

**A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE FACTORS
IDENTIFIED IN THE INITIATION AND TRANSITION OF
INDIVIDUALS INTO A NEW SUPERINTENDENCY**

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

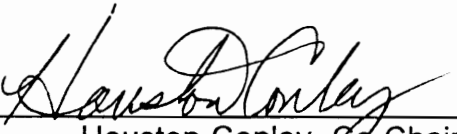
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION


in

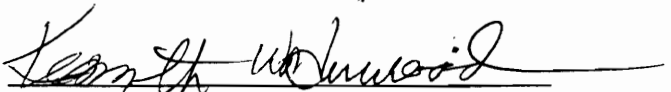
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June 1996

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Key words: Education, Superintendency, Transition, Schools, Administration

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(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was to report and describe certain recurrent perceptions, events, behaviors and relationships associated with the initiation and transition phases of a new superintendency. The initiation phase of a new superintendency is defined as the timeframe inclusive of the date the individual accepts the appointment of superintendent up to the date the individual actually assumes the position of superintendent. The transition phase is defined as the first one hundred days following the assumption of the superintendent position.

While this study's purpose is not to evaluate the quality of a superintendent's tenure, it does identify and describe certain factors that might be generalized as being associated with the tenor of a superintendent's tenure.

The study is guided by the following major questions:

1. What was the prevailing climate of the community of the superintendency vacancy when the individual was appointed?
2. What professional preparation and personal issues were identified as factors

- by the individual seeking the new superintendency?
3. How did the individual establish the climate of the new superintendency?
 4. How did the individual establish a vision and develop a plan of action for the new superintendency?
 5. What actions were initiated by the individual within the first one hundred days of the new superintendency?

The researcher conducted structured interviews of five superintendents who were serving in their first three years in a Virginia school system. Specific questions guided the interviews. Interview questions followed the procedure suggested by McCracken in The Long Interview.

Data were also collected from documents including: official records and documents from each of the five respective school systems; local newspapers; personal notations and correspondences of the superintendents; superintendent's resumes and biographies.

Data are presented in narrative form.

The findings of this study indicate that there are certain recurrent perceptions, events, behaviors and relationships associated with the initiation and transition phases of selected superintendents relevant to the five questions that guided the study. Further, these factors appear to be common to the initiation and transition phases of a new superintendent regardless of such variables as the size of the school system, the gender, age, or ethnicity of the individual.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help, support and encouragement from certain people. Thanks to my dad and mom who know me better than I know myself and who have never pushed, but always supported me. To my campus cheering section: Dr. Mamie Locke, Dr. Bertha Davis, and Dr. Freddy Davy who wanted this nearly as much as me and helped me move toward the light even when it was nearly invisible to my undiscerning eye; to my daughters Raegan, who practically raised herself through my trek to “doctoral status”, and Nichole who really helped out at home as I labored toward this goal - both of whom are shining beacons in my life.

I give a very special thanks to the members of my committee, Dr. Jimmie Fortune, Dr. Kenneth Underwood, Dr. Robert Richards, and Dr. Mary T. Christian, who served as advocates for me all along the way. And an extra special thanks to Dr. Houston Conley, my committee chair, who kept saying, “I know you can, I know you can.” Their guidance and probative style of questioning and interacting made this a true learning experience for me.

To Carolyn Acklin - my secretary, assistant, friend who just kept on typing! And to Hampton University President William R. Harvey whose patience in waiting is appreciated mostly because he didn't wait for me to finish.

And to Dr. “C” and mentor, Dr. Effie Jones who both continued to believe in me, even when I had difficulty believing in myself - “Thank you”.

And I do thank God whose testing of me throughout this initiative helped me to recognize strengths and talents I never knew I had.

In Memory Of

On August 29, 1995, I lost the love of my life, my husband, Robert Brevard Suber, Sr., to cancer. For years Brevard admonished me for not completing the requirements for this degree. In an ironic twist of fate, it was his death and the tremendous void it left in my life, that caused me to focus on this goal.

It is his spirit that shares this moment with me.

"158"

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INTRODUCTION

There are many factors associated with the initiation and transition phases of a new superintendency. This is particularly true for the period of time beginning the day an individual accepts a superintendent's position through the first one hundred days of the tenure. From a historic perspective, the transition stages of a presidential administration are seen as critical to the orchestration of policy changes, the development of agendas, and the overall execution of the dictates of the office. This period is no less critical for the administration of new superintendents (*AASA Report*, 1992).

The last decade has shown America busily reforming its public schools. A significant number of research studies and professional texts have focused on the development of teacher competencies and professionalism, school-site management, student behaviors, parental involvement and control, and on the development of the principal as the instructional leader (C. Penn, personal communication, June, 1994). Curiously absent from the literature on school reform is a comparable level of discussion relevant to the role of a school district's chief executive officer: the school district superintendent (Konnert and Augenstein, 1990).

The American school superintendency role is multifaceted and complex. The contemporary jurisdiction of superintendents has become increasingly more

extensive and the concept of the superintendent as a chief executive officer has evolved more definitively over the last ten years (Glass, 1992). A review of related literature published by the American Association of School Administrators calls for the superintendents of the 1990's to cease being bureaucratic managers and to become "executive leaders" akin to chief executives of private sector corporations (*The Study of the American School Superintendent*, 1992, p. ix).

Dr. Smith, superintendent of schools in Newport News, Virginia paralleled the role of school superintendents to that of United States presidents (E. Smith, personal communication, December 3, 1992). Dr. Harvey, Hampton University president and entrepreneur, in a separate interview, agreed that the role of superintendents, like that of United States presidents, corporate CEO's and state governors, has become increasingly more diversified and complex over the last several decades (W. Harvey, personal communication, June 5, 1992). "The days for superintendents to be promoted just because they were good principals or winning coaches before that are over," Harvey added. Both Harvey and Smith stressed the importance of a superintendent being able to demonstrate having not only the highly honed administrative skills necessary to lead a school district, but a clear political and business sense as well. Both noted the significance of an adequate preparation prior to becoming a superintendent and the long term impact

that the quality of the transition phase has on the success or failure of a superintendent's tenure.

In Hess's (1988) *Organizing the Presidency*, the former United States President Lyndon Johnson summed up the importance of the transition period late in his administration:

You've got to give it all you can that first year. Doesn't matter what kind of majority you come with. You've got just one year when they treat you right, and before they start worrying about themselves . . . So, you've got one year (p.17).

Hess's study is one of several that has looked comparatively at the procedures and strategies of the transition period of presidents (Hess, 1988; Brauer, 1985; Marshall and Schram, 1993). Brauer, in his book *Presidential Transitions: Eisenhower through Reagan*, refers to transitions as being "filled with peril and with opportunities" (Brauer, 1988, p. xiv). The ability to avoid the former and make the most of the latter goes a long way toward determining the characteristics of an administrator's tenure.

Hess and Brauer identified and described the transition periods of various United States presidents in their studies. Both studies reported the activities, events and issues associated with the period of time the newly elected presidents traveled

from successful candidacy to established incumbency (Brauer, 1986). The review of these studies ignited the concept for this study. Clearly, there are significant differences in the parameters between the transition period of a superintendent and that of a United States president. School superintendents are not preceded by advance teams or transition consultants and new superintendents rarely have the privilege of being able to bring to the school district their own administrative staff (K. Underwood, personal communication, October 4, 1994). Yet, there would seem to be parallel factors that can be identified, described, and reported that occur during both the transition phases of a superintendency and the transition phases of a presidency.

Konnert and Augenstein's (1990) study proceeds on the premise that an individual's initiation and transition into the superintendency is both formal and informal and occurs both prior to and after assumption of the position. Chapters one through five of this study, *A Descriptive Study of the Factors Identified in the Initiation and Transition of Individuals into a New Superintendency*, will report and describe certain recurrent perceptions, events, behaviors and relationships associated with the initiation phase and transition phase of each of five superintendents. The chapters are written as narratives that reflect the chronology of events and respect the perceptions of the superintendents.

The last section of the study, "Patterns and Similarities," provides the summary discussion on certain recurring patterns from which the reader can derive certain discernible trends. Just as no two presidents are alike (Brauer, 1985), so no two superintendents are alike (Glass, 1992). Existing conditions and circumstances, differing backgrounds as well as personalities, insure that no two tenures are duplicates of one another. Therefore, it is not the primary intent of this study to define a narrow set of parameters by which to advise an individual assuming a new superintendency. There are, however, certain important similarities and recurring patterns among the five superintendents in this study, and from these similarities and patterns can be culled certain basic, critical success factors and common challenges that may be determined to bear some influence on the length, scope, and effectiveness of a superintendent's tenure.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Whether an individual's new position as superintendent is a promotion from a position held within a school district, a promotion from one school system to another, or a lateral move from one school system to another, there are many factors associated with the initiation and transition into a superintendency. The perceptions of an individual, the events and activities that occur, the development

of agendas and plans, and the establishment of relationships are all critical elements in the time frame associated with a new superintendency. Each of these factors becomes integrated into an individual's initiation and transition into the position of new superintendent. Consistent with the paucity of information on the role of the superintendent as chief executive officer is a similar scarcity of reference in the literature to the transition period of a new superintendent.

What happens during the initiation phase which begins the day an individual's appointment is announced through the first one hundred days transition phase that begins the day that individual reports to the position? How is closure brought to the position being vacated? How does an individual initiate change? Who are the key players that should be involved in the initiation and transition phases? Should the outgoing superintendent be available for the transition? What role does an individual's family play in this process? What expectation should an individual have of the school board?

Articles appearing in professional journals have provided interesting insights into the experiences of new superintendents in varied stages of development and reflection. In general, however, a literature review has failed to provide evidence of documentation of specific research or studies addressing the questions posed in this study.

The career path of many superintendents is marked by movement from one community to another. Reflected in *The 1992 Study of the American School Superintendency* (Glass, 1992), are queries associated with that movement reality include: "What makes the job difficult? What are the backgrounds and career paths of superintendents? What are the obstacles to successful tenures?" The AASA study, however, stopped short of examining specific factors, trends or patterns associated with the movement itself.

This study focuses on a very narrow, but specific time frame in examining the new superintendency. The time frame is inclusive of the initiation phase of a superintendent's tenure which begins with the announcement of the appointment and continues through the first one hundred days transition phase of the tenure.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to five Virginia superintendents who are serving in their first three years in a Virginia school system. This study assumed that perceptions can be recorded and analyzed. The study is qualitative in nature, relying on reported data, perceptions, anecdotes and phenomenological reflections, reinforced by written documents and audio taped interviews.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions are provided:

board of supervisors - the governing body of a county

central office - the group of administrators usually consisting of coordinators, supervisors, directors and assistant superintendents who administer and manage school system programs and operations; in this study it is the same as central administration

climate - the existing conditions affecting the traditions, activities, development and phenomena of a community

initiation phase - the period of time which begins with the school board's announcement of the superintendent appointment and continues up to the first day the superintendent assumes the position

key players - the members of the community who either overtly or covertly influence policy and practice

needs assessment - the determination of a condition or conditions of deficiency or the lack of required or desired outcomes

perceptions - the results of grasping information and internalizing observations through the senses of the mind

school board - the group of people, elected or appointed who make

policy for local public schools

school community - the varied groups of people living in a particular city or town having a shared interest in the activities of the schools in that town or city

school system - the area inclusive of facilities and personnel that is under the supervision of a specific school board where the superintendent is appointed by the same school board; same as district; division

sitting superintendent - the superintendent who has tendered a resignation but who has not yet vacated the position

superintendent - a person responsible for providing the leadership and direction to a school system; the person in charge

transition phase - the period of time which begins on the day the new superintendent reports to the position and concludes at the end of the first one hundred days in the office

This study was designed to describe and report the factors identified in an individual's initiation and transition into a superintendency, and to address the existing void in the information and available data banks relative to the phases of superintendent transitions. While this study's purpose was not to evaluate the

quality of a superintendent tenures, it was expected that factors reported and described as occurring during the initiation and transition phases of a superintendency would provide an expanded base of information with regard to certain discernible patterns and lessons for those preparing to assume a superintendent position.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This was a descriptive study designed to report and describe the factors identified in an individual's initiation and transition phases of a new superintendency. The study was designed to insure that the researcher did not judge what occurred as good or bad, effective or ineffective, but rather described the patterns, events, behaviors, relationships, and perceptions of the individual during the specified initiation and transition phases.

This descriptive study was guided by research standards and qualitative methodology associated with the long qualitative interview (McCracken, 1990). The principal means of data collection were direct interviews of five Virginia superintendents who were serving in their first three years in a Virginia school system. The interview strategy was selected because the nature of the study required extensive conversation and probing of individual circumstances, contexts,

and perspectives. Documents collected during the progress of this research included organizational charts, school board minutes, reports and minutes of cabinet and other administrative meetings, changes in board policy memorandums, and articles from local and area newspapers.

All interviews were conducted by the researcher, and each was audio taped and transcribed. Follow up interviews were conducted to provide clarity to the transcriptions to ascertain additional information as necessary. Each individual in the study agreed to be interviewed and to participate in the study. The interview was conducted in the form of a long interview between the informant and the researcher as suggested by McCracken (1990). Parameters for the introduction of new elements throughout the dialogues, as well as a format for collecting additional data were established. Guided by McCracken's (1990) suggestion, the four-step method of inquiry divided the qualitative research circle into four quadrants, each of which represented a separate and successive step in the research process. The quadrants were as follows:

- (1) a review of the literature establishing an inventory of the categories and the relationships the researcher must investigate;
- (2) the engagement of the researcher in preparing for the

development of the interview format (data collection) by identifying categories and relationships that had not been identified in the literature and by preparing the templates by which the researcher would discern patterns in the interview data;

- (3) the construction of the questionnaires, the creation of biographical data questions, the gathering of other data; and the conducting of the interviews;
- (4) the analysis and establishment of relationships and interrelationships; identification of themes leading to conclusions (McCracken, 1990).

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

The population for this study consisted of superintendents in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A sample of five superintendents was identified. Each superintendent was serving in the first three years of a current superintendent position. The participants constituted a sample of convenience selected by the researcher from a list of Virginia superintendents provided by the Virginia Association of School Administrators. The researcher considered race and gender

in the selection of participants to the degree that the limited population would yield a varied representation. The sample profile included three males and two females; one African American; one superintendent with prior experience as a superintendent; two individuals - one male and one female - who were promoted from positions within the school system; and individuals representing both rural and urban communities with student populations ranging from 1,600 to 35,000.

ANALYSIS

The data collected from documents and interviews were subjected to content analysis and analyzed. The long qualitative interview required the careful verbatim transcription of interview data. Analysis of these data required five stages:

first stage - treated each utterance in the interview transcript in its own terms, ignoring its relationship to other aspects of the text

second stage - identified the observations garnered in the first stage and developed them according to the evidence in the transcript, and literature and cultural review

third stage - examined the interconnection of the second level observations, relating again to the literature and cultural review

fourth stage - explored the observations collectively, generated and

subjected them to collective scrutiny with the expectation of determining patterns of intertheme consistency and contradiction

fifth stage - analyzed patterns and themes and subjected these to a final process of analysis through which the researcher's observations become "conclusions" (McCracken, 1990).

The primary questions posed in the interview were designed to yield responses in five categories. (Appendix A and B) The last section of the study described the summary of the five categories. The study identified the five categories as

The Prevailing Climate - an assessment of the community of the superintendency vacancy. This category answers the question, "What was the community like before the arrival of the new superintendent?"

The New Superintendent - an accounting of the new superintendent's academic credentials and experiences. This category examined an array of professional preparation, and personal issues involved in the move to a new superintendency.

Establishing A Climate - an identification of the varied activities and interactions that occurred during of the initiation phase of a new superintendent's tenure. This category explored the relationships with the school board and

community influences.

The Vision and Plan of Action - a description of the expectations and the perceptions individuals had of themselves in the new superintendency. This category asks and answers the questions, "What does the individual want to accomplish and how?"

The First One Hundred Days - a reporting of what actually occurred once the individual in a new superintendency officially assumed the position. This category answered the question, "What did the individual accomplish?"

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been many studies conducted and much written about the superintendency in American school systems. However, much of this literature focused on the basic roles of the superintendent, relationships with school boards, and the successes and failures of superintendents. Little has been written about a critical part of the launching of a new superintendent. That is, what does an individual do during the initiation and transition phases of a new superintendency? This study explores the factors that were identified as a part of that process. The review of literature reveals the limited availability of materials that examined this process of initiation and transition into the role of superintendency, and it reflects

the important developments and trends in the evolving superintendency.

In their work, *The Superintendency in the Nineties*, Konnert and Augenstein (1990) argue that there is both a formal and an informal process that prepares and initiates an individual into a superintendency. Those processes occur both before and after assumption to the position and are grounded in socialization theory. They use Clausen's (1960) definition of socialization, the "process by which a role aspirant learns the values, norms, requisite work skills and abilities, and required behavior for a specific role" (p.187). It is during this socialization process that the new superintendent internalizes values and norms and assumes the identity of the new role. Again, this socialization process occurs before and after the individual assumes the superintendency. This socialization, both formal and informal, continues as the new superintendent becomes more knowledgeable, develops new skills, and maintains and sharpens existing skills.

There are studies that parallel the tenure of superintendents to that of other professionals. A notion of the role and function of professionalism in public bureaucracies is important to any study of the behaviors of leaders and particularly in careers of administrators. The Introduction chapter examined this parallel with the President of the United States and CEO's. Zeigler, Kehoe, and Reisman (1985) discuss outcomes of another comparison. In their study of school

superintendents and city managers, the authors highlight various similarities and differences and related their responses to the various sources of conflict and other variables that ultimately impact the perceived effectiveness of tenure. They posit that superintendents enjoy an average tenure of just under eight years and city managers have a slightly shorter tenure of seven years. Additionally, contractual guarantees and obligations for superintendents make firing more expensive because of the potential necessity to buy out contracts.

They contend that the professionalism of superintendents exceeds that of city managers because of the existence of a confirming ideology and a narrow career path. In their study of both categories of professionals, they have found that members of these groups are members of their respective associations and that those relationships foster intra professional communication and reinforce professional identification. The review of the literature revealed that a greater number of superintendents maintain professional memberships than do city managers.

Dunnerstick (1992) suggests that a new superintendent should go into the job with few fundamentals. Instead, the individual should simply follow seven key survival techniques. These techniques include knowing the board and establishing ways of communicating with members; knowing administrators and beginning the

process to build and strengthen a leadership team; knowing the union and being prepared to inform the organization of any action - positive or negative - that might affect its members; knowing the power base and understanding the power of visibility. Following these techniques may ease the transition phase for the new superintendent.

Papallo (1990) provided similar advice, particularly as it relates to the new superintendents' relationship with the school board. He argued that if a new superintendent is to be successful, he or she must, "know all the right moves" (Papallo, 1990, p.17). What a new superintendent does in the first few weeks on the job is critical to cementing a good working relationship with the board. Papallo indicated that the new superintendent must be objective, and must take the time to get a feel for the job and the needs of the school system. Further, egos should be held in check while the individual understands that there is a "thin line" between policy and administration. Superintendents should also know when their tenure in a school system has reached the saturation point. The quality of tenure is more important than longevity in a school system.

A critical area for many new superintendents is the relationship with staff and other administrators. Unlike presidents, new superintendents do not have the luxury of bringing with them a completely new management team. Often, staff

members, who range from mediocre to excellent, are inherited. Donald Langlois (1986) highlighted some basic rules for how a new superintendent can mitigate what he called "turkey" behavior from existing staff. Among these rules are the admonishment to resist labeling individuals before undertaking a complete behavioral analysis. Otherwise, the new superintendent might make premature and unwise staffing decisions that may have long-range consequences. Secondly, new superintendents must learn how to be effective supervisors. Langlois defined supervision as holding periodic meetings, during which time the superintendent listens, makes suggestions, corrects, and praise successes. "In short, effective supervision means setting clear expectations, staying in touch with what subordinates are doing, and making sure they know whether you approve or disapprove of their efforts" (Langlois, 1986, p.23). In sum, an efficient and effective method of transitioning into a superintendency is knowing how to work with and through others ,with particular strategies being employed with those staffers who may be perceived as difficult or resistant.

Being explicit and forthright in one's approach to the superintendency during the interview stage is a workable method that mitigates the possibility for misunderstanding between a new superintendent and the school board. So argued Barbara Grohe (1983) who felt that the interview should be the basis for forging a

partnership with the board. This process includes mutual candor. The new superintendent should not assume the position anxious to make immediate changes. There must first be an acquired knowledge and understanding of what is going on in the school system. The individual needs to become a part of the existing staff while learning about the resources and strengths of the system. Staff should be informed of expectations and methods of assessment. Key to the whole process is candid and open communication. The new superintendent must learn to distinguish between being right and always winning, and must "be willing to work as long and as hard as it takes to become visible, credible, informed, and respected" (Grohe, 1983, p.29).

There are many factors that impact on a superintendent's tenure in any given school system. Martin and Martin (1986) presented an analysis of superintendents' tenures in two West Virginia rural and mountainous counties. Although both counties had similar attributes, such as in-school enrollment and social climates, one county boasted a school chief who had a successful eight-year tenure while the other county suffered through six unsuccessful superintendents during a ten-year period. Their analysis served to identify the critical difference in the superintendent's tenures in each county.

In determining the rationale for outcomes identified in the tenure of those two

chiefs, the authors analyzed two variables: power and influence. In the analysis of power in the two communities, ten years of school board minutes and weekly newspaper reports of school news were reviewed. Additionally, people were interviewed to determine which persons they perceived to be influential. In one county, 90% of the "education influential were men who belonged to a variety of social, fraternal, professional and religious organizations, but the majority belonged to the local country club, chamber of commerce, and Lions Club . . . and so did the superintendent" (Martin and Martin, 1986, p.21). Seventy percent of the influential were longtime residents of the county. The superintendent, however, interacted as effectively with the old hierarchy as he did with the new influential, brought in new coal mines and new businesses who were associated with the influx of constituents resulting from the building of new coal mines and new businesses.

In the other county, six of the influential were women, and because most community service and fraternal organizations discriminated by sex, the influential men and women on the author's list did not belong to groups that gave them a chance to meet informally to discuss issues. Additionally, one of the top influentials was a professional educator, a high school principal, and one other the owner and editor of the local newspaper. The superintendent occupied no significant place in the power structure.

As existing influence was analyzed. Martin and Martin (1986) purport that regardless of setting and types of school systems, a superintendent has a better chance of success if the power structure is relatively stable. They suggested that chances of success are greater still if the superintendent can identify people who wield the power, gain their support, and influence them. Furthermore, they identify general strategies that would be important for superintendents to consider when moving into a new school system: (1) review local newspaper and identify key members of the community power structure and talk to them before accepting the position; (2) consider personalities, desires, social status of members of the power structure since establishing friends at the top and staying in continued informal contact with will assist in bridging the gaps between the superintendent and members of the power structure; (3) solicit the support of local church leaders and local media; and (4) be cognizant of the fact that certain groups such as the P.T.A. or other civic groups, because of their political or social functions, have special power to influence the power structure.

There is an art to management and insuring that the act operates efficiently and effectively. Akenhead (1991) stated that the art of enlightened management is the art of getting others into the decision-making act and then making sure that the act goes smoothly. He described this behavior as being a facilitator, that is, one

who recognizes that when no one answer is the only right way to go, it is best to build on the brainpower of everyone involved. He further articulated basic guidelines of facilitation which include respecting one's board members' expertise, using board standing committees, recognizing value in group decision-making, understanding the use of power, and allowing flexibility in developing viewpoints and opinions. Further, he contended that the facilitator approach may not work in all situations, but when it works well it answers a high level of involvement and increases the likelihood that decisions will be supported.

Vann (1990) stated that new superintendents must earn the support of principals. This support is not automatic and requires work on the part of the superintendent. The best mechanism for gaining the support of principals is for the superintendent to follow through on ideas and policies with action and to take honest, constructive feedback. It is the responsibility of the new superintendent to create a climate that allows for strong, positive communication. With the loyalty, respect and support of principals, superintendents pave the way for their success.

Conran (1989) presents the discussion that many issues that affect school superintendents as she posits guidelines that serve as practical techniques for administrators. Most of the issues discussed were related to policy development, achieving educational excellence, improving curriculum and instruction,

communicating results, preparing agendas, maintaining public relations, networking/mentoring, planning, changing demographics, research, budget and legal issues in employee relations. Within these areas particular canons that undergird behavioral interventions are discussed, such as power or authority. Particularly significant to this study, however, is the discussion of tenure. Conran further states that tenure is the bane of all school superintendents. While tenure statutes, technically, were designed to compel procedural due process in the procedures effecting dismissals or adverse employee actions, practically speaking, the tenure statutes have become a roadblock to disciplining or terminating those judged to exhibit unsatisfactory performance. Further, she posits that states have definite requirements for disciplining and dismissing employees and some effort at remediation is owed morally and, usually, legally.

Anderson (n. d., p. 22) quoted one former administrator who stated, "usually in this rather perilous business, mere survival is one measure of success." As she developed methodology to gather data which could predict success in the superintendency, the following questions were used to ascertain information: "What can a candidate for the superintendency discover about the job in which he or she is interested?" "How might a board of education assess the superintendency vacancy and the candidates under consideration?" To answer those questions, the

American Association of School Administrators conducted a nationwide survey of all superintendents who had vacated their positions between August 1983 and August 1985.

The educational research service lists 14,222 school districts nationwide with a turnover rate for superintendents of 13.5 percent (Anderson, n. d., p.22). A total of 1,574 past superintendents were mailed questionnaires; 835 responded for a response rate of 53 percent. Results revealed a distribution of tenure toward fewer than five years even though a few remained more than twenty years and one reported a tenure of forty-two years. Anderson (n. d., p. 26) identified several variables that were significant in all candidates surveyed. Longer tenures seem to occur when the cost per pupil expenditure was reasonable or high. Superintendents who were contracted for shorter time frames were associated with longevity as were superintendents who belonged to the same ethnic group as made up the district majority. Salaries were tied into longevity, that is, the higher the salary, the longer the stay. First time superintendents were seen to have the greatest potential for long tenures. Superintendents remained longer in larger districts. Shorter terms were associated with superintendents who were using the position as a stepping stone to other superintendencies. School districts that used formal formats for interviews had superintendents with shorter tenures. The

electoral defeat of a board member was associated with shorter tenures as were situations wherein boards experienced significant turnover or change in the make up of the board.

Research data are well developed in regard to studying school districts as a changing political entity, but they are less well developed in regard to superintendents who survive despite the odds and analysis of what makes each different. Lannaccone (1981) interviewed several survival superintendents in large, very difficult and high conflict school districts. Superintendents determined that their basic orientation to and their behavior in high-conflict school districts should be undergirded by a value system that is rooted in the democratic process and a commitment to the importance of the public school agenda. To establish a climate that promotes the belief that schools can make a difference, superintendents agree that the district administrators need to “get into schools” with a sense of mission and purpose that far exceeds mere survival in the superintendency.

The study of school board and superintendent relationships focused educators' attention on many salient points regarding what is needed to make those relationships successful. For many years, the *American School Board Journal* and Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University (VirginiaTech) surveyed a representative sample of men and women who served on school boards throughout

the United States. In April 1989, a three-part survey was sent to a random selection of 11,992 school board members. The 2,166 (18%) who responded represented a cross section of board members in all 50 states (Yock, Keough, Underwood, and Fortune, 1990, p.28). Part one of the survey was designed to obtain data on superintendent tenure by determining what board members thought of their superintendents; how long they would allow them to remain on the job; what issues or events would cause boards to oust their superintendents; what attitudes boards would look for in new candidates. Part two of the survey yielded demographic data while part three yielded data regarding current problems such as money and state mandates that plagued board members. Of the 2,166 school board members who responded, nearly 81 percent said they did not favor breaking their school system's relationship with the superintendent (Yock, Keough, Underwood, and Fortune, 1990, p.30). Similarly, when asked about their own feelings about the superintendent's performance, 82.6 percent stated that they were satisfied; only 11 percent admitted to any dissatisfaction.

Data regarding regional analysis revealed that board members from Pacific states tended to be happiest while southern board members seemed to be the most unhappy. School board members representing large school systems were more pleased with their superintendents than those in smaller systems.

Additionally, given a bad situation, the majority agreed it is okay to break a superintendent's contract, especially for reasons such as loss of confidence in the superintendent's integrity (87.3%), loss of faith in leadership (84.6%) and evidence of mismanagement of school finances (82.9%). When asked the ideal length of time a superintendent should stay in a school district, the majority of respondents stated six to ten years; only 4.5 percent stated sixteen to twenty years. The researchers concluded that the longer the superintendent served the school system, the more critical board members became of the superintendent's performance. Additionally, the longer the superintendent's "reign," the more likely it is for board members to raise the issue of searching for a new school chief (Yock, Keough, Underwood, Fortune, 1990, p.33).

As superintendents' roles have shifted over the years, moving from board functionaries to professional administrator and chief executive officers, so has the relationship superintendents share. Hentges (1986) pointed out in his study on "The Politics of Superintendent-School Board Linkages" that school boards and superintendents must have a good partnership if public education is to be effective. He concluded that boards and superintendents share power, but superintendents have a tendency to predominate when internal policy issues are involved. Undergirding this relationship is the political dimension of public school systems.

Superintendents, in his view, "need to develop political acumen if they are to function effectively in a political milieu" (p. 32).

The increasing influence that political acumen plays in the review of superintendent tenures was evidenced in a study by Tallerico, Poole and Burstyn (1994). They studied four superintendents and the contexts of the respective superintendencies. They identified several recurrent themes in their data: the intensity and perceived problematic nature of conflicting demands and influences, coupled with a not-so-subtle distaste or unreadiness for the pervasiveness of the political aspects of the superintendency. The dichotomizing of the professional and the political along with the perceived centrality of school board members in the politicization of superintendents' work was apparent in excerpts from three of the four superintendents interviewed in the study. In their views "its more than knowing the good curriculum, the instruction, knowing how to do well and monitoring your budget . . . its about the politics" (p. 443).

The role of the superintendent has changed considerably over the past few decades. These changes may well impact how an individual functions in the role of superintendent, and the quality and longevity of the tenure. Where the literature falls short is in its discussion and analysis of the actions and occurrences that take place during the initiation and transition phases of an individual launching a new

superintendency. An analysis of these events would provide critical data for the purpose of reference and study for individuals embarking on a new superintendency. This study attempts to fill the void.

CHAPTER 1: DR. SUE F. BURGESS

Prevailing Climate of King William County Public Schools

King William County, Virginia is located in the east central area of the state, northeast of Richmond. It is a sparsely populated county of less than 10,000 people. The public school system has three schools, one high school and two elementary schools (K - 8th grades). There are less than sixteen hundred children enrolled in the public schools of King William County.

Dr. Sue Burgess succeeded Nicholas Maschal who served as superintendent of King William County public schools for five years. In an interview given to the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Maschal reported that he was resigning from the King William County superintendency to become superintendent of schools in Lexington, Virginia ("School Superintendent in King William Resigns", *Richmond Times Dispatch*, November 10, 1992). Maschal stated that the move to Lexington "is in line with my professional goals" ("School Superintendent in King William Resigns", *Richmond Times Dispatch*, November 10, 1992). He added that the position in Lexington would also enable him to be closer to members of his family. A staff writer at *The Country Courier* reported the resignation of Maschal as being "accepted" by the King William County school board (*Country Courier*, November 12, 1992).

Maschal announced his resignation on November 9, 1992 citing an effective date of January 1, 1993. Neither the *Richmond Times Dispatch* nor the *Country Courier* published during that time frame cited any particular reason for the announced resignation. When asked the question, "Under what circumstances did the former superintendent leave the position?", Burgess responded, "A school board and a superintendent may, in fact, have the same goals for a school system, but have a different vision of how to achieve those goals . . . I think both Dr. Maschal and the board were in mutual agreement that it was the appropriate time for him to leave" (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess indicated that she had been aware for at least a year prior to his resignation that Maschal was seeking, other superintendent positions. She acknowledged that at one time the two of them [she and Maschal] had even "run into each other at the same interview" (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Superintendent of Surry County, Virginia schools Clarence Penn, who was identified by the executive director of the Virginia Association of School Administrators (VASA) (V. Cibbarelli, personal communication, September 28, 1994) as being one of the senior superintendents in Virginia, explained Maschal's resignation as being fairly common place in the superintendent business. "When superintendent's resign, the reasons are not always embroiled in scandal or conflict,

or mismanagement of monies; more often than not, the board, sometimes because of changes in the make-up of the board, and the superintendent simply come to a parting of the ways . . . Superintendents do not earn tenure, nor is there a grievance procedure for superintendents . . . so usually, when we see differences developing, we try to move on . . . This was the case with Nick [Maschal]" (C. Penn, personal communication, March 21, 1996).

Although it was Maschal who initiated the resignation, the decision to resign was, in part, made under some duress (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Following the submission of his resignation, the school board proceeded to conduct a search for a new superintendent.

The New Superintendent

Sue Burgess was appointed as superintendent in King William County in March 1993. Her prior experiences spanned seventeen years in public education and included serving as teacher and assistant principal in Davidson County, North Carolina and as elementary school principal, director of special services, and dean of instructional services in Hanover County, Virginia. As director of special services, Burgess worked in the areas of special education, gifted programs and counseling (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 16, 1993, p. J1).

Burgess was a graduate of Ohio University with a bachelor's degree in

secondary education. She received a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) and a doctorate in educational administration from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Burgess decided early in life that her career goal was to be a superintendent. In her early position as a classroom teacher, she laid out the steps she felt she needed to take in order to prepare herself for a superintendency. She determined that a doctoral degree for a woman seeking a superintendent position would be a requirement. Therefore, she began her doctoral studies early in her teaching career. Burgess strategically planned her career moves, beginning as a classroom teacher and progressing through the positions of assistant principal, principal, and the central office positions of director and dean. Burgess explained that the dean of instructional services in Hanover County is equivalent to that of an assistant superintendent. She also stated that she "did all the things necessary to prepare myself to be a superintendent" (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). She reported that she took advantage of all possible professional development opportunities. She used her vacation leave and underwrote the cost herself to attend the National Superintendents' Academy, sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators. In each of her professional roles,

Burgess strategized to learn all that she could relative to the many facets of each of the positions she held. She particularly sought out opportunities to work in the areas of transportation and finances (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

According to an article appearing in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Dr. Stephen M. Baker, superintendent of Hanover County, Virginia school system, stated that Sue Burgess had been on a "fast track" toward educational administration since graduating from college. Baker indicated that even when he taught her as a high school student in Roanoke, Virginia, Burgess exhibited traits of a successful educator (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 16, 1993). He stated that,

as a student, she [Burgess] had all the skills, then, that she has demonstrated [as an assistant superintendent] here in Hanover County. . . She is one of the real quality people in our business . . . and as long as she continues her work ethic and her quality of work, she will have no problem as a superintendent (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 16, 1993).

In response to the question, "What prompted your interest in King William County Public Schools?", Burgess stated several reasons. She indicated that she

was aware of the fact that the King William County schools were involved in the school renewal program of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The school renewal program was a program in which Burgess acknowledged she had been involved since its inception in the state of Virginia (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is the accrediting agency for schools in thirteen states. Burgess reported that the school renewal program focused on school based management and school improvement models. Burgess reported that she had also been involved, not only with the accreditation process, but with school based management, and school improvement models in the Hanover County school system. She, therefore, felt she had the prerequisite experiences to support programs already in place in King William County. She felt her skills and knowledge of certain programs made her a viable candidate for the King William County school superintendent position (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Furthermore, Burgess acknowledged she felt she was ready for a superintendent position. She admitted that she had been applying for other superintendent positions for nearly a year prior to her appointment as superintendent in King William County. She indicated that she had deliberately selected and analyzed the positions for which she applied, choosing only those that

she felt best met her career goals.

Burgess indicated that since she knew the previous superintendent [Maschal] was leaving King William County to assume another superintendency, she waited for the vacancy to be posted and then applied for the position. She became aware of the superintendent's search when she saw the position opening posted on the bulletin board in the Hanover County school board office.

Burgess stated that she applied for the superintendency in King William County because she liked the size of the school system, its location, and its reputation for "being small, but good" (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). She stated that "given my state of inexperience, the size [of King William] was very attractive to me. . . it will enable me to get to know everyone more quickly" (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 16, 1993).

Burgess acknowledged that family considerations played a very minor role in her decision to apply for the superintendency in King William County. Her family, she pointed out, consisted only of herself and her husband. Her husband was the director of the fine arts program for the Hanover County School System. Burgess reported that her husband supported her decision to apply for the superintendent position. He agreed that he would drive the thirty-five miles, as necessary, from a home in King William County to his office in Hanover County. The Burgess's owned

a home in Hanover County at the time of her appointment and purchased a second home within five miles of the King William County school board office after Burgess's appointment to the King William County superintendency was announced.

Burgess acknowledged that the decision to leave Hanover County was timely for her but was still a difficult decision. "Its a big step up," she said, from her dean of instruction position which included handling everything from school renewal projects, family life education curriculum, and establishing the school Health Advisory Board, to facilitating the development of Hanover County's long-range plan. "This was a difficult decision . . . I asked myself why I was doing this, even as I was filling out the application. But it was my career goal. [to be superintendent]" (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 16, 1993). "We are going to miss her very much", said Dr. Stephen Baker, Hanover County Schools superintendent. "[Her leaving] is going to leave a big void in our office. She [Burgess] has been an integral part of our staff and a reason for our success. But we are happy to see her grow" (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 16, 1993).

The former superintendent, Nicholas Maschal, announced his resignation intentions to the King William school board on November 10, 1992. The school board immediately began the search for a superintendent. The school board

retained the Virginia School Board Association to conduct the search. The five member school board announced the appointment of Sue Burgess as superintendent in March 1993. The appointment was affirmed in an unanimous decision by the board although Burgess reported that at the time of her appointment, there was a vacancy on the five member school board. The vacancy was not filled until after the first one hundred days of her tenure. Burgess noted that she felt that the board's 4-0 vote was a unified vote (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). She became the ninth woman superintendent of the one hundred thirty-three superintendents in the state of Virginia. She was the first female superintendent to be appointed in Hanover County(J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 16, 1993).

The school board appointed director of finance, John Reeder, as interim superintendent to serve from January 1, 1993 to June 30, 1993. Burgess was given a four year contract with the effective date of employment being July 1, 1993 (School Board Minutes, March 10, 1993).

Establishing A Climate

Burgess was appointed superintendent in March 1993 and officially assumed the position of superintendent on July 1, 1993. The former superintendent, Nicholas Maschal, tendered his resignation in November 1992, effective January 1, 1993 and

was available to Burgess only by telephone during the initiation phase of her tenure. Burgess acknowledged that she talked with Maschal by phone several times, but their exchanges proved to be awkward and difficult. She did not feel that their dialogues were particularly helpful. She decided to rely on persons on site in King William County to assist in effecting the initiation and transition phases of her tenure.

Burgess indicated that Reeder, the interim superintendent, was immensely helpful and provided her with significant information relevant to the “particular ways” of both the county government and the school system (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess indicated that she was comfortable in seeking assistance from Reeder. She acknowledged that at the time she was appointed to the superintendent’s position, Reeder informed her that he had not sought nor was he interested in the position of superintendent. Reeder also admitted that he had at first said ‘no’ to the school board when they requested that he serve as interim superintendent (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess felt that Reeder had managed the school system effectively from January - June. No major initiatives were introduced during his interim tenure. The budget process for the new fiscal year, however, was completed during the initiation

phase of Burgess's tenure prior to her actually assuming the superintendent position. Burgess did not have any input into the development of the 1993-94 school budget. The school board gave her a copy of the proposed budget, "for my information," prior to the board's action to approve the budget. She received a copy of the proposed budget prior to its presentation to the board of supervisors, but was provided no opportunity to react to the proposal (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess used the initiation phase of her tenure to learn as much as possible about the King William County community. During the time period between March and June, Burgess maintained a subscription to the local newspaper, *The Country Courier*. She requested, received, and read copies of the school system budgets and long range plans dating back five years prior to her appointment. Additionally, Burgess reviewed various policy and regulation manuals, reports of student test scores, job descriptions of central office administrators, and class size assignments by schools and grades. Burgess acknowledged that one of her goals during this initiation phase was to identify the funding sources for the county and school system and to try and "learn about the make up of the population . . . to answer the question: Who are the people who live in King William County?" (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

During the initiation phase of her tenure, Burgess set up meetings with school and governmental personnel, including the county administrator, members of the board of supervisors, the county attorney, and persons working in county agencies. Burgess indicated that the school board offered no assistance to her in setting up these meetings and that it was she who made the initial contacts and scheduled the meetings with all the people she listed.

In response to the question, "What role did the school board play during either the initiation or transition phases?", Burgess answered that the school board made the arrangements for her initial meeting with the members of the board of supervisors. This dinner meeting was a joint meeting between the school board members and the members of the board of supervisors. This meeting, she stated, provided an opportunity for her to meet directly with the board of supervisors which was the governmental body that controlled the county funding formula. She indicated that she was able to make a few remarks, and discuss her vision and goals for the King William school system. Additionally, the school board invited Burgess to attend the school board's April, May, and June meetings. One month following the announcement of her appointment, the school board held a reception for Burgess. A general announcement of the appointment was sent out to all school system employees, government personnel and community citizens.

When questioned as to what the school board's charge was to her, Burgess indicated that the school board gave her the directive to "formulate goals for the system as you see the needs and to establish a time line for meeting those goals." The directive was not specific and not contingent upon any existing or identified goals or school board plan (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). The directive was discussed with her prior to the announcement of her appointment. Burgess met with the school board as a body for the first time during the first week of her initiation phase. It was at this meeting that she discovered that the Six Year Plan required of all school systems by the Virginia Department of Education, had not been appropriately updated. At that point in time, the plan was incomplete and the deadline had passed for submitting the document to the Department of Education. Burgess described to the board the urgency of completing the plan and the negative ramifications for the school system if the plan was not completed and submitted in a timely way.

Following the meeting, the King William County school board sought to have Burgess released from her contract with the Hanover County school system effective May 1, 1993 so that she could begin formulating the Six Year Plan. Hanover County schools, however, refused to release Burgess from her contract indicating their need to insure that there be adequate transition time allowed in

Hanover County to fill Burgess's position as dean of instruction. At the request of the King William County school board, Burgess agreed to use her accumulated leave time to begin working with the King William County School System to develop the long range plan. The King William County school board agreed to pay Burgess a stipend for the days she worked on the King William County school system plan. Burgess began this project during the initiation phase of her tenure while still under contract to Hanover County.

During the initiation phase of her tenure Burgess developed the framework of the Six Year Plan and worked with King William County to facilitate the school system needs assessment necessary for the completion of the Six Year Plan:

There was no long range plan update. It was already overdue . . . so I had to throw myself into that process immediately . . . We did a lot of work that normally would have taken place over ten months or more, but we did it in two months (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess indicated that she began developing and updating the long range plan in June, one month before her actual start date. She stated that the geographical proximity of Hanover County to King William County enabled her to accept this responsibility prior to her actually assuming the superintendent position.

She was able to serve both counties “ in my dual roles of dean of instruction and superintendent-elect - beginning in one place and closing in the other” (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Although Burgess continued in a dual role for two months of her initiation phase, she engaged in several activities designed to prepare her for the transition phase of her tenure in King William County. During the initiation phase Burgess visited and toured the facilities of each of the three King William County schools several times. She reviewed the facilities study prepared by a consultant hired by the school board during the tenure of the previous superintendent. Burgess reviewed teacher applications and revised the system’s existing interview protocol process by including her office as part of the process used for hiring new personnel. She was briefed by Reeder in areas regarding personnel and financial matters, certain policies and regulations that effected operational procedures, school and central office personnel contracts, plans for the impending summer school program, and pending legal issues (Burgess, “Partial Listing of Activities Conducted Prior to July 1, 1993).

In response to the question, “ How did you identify the key players in King William County?”, Burgess stated that, except for the initial joint meeting of the school board and board of supervisors, set up by the King William County school

board, "it was really up to me to get to know who to contact" (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess reported that one of the things she asked the previous superintendent to assist her with was in determining who the key players were. She was particularly interested in identifying people who would be helpful in getting things done. Burgess reported that she had some knowledge of the key players in King William County, having lived so long in neighboring Hanover County, but was not sure that her perceptions were accurate (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess labeled governmental officers as obvious key players, especially in a small community.

You meet them by virtue of their positions. . . but then there is that person who is *unofficial* that is so crucial to know; sometimes its the spouse of someone who's in an official position; it could be a neighbor; or someone who becomes a key player because they live next door to and, have easy access to the BIG key player (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess stated that her early meetings with some of the key players were met with a certain bit of wariness. The climate of these meetings "generally revealed a we'll 'wait and see' attitude" (S. Burgess, personal communication,

March 22, 1995). Burgess felt that the key players in the community regarded her as the new person about whom they knew very little; but she sensed an attitude of hope and expectation that she would be able to “get the job done” based on their own individual perceptions of the scope of “the job.” She acknowledged that her identification of persons whom she considered as key players during the initiation phase proved to be fairly accurate once she assumed the position of superintendent (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess reported that the decision as to which civic or community social organizations to join was a fairly easy one to make. The limited number of choices of organizations in King William County provided her a comfortable way of not having to choose at all. She stated that she was, “after all, too old for the Junior Women’s Club and that the Ruitan Club was for men only” (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). The Ruitans invited Burgess’s husband to join the organization, but he respectfully declined the invitation. Burgess decided to maintain her membership in the Mechanicsville Rotary Club. Mechanicsville was in Hanover County, but the Mechanicsville Rotary Club also served King William County. Six members of the club were residents of King William County. Burgess noted that the Mechanicsville Rotary Club sponsored scholarships for students to attend summer programs and to participate in international travel. It also

sponsored a stipend program to award teachers who explore creative and innovative teaching strategies. The Mechanicsville Rotary Club always included the King William County schools in their sponsored activities (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess felt that her existing membership in the Mechanicsville Rotary Club provided her with ample ties to the King William County community.

Burgess reported that she continued to maintain her affiliation with the church she attended in Ashland, Virginia prior to becoming superintendent in King William County. There was no pressure from the community for her to change that membership and join a church in King William County. Burgess stated, "people tend to accept your religious decisions separate from the other activities you do as a superintendent" (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Vision and Plan

Burgess stated that her vision as superintendent for the King William County school system was very clear when she accepted the appointment.

As an educator you are always concerned with bringing about improvement. I want our students to be prepared when they leave school - measurably improved over when they came in. That is always my vision whenever I am in a role to make a difference (J. Gaggiano,

Richmond Times Dispatch, June 16, 1993, p. J1).

To this end, Burgess stated that after accepting the position of superintendent, she used the initiation phase of her tenure to do an assessment of the King William County school system. The assessment was also necessary to complete the Virginia State Department of Education Six Year Plan update. As a result of her collection of information and data, Burgess identified a number of federal and state regulations for which the school system was in non-compliance. Additionally, she targeted school policies that were in need of review, revision or rescission. These areas of urgency which she determined as having potentially damaging or negative consequences to the school system included the need to

- develop and implement (1) reimbursement policies and (2) purchasing procedures
- develop and implement procedures required to meet the compliance regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act regulations
- review and eliminate inequities in teacher stipends and coaching supplements
- revise policies which promoted the practice of withholding academic credit during suspensions
- institute continual maintenance procedures for buildings and grounds

- revise the evaluation instrument for the performance of teachers, superintendent, and other staff
- update the policies and regulations manual
- update job descriptions and the school system organizational chart (Burgess, "Partial listing of Activities Conducted Prior to July 1, 1993").

Burgess stated that her initial plan for the King William County school system evolved from the immediate need to update the required Virginia State Department of Education Six Year Plan and to address the issues of federal and state compliance practices and policies which were identified in the school system needs assessment results (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess acknowledged that her expanded plan for the school system was three fold: - the first being the priority of raising student achievement as measured by standardized test scores. Test scores reports reviewed during the initiation phase of her tenure indicated that a significant disparity existed between the achievement level of minority students, which in King William County, included a notable percentage of Native American students, and white students.

The second focus was on the repair, renovation, and maintenance of facilities. The school system's "beautiful new five year old school just had a roof fall

in,” she stated. Burgess indicated that the other two schools were also badly in need of repair, renovations, and maintenance work. She found these conditions to be true of other school facilities, including the shared school/community athletic center (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

The third focus of the plan that Burgess crafted to be implemented during her tenure as superintendent resulted from what she identified as the school system’s “most glaring weakness” and that was identified as “the total lack of use of instructional technology.” Burgess indicated that she could only find one indicator of computer technology throughout the total school program at any level. A *Writing-to-Read* software program was being used in one of the primary school classes. However, the program being used was a six year old version of the technology and the software had not been updated since its installation.

Burgess decided to include her vision and the three-fold plan for the King William County school system as a part of the updated Six Year Plan. During the final month of the initiation phase of her tenure, Burgess began meeting three days a week with the interim superintendent in order to gather data, review documents, and access other information necessary to update the required Six Year Plan. She reported that for twenty-two days of the initiation phase, she was paid a stipend to work on the updating of the Six Year Plan. During this time she developed a time

line and a process for completing the update of the Six Year Plan. Burgess viewed this initiative as critical to the progress of the school system. She attended the June 1993 meeting of the school system's Long Range Planning Council, which was composed of teachers, parents, community members and representatives from the county government.

Burgess stated that "the challenge for success there with that group, for the superintendent, or whoever leads that group, is [that] you really have to incorporate the views of the whole group into your views and vision" (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess used the long range planning council as a sounding board for her recommendations relevant to the updating of the Six Year Plan. Minutes from that meeting indicate that Burgess explained the urgency of completing the process and the magnitude of the expectancy. "We will have to complete in two months what most school [systems] take twelve to fifteen months to complete . . . I will want to involve as many people as possible in this . . . improvement process. . . ." (Long Range Planning Council Minutes, June 9, 1993).

Burgess restated that much of the activity she was involved in during the initiation phase resulted from her own initiatives. She reported that the school board was supportive of her action during this period, but provided little guidance.

The First One Hundred Days

Burgess reported that the challenge of her first one hundred days transition phase was to complete the required Six Year Plan update and to submit it to the Virginia State Department of Education. She acknowledged that she was uncomfortable with the quality of some of the data derived from the needs assessment process because of how “rushed” the collection process had been. However, her previous experience in Hanover County with developing and updating the Six Year Plans provided her with a “sound basis” for leading the process (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess set a target date of September 3rd to have the document ready for presentation to the public.

Burgess met with both the Long Range Planning Council and the school board to develop a mission statement and to set goals and priorities for the school system. These components were included in the plan update. She indicated to both bodies that the goals and priorities had to be consistent with the mission statement. Together they developed four priorities to be included in the Six Year Plan update: (1) improving test scores for all students; (2) adding additional and more diverse course offerings in general high school departmental curricula; (3) adding more advanced placement and other honors level courses to the high school curriculum; and (4) improving communications at all levels, particularly with parents

(S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess met with the Planning Council weekly throughout the month of August to work on the Six Year Plan (*The Friday Report*, August 6, 1993).

The Six Year Plan remained on the agenda for much of Burgess's first one hundred days transition phase. The Long Range Planning Council completed its work and, with the school board's approval, the draft of the Six Year Improvement Plan was made available for public review on September 1, 1993. Following the review period, a public hearing was scheduled on September 21, 1993 (*The Friday Report*, September 3, 1993). The Six Year Improvement Plan was ultimately finalized and submitted to the Virginia Department of Education (*The Friday Report*, October 8, 1993).

During the first one hundred days, concurrent with the updating of the Six Year Plan, Burgess began to address the other areas of concerns and priorities that she determined to be critical. She requested and received authorization from the school board to amend the approved 1993-94 school system budget. The 1993-94 school budget had been approved during the tenure of the interim superintendent prior to Burgess' appointment to the superintendent position, and without input from her.

Burgess amended the budget to include a technology network line item. She

designated this allocation to the purchasing of a computer laboratory for the upper elementary school program. Burgess justified the expenditure as a “significant strategy to assist students in passing the Literacy Passport Test” (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). The Literacy Passport Test is a standardized test developed by the Virginia Department of Education and is a requirement for all students in the state of Virginia who anticipate graduating with a standard or regular high school diploma. At the August principals’ meeting scheduled by Burgess, the three principals were strongly advised to “use their instructional allocations in such a way..... toward buying more computers and software” (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). The school board approved the amended budget.

Burgess reported that once she actually assumed the position of superintendent, she found the issue of communication more fragmented and invasive than she realized based on her interactions with people during the initiation phase of her tenure. She admitted her surprise. “Given the size of the school community, I would have anticipated just the opposite.....” (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess reported that over the years, as a central office administrator in Hanover County, she had established a set of strategies that she found effective in opening channels of communication. She

decided to use the first one hundred days transition phase to introduce her style of management. Burgess recognized the need to institute a more inclusive work atmosphere. In order to generate open dialogue among principals and other administrators, Burgess instituted one of the strategies that she found effective in Henrico County. She established a schedule of weekly meetings with principals and bi-weekly meetings with the central office staff.

During the transition period, Burgess reestablished the Superintendent's Advisory Committee and set up a regular meeting schedule for that committee. She described these meetings as a vehicle to emphasize three basic values required to run an effective educational program: good instruction, good organization, and efficiency (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess began publishing a weekly communique, which she labeled *The Friday Report*. *The Friday Report* served to keep the school board informed of activity and action taking place across the school system. Additionally, Burgess sent out a letter to all parents introducing herself and welcoming their families to a new school year (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess directed all principals to send welcoming letters to all returning teachers and staff and to send letters of thanks and well wishes to teachers and staff who would not be returning for the 1993-94 school year.

Early in the first one hundred days transition phase, Burgess held a school opening convocation for all school personnel. She used the convocation forum to present herself and to discuss the development and components of the Six Year Improvement Plan with the school community. A motivational keynote speaker was invited for the purpose of establishing the tone and climate for the new school year. Following the convocation, teachers were treated to lunch in one of the school cafeterias. Burgess indicated that this was the first time for such an event (*The Friday Report*, September, 1993).

Burgess moved very quickly in the first one hundred days transition phase to address the federal and state compliance issues and the issues relative to policies and procedures review and revision. A reading of the entries in *The Friday Report*, beginning with the July 16, 1993 report, indicated that Burgess informed the school board on a regular basis of updated policies and actions taken to insure that the school system met federal and state compliance regulations. Each entry referenced the actions as effecting "several or selected policies and regulations" (*The Friday Report*, July 16, August 13, August 27, September 17, September 24, October 1, 1993).

Burgess reported that she experienced some frustration after completing the needs assessment process and realizing that the King William County school

system needed to “play catch up” to other school systems, particularly those in the region. This realization was noted as being based on her perception that other school systems, particularly those in close proximity to King William County, were far more advanced or progressive than King William County in a number of areas (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

She realized the need to add an operational objective to the school system’s plan that would target the need to improve the quality and frequency of staff development initiatives (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). In an effort to emphasize this objective as being one of the system’s priority objectives, Burgess used one of the early scheduled monthly principals’ meetings to conduct an inservice on observing and evaluating teachers (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). She introduced the newly developed evaluation forms at this meeting. Principals were directed to develop a schedule of ongoing inservice activities for faculties at their individual schools. Burgess directed the principals to document their efforts in this area.

Burgess did not request an external financial audit during either the initiation or transition phases of her tenure. However, the audit report commissioned by the school board during her initiation phase was completed on July 20, 1993. The report was sent to her (*The Friday Report*, February 22, 1993). Burgess indicated

she was satisfied with the results. However, during the first 100 days transition phase, the Office of Indian Education, which audits approximately one-fourth of all federal grants annually, selected King William County schools for a September audit. Burgess met with the project director and the parent committee chairperson to review the grant requirements and to assemble the required documents requested prior to the audit. Burgess reported that she was satisfied with the results of that audit as well (*The Friday Report*, September 24, 1993).

As one way of addressing the issue of school facilities, renovations, improvements, and repairs, Burgess made arrangements for school principals, some teachers, and the maintenance supervisors to spend a day visiting certain schools in Hanover County. Burgess indicated that she selected schools that she knew to be of comparable age, size, style and construction that served similar populations as those in King William County. The purpose, she stated, was to increase the staff's awareness of "possibilities" (*The Friday Report*, October 1, 1993; S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess reported that there were no vacant administrative positions when she assumed the position of superintendent. In response to the question: "How much leverage did the school board agree to allow you in making personnel changes?", Burgess reported that when she was appointed superintendent, the

school board indicated to her that she could develop and implement a new organizational chart if she felt that was necessary in order to reach the school system's determined goals and priorities. Burgess stated, however, that she wanted to observe and learn the skills of staff members who were assigned to front line positions before making any personnel changes. The central office and administrative staff were composed of four people - the director of instruction, the director of personnel, director of special services, associate director of personnel and instruction - and three principals. Consequently, Burgess did not feel that it was necessary to make any major, sweeping changes during the first one hundred days transition phase. She noted for the record,

After I had been here for a year and had observed the workloads of the people in [this] office, I did redistribute some responsibilities among the four [administrators]..... but I didn't do that initially because I didn't know the individuals' strengths, weaknesses or..... understand clearly what their assignments entailed (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Burgess acknowledged that had she chosen to come into the position and make immediate changes, the board had agreed to support any plan she submitted.

During the first month of the one hundred days transition phase, Burgess

made the decision to rotate the two elementary school principals. This decision was based on the recommendation of the interim superintendent. Burgess would not discuss the reasons for the reassignments, citing the Code of Virginia as prohibiting the discussion of personnel decisions in open forum (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). However, she indicated that the decision created some unrest and angry reactions within the community. Several delegations attended the August 17, 1993 school board meeting to address the reassignment of principals. Mrs. Virginia Gaines, president of the King William County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), asked the school board to provide a reason for the reassignment of the principal at Acquiton Elementary School. School board chairman Helen Williams responded, “. . . to put [the] right people in [the] right places with the right skills” (School Board Minutes, August 17, 1993). Burgess was contacted by the local newspaper and questioned about the change in the principals’ assignments. She explained that King William County was undergoing a period of growth and construction. The school system was transitioning to the middle school concept and was faced with the possibility of opening another elementary school. Because of this, she stated to the reporter, “it would be beneficial for the school to have a cadre of administrators with experience at various school levels (*The Country Courier*,

August 16, 1993). Burgess described the actual relocation of the two principals as going “smoothly” (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). She indicated that she worked closely with the two principals to facilitate the move.

Burgess described her first one hundred days transition phase as going well, marked by routine matters of beginning a new school year. She felt that it was very helpful that she was able to come into the school system and “work” before actually assuming the superintendent position. She added, though, that the comfortability level probably would not be the same if the “sitting” superintendent were still physically on site.

I probably would feel differently if I was appointed and the previous superintendent was still there. I think it would be a little awkward unless the superintendent invited me to come which typically wouldn't happen . . . participating in school and school board events before becoming official gives you a real edge, I think (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

In response to the question, “Did your first one hundred days transition phase change your vision for the King William County school system?”, Burgess stated that, “[her] plans had to be adjusted based on learning of the status of the Six Year Plan. That was a major undertaking and a surprise!” . . . “but, basically my vision

remained intact” (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995). Burgess stated that the positive reputation of the school system’s infrastructure and overall school programs proved to be fairly accurate. But there were some areas that she felt had been significantly overstated. She referenced again the need to improve the technological operations of the school system. Burgess stated that she felt her activities during both the initiation and transition phases were appropriate and effective and helped make her overall transition into the superintendency a fairly easy accomplishment (S. Burgess, personal communication, March 22, 1995).

Analysis

Dr. Burgess had a relatively easy transition into the superintendency. She came into the position with full support of the school board. Her initiation phase of three months provided an adequate amount of lead time for preparing to assume the actual superintendency. She was able to facilitate this for three reasons: (1) the proximity of King William County, the new employer, to Hanover County, the previous employer; (2) a cordial and cooperative relationship with the interim superintendent; and (3) her professional relationship and rapport with the Hanover school system staff.

Konnert and Augenstein (1990) argue that there is an informal and formal process that prepares and initiates an individual into a superintendency. These processes occur prior to and after assumption to the position. The new superintendent internalizes values and norms and assumes the identity of the new role. Burgess actually began this internalization process early in her career. She knew that her ultimate career goal was to become a superintendent. Therefore, she began to learn and acquire the abilities, values, and work skills needed to obtain a position.

Burgess assumed a "wait and see" attitude with regard to evaluating the staff and initiating strategic changes. Although she knew that the board would have supported any changes she proposed, Burgess thought it best to take the necessary time to observe and assess before making any sweeping changes or decisions. This approach has been supported in the literature. Dunnerstick (1992) has suggested that new superintendents should go into the job with few fundamentals. They should take time to know the board and the power base as well as begin to build and strengthen a leadership team. Papallo (1990) supports this approach as well. A new superintendent should always take time to get a feel for the job and the needs of the school system. Burgess used much of the transition phase of her tenure learning as much as she could about King William

County; not just the school system, but, the infrastructure, the key players and the mores of the people and the community.

One of the major issues Burgess addressed during the transition phase of her tenure involved the reassignment of administrative personnel. This decision was not well received among some members of the community. The issue was controversial enough to be covered by the press. Consistent with Vann's (1990) notion that a new superintendent must earn the support of principals, Burgess met and worked with both principals to ease the transition. Vann points out that it is the responsibility of the new superintendent to create a climate that allows for strong, positive communication. Burgess managed effectively what could have been an explosive situation by listening and paving the way for the leadership to change at the schools. Being in a small system allowed Burgess an opportunity to cement a good relationship with the board, principals, teachers, and staff.

Burgess worked three days a week in the new superintendency during the last month of her initiation phase. During this time she continued to meet her contractual obligations to the Hanover County school board, but, she also attended board meetings and other functions and activities that helped familiarized her with the King William County school system. Burgess felt comfortable working with the interim superintendent during the initiation phase. The transition phase was easy

for Burgess because she completed a needs assessment and established a framework for a plan of action during the transition phase which provided an immediate focus. She had the opportunity to develop some of her ideas before actually assuming the post. She was able to implement changes and fully entrench herself in her new role as superintendent of King William County Public Schools.

CHAPTER 2: DR. THOMAS H. GAUL

Prevailing Climate of Dinwiddie County

Dinwiddie County, Virginia is located in the south central area of the state, southwest of Petersburg. The public school system has seven schools, one high school, one middle school and five elementary schools. There are less than three thousand children enrolled in the public schools of Dinwiddie County.

Dr. Thomas H. Gaul succeeded Dr. Richard L. Vaughn as superintendent of Dinwiddie County Public Schools. Dr. Vaughn served as superintendent of Dinwiddie County Public Schools for sixteen years. At the time of his retirement, the school system was under fire from several fronts. In April 1992, a controversy erupted over the proposed demotion of R. Beasley Jones, principal of Dinwiddie High School. Jones had been principal for eighteen years and faced being demoted to a teaching position. Jones received a letter from superintendent Vaughn citing the reason for the demotion and salary cut as being Jones' lack of leadership and his ineffective supervision of school employees. Jones told the board that he did not want to leave his position and was surprised at the unjustified accusations levied against him (K. Krishnamurthy, *The Progress Index*, April 8, 1992). He accepted the school board's offer of the teaching position, but availed himself of his right to an administrative hearing after receiving the letter from

Superintendent Vaughn.

As a result of the action against Jones, members of faculty and staff across the school system asked to meet with the superintendent, the board members, and other school officials. Faculty and staff were supportive of Jones because many felt that their own jobs hung in the balance since they, like Jones, believed the action to be unfounded. They composed a letter of protest to Vaughn which stated that they felt "intimidated" by the action directed towards Jones. The overwhelming majority, 88%, felt that if the recommendation went through, none of their jobs would be secure (K. Krishnamurthy, *The Progress Index*, April 8, 1992). The eventual resolution to this situation was the "promotion" of Mr. Jones to the central office.

Closely following the Jones controversy was the board's dismissal of Janice Cawthorn, principal of Southside Elementary School. At the June 24, 1992 School Board meeting, Superintendent Vaughn indicated that Cawthorn was being dismissed because of "poor interpersonal and public relations skills." Further, Vaughn charged that Cawthorn did not enforce the school dress code and had problems with the teacher evaluation process. On a vote of 3-1, the board voted not to renew Cawthorn's contract (J. Boyle, *The Progress Index*, July 15 1992).

Cawthorn's dismissal angered many Dinwiddie County residents and renewed criticism of Superintendent Vaughn. Earl Weaver, president of the

Dinwiddie County Civic League, summed up the situation at the July 14, 1992 meeting of the school board: "Over the past five months I have watched the school board undermine the education system in our county by allowing the superintendent, Dr. Richard Vaughn, to have his way, whether it is right or wrong" (J. Boyle, *The Progress Index*, July 15, 1992). Weaver then called for Vaughn's immediate dismissal. Reverend Peter Jeffrey, pastor of First Baptist Church, presented a petition signed by eighty-nine county residents calling for Cawthorn to be reinstated as principal. He stated that "we are determined that this board reverse itself on this matter, and at the very least gives another public hearing" (J. Boyle, *The Progress Index*, July 15, 1992).

At the time of Cawthorn's dismissal, the school board had recently installed as the new chairman of the board, Gregory Davis. A new vice chairman, Harold Walker, was installed shortly afterwards and Curtis Barnes also joined the board as a new member. Thus, as Vaughn continued to be under fire, the school board make-up was undergoing a significant change in membership. The new board chairman announced that "the board would not be pressured, threatened, or harassed into making a decision." Reverend Jeffrey responded by saying that the citizens were not issuing threats, but indicated to the board that his group intended to employ a telephone campaign among other strategies to ensure that Cawthorn

be reinstated” (J. Boyle, *The Progress Index*, July 15, 1992).

Jeffrey’s committee met with Vaughn, assistant superintendent Dr. Nancy Vance and other school officials on July 28th to ask for Cawthorn’s reinstatement. Vaughn indicated that he would not respond to their request. He told the committee that they “had to have faith that school administrators and the school board had made the right decision in the Cawthorn matter.” Consequently, the committee vowed to follow through on the telephone campaign which would involve around-the-clock protest calls to administrative personnel and board members (J. Boyle, *The Progress Index*, July 29, 1992).

Board chairman Davis reported that the school board had conducted a thorough investigation and that due process had been followed in the recommended dismissal of Cawthorn. Virginia law does not allow or require board members or other school officials to comment on the specifics of personnel matters. Reverend Jeffrey responded that school officials should be able to defend the steps of the process leading up to an employee being dismissed without discussing the contents of a personnel file. He felt that Vaughn and others were not willing to be forthcoming regarding their roles in the process itself. Therefore, Jeffrey indicated that “they’re in for a major fight” (J. Boyle, *The Progress Index*, July 29, 1992).

The controversy over the various personnel decisions and the shifts in the

school board membership created a difficult climate in Dinwiddie County. The school system was overwhelmed with the anger and protestations of parents, community residents, faculty and staff triggered by the sense of school administrators and board members having made what were viewed as inappropriate decisions. Cawthorn was not reinstated as principal. Criticism of Vaughn and his policies continued into the new school year (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

At the November 10, 1992 school board meeting, Vaughn announced that he would retire, effective at the end of the 1992-1993 school year (School Board Minutes, November 10, 1993). The actual notification of Vaughn's decision to retire was made known in a September 30, 1992 letter to school board chairman Davis. Vaughn indicated that the time was right for a change and that the school system needed someone new to follow through on the building facilities plan and various curriculum projects. He stated in the letter that the previous personnel controversies did not factor into his decision (J. Boyle, *The Progress Index*, November 11, 1992). Although Vaughn ultimately choose to retire from the superintendent's position, his resignation was, in part, a decision made under duress and with some pressure from both the board and the community (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). The school board proceeded to

conduct a search for a new superintendent.

The New Superintendent

Thomas H. Gaul was appointed superintendent of Dinwiddie County Public Schools effective July 1, 1993. His prior experiences, spanning nearly twenty-five years in public education, included serving as an associate superintendent, principal of two high schools, assistant principal and teacher in the Prince William, Virginia county schools system. He was a graduate of Millersville State College with a bachelors degree in secondary education. He had two masters degrees, both from the University of Delaware. His doctorate in educational administration and supervision was from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech).

As an educator Gaul brought to the table a variety of experiences. As an associate superintendent in Prince William County, he maintained accountability for instructional improvement among twenty-one schools. He coordinated several alternative education programs for students at risk of failing in school. As a principal, Gaul established on-site alternative classes for over-aged and below grade level students. His tasks included the overall administration, supervision and operation of the student services division of the relatively large Prince William

County school system.

Gaul had an active role in developing and initiating articulation programs; designing and developing effective teacher evaluation systems; administering employee grievance procedures; and implementing principles of a school-based management model. Gaul was instrumental in introducing higher technical applications to schools and establishing extensive and expansive business partnerships with local businesses.

In response to the question “What prompted your interest in the Dinwiddie Public Schools Superintendency?”, Dr. Gaul indicated that he actually knew very little about Dinwiddie County prior to applying for the superintendency. He wasn’t “even sure where Southside Virginia was located” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). He stated that he was finishing his Ed.D. degree requirements at Virginia Tech and was told by his advisor that there were several superintendent positions open around the state. He was advised to apply for two or three of the positions of which Dinwiddie County was one. He submitted a letter of application with just a minimum level of interest in the position. Gaul was subsequently interviewed in Dinwiddie and offered the position. At the time he applied, Gaul was serving as an associate superintendent in Prince William County, Virginia and had no intention of looking for any other position.

Gaul stated that his wife was the primary and only family he considered in making the decision to apply for the position in Dinwiddie County. He acknowledged that he and his wife shared some concern relative to his readiness to assume such a challenging position in part because of the stress he was experiencing as a result of his efforts to complete his dissertation, and because of the prevailing climate in Dinwiddie County. However, Gaul indicated that when they were initially approached by his doctoral advisor, his wife's position on the career move was very positive and supportive. Gaul considered himself and his wife to be very mobile and boasted that they had always been a couple that was willing "to take chances" on new initiatives (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). Another reservation that they both shared was reflective of the transition from the very urban Northern Virginia area with all of its cultural and shopping accesses to a small rural county. The purchase of a lake side home, however, with its tranquil environment, and the fact that the county is "only" two hours from Northern Virginia, helped to make the logistical move an easier one for Mrs. Gaul. Mrs. Gaul taught classes at night at an area community college (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Gaul stated that the initiation phase of his tenure as he prepared to assume the superintendency in Dinwiddie County and simultaneously leave the associate

superintendent position in Prince William County was very difficult. He found that often he was working 90 hours a week between the demands of the two positions and the completion of his dissertation work required for the doctoral degree. Having been a principal for 12 years in Prince William County and then serving as an area or a “mini superintendent” working directly with twenty one schools, Gaul admitted that he had very much enjoyed the positions of mid-management. As he pushed to complete the writing of his dissertation, he found himself fulfilling less and less of the job expectancies of the associate superintendent position. He stated that his Prince William County colleagues, however, were appreciative of his situation, tolerant of his decreasing visibility and proved to be very supportive of his efforts to meet all the demands on his energies and time (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

The Prince William County School Board choose to involve him in the process it established to select the new associate superintendent. He had an opportunity to participate in interviewing and selecting his replacement. Gaul stated that he made sure he solidified his Prince William County network before leaving the position as he felt rooted in Prince William County. “Truth is,” he declared, “I haven’t left Prince William, yet; part of me is still there” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

The Dinwiddie County Virginia School Board which consisted of five appointed members conducted a national search to fill the superintendent position. The board reviewed credentials of fifty-seven applicants whom they considered serious candidates. The school board pared the pool to ten, five, and then three candidates. The board minutes state that the school board met in a special session on February 26, 1993 to discuss one personnel matter - the appointment of a school superintendent (School Board Minutes, February 23, 1993). The board by-laws mandated that an appointment be made by March 1, 1993. Following an executive session, the board reconvened in open session and announced the appointment of Thomas H. Gaul as the new Dinwiddie County school superintendent. The vote was unanimous (Board Minutes, February 26, 1993). Gaul stated in the interview that the vote was a true vote and not just an affirmation vote for "public appearance sake" (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). He was given a four year plus one month contract with a June 1st effective date. By setting a June 1st start date, the board built in a one month period during which both Gaul and Vaughn were under contract for the final month of Vaughn's tenure as superintendent.

Establishing A Climate

Gaul officially assumed the position of superintendent on June 1st. This resulted in a one month overlap in his one hundred days transition phase in which

the county school system was actually served by two superintendents. The outgoing superintendent was physically on site during the first thirty days of Gaul's first one hundred days transition phase.

Gaul described his frustrations with this arrangement in response to the question: "Was the outgoing superintendent available to assist you during the transition?" Gaul reported that the availability of the outgoing superintendent was desirable to some minimum extent - "in some fairly superficial ways" (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). However, he acknowledged that "the mandate for change from the board and the community was so great that it was almost cumbersome for me to be working out of the same office...having to acknowledged his seniority and all the graciousness that goes with that and trying to really get started on the new agenda" (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Gaul stated that the first few weeks of his initiation phase were really burdensome, primarily because of the presence of the "sitting superintendent." The school board was insistent that Gaul be included in the budget process which actually began prior to his appointment and which was at a midway stage at the time of his appointment. The process was being led by the sitting superintendent and driven by the "old way of doing business" (T. Gaul, personal communication,

February 21, 1995).

I had actually started reviewing materials and ‘working’ in April as soon as my appointment was announced. . . so I was really starting to find new directions before I ever even took the job and it was frustrating to watch [them] work through the old way and wrap up the old way of doing business while I was very much fascinated in heading out in new directions” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Additionally, the school board asked Gaul to sit in on disciplinary cases that were under review during his initiation phase. He was asked by the school board members to state his opinion on how each case should be handled. Gaul reported that this was a very frustrating part of the initiation phase and created stress for both him and Vaughn.

Gaul reported that he was given an emphatic mandate by the school board to change the direction of the school system for the purpose of making it “the best school system East of the Mississippi” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). He noted that the board’s position was clearly stated and that the board members appeared unanimous in their support of him. This support, he felt, translated into allowing him to institute any changes in personnel, programs,

building renovations and repair that he felt were necessary to achieve the mandate. Although there was no discussion of his being able to bring with him any of “his own people” to positions that either already existed or that might be created in the school system organization, the board gave Gaul “carte blanc latitude in deciding who should stay, who should go, how to reorganize and who should be a part of the team” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Gaul stated that his expectations relative to the degree of autonomy he would be allowed were established by him during the initial superintendent search interviews. During his interview with the board, he indicated that he expected to be given the freedom to develop and implement strategies designed to address the mandate for change as directed by the school board.

During the interview process, Gaul described his position to the school board: “I described myself in the interview as being an artist . . . I needed my easel, and my paints . . . [they] may not necessarily always understand the incremental steps - my sketches - but when we got finished, [they] would be happy and pleased” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Gaul felt that of the five member school board, there were no members who served under the previous administration who proved to be antagonistic or adversarial to him or the mandate for change. The school board affirmed their

confidence in Gaul initially by granting him relative administrative autonomy.

Gaul stated that the school board held a reception for him following the announcement of his appointment. The guest list included school personnel and some “select” members of the community. He felt that the school board’s level of confidence in having selected the “right” person was evidenced in that it agreed readily to including him in key discussions during the initiation phase of his tenure. He felt that they listened to his vision and plans and then stepped back to let him administer the school district. Gaul reported that in the previous administration it appeared that the roles between the school board and the superintendent were not clearly defined or separated. He reported that it seemed to him that the school board in the previous administration frequently assumed administrative responsibilities and attempted to influence operational practices and procedures. Gaul reported that he continuously defined his expectations and assumptions for his relationship with the school board. He added, though, that he viewed the initiation phase of his superintendency as the opportune time to solidify his relationship with the two key entities that he perceived as being essential to an effective superintendency: his relationship with the school board and his relationship with the community (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

A school district needs assessment was completed by the Superintendent

Search Team as a part of the superintendent search process. This assessment provided Gaul with what he described as being critical information relative to strained community and school board relations. The tenuousness of the relationship was ascribed to being sparked by community dissatisfaction with the outgoing superintendent (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). Gaul reported that the Superintendent Search Team completed a needs assessment as a part of its search process to determine the type of personality desirable in the new superintendent. The team compiled a list of key community people developed from input given by school personnel. Gaul explained that he used that list, expanded it, and determined from that list the groups of people and individuals with whom he should meet.

Specifically, Gaul stated that he met with Ruitan Club members, school board members, faculty and parent groups, black and white church groups, and the Civic League, a primarily African American group whose goals and mission paralleled those of the NAACP. Gaul pointed out that he learned who the key players were, both formally and informally by observing, listening and analyzing the interactions, the articulated and body languages, the perceptions, and the issues raised as each faction responded to certain questions or described certain events or activities associated with the school system or the county politics during his various meetings

with them.

These meetings took place primarily during the months of April and May, the first two months of the initiation phase, but were continued into the first one hundred days transition phase through the summer months of July and August (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). Gaul felt confident that these meetings helped him to understand the agendas of the various factions of the community.

Gaul reported emphatically that identifying and connecting with key players in the community was a factor to be addressed during the initiation phase of the new superintendency. When questioned as to whether the key players provided a support system for him after he assumed the position of superintendent, Gaul responded that “interestingly enough, the key players have tended to be both positively and negatively supportive depending on [the] stance I take on their agendas” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). He reported that his observations seemed to support a theory he had from a historical perspective and that is that the community factions that felt the most disenfranchised from the school system in Dinwiddie County seemed to be the African American community and “outsiders” - those not county born and raised. These factions had, in the past, tried to use intimidation strategies and threats to get the kind of results they sought.

He indicated that similar behaviors, initially, were employed with him. He admitted surprise at finding a significant divisiveness in the community that seemed to break out across racial lines. "My struggle with that," Gaul stated, "particularly with the black people in the county, was to develop strategies that would undo years of distrust and disillusionment among that segment of the populace - strategies that would help merge our agendas with common, reconciled, and positive goals" (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Meeting with various constituents helped Gaul to understand that the "speed of implementation" was critical to his "establishing credibility and bringing a sense of cohesiveness to his plans to change the school system's direction". He realized that there was an urgency to identify operational objectives and strategies and to actualize them in a five year strategic plan that reflected a commitment to quality and equitable education for all Dinwiddie County students. He had to move quickly or run the risk of having his administration perceived as conducting business as usual (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Gaul indicated that he did not join any organization or civic group during either the initiation or transition phase. He admitted that he did anticipate doing so given the limited choices in Dinwiddie County. He stated that he was faced with having to choose between either all white groups (i.e., Ruitans) or all black social

and church groups. He stated that he had been a member of the Rotary Club in both Highland Springs and Prince William, Virginia, but that the Petersburg, Virginia Chapter Rotary Club was the closest chapter to Dinwiddie County and he anticipated that his participation in that chapter could create problems for him because of the territorialism of the two communities - Petersburg and Dinwiddie County.

Gaul reported that he had been pursued by various groups to accept offers of membership, but he put them off by falling back on the tightness of his schedule and the number of evening job related meetings he was committed to attend. He also used the fact that he was Presbyterian and his wife Jewish, as a reason for not establishing himself with any church in the community. He said that not joining a church had been somewhat advantageous since the community was so divided.

...to sit in the middle is most advantageous rather than having to justify my membership in an all white Methodist church ...quite frankly, it surprised me that it [Southside Virginia] really hadn't changed very much [over the years]. It's still very territorial. Its a real challenge...

(T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Vision and Plan

Gaul stated that he wanted to change the direction of the school system, particularly the “victim” mentality that appeared to be pervasive throughout the system. He stated that the system was poorly organized and managed, and that morale amongst employees was low. Thus, his first task was to create a strategic plan that would put pride back into the system. The plan Gaul developed outlined his vision for the district. He pointed out that the Dinwiddie Public School System was “not the worst school system East of the Mississippi, but that his vision was to make it the best system East of the Mississippi” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Gaul also indicated that he envisioned surrounding himself with people who shared his vision and optimism relative to the development and enhancement of the school system. Specifically, he wanted the district to head in a new direction “without having to fight windmills” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Gaul stated that, during the initiation phase of his superintendency, the board asked him to participate in several school system activities which included the development of the annual school budget. During this phase, he drove down to Dinwiddie County at nights and on weekends in order to begin laying the foundation

for his superintendency. He began to visit school facilities and review various school system documents, reports, and personnel files. Following conversations with various staff members, teachers, and citizens, Gaul reported that it was apparent to him that the citizenry and school personnel viewed the school system as “a victim” and considered it to be mis-run, poorly organized, and top heavy with administration (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). Further, as a result of his visits, he found several buildings in need of significant structural and interior repairs. Gaul indicated that he gained a sense that the academic programs had deteriorated beyond effectiveness and that “in general, on a scale of one to ten... with one being the low end, the morale sampling of the citizens and the staff regarding the system . . . ranked at about a two” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). Gaul noted that during the initiation phase, throughout the months of February to June, he came down and met with groups of people. These groups included the Ruitan Club, the Board of Supervisors, school board members, faculty groups, and parent groups. He also met with the County Civic League, whose membership was primarily African - American. This process, Gaul reported, helped him to identify key players in the community.

Using the data collected from his initiation phase activities, Gaul developed a strategic plan for fiscal years 1994-1999. The stated purpose of the long range

plan set the tone for change, established both long range goals and operational objectives, and provided basic guidance and direction to all budgetary units within the school division. The plan called for a collaborative planning process among the schools and office support departments in order to develop specific operational plans for implementing the school system's long range plan.

The plan was developed over the four month initiation phase which began immediately following the announcement of Gaul's appointment. The plan's vision and mission statements grew out of meetings with school board members, employees, and a mixture of citizens to determine the direction and focus for the school division. Each component of the long range plan was developed with input from teachers, administrators, and parents. Advisory groups helped to identify indicators of progress and to describe the changes needed to accomplish the division's mission. Selected principals reviewed and reacted to the plan in its draft form. The plan included the system's needs assessment report which among other things, provided an analysis of salaries, pupil/teacher ratio, use of and availability of facility space, and community involvement, and indicators of how Dinwiddie Public School System compared with other districts of similar size and demographics and to state and national norms.

The long range plan contained six elements, each having a specific design

and purpose. These elements were a vision statement, mission statement, common curriculum of learning goals, strategies, and performance standards.

1. **Vision statement:** The vision statement for the school system described what the ideal was for the division and set a tone for individual units within the school system.
2. **Mission statement:** The mission statement provided general information about how the school system expected to arrive at its mission. It defined the basic direction of the school system and established a basis for determining how the school system uses its resources.
3. **Curriculum Learning:** The curriculum of learning described the expected outcomes for students required for graduation from the Dinwiddie County Public Schools. It identified the skills and course content students would be expected to either master or demonstrate proficiency prior to exiting the school system. The curriculum of learning was designed to drive decisions relevant to student outcomes the way resources would be used, programs developed, and the development of the organizational structure of the school system's site administration and operations.
4. **Goals:** The goals statement described the desired outcomes which were, in part, derived from the needs assessment process which was

conducted. The goals reflected elements of the school system's vision.

5. **Strategies:** The strategies established the general approaches to be followed in achieving the mission and goals. Strategies reflected the school system's commitment to deploying resources to achieve the school system's mission and goals.
6. **Performance Standards:** Criteria, indicators, and desired outcomes were developed to assess and measure progress and successful implementation of the school system's long range plan. These standards provided the control system to measure, evaluate, and correct performance and progress towards the successful accomplishment of the long range plan.(Dinwiddie County Public Schools, ***Strategic Plan***, Fiscal Years 1994-1999).

Gaul's plan called for a reorganization of the existing staff as well as redefining and phasing out certain positions. This five-year strategic plan was developed by Gaul during the initiation phase and was ready for implementation after the first thirty days of the one hundred days transition phase of his superintendency. As a result of the school board's directives engaging him in school system activities during the initiation phase, Gaul used the opportunity to interject his ideology and his style whenever possible, and set the tone of the

climate for his superintendency, but he conceded that it was difficult “introducing the new direction on top of the old ways” (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

The First One Hundred Days

Gaul reported that, with the onset of his first one hundred days, he began immediately implementing the actions dictated by the five year strategic plan that he developed during the initiation stage.

The issue of the system being top heavy with administrators proved to be more of a perception than reality. A study of the allocation ratio used by the Virginia State Department of Education showed that the number of administrators in Dinwiddie County was fairly consistent with most small districts of similar size (*Virginia Department of Education Directory of School Boards*). In order to dispel the community’s perceptions and to better utilize the existing personnel, Gaul instituted a plan that decentralized many of the central office services. The first step in actualizing the plan called for literally moving the psychologist and social worker, and their support staffs, out of the central office and into offices located at school sites (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). Other actions taken were designed to downsize positions that were determined by the needs

assessment to be non-essential. The position of vocational director fell into that category. Because Dinwiddie County was served by a very comprehensive regional vocational center, the need for a vocational education director in a system the size of Dinwiddie County was negligible. Gaul changed the director's position to that of high school teacher and paid the teacher a supplement to essentially administer the required state reports and monitor the expenditure of federal and state monies such as the Carl Perkins Vocational Act allocations.

Moreover, Gaul eliminated the separate positions of associate superintendent, personnel director, and several other positions which had little viability other than the responsibility to fill out reports and complete "state paperwork" (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). Jobs were grouped together using a combination of expectancies and outcomes and assigned as multiple responsibilities to a fewer number of administrators. The resultant organizational chart reflected a plan more consistent with the actual needs of the school system.

Gaul estimated that the cuts in administrative positions amounted to a savings of nearly three percent of the total central office administrative budget. His strategic plan moved the school system administration infrastructure away from traditional administrative positions and established teams of people focused to work

as a unit to resolve problems and address issues to which the school system had to respond or react.

Gaul cited as a coup the adoption of a referendum approved during the transition phase by the Dinwiddie County board of supervisors which funded a \$22 million capital improvement plan. The main thrust of the plan was intended to provide funding for the structural needs at all seven school sites (M. Grossman, *The Progress Index*, July 12, 1993). The approval of the funding resolution provided a spring board for expedient implementation of Gaul's five year plan relative to the capital improvement of school facilities and helped to establish his credibility in a positive light with some parents (J. Peyton, *The Progress Index*, July 12, 1993).

The scheduled renovational work was projected to significantly effect students and families at all school sites as a result of the moving and shifting of students from one site to another. A three year administrative position was created to handle student assignments; personnel; certification and licensure issues; and public relations relative to the period of construction and renovations. Again, parents responded positively to the initiatives to validate their input and to involve them in the change process (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Gaul indicated that he addressed head-on the issue of racial inequity in hiring practices. He discussed the concerns and the data candidly with building administrators, and the administrator who was directly responsible for the hiring and assignment of teachers. Gaul moved a veteran white principal who he determined to be ineffective at a particular school site to a parallel position and he promoted to a principalship a seasoned, experienced African American, whom he had observed as being very effective in the position of assistant administrator. Other personnel changes made at both the school and central office sites were specifically calculated to increase competency and effective leadership at the respective sites and to address specific concerns brought out in discussions with various community groups. This process was easy to manage because contracts in Dinwiddie County were not issued until July of each year in contrast to late spring, as occurred in many school districts. Gaul stated that contracts in all of his previous experiences were generally issued during the months of April through June - prior to the end of the fiscal year (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

When questioned as to whether an external audit was requested either prior to or during the first one hundred days transition period, Gaul indicated that an external audit had been completed as a part of the needs assessment directed by the school board which had been completed in the previous spring of 1993. He saw

no need to request an additional audit. However, within forty days of the transition phase, he submitted to the board a number of recommended amendments to the budget that was prepared before he officially assumed the position of superintendent. The board approved the amendments.

When asked the question "What do you wish you had known prior to accepting this superintendency?" Gaul reported that while he was forced to stumble into the right direction, "the new guy needs to know the direction in which he plans to move before he actually takes over. He indicated that he felt strongly that a new superintendent needs to "have a plan in place on the first official day of assuming control. Some decisions have been made already." He cited as an example, the budget.

I refuse to work in someone else's budget. You find yourself trying to work through the transition period, establishing your goals, and your vision using someone else's budget . . . it takes you a year to finish off the other person's budget. So I think when you report the first day - that first of the one hundred days - you need to alter that budget" (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Gaul reported that during the first thirty-five days of the transition phase he reviewed contracts that were out on bid, health care plans and any other

transactions effecting the school district budget. He then recommended adjustments whenever he felt adjustments needed to occur. Gaul acknowledged that he had more control of the budget than most people normally have during a transition phase. He felt that most new superintendents have to live with what they get (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). To have had a strong strategic plan already established before taking office was useful, he stated. The plan helped to justify the request for budget changes.

Gaul also indicated that it was helpful that he had such an extended initiation phase. He was able to sit through the budget process as well as observe the dynamics of the school system personnel. As a result of his observations, he was able to make personnel changes the week he came on board. "New superintendents can make a mistake if they take the first one hundred days to build a strategic plan and bring in experts and do a lot of auditing. I think you almost need to do that before you take over" (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995). He indicated that he thought the initiation phase was almost more critical than the transition phase. In his view, the initiation phase has a tremendous impact on the first two years of the superintendency.

Gaul reported that his vision for the Dinwiddie County School District was not altered at all after the transition phase. He found no surprises nor did any hidden

agendas surface. The Strategic Plan which reflected input from all sectors of the community continued to have full support from the school board as did the changes he implemented in the areas of budgetary and organizational structure (T. Gaul, personal communication, February 21, 1995).

Analysis

Despite the controversy surrounding the resignation of the outgoing superintendent, Dr. Gaul's initiation and transition into the superintendency appeared to have been smooth ones. He came into the position with unanimous board approval and support and with a clear mandate for change. He was able to network with key players in the community for several months during the initiation phase. He was also able to come on board early and participate in several district activities which made the transition easier.

According to Grohe (1983), being explicit and forthright in one's approach to the superintendency during the interview stage is a workable method that lessens the possibility of misunderstanding between a new superintendent and the school board. She argued that the interview should be the basis for forging a partnership with the board, a process that included mutual candor.

Gaul established certain parameters during the interview stage. He asked

for and was given a certain latitude to do what was necessary to move the district forward. Thus, he had the support from the board to make significant changes in the structure of the system. He was able to reorganize, decentralize, and downsize as he deemed appropriate.

Papallo (1990) argued that if a new superintendent is to be successful, he or she must "know all the right moves" (p.17). What a new superintendent does in the first few weeks on the job is critical to cementing a good working relationship with the board. Gaul had been able to establish and maintain such a relationship.

Gaul's initiation phase began with the announcement of his appointment. His transition phase, however, began during the last month of the outgoing superintendent's tenure. During this one month overlap, the school system was actually served by two superintendents. Gaul felt uncomfortable and awkward working alongside the former superintendent under a climate of the old meeting the new. While he was phasing in, he had to work with staff who were used to working under a leadership style significantly different from his. Gaul envisioned new and exciting directions and was anxious to begin the actualization of his vision. Consequently, the aspect of the initiation, which began at the index of his appointment and the first thirty days of his transition phase was cumbersome.

The transition phase was generally perceived by Gaul to be very effective

because he was able to introduce and implement his plan for the school system almost immediately. The school system climate was primed for new leadership and new direction. Gaul met little resistance to implementing changes. He was able to become fully entrenched in his new role as superintendent of Dinwiddie County Public Schools relatively quickly.

CHAPTER 3: MRS. JOYCE TRUMP

Prevailing Climate of Suffolk City School System

Suffolk, Virginia is located in the southeastern area of the state on the perimeter of the Tidewater region. Suffolk is Virginia's largest city in land mass. The public school system has fifteen schools, two high schools, three middle schools, and ten elementary schools. The student population is 10,050.

Mrs. Joyce Trump succeeded Dr. Beverly Cox as superintendent of Suffolk City Schools. Cox resigned for reasons of failing health after having served three years as superintendent. At the time of his resignation, Cox had completed three and one-half years of a four year contract. Cox's tenure was preceded by a period of ten years in which the school system experienced the leadership of five different superintendents. This continuous change in leadership styles had contributed "to a climate of flux and instability (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). Information received from the office of the coordinator of personnel indicated that Cox, who served two months as the acting superintendent from October 7, 1991 to December 19, 1991 and three and one-half years as superintendent from December 19, 1991 to June 30, 1995, was the fifth superintendent to serve Suffolk City Schools in that ten year span (J. Milteer, personal communication, March 13, 1996). Joan Milteer, director of personnel, for

the Suffolk City Schools provided the following chronology relative to the tenures of superintendents prior to Dr. Beverly Cox:

Forrest Frazier served nine years, from June 1, 1977 until his retirement on June 30, 1985. Martin Loughlin served ten months from July 7, 1985 to May 1, 1986. According to Clarence Penn, superintendent of Surry, Virginia, public schools and recognized as one of Virginia's senior superintendents, by the executive director of the Virginia Association of School Administrators (V. Cibbarelli, personal communication, September 28, 1994), Loughlin's resignation from the school system was rendered when both the Suffolk school board and Loughlin realized that "it simply wasn't a good marriage" between them (C. Penn, personal communication, March 22, 1996). The school board appointed Mack Benn, Jr. to serve as acting superintendent from May 1, 1986 to June 30, 1986. As acting superintendent, Mack Benn continued to function in the role of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction while serving as acting superintendent. At the end of his two month period as acting superintendent, the school board appointed Benn to the position of superintendent. Benn served in the position until his retirement from the school system on June 30, 1988 (J. Milteer, personal communication, March 13, 1996). During his two year tenure as superintendent, Benn was credited with "providing a measure of stability" to the school system (J.

Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). Following Benn's retirement the school board appointed C. Lindsey Suggs as superintendent. Suggs served as superintendent from July 1, 1988 to October 7, 1991. During Suggs's three year and three month tenure, the Suffolk school board built two new high schools. The funding for the two high schools and the actual construction resulted from the efforts of the school system leadership (inclusive of former superintendents and former school boards) spanning eight years (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). During that period of time, however, overspending occurred in the amount of nearly \$2,000,000. The overspending created a negative image problem in the community by the local media effecting both then superintendent Suggs as the superintendent and the members of the Suffolk school board. The backlash from the community resulted in Suggs's forced resignation in October 1991 (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

The school board appointed Dr. Beverly Cox, III to complete the calendar year as interim superintendent. At the time of his appointment, Cox was serving as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. At the December 19, 1991 school board meeting, Cox was appointed unanimously by the school board to the position of superintendent (School Board Minutes, December 19, 1991). He served in that position until his resignation, stating chronic and critical medical problems as

his reason for retiring. Cox was credited for restoring credibility to the school system, establishing stable financial operations, and pushing through the funding for several capital improvement projects. Cox's resignation was not submitted under duress, but because of the status of his health, the pressure from the demands of the school community was perceived to be a contributing factor to his early resignation (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Following the February 1995 announcement of Cox's impending resignation the Suffolk school board immediately initiated a process to replace him. The school board announced its goal to have someone in place no later than June 1, 1995 (M. Panton, *Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, May 31, 1995, p.1). Upon hearing of Joyce Trump's selection as his successor, Cox issued a statement of approval: "Joyce has provided excellent leadership in the school system. I think she's an excellent choice as superintendent and I'm sure that she'll continue to provide outstanding leadership as superintendent" (M. Panton, *Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, May 31, 1995, p. 2). In testament to Trump's appointment PTA president Sharron Hill offered the comment: "You feel secure with her [Trump]" (A. Payne, *Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, June 19, 1995, p. B2).

The New Superintendent

Joyce H. Trump was appointed superintendent of Suffolk Public Schools in

May 1995. Her prior experiences spanned nearly thirty-five years in public education and included serving as a social studies teacher in both Suffolk, Virginia and Elizabeth City, North Carolina; an assistant high school principal; supervisor of intermediate and secondary education, coordinator of public information; and assistant superintendent - all in Suffolk; and director of instruction in Franklin, Virginia. Trump earned her bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, her master's degree from Old Dominion University and is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Old Dominion University in urban studies and academic leadership.

In her three year tenure as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, Trump held the responsibility of overseeing curriculum and instruction in Suffolk. She was credited with focusing on classroom technology, staff development, and early intervention to prevent student failure, especially among the "needy" (M. Panton, *Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, May 31, 1995, p. B3). As assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction for three years, " Trump had a finger in almost every pie - from staff development to a focus on the marriage of vocational and academic skills, to early intervention measures for underachieving kids, to a push to enroll more students in tougher classes" (M. Panton, *Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, June 19, 1995, p. B2).

Trump was the first woman to hold the position of superintendent in Suffolk. The fact that she made history really hadn't fazed her, she said. "What's important", she said, "is for the board to select an individual, be it male or female, that can provide the leadership the board thinks the system needs (M. Panton, *Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, May 31, 1995, p. B3).

In response to the question, "What prompted your interest in the Suffolk Public Schools superintendency?", Trump stated that she was "place bound and not career bound" (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). She acknowledged that where she believed she had the qualities to be a superintendent, she "didn't have any burning passion to be a superintendent to the degree that I wanted to uproot my life and move myself somewhere, some distance away" (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). She felt that large school systems tend to look for superintendents with experience, although she countered that "you don't get experience somewhere else unless someone hires you for the first time." Trump felt that once she made the decision to continue living in Suffolk, she limited herself to only the consideration of a small school division.

At the time of Cox's resignation, Trump was serving as an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in the Suffolk City school's system. She stated that she was encouraged to apply for the position by colleagues,

community people, and many parents.

Trump felt that her longevity in the school system was not necessarily an asset nor did she feel it gave her any advantage over other candidates. Trump served as a high school teacher and high school assistant principal for seventeen years in Suffolk before moving to the central office administrative level in the school system. For nine years, she served as an administrator in a variety of capacities and as coordinator of public information.

In 1987, she accepted a job in the Franklin, Virginia Public Schools System as director of instruction. Franklin borders Suffolk on the western perimeter. After serving five years as director of instruction in the City of Franklin Public Schools, Trump accepted the position of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction with the Suffolk public schools and returned to the system to serve for three years in that role before applying for the position of superintendent. "Having made the decision that I wasn't going to go somewhere looking for a superintendency, I thought I could serve the city and the school division in the remaining years of my career by being superintendent" (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump stated that family issues were not significant considerations in her decision to apply for the superintendency. Her husband was retired and had been

for some time. She stated that he is older than she and that he has always been “extremely supportive of what I do” (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). Her children are grown and living independently of her. Both of her parents are deceased.

Her one concern centered around the effect that possible criticism of her as the superintendent would have on her family. “You know . . . you don’t want to read something bad about your mother. I decided to just tell them not to read the newspaper” (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). She discussed her concerns with her husband and children and they reaffirmed their support of her decision to apply for the superintendency.

At the time of her appointment to the superintendency, Trump was living in one of the oldest houses in the city of Suffolk, a quaint Main Street fixture built in the early 19th century. No consideration was given to her relocating to a different residence after she became superintendent (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump was described by *Virginia Pilot* staff writer, Vance Vines, as “. . . ladylike, refined, decorous and dainty” (*Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, June 19, 1995, p. B1). Trump was described by those who knew her as a “perfectionist with a steel spine; a meticulous administrator and team player with a sharp, discriminating eye;

a kind, self-deprecating soul who never loses control (*Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, June 19, 1995, p. B1).

The Suffolk City school board conducted a national search to fill the superintendent position. The seven member board, consisting of three appointed and four elected board members, reviewed credentials of thirty-three candidates. The school board pared the number of applicants to seven, all of whom were invited to interview with the school board. The school board set up two rounds of interviews with the first phase using a structured interview format and the second interview characterized as “free wheeling” (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

The board minutes stated that the school board adjourned into executive session on May 30, 1995 to discuss candidates for the position of school superintendent. Board minutes indicated that the appointment of Trump to the position of superintendent was approved unanimously by the board (School Board Minutes, May 30, 1995). Trump signed a two year contract with a June 1st effective beginning date. By setting a June 1st start date, the school board built in a one month period in which Dr. Beverly Cox, the outgoing superintendent, was available on site during the final month of his tenure.

Establishing A Climate

Trump assumed the responsibilities of the superintendency on June 1st. At that time the "sitting superintendent" physically vacated his office and moved into the office that had been Trump's office during her tenure as the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. Trump, in turn, moved into the superintendent's office. She described the move as "moving from the 'back hall' to the 'front hall'" - a perception of increased power and significance of position (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump indicated that at that point, although Cox was still physically on site, she began responding as the superintendent to everything that came through the superintendent's office. Additionally, she continued to be responsible for the agenda responsibilities of the office of the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. In essence, for thirty days within the initiation phase of her superintendency and prior to actually assuming the position of superintendent, Trump functioned as both superintendent and assistant superintendent. She acknowledged that

In a way it was a gift to me to have the sitting superintendent move out of his office and out of the way, but it was not all that magnanimous because he felt so bad physically, he just didn't want

to deal with the demands of the office anymore . . . On the other hand, it was somewhat self serving on his part, because he basically closed his door and stayed in that office away from the business . . . still, there was a certain amount of protocol and deference he was due because he was, in fact, still the superintendent and I had to work to remember that (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump described her perceptions relative to this arrangement in response to the question, "Was the availability of the outgoing superintendent during the transition period of benefit to you?". Trump stated that the on-site presence of Cox during the month of June provided somewhat of a safety net. "If I came across an issue that I didn't know as much about as I needed to know, [he] was still available to talk with and to discuss the circumstances relevant to a particular issue" (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). Trump reported that she felt a more significant outcome of his presence was that it gave his colleagues - teachers, and staff - an opportunity to say good bye quietly and gradually. Although Cox had only served four and one-half years as the city superintendent, he had worked in the city school system for seventeen years. Additionally the overlap of tenures provided the central office staff a chance to become comfortable with the change in Trump's roles and the scope of her new responsibilities. Trump

anticipated that some of the staff might have difficulty with the change in her relationships with them as she moved from her position as assistant superintendent to superintendent. She felt that the overlap helped make the transition more palpable for those persons (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Despite the board's unanimous endorsement of her appointment, Trump perceived that there was a quiet concern among some school board members relative to her being female.

I know that they had some reservations about appointing a female . . . This is a very traditional, conservative and Southern community; and so they had taken a real leap of faith in appointing me . . . On the other hand, they also knew me, my work and my reputation and so they knew what they were getting (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

In discussing the school board's charge to her, Trump acknowledged that the board's mandate was more implied than absolutely stated. She identified three areas that the school board indicated were of key concern: (1) student achievement and the disparity between the achievement levels of minority and white students; (2) creating a relevant and realistic curriculum for students growing up in an agrarian community; and (3) establishing positive racial relationships amongst

students. The school board also pronounced their expectation that Trump be successful in completing the capital improvement plan that had been initiated by her predecessor. Trump noted that she felt confident in meeting that expectation as she had worked very closely with Cox in developing the plan, and understood the details and the intent of the plan. At the time of her interview, she indicated to the school board that she had identified a school system-wide need to institute a comprehensive technological initiative as one of her priority goals for the system. Board members agreed to add the technology goal as a system priority.

Trump stated that she established a position for working with the board during the interview process. She said that she informed the board that she would maintain an honest, proactive approach to interacting with them in regards to all matters inclusive of personnel and budgetary issues. She also stated that she established her expectations of the board during the interview process which included the expectation that they support her administrative decisions regarding personnel and budget recommendations “without making her jump through hoops” (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump reported that the school board held a reception for the outgoing superintendent during the initiation phase of her tenure. This event brought many of the “community key players” together. She acknowledged that she was in

attendance and made a concerted effort not to upstage the outgoing superintendent. This, she admitted, was difficult since there was no separate activity planned to announce her appointment. The reception created an awkward situation as many of the attendees felt compelled to use Cox's reception as the opportunity to congratulate and politic with the new superintendent.

When asked, "How did you identify who the key players were in the community?", Trump responded that when you've lived in a community for thirty-five years - "you just know" (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). Trump maintained that there were actually two categories of key players - THE key players and those that are close to the key players. She stated that it is important to know both. "Being politically astute," she offered, often means knowing how to get things done by going through the side door; that is, not always having your finger print right out there for all to see." Trump included a wide range of people as being key players - businessmen, realtors, retailers, representatives from industry sites, as well as hospitals, major employers, citizens with children in private schools, citizens without children in schools, and people who don't fit into any category, but who are "out there pulling strings and pushing buttons" (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

In response to the question "How did you connect with these key players?"

Trump described her position:

I wasn't somebody new and unknown. Consequently I haven't felt the urgency of having to have meetings all over the city. As the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction for three years, I accompanied him [superintendent] to meetings all over the city. . . . I was perhaps more aggressive, in that sense, and more involved than an assistant superintendent in another school division might have been . . . I met once a month with the parent advisory board whose membership includes parents representing all the schools in the city; I served on the PTA Executive Board; I attended advisory committee meetings and all PTA meetings . . . I met with the two ministerial alliances, and, of course, ministers here in Suffolk, are very powerful . . . One is an all African American group, and one is an integrated group . . . they all know me and they serve as liaisons, and power brokers, to all facets of the populace" (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump acknowledged that during the last two years of Cox's tenure, when he became ill, she often attended meetings as his designee.

Trump stated that after her appointment as superintendent, she expanded

her interactions to include attending civic forums, organizational dinner meetings, and homeowners association meetings. She instituted a practice of meeting “every two weeks or so” with a group she called key communicators but admitted that she delayed this process until the onset of the first one hundred days transition phase. The composition of the group varied with each meeting, but always reflected a diverse, cross section of the community key people. She indicated that she developed the attendee list for each of these meetings herself (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump did not join any new organizations during either the initiation or the transition phases of her tenure. She acknowledged that she was active in several of her church’s auxiliaries, but that she was not a “joiner” and did not feel inclined to seek additional memberships in any organization, civic or social, once she assumed the position of superintendent. She stated that she felt that as a superintendent she would be more effective if she maintained a position of being “easily accessible” to all organizations and groups (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Vision and Plan

Trump stated that one of her key goals as superintendent was to get “the citizens of Suffolk and those who live outside of Suffolk to recognize this as a school

division of excellence.” She stated that the system had been steadily improving its academic programs, facilities and services, but that it [Suffolk] was still trying to shake its “stepchild image.” She was very emphatic in stating her intent “to push to overcome the perception that the Suffolk academic core is some how decayed” (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). As she discussed ideas, plans, and wishes; Trump used many of the catch phrases of education reformist: “We need to improve articulation between grades and grade levels.””We need to constantly increase the variety of strategies we use to teach children because children don’t all learn the same way. . . .We need to increase the expectations of all students and the opportunities for them,” she stated (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump stated that within the first few days of the initiation phase she met with the school board and outlined several key initiatives for the school system. She stated that she had no plans to start “feverishly rocking the boat because, for the most part, it’s already on course We have many, many good things in place right now and we need to continue with those things” (A. Payne, *Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, June 19, 1995, p. B2). That line of thinking appeared consistent with the agenda of the Suffolk school board. In an interview given to Marilyn Panton of the *Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, chairman of the school board, Arthur D. Smith stated, “in

light of some of the concerns expressed by both the school board and city council with potential growth and needs for capital improvements to be made with the public school facilities, Trump . . . will want to continue with many of the procedures which are in place” (N. Panton, *Virginia Pilot/Ledger Star*, May 31, 1995, p. B1).

Trump stated that she felt that her situation as a new superintendent was unique. As the former assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, she had been primarily responsible for the entire instructional plan and many of the departments that served as support programs of the instructional plan. Consequently, she did not feel pushed to develop and impose a new plan or a different plan. Her plan as superintendent centered around her new “power” - that is, the opportunity and authority to maneuver, and move around the variables, such as people and resources, to effect program outcomes. Trump stated that this capability served to enable the system to achieve success with the existing plan (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

“My greatest expectation (vision)” Trump stated is “that student achievement be improved in this city” (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). To this end, Trump outlined three major initiatives scheduled for implementation during her first year of office:

- Alternative Education - This initiative included the implementation of the

Early Start Program which targeted four year old students and was designed to assist pre-schoolers who were at risk of early school failure.

- The Middle School Program - This initiative dictated a revision of the original middle school program. The Suffolk school system middle school program had been operational for fifteen years and was one of the oldest in the state. Trump's plan called for a review of the existing goals and objectives to determine if the program was viable for the current population of students served.
- Technology - This initiative mandated the development of a plan for infusing technology into the teaching/learning process as well as the school systems overall operations. Trump's plan called for a school system-wide plan to maximize the Virginia State Department of Education's initiatives to the benefit of the Suffolk schools in terms of providing state funding for technology. Trump's plan focused on acquisition of hardware and software, access and inter connectivity across the school system; and extensive, comprehensive training of personnel and students.

Trump indicated that a Minority Student Achievement Task Force, appointed when she served as assistant superintendent, had spent the previous year (1994-

95) completing a study on the under-representation of minority students in areas such as honor roll recognition, completers as honor graduates, and enrollment in advance placement and honor courses. Trump indicated that the recommendations from the task force would be an integral part of the school system's plan to address the goal of student achievement (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump met again with the members of the school chairman within the first ten days of the one hundred days transition phase. At that meeting, she set an August date for a retreat to be held with school board members and central administration staff. Trump indicated to school board members that she would present a plan highlighting long term goals and objectives for the current school year at the retreat. She stated that the purpose of the long range plan was to provide direction for specific program development both currently in progress and for new initiatives, as well as with budget development and monitoring responsibilities. Trump determined that this meeting would serve to set the tone for the overall school system climate. She acknowledged that the plan was an "expansion and enhancement" of existing goals and operational objectives and included ongoing projects and program initiatives that were already in place and that were at either the planning or early implementation phases (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

The Long Range Plan developed by Trump and submitted to the school board at the superintendent's retreat included eight ongoing goals:

Suffolk Public Schools

Long Range Plan

Ongoing Goals - - 1995-96

1. To continue to improve academic achievement as demonstrated by student performance on the Literacy Passport Test, standardized tests and the Scholastic Achievement Test;
2. To continue to create a safe learning environment whereby students take responsibility for their own actions;
3. To continue to improve the instructional programs in the elementary, middle and high schools;
4. To continue to strengthen and improve the quality of parental involvement in the schools;
5. To continue enhancing school-community relations;
6. To continue ensuring that adequate facilities exist for students and support operations;
7. To continue to update and approve School Board policy; and
8. To continue the regional accreditation process through the Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools.

The operational plan for the 1995-96 school year proposed eight specific goals:

1. Implement and evaluate block scheduling at Lakeland High School and Nansemond River High School.
2. Implement the recommendations of the Minority Achievement Task Force Report and establish a Minority Achievement Advisory Committee for 1995-96.
3. Develop a comprehensive evaluation plan for all professional employees for implementation in the 1996-97 school year.
4. Implement EARLY START, the preschool program.
5. Develop a Capital Improvements Program based on the population projections from the demographic study.
6. Develop a five-year technology plan.
7. Develop a model for an alternative education program.
8. Implement the Standards of Learning for science, mathematics, social studies, and English as adopted by the State Board of Education in 199. (Reprinted from Suffolk Public Schools, *Long Range Plan Ongoing Goals 1995-96*).

Trump stated that the promotion of an improved reputation of the credibility

and achievement of the school system was not listed specifically in the Long Range Plan, but was “an understood goal” by all school system personnel and would be addressed directly to all school personnel, students and the community (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

The First One Hundred Days

Trump reported that the first fifty days or so of her transition phase as superintendent were not clearly separate from the dual role of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. She continued to serve in both capacities for six weeks after she assumed the position of superintendent pending the appointment of a new assistant superintendent.

Trump indicated that during the first few weeks of the transition phase, she looked first at personnel issues. She made a conscious decision not to make any major changes in personnel. “Foolish is the man or woman who comes in and makes major changes in the first one hundred days transition period in my opinion,” she stated. She acknowledged that sometimes there are blatant personnel issues that an incoming superintendent might “inherit” from the previous administration. In such situations she conceded, the new superintendent must act, but when there is a choice, Trump stated that new superintendents should pace themselves in

making personnel changes (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump indicated that once she became superintendent she came under some pressure from certain community groups to terminate one of the school principals. She admitted that there was merit in the request and cause for considering such a move and that because she had been the assistant superintendent for curriculum and development, she was aware of the issues involved. However, Trump took the position that it would be unfair to recommend to the school board the termination of the principal until she had had an opportunity to work with the principal in her role as superintendent.

Thirty days following the onset of the first one hundred days transition phase of her tenure, Trump scheduled a one-day retreat for the central administration officers and the members of the school board. The agenda of the retreat provided a format that fostered open dialogue among the participants on the critical issues facing the Suffolk school system. Such issues as rapid growth, budgetary constraints, new programs, and school climate were discussed.

Minutes of the School Board Retreat held August 3, 1995 at The Well, a retreat center in nearby Smithfield, Virginia, documented the issues Trump presented to the school board for their review and approval (Suffolk School Board Minutes, August 3, 1995).

Trump informed board members that the clerk of the board would hold a meeting to collect all of the old policies and distribute new copies which would be color-coded. She stated that a “conscientious effort will be made to keep the manual current.” Trump indicated that the update was “critically necessary.” She informed the board that the process had not been carried out for a number of years (Suffolk School Board Minutes, August 3, 1995, p. 2). She indicated that this effort would help establish the creditability of persons making decisions for students and staff and to ensure consistency in the decision-making process throughout the system. This effort was one means of improving the overall credibility of the school system.

During the sessions held at the retreat, Trump provided the school board members the opportunity to express their concerns and raise issues in reference to the proposed alternative education initiatives. She assigned the assistant superintendent for administration and pupil personnel services the charge of giving a brief overview of the alternative programs that were already being implemented in the school system at the time of the retreat. A discussion was held and the input of board members was noted. Trump stated that this strategy enabled her to know which plans and concepts for future plans would receive immediate board support and which would require a “battle plan” (J. Trump, personal communication,

January 31, 1996). Trump used the retreat to convince the school board members to agree to fund activities which would lead to a model alternative education program.

Trump presented board members with copies of the Long Range Plan she had developed during the initiation phase which included the school system's annual goals and objectives. She indicated to the board members that, based on their approval of the goals and objectives, a review and subsequent modification of certain line items of the school year's budget allocations might be required. The board granted Trump authority to submit a revised budget if necessary

Trump presented her assessment of the school system's status relative to the use of technology and technological resources. She informed board members of the proposed plans for automating elementary and middle school libraries and the projected cost of the project.

Trump stated that she used the retreat to "put all the cards on the table" so that she would have a clear understanding of where she and the board members stood in relation to her vision and the proposed plan of action for the school system. Additionally, she indicated that by including the central office staff in the retreat, the key administrators had the opportunity to interact with school board members and get a feel for their positions. The key administrators she indicated would have

essential roles in developing operational strategies designed to address the goals and objectives outlined in the annual plan (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Just prior to Trump's assuming the position of superintendent, the Suffolk City Council had agreed to fund a significant capital improvement budget. Because of the funding under that budget, a 675 student capacity elementary school was under construction. During the first one hundred days transition phase of her tenure, Trump scheduled a visit to the construction site and met with the contractor. She requested a written status report and an updated projected time line. Other capital improvement projects that were funded under the CIP budget included installation of new heating and air conditioning systems in nine schools and the beginning of the renovation and addition project at another of the elementary schools. Trump reviewed the specifications and projected cost analysis on these projects and met with the contractors responsible for each project site (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

During the first one hundred days transition phase of her tenure, Trump met with the Blue Ribbon Commission. This commission was established by the city council and the school board for the purpose of reviewing and monitoring the school system's Capital Projects Ten Year Plan. Trump used this meeting to present her

vision and plan of action for the Suffolk School System to the commission. This group she acknowledged as being made up of “really key players” (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Trump filled two administrative positions within the first one hundred days transition phase of her tenure. One of the positions - that of instructional specialist - was a position that had been included in the budget which was approved by the school board prior to her appointment as superintendent. This position was created to provide support for the school system’s improvement of minority achievement initiative plan and was funded as a result of the recommendation of the Minority Student Achievement Task Force.

Trump acknowledged that in filling the position of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction she was able “to bring closure to her previous position” (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). She also stated that this personnel decision was not without controversy. Trump reported that historically, dating back to the integration of the school system, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction had always been Caucasian and the superintendent for administration and pupil personnel services had been African American. At the time of Trump’s appointment to the superintendency, the assistant superintendent of administration and pupil personnel services was African

American. "I am not a political fool," Trump stated, "but I told the board during my interview that I would always recommend [personnel] I believed to be the best for the job" (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). Trump selected an African American for the position of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. She stated that the selection process was structured and comprehensive and she is confident that she appointed the right person (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). Trump indicated that she had responded to at least one organization and several individuals who challenged her decision and her break with historical precedent. She stated that she reminded the complainants that "before her, there had always been a male superintendent" (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

Within the first forty-five days of her one hundred days transition phase, Trump held a "Back to School" opening meeting which included all administrators, teachers, and support and auxiliary staff to introduce herself in her new role as superintendent. At this meeting, Trump discussed the long range plan, the specific goals for the school year, the status of the Capital Improvement Plan, and her expectations of the school community. Additionally she outlined her operational procedures and style. She presented the two assistant superintendents as her administrative team and defined the roles and responsibilities of each (J. Trump,

personal communication, January 31, 1996). Trump visited each school's opening Parent Teacher Association meeting or commencement activity during the first one hundred days transition phase which extended throughout the months of September and October. She stated that she established her expectations of parents and community at these events and explained how she would operate as a superintendent. She made it clear that she was still accessible, but defined the role each assistant superintendent would play in the chain of command (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996).

In response to the question, "Did your vision for the Suffolk City Schools change or alter in any way during the first one hundred days?", Trump indicated that she saw the population growth trend in Suffolk as having more of an impact on budget allocation and programs than she had realized when she was the curriculum and instructional administrator. She acknowledged that she wished she'd had more direct involvement with the overall capital improvement planning process because as she reflected on the projects some of them appeared to be short-sighted and not congruent with projected population growth patterns or school system needs. Trump admitted that responding to the need for increased diversity among administrators and teachers, and addressing the tenacity of rural attitudes and age old perceptions were going to be real challenges.

Trump acknowledged that one major concern she had relative to her vision for the school system lay in the changing composition of the school board. Three of the seven member school board would be required to run in a spring election to retain their seats on the school board. One of the three who was a board member at the time of her appointment as superintendent had decided not to seek election. Trump was wary that a change in the school board's composition could have a significant effect on her plans for the school system (J. Trump, personal communication, January 31, 1996). Trump stated that her intimate knowledge of the system and its potential was significant to her maintaining her vision for the Suffolk school system.

Analysis

Trump's appointment as superintendent represented both a break with tradition and at the same time a maintenance with that which was comfortable and familiar for the Suffolk community. As the first woman superintendent, Trump's appointment signaled the community's willingness to move away, to some extent, from the traditional conservative mores of the community while the fact that she was a thirty-four year veteran of the school system enabled the community to derive a

sense of stability and security from her appointment. Trump's appointment followed an era of instability for the Suffolk school system which experienced five superintendent tenures in ten years.

Trump assumed the position of superintendent with unanimous board approval and support. She was knowledgeable of the community, its constituents, and the school system staff. Trump had worked closely with the outgoing superintendent for three and one-half years and was involved at a significant level in the administrative decision making process before assuming the position of superintendent.

Trump established a modality of operation with the school board during the interview stage. She agreed to include and inform them of her positions on all issues. Grohe (1983) pointed out that the interview stage was the point where a partnership was forged between the board and the new superintendent. Mutual candor, forthrightness and detailing expectations at this stage established an open line of communication that lessened the possibility of misunderstanding at later stages. Trump was able to establish a cooperative relationship with the board at the outset.

Trump used her relationship with board members, teachers, administrators and community leaders to effect smooth initiation and transition phases. This

behavior is consistent with Dunnerstick's (1992) argument that a new superintendent should follow seven key survival techniques. These techniques included knowing the board and developing ways of communicating with board members; knowing administrators; beginning the process of building and strengthening a leadership team; knowing the union; being prepared to inform the system of any action that might effect its members; knowing the power base; and understanding the power of visibility. Trump incorporated each of these techniques into her transition.

Akenhead (1991) articulated basic guidelines for facilitating decision making which included respecting your board member's expertise, using board standing committees, understanding the use of power, and allowing flexibility in developing viewpoints and opinions. He contended that the facilitator approach may not work in all situations, but when it worked well, it answered a high level of involvement and increased the likelihood that decisions would be supported. Trump strengthened her position of collaboration decision making by soliciting input from board members in finalizing the plan of action for the school board. During both the initiation and transition phases, Trump paced herself in order to establish a strong foundation for decisions and action and to provide a stabilizing climate for the school community.

Trump's initiation phase was encumbered by her having to manage the

responsibilities of both the positions of superintendent and her former position of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. However, her knowledge of the system and the personnel allowed her to move through the transition phase with relative ease. The presence of the former superintendent provided some support during the initiation phase but was not considered by Trump to be critical to the transition phase. Although Trump did not have to adapt to Grohe's (1983) assessment that a new superintendent must know and understand the school system, she did inform staff of her expectations. Since she was already a part of the system she was aware of the resources, and the strengths, and the areas of need of Suffolk city schools. Grohe argued that this knowledge was key to a new superintendent's ability to become "viable, credible, informed and respected" (29).

Trump assumed the position of superintendent focused and in tune to the dictates of the political, social, civic and educational facets of the community. The one hundred days transition phase was perceived by Trump as being very effective. In spite of the fact that an early personnel decision created some limited controversy, Trump's established reputation and credibility in the school system and community provided a substantive support system for the controversial decision.

By introducing a plan of action that enhanced and expanded existing programs and initiatives implemented prior to her assuming the position of

superintendent, Trump was able to assume the leadership of the school system and begin a decisive agenda as superintendent of Suffolk City Schools.

CHAPTER 4: DR. BILLY K. CANNADAY, JR.

Prevailing Climate of Hampton

Hampton, Virginia is located on the eastern coast of the state in an area known as the Tidewater Peninsula. The public school system has a total of thirty-five schools, four high schools, five middle schools, and twenty-six elementary schools. The school system has an enrollment of 23,120 students.

Dr. Billy Cannaday succeeded Mr. Raymond Washington who served as superintendent of Hampton City Schools for three years. Washington's appointment as superintendent capped a thirty year career in public education. Washington, the city's first African American superintendent, retired from the position of superintendent with twenty six years of experience in the Hampton City Schools. Starting as a drafting instructor, he served as principal at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, and as an assistant superintendent for personnel and administrative services before his appointment as superintendent.

Washington was viewed by many as a facilitator, a negotiator, and a peace keeper. "He was good at what he did," . . . stated Carol Ann McErlean, president of the Hampton Council of PTA's at a post announcement interview. "He stood and fought for what was right for the kids" (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, March 17, 1994).

Following the announcement of his plan to retire, school board chairman, Pat

Patrick took his turn to offer a personal praise: "I can think of no one who has made a more dynamic impact on our school system . . . I'm going to miss the heck out of you . . . I have a great love for you and what you've done" (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, March 17, 1994).

"Washington's announcement to retire was not unexpected and was not the result of any adverse or negative activity within the school system" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28 1994). The announcement came as the city prepared for its first school board elections, but Washington stated that dealing with an elected board rather than one that has been approved by the city council did not influence his decision to retire (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, March 17, 1994).

Washington generally was perceived as being secure in his job. Even those who sometimes criticized school policy said he was well liked and probably could have kept the school system's top post as long as he wanted it (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, March 16, 1994).

Within twenty-four hours of the announcement of Washington's resignation, school board chairman A. W. "Pat" Patrick announced that the school board would meet "within the next few days [to decide] whether to conduct a national search for a replacement or keep it local." "Billy Cannaday is probably a shoo-in unless they pull in someone from the outside", stated Hampton Council of PTA's president Carol

Ann McErlean (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, March 17, 1994).

Several citizens attending the March 23, 1994 school board meeting asked the board to consider conducting a national search for the new superintendent (School Board Minutes, March 23, 1994). Hampton school board chairman, A. W. "Pat" Patrick's attempt to set the tone to diffuse any community movement toward promoting a national search is reflected in a March 17, 1994 newspaper article in which he is quoted as acknowledging that [Cannaday] "was eminently qualified . . . had done a fantastic job as assistant superintendent and would be his number one choice should the board decide to limit its search to in-house" (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, March 17, 1994).

On April 14, 1994, one month following the announcement of the resignation of the former Hampton City school system superintendent, the Hampton City school board named Billy Cannaday, Jr. as Washington's replacement. No other candidates were considered for the position (School Board Minutes, Executive Session, April 13, 1994).

The New Superintendent

Billy Cannaday, Jr. was appointed superintendent of Hampton City Schools in July 1994. His prior experiences included serving as a secondary teacher; Title I home school coordinator; middle school coordinator; and middle school

principal, all in Newport News, Virginia; assistant secondary principal, director of secondary education; and assistant superintendent for instructional services in Hampton, Virginia. He earned his master's degree in administration and supervision from Hampton University and both his bachelor's and doctoral degrees from Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University (Virginia Tech).

As coordinator of the Newport News middle school program, Cannaday provided the leadership for the school system in developing the blue print for the implementation of the middle school organization in Newport News. During his tenure as principal of Newport News's Huntington Middle School, located in a low income urban area of the city, the school was cited for excellence by the U. S. Department of Education Secondary School Recognition Program. As the assistant superintendent for instructional services, Cannaday was credited for leading the Hampton school system through a successful restructuring initiative, and implementing an attendance policy designed to reduce absenteeism through positive incentives (Hampton City Schools Information Profile Sheet). Cannaday's collaboration with Alternatives, Inc., a non-profit community agency, sparked the development of a "work" program for students suspended from high school. As a result of his leadership, an innovative and cooperative community project was established for youngsters at-risk of dropping out of school. This project, The

Commonwealth Experience, was awarded a 1992 Excellence in Education Award from Virginia Tech for its effectiveness as an alternative education program.

In response to the question, "What prompted your interest in the Hampton City Schools' superintendency?", Cannaday indicated that it was all about timing. "The timing was right for both me and the school system" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). Cannaday reported that he was approached directly by the chairman of the school board and asked if he would accept the position of superintendent if he were endorsed by the school board. Cannaday stated that he informed the school board chairman that he would positively consider the offer. He acknowledged that he would not have sought the position had he not been approached by the board chairman and asked to consider "applying" for the position.

Cannaday acknowledged that by having worked between the two school systems (Newport News and Hampton), he had fairly well established his credibility. As he had already held the position of an assistant superintendent for instructional services, a key administrative and instructional position, he felt that he had established a certain level of visibility and credibility as both an administrator and instructional leader with the Hampton city school community. Since his predecessor had been the first African American superintendent of Hampton, he believed that

the somewhat conservative community would not have reason to resist or oppose his seeking of the superintendent position. "With Raymond [the former superintendent] having already broken that ground, my raising certain controversial issues would not cause me to be consumed in philosophical or even legal battles" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). Cannaday described such issues as being the redistricting of school zones necessary to effect racially balanced school populations; addressing sometimes controversial educational and racial issues, such as the disparities between minority and white student achievement scores and family life curriculum; and increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of both teaching and administrative staffs. "As the assistant superintendent for instructional services, I was already involved in some excellent initiatives for children; and I wanted to see them through," he stated (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday's appointment to the position of superintendent was announced to the citizenry of Hampton through a closed press conference limited to members of the press, a few select school administrators and members of the school board (School Board Memo, April 12, 1994). The appointment was made within one month of the announcement of the retirement of the "sitting" superintendent. In discussing his decision to allow himself to be considered for the new

superintendency, two key issues dominated the Cannaday family discussions: (1) the anticipated and realistic expectation of a significant increase in Cannaday's work-load and subsequent time requirements and constraints which would inevitably effect the family dynamics, and (2) the loss of the family's privacy. Both issues were of major concern to Cannaday's wife. Cannaday admitted that when his daughter Lauren died after a prolonged illness at age four "it was difficult to fill the void, so I filled the void with work" ("Expect More", *Daily Press*, July 24, 1994).

Cannaday stated that when he accepted the position of superintendent he used the initiation phase of his tenure to begin addressing the issue of the job demands and time constraints. He consciously developed a work schedule designed to create a better balance between "work time and family time." Cannaday described his lifelong mind set as being one of "if I didn't get it done, no one else could be expected to get it done" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). During the interview, Cannaday admitted that, "I am better, but it isn't easy. It's still a struggle to balance my life" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday indicated that his wife's feelings relative to his accepting the Hampton superintendency were his primary concern. Having lived eighteen years in the Hampton community, he did not have to address the issues related to

relocating, or finding a house, or choosing a community in which to reside. The Cannaday's built a home in an upscale middle income community three years earlier when Cannaday was appointed as assistant superintendent for instructional services. They selected a community with a close proximity to the Hampton City Schools administrative offices. Their four year old daughter died as a result of a malignant brain tumor in 1985. The Cannaday's had no other children, so school zones were not a consideration in their decision. Ms. Cannaday is a nursing supervisor at a regional hospital facility in the area.

In addressing the issue of privacy, Cannaday described his approach to his wife's feelings:

I have to make sure that I [will be] available for the kinds of things and activities for which she will need my support . . . it is important that she continue on with the important things in her life . . . giving her permission to decide which parts of [this superintendency] she wants to share and which she doesn't . . . I needed to make sure she had a choice as to what she wanted to be connected to and with what she wanted to be associated . . . if she wanted to be a part of the press conference, she could decide for herself if she wanted to be there. I would honor her decision and not be judgmental or pressure her (B.

Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday stated that bringing closure to the position of assistant superintendent of instructional services was relatively uneventful and unmarked. He continued to fulfill the responsibilities of the position while gradually assuming more of the responsibilities of the superintendent's position. During the initiation phase of his tenure, Cannaday conducted a search to fill the position of assistant superintendent for instructional services. He interviewed two internal applicants and several candidates from outside the system. During the month of June, prior to the July 1 onset of his first one hundred days transition phase, Cannaday functioned in both the roles of assistant superintendent for instructional services and that of superintendent. Closure came at the point that he announced the candidate selected to fill the assistant superintendent for instructional services position.

Cannaday was selected as the Hampton City Schools superintendent in an unanimous vote of the seven member appointed school board on Wednesday, April 13, 1994. The appointment came as no surprise to school observers. As an assistant superintendent, Cannaday often led discussions at school board meetings and was perceived to be the "point man" on several controversial issues (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, April 14, 1994).

Two weeks prior to his July 1 effective date, the Hampton City school board

appointed Cannaday as the interim superintendent. Cannaday's appointment as superintendent was the last to be made by an appointed school board. Less than one month following Cannaday's appointment, three of the seven school board positions were filled by election. Two of the officials were incumbents and retained their seats. The third elected board member was not a member of the board at the time of Cannaday's appointment.

Establishing a Climate

Cannaday officially assumed the position of superintendent on July 1, 1994. The announcement of Cannaday's appointment on April 13, 1994 created a two and one half month initiation phase during which time the sitting superintendent was physically on site. Following the announcement of his appointment, Cannaday and Washington met with the school board and requested that Cannaday be "allowed" to begin "transition activities." Transition is used here by Cannaday to mean "changing of leadership" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). Cannaday described for the board the types of activities included in his request: conducting meetings with certain personnel; establishing certain operational plans for the upcoming school year; accessing certain information and data; meeting with certain community agencies; engaging in other activities that are

“generally afforded superintendent-elects just prior to their assuming the position of superintendent” (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday acknowledged that in his early discussions with the school board, he indicated to them that if he were selected to the position of superintendent, it would be somewhat difficult for me to start the year out on July 1st.

I told them that if I were offered the position, I would like the transition period to start in April . . . although I would not meet officially with staff members until after my actual start date of July 1st (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Within one week of the announcement of Cannaday’s appointment, Washington held a general administration meeting of school principals and central office administrators. At that meeting Washington explained how the “changing of the guard” would occur and the roles that he and Cannaday would assume during the initiation phase of Cannaday’s tenure (Tape recorded minutes, April 21, 1994). Washington explained to the administrators that Cannaday would continue to administer his responsibilities as assistant superintendent for instructional services and that he would also be leading and facilitating activities in preparation for his assuming the superintendent’s position effective July 1, 1994. He further admonished the administrators to support Cannaday’s leadership and to assist him

during the initiation phase of his tenure (Tape recorded minutes, April 24, 1994).

Washington assured the staff that he would continue to serve as "THE" superintendent until the end of his tenure. He outlined those specific areas in which he would continue to be actively involved. These included, among other things: meeting with the school board; completing the budget process for the 1994-95 school year; attending all functions at which the superintendent's presence is invited, required or expected. Washington announced that he would be using his accrued vacation and personal leave during the initiation phase of Cannaday's tenure from April 14 to June 30, 1994.

Washington did, in fact, use the accrued leave time and was physically removed from the day to day operations of the school system during the initiation phase. During this time frame, Washington deferred all major decisions that had the potential of significantly effecting the school system, including program and personnel issues, until after the July 1, 1994 date (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday stated that, with the exception of the initial press conference to announce his appointment, there were no activities planned for him by the school board during either the initiation or transition phases of his tenure.

In response to the question, "Describe the school board's charge to you upon

your assuming the position of superintendent?”, Cannaday stated that the school board did not provide him with any specific charge or agenda for his tenure. A review of school board minutes from March 1994 through August 1994 failed to provide any evidence that discussions of goals, objectives or initiatives were either directed by the school board or discussed with Cannaday.

Cannaday reported that following the announcement of his appointment several board members called him to discuss, “unofficially,” some of the things they “hoped he would address” during his tenure (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). The topics of these calls included such issues as racial balances in school; increasing the numbers of fundamental schools or magnet programs; specific personnel issues; and renegotiating the school system’s contract with the public transit agency. (The school system leases public transit to transport its middle and high school students.)

Cannaday described his feeling about the board’s position and support of his appointment:

I don’t believe the board’s failure to give me an agenda was negative or questionable at all. Instead, I think it was a unanimous endorsement of my appointment . . . Each individual board member that called or talked with me after the formal offer, without any

exceptions, spoke specifically of what they thought the things were we could accomplish. I would not have wanted to take this position had it been otherwise (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

When asked to respond to the question, "How did you identify the key players in the community and what steps did you take to connect with them following your appointment as superintendent?", Cannaday responded that as he "did not perceive the position of superintendent as being political"; he was, therefore not overly concerned with identifying "and courting" key players (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). He explained that he had discussed his feelings with members of the school board during discussions prior to his appointment and had made his position clear to the board. The position he gave defined the board's role as political, not the superintendent's role. Cannaday indicated that "I was not involved in politicking before . . . nor did I care to do those [political] things as superintendent" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

He stated that he was confident that community leaders (the key players) would support his efforts and his leadership as superintendent not because he was politically astute, but because he "would do an effective job." Cannaday described

the onslaught of calls he received from people in the community as being “numerous and not always subtle.” He was prepared to listen to issues raised, but would not allow himself to get into the “jockeying for power and position” activity. “I didn’t encourage people to call me” (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

During the initiation phase of his tenure, Cannaday admitted that he did not initiate any schedule or plan to meet specifically with various leaders of governmental or community agencies or organizations. He was insistent that the community already knew the caliber of his work and did not expect him to function differently than he had as an assistant superintendent. He further stated that during the initiation phase of his tenure, he restricted his interactions with even school administrators because “I did not want them to assume that there would be transition devil play” (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday indicated that he established what he identified as a key players administrative team. During the initiation phase of his tenure, he identified seven key school system administrators that served to provide support for the transition phase of his tenure. These administrators included the assistant superintendent for pupil services; both directors of elementary and secondary instruction; the directors of personnel, finance, public information,

and staff development (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). These administrators, whom Cannaday identified as key players, were used during the initiation phase as primary sources of information. Additionally, Cannaday used the initiation phase to observe the dynamics amongst the key players:

When I was first appointed, identifying the relevant key players in administration became a critical part of my transition plan. I wanted to give myself, from the perspective of a superintendent, the opportunity to step back and let them carry out their roles and watch to see how they did it . . . I wanted to make certain, also, that I had people in these key positions who would give me different perspectives . . . I could watch the dynamics of the team (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday reported that he was careful to maintain a professional, albeit distant, relationship with each administrator. He set up a meeting schedule that included every second and fourth Monday throughout the months of mid-April, May and June, the two and one-half months of the initiation phase. Cannaday established an electronic data base that let the team members know the duties and responsibilities of each team member. The system included a dialogue box, in

which comments and the progress or status of projects in progress could be recorded and accessed by all members of the team. Cannaday explained his intent in setting up the system:

I wanted everyone to know that they were equally important. I didn't have a particular box for some and an open access box for others. This helped me to understand and observe the dynamics of the group. Most of all, it sent signals to all that no one was more predisposed to being on the inner circle than others,,. This was really important to me because having been in the system, I did not want to send any signals to certain people that [you] are more valuable than others (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday referenced this group of administrators as his transition team. He defined these administrators as persons whose responsibilities included planning for and overseeing the allocation of budget and personnel resources, and management of school programs and system operations. This team was renamed the Superintendent's Cabinet at the beginning of the first one hundred days transition phase.

Cannaday was asked to respond to the question, "Which social, civic or community organizations or clubs did you choose to join and what criteria did you

use in making your decisions?” He stated that he had a great deal of respect for the mission statements and the goals of many of the area’s diverse groups and organizations and felt strongly that most contributed positively to the climate and welfare of the community, but he stated that deciding on memberships or enrollment in organizations for him was an easy decision: “I am not a “joiner” (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

He selected memberships in two organizations - the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Kiwanis Club. In explaining the reasons for his choices, Cannaday identified the NAACP manifest as having a lifelong commitment to equality and equity; the Kiwanis Club he described as being one of the more far reaching community organizations. Based on his experience, he stated that the Kiwanis Club was effective in disseminating accurate and explanative information relevant to the school division and its many issues and concerns.

Cannaday admitted that at the time of his appointment, neither he nor his wife were affiliated with a particular church. They did not consider the joining of a religious community to be a key factor in establishing a climate in the Hampton City community at large (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Vision and Plan

Cannaday's vision for the Hampton City Schools was rooted in lessons he learned from his father. There was a rule in Cannaday's house when he was growing up in Roanoke, Virginia: no grade lower than a B, or no sports. The rule was law. His father, a handyman who worked a number of jobs to support his family, insisted that his son do well in school ("Expect More", *Daily Press*, July 24, 1994).

Cannaday said he believed, as his father did, that students will rise to whatever standards teachers and parents set for them. "He [Cannaday] wants students to meet higher standards before they can advance to middle school, high school and graduation" ("Expect More", *Daily Press*, July 24, 1994). Cannaday's vision for his tenure as superintendent included salary raises for principals based on how well their students met school goals and standards. His vision included starting a public-private foundation that assists

middle of the road students who have potential, but cannot afford college tuition costs to pay for the first year of community college or trade school, and adults - parents and school educators in raising the expectations they - have for students to succeed (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday reported that he felt that, in order to have a successful tenure as superintendent, he needed to use the time periods prior to his actually assuming the position of superintendent (the initiation phase) to develop a plan that provided specific direction for the school system. In the absence of a specific directive from the school board, Cannaday set in motion the process to develop a five year Long Range Plan for the Hampton City Schools (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

A June 16, 1994 memo to the assistant superintendent for pupil services from Cannaday addressed the intent and format to be held in the development of "a comprehensive plan for Hampton City Schools - 1995-2000" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). The plan called for a process to be developed that would insure input from "school related personnel defined as school board members, administrators, teachers, classified personnel, and students; city officials; community leaders; parents and others representing key stakeholder groups" (Memo, June 6, 1994). The memo stated the importance of this step in the development and subsequent successful implementation of a five year long range plan. A June 8, 1994 memo from the director of public relations to Cannaday targeted a completion date for the Long Range Plan of October 1, 1994 (Memo, June 8, 1994).

On June 15, 1994, the school board announced that Cannaday would serve as interim superintendent until he officially assumed the position of superintendent on July 1. At that meeting, Cannaday presented to the board his plan to develop a Long Range Plan. Cannaday outlined key elements that would be addressed in the plan. These included six school division goals which would serve as the driving force for all school programs. The six goals were stated as a commitment to

- Diversity
- Academics
- Gifted Education
- Communication
- Safe Schools
- Employee Recognition

In presenting the proposal, Cannaday stated, "I have established several goals for this school year and targeted areas of concentration which I believe are most important" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

After a brief discussion, the board approved the proposed plan for development and implementation (School Board Minutes, June 15, 1994).

The plan which was ultimately presented to the school board during the first one hundred days of Cannaday's transition phase proposed to first and foremost accelerate efforts in the area of academics, to raise promotional standards for all grade levels, and to revise curriculum to meet these standards. The plan proposed the creation of a TV Learning Channel to assist students, parents and the community after traditional school hours.

Another priority listed in the plan fell under the category of “safe schools.” The plan outlined actions and strategies designed to ensure that students be provided with a comfortable and safe learning environment, including the development of Safe School Teams; addressed the increasing number of chronically disruptive students by including a directive to revise the Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook to include behavioral expectations. Cannaday announced that the plan would also concentrate on the areas of technology, gifted education, diversity, communication, and expand on ways to recognize staff accomplishments (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, September 1, 1994; B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday stated that his plans for the school system and the role he would assume as superintendent translated into a series of self preparatory actions. He restated the importance of having a plan to drive the school system, but he also indicated a need for a plan of action to prepare himself for the challenge. He described those actions as “deliberate and focused” (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday stated that his initial action was to mentally move himself from the role of assistant superintendent to that of superintendent. In order to achieve this “purging”, he developed a list of questions that outlined the things “I felt I needed

to know in order to move into the superintendency. I had to then determine how to best access that information.” He reported that he wanted to be sure that the perceptions and perspective he held of the status of the school system as an assistant superintendent were accurate (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

During the initiation phase of his tenure, Cannaday reviewed all annual school plans developed by each school site; each school’s and department’s budget projections and approved plans; and budget expenditures. This activity allowed him to compile a profile of each individual school and its academic program, to garner an assessment of the operational functions of the school system and to validate his perceptions and perspective. Because he was the assistant superintendent for instruction, the information was readily available to him and “merely needed to be put together” in a format which allowed for a quick analysis (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday reviewed reports and budget statements from all service departments - including maintenance, building and grounds, transportation and auxiliary services. From the data collected and analyzed, he identified two areas of major concern: fragmented internal/external communication, and minority achievement disparities. Cannaday identified these as critical issues that needed

to be addressed immediately and noted a need to address these issues of concern with his transition team.

He met with principals and central office administrators early in the initiation phase of his tenure. Having made an agenda of what he identified as critical transition issues, Cannaday listed for them several procedural issues to be adhered to during the initiation phase time frame of April to June. Two key factors noted were the facts that (1) there were to be no changes in personnel assignments, and (2) there were to be no major budget expenditures (over \$5000) or line item transfer of funds that had not already been approved prior to the announcement of his appointment. Cannaday also announced that requests for summer vacation leave would only be approved within a restricted time frame for the 1994 summer months. He announced the designated time frame as being the months of July and first two weeks of August. Cannaday stated that he used this initiation phase to establish a working climate that would “drive, not only the transition phase, but the duration of my tenure” (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday met with the members of the school system support staff within the first two weeks of the initiation phase of his tenure. He stated that he wanted the support staff to feel a part of the initiation and transition phases of his tenure as superintendent. He indicated that he wanted them to understand the change in his

role from assistant superintendent to superintendent. Further, he wanted them to understand his validation of their contribution to the school system.

At the meeting, Cannaday addressed and discussed four key issues. He stated that his objective was to make sure that he,

as superintendent-elect, clearly understood the major issues confronting the school division from the perspective of the support staff; communicated accurately the support staff issues and concerns to the appropriate administrators and that those issues were included in the superintendent's annual school report to the board; had enough information, or access to the right information, so that when questions were raised, [he] would be able to understand and interpret support staff concerns and subsequently determine how those concerns effected or impacted the school division; and set a climate that leaves the door open for discussion of other and varied issues" (Minutes September Meeting, April 28, 1994; B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday admitted that it was important to him to get "something done" in the initiation phase. He acknowledged that one of the objectives of his personal plan of action deliberately increased his level of visibility throughout the school

division. He was, however, always careful not to upstage or infringe on the tenure of the outgoing superintendent (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

The First One Hundred Days

Cannaday reported that the time spent during the initiation phase of his tenure preparing for the superintendency allowed him to “hit the ground running” as superintendent (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

During the two weeks following his appointment as interim superintendent, Cannaday filled the position of assistant superintendent for instruction. He considered five applicants for the position, including two internal applicants. Cannaday ultimately recommended one of the candidates who applied from outside of the school system to fill the position.

At the beginning of the first one hundred days transition phase, Cannaday instituted a number of procedures designed to improve internal communication flow from all levels to all levels of the school system operations. He established two teams of professionals to react and respond to issues and concerns effecting the school system. The Superintendent’s Cabinet (formerly the transition team) was established as a sounding board for the superintendent. This cabinet included both

the assistant superintendent for instruction and the assistant superintendent for pupil services; and the directors of the human resources, finance, and public information offices.

Additionally, he established an expanded team which included the assistant director of public information; the coordinator of safe schools and administration; the directors of instruction and special education; a curriculum leader and a teacher specialist; representatives from instructional services; the directors of the offices of guidance, information and technology, staff development, and plant facilities; coordinator of nurses; the coordinator of social services representatives from pupil services; one high school, one middle school, and four elementary principals; four members from the Hampton Educator Association, and the Hampton Federation of Teachers; and three at-large teacher representatives. This team, referred to as the Team in the Huddle was established and convened to solicit a wide range of viewpoints and input on issues, concerns, and programs affecting the school system. Cannaday set up a bi-weekly meeting schedule for each group. He reported that these meetings provided him an opportunity to “articulate his vision for the school system; identify his expectations of school employees’ behaviors and performances; discuss planning and action issues and items; critique, review and revise school system policies and procedures” (B. Cannaday, personal

communication, November 28, 1994).

During the first one hundred days transition phase, Cannaday used these meetings to establish his leadership and management style. The agendas of the two meetings held in August specifically addressed his perception and observations of the school system and set the tone for change. Minutes of the August 15, 1994 meeting report that Cannaday charged that the school system “had become stagnant.” He stated that administrators and teachers had allowed themselves, in many instances, to become “trapped by old thinking.” He admonished the team to remember that “learning is our business and [that] we must determine how to use our resources, including ourselves, as resources to promote learning” (Team in the Huddle Minutes, August 15, 1994). A review of the minutes for Team in the Huddle as well as from the Superintendent’s Cabinet meetings revealed that Cannaday sent agendas for each meeting one week prior to the actual meeting dates. He stated that this practice allowed team members an opportunity to prepare for discussion. He indicated that the topics listed on the agendas were designed to help team members focus on school system priorities.

Cannaday introduced a process which included a series of forms for tracking projects during the first one hundred days of his tenure. A review of minutes from a series of meetings revealed references to goals and progress of projects or the

status of certain ongoing activities. The requirement to complete and distribute assignment forms following each meeting was established as standard operational procedures. Similar forms were introduced for the purpose of reporting goals updates and project management tracking (See Appendix C).

The format of the Team in the Huddle meetings provided a basis by which Cannaday defined and managed his expectations of team members. The minutes reflect which issues or actions were addressed; what appropriate or possible actions were recommended; and which teams of staff were assigned to solve or resolve an issue or initiate action (Team in the Huddle Minutes, September 1994). Cannaday stated that he used the first one hundred days transition phase to move his staff from thinking unilaterally to promoting cooperative problem solving and collaborative interaction. "The structure of my meetings was designed for the purpose of teaching the team to problem solve in work groups whenever appropriate" (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday indicated that he really perceived the school system's internal communication inefficiency and ineffectiveness as being the undergirding of many of the school system's "perceived" problems (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). He acknowledged that a significant effort was spent in the first two months of the one hundred days transition phase setting

up initiatives that would improve the plaguing internal communication log (B. Cannaday, personal, November 28, 1994). To that end, Cannaday developed and established an electronic data base system that allowed all entities in the loop, inclusive of departments and school sites, to communicate freely with one another through the expansive use of technology. The system created a personalized track and management process that allowed all sites to access and input information to any ongoing project in the school system. Any staff persons who had responsibility for a task or project could immediately provide information, seek input and receive comments, responses, critiques and assistance from any other team member immediately. Cannaday additionally stated that this system served as a checks and balance system for him as it allowed input from all members of the teams and enabled him to monitor, manage, and track the progress of projects on a continuing basis.

During the initiation phase of his tenure, Cannaday made very little effort to meet with community leaders or other members of the citizenry; however, within the first thirty days of his transition phase, Cannaday approved a request from the director of public information and the public relations manager to set up an informational meeting for selected representatives from various community organizations (Memo to Jerry Sanford, August 3, 1994). In a June 18, 1994 memo

to the Superintendent's Cabinet, the director of public information and public relations manager proposed this meeting indicating a need " to inform certain community constituents . . . of the development of a long range plan and the need to gather opinions from the citizenry on what the division's priorities should be" (Memo, June 18, 1994). The memo further stated that a "list is being created of representatives from various arenas including civic groups; ministerial alliances; retired citizens; the Redevelopment and Housing Authority; tenant management groups, and the business industry" (Memo, June 18, 1994). Reference in the memo is made to purchasing a civic group directory from the Hampton Public Library at a cost of \$15.00.

Cannaday decided that a press conference would be the most effective vehicle for sharing the substance of the proposed long range plan with the community. Sixty days into the first one hundred days transition phase, Cannaday held a press conference and invited the entire Hampton community to join the school system on this "journey worth taking together." Reading the proposal submitted to the school board which outlined his vision and the six key goals, Cannaday stated that, "as partners, we can work miracles in the lives of our young people and truly make a positive difference. (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, September 1, 1994; B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Cannaday announced all personnel changes or action during the two weeks he served as interim superintendent. He stated that he wanted all speculations and surprises over and done with prior to the July 1 official start up date (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). During those two weeks, he announced the appointment of the assistant superintendent for instruction; announced the appointment of three new school principals; and the reassignment of six principals to other schools. He created and filled the position of a safe schools director. Cannaday also reassigned the secretary to the former superintendent to another secretarial position. He chose, instead, to select another secretary from the administrative secretarial pool to serve as secretary to the superintendent.

One of the components of the proposed long range plan included an objective by which building administrators would be compensated based on student performance in their respective schools. In order to move forward in that direction, Cannaday proposed to the board that an external researcher be hired as a consultant to complete an organizational study of the Hampton City Schools administrative and supervisory staff within the central administration. The board approved the proposal and a consultant was hired (Memos, June 1, 1994 and July 11, 1994). This action was taken within fifteen days of the first one hundred days

transition phase.

Cannaday stated that his first one hundred days were “punctuated with what I can only describe as crisis situations.” On October 5, 1994, a gunman entered one of the elementary schools just as school was about to be dismissed. The school was evacuated after the gunman ran through the back door holding a gun. Although none of the children or staff were injured, the police were unable to subdue the gunman before he killed himself. The classroom in which the gunman committed suicide had to be cleaned, repainted and recarpeted.

Cannaday indicated that overall, his staff responded “professionally and ably to the crisis situation,” but he acknowledged that he should have met with his public information personnel as a part of his early one hundred days transition activities and defined a specific procedure for handling external communication specific to that type of crisis (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994). As a result of the incident, Cannaday called for an immediate assessment of safety procedures for all thirty-four schools and ordered renovations for the communications system for the school involved and any others found to be ineffective (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, October 7, 1994).

Cannaday cited a second occurrence which he felt challenged his administrative acumen during the first one hundred days transition phase of his

tenure. Inadvertently, questionnaires about the consequences of premarital sex were given to all students in sixth through tenth grades before being approved by the Family Life Steering Committee. Parents were not notified or given the opportunity to excuse their children from participating in the survey which is the policy affecting all issues relevant to family life classes. Cannaday declined to identify those responsible for not forwarding the materials to the committee, but did absolve from any fault the Hampton Social Services Department who developed the test (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*, October 19, 1994; B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28 1994).

Responses from those interviewed showed that parents were as much concerned and upset with the procedural slip as they were with the questions asked on the questionnaire. The Hampton Council of PTA's scheduled a special meeting for November 1, 1994 to let parents discuss the issue with school authorities. However, council president Carol Ann McErlean reported that she was "satisfied with Cannaday's response and the way the incident was being handled." In the October 19, 1994 edition of the *Daily Press*, Cannaday is quoted as saying, "A lot of people forget about the important role of the steering committee . . . anything that would be explained would be an excuse . . ." Cannaday announced that all questionnaires would be destroyed. Parents were invited to witness the shredding

at 6:30 p.m. before the evening's school board meeting at the school administration building (R. Shawgo, *Daily Press*. October 19, 1994).

An editorial published the day following the school board meeting lauded Cannaday's handling of a "potentially violative situation." The editorial stated in the opinion of the editor, "Parents . . . should be reassured by the prompt and direct manner in which school superintendent Billy Cannaday has responded to the [school system's] error" (*Daily Press*, October 20, 1994).

In responding to the question, "Were your vision or plans for Hampton City Schools altered or changed during the first one hundred days of your tenure?", Cannaday admitted that, though his vision had not changed, he realized that he may have abbreviated some key steps to an effective superintendent tenure because he had the advantage of being promoted from inside the organization. He acknowledged that he had begun to see some "key players" emerging that he had not anticipated having the potential for pivotal or influential community acceptance of several of his proposed programs.

Cannaday also identified that the change in the partially (three of seven) elected school board may have deserved more of his attention during the initiation phase of his tenure. He expressed what he called the overriding factor that focused the activity of his first one hundred days in office: "your survival and mine is

contingent on how well these students do . . . I am confident that the organization . . . I have put people in place supports my vision to ensure that these student do well” (B. Cannaday, personal communication, November 28, 1994).

Analysis

Cannaday’s initiation and transition into the superintendency were not problematic. He came into the position with full board support and had the advantage of a close working relationship with the outgoing superintendent. He was a part of and respected by the community, which made his appointment somewhat anti-climatic; that is, it was not a surprise or unexpected.

Although superintendents do not have the luxury of bringing new management teams with them, Cannaday had the advantage of having worked with the school system administrators for several years. Langlois (1986) argues that a good and effective method of transitioning into a superintendency is knowing how to work with and through others. Cannaday was able to do so because of his previous position in the same school system in which he was promoted to superintendent. He also followed two of the survival techniques Dunnerstick (1992) suggests that new superintendents follow: knowing the board members and administrators and establishing ways of communicating with them as well as

building and strengthening a leadership team.

Cannaday's initiation and transition phases were both formal and informal as Konnert and Augenstein (1990) have suggested. They point out that the processes that prepare a superintendent for the position occur before and after assumption to the position.

Cannaday's initiation stage was played out as he brought closure to the administrative position he held within the school system prior to assuming the superintendency. This allowed him easy and immediate access to personnel, documents and records, and resources as he planned for the transition phase of his tenure, thus enabling him to expand himself into the role of superintendent while simultaneously establishing the direction and focus of his tenure.

Chapter 5: Dr. Mark A. Edwards

The Prevailing Climate of Henrico County

Henrico County located in the south central area of the state is a bedroom community looping the city of Richmond, the Virginia state capitol. The public school system is made up of fifty-five schools, eight high schools, eight middle schools, and thirty-eight elementary schools, and has an enrollment of about 35,000 students. The school system is divided into five school districts.

Dr. Mark A. Edwards succeeded Dr. William C. Boshier, Jr. who had served as Henrico County's superintendent for thirteen years and who resigned from the school system after being named the state superintendent of public instruction in January 1994 by Republican governor-elect George Allen. Boshier was known by constituents and colleagues as an astute administrator and a respected public speaker (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995). He was viewed as a strong, outspoken advocate for the Henrico County school system and consistently maintained a profile of high visibility at both the local and state levels. In a three page published report, then school superintendent Boshier announced the Henrico County school systems' opposition to two of Virginia's State Department of Education's most controversial education proposals - *Outcome Based Education* and the *World Class Education Initiative*. According to a September 11, 1993

newspaper article, in *the Richmond Times-Dispatch*, two proposals were viewed by many as Virginia's most controversial proposals. Boshier questioned how well *Outcome Based Education* and the *World Class Education Initiative* would serve students in Henrico County. He expressed concern that the plan "treats all school systems alike". He wrote, "the majority of our Henrico County students have done well and should not be maligned by the failures of a few". Boshier contended that the role of the state should be to set ambitious content standards and then to permit local communities to develop programs. . . . (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 11, 1993, p. B1). Boshier's report, approved by the Henrico County school board, charged that *Outcome Based Education* is expensive, long on molding attitudes and short on academics, and too focused on **multiculturalism**". Under Boshier's leadership, the Henrico County school system was the first of several school systems to take exception to the proposed Commonwealth educational plans.

Following the announcement of Boshier's resignation, the Henrico County school board announced that a national search would be conducted for a new superintendent. On January 10, 1994, they appointed Kenneth Crush, then finance director for Henrico County Public Schools, to serve as acting superintendent ("School Finance Head Tapped", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, p. B5). Crush joined

the school division as finance director in 1986. He continued his duties as finance director for the schools while serving as the acting superintendent. Crush acknowledged having no interest in applying for the position of superintendent and, in fact, returned to his position as finance director when the new superintendent assumed his position on July 1, 1994.

In 1989, under the leadership of Boshier, and five years prior to Edward's appointment, the Henrico County school board adopted a six year strategic plan developed by a thirty-six member commission made up of school and community representatives. This strategic plan established 14 initiatives as goals for the school system and 124 strategies to be employed in achieving those goals. The management plan, which was developed by a task force of teachers and administrators and designed to implement the commission's recommendations, was entitled *The Henrico Education: 2000 Management Plan*. It was an ambitious plan with initiatives and strategies that effected every area of the Henrico County students' schooling - from intellectual development to physical fitness (*Road to 2000*, October 1993, p.1).

Eight months prior to Edwards' assuming the superintendency, the Henrico County school board published a summary report which indicated results of the initiatives and implementation strategies after the first four years. The findings

showed a continuous rate of increasing academic performance for students in 59 of the 60 indicators examined. However, the data revealed that while those four years showed an increase in academic performance, the factors that correlate with larger numbers of young people needing special academic and developmental support also increased. These factors included a 73.7% increase of adults and children who receive aid to families with dependent children. (Citation from *Richmond Times Dispatch*, August 24, 1993, quoting information from the Virginia Department of Social Services). The number of families receiving food stamps increased 101.6% and the measure of economic deprivation in the annual Chapter I survey rose from 14% to 17.6% (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 24, 1994, p.1). Of the 124 strategies contained in the *Henrico Education: 2000 Management Plan*, 110 strategies had been implemented at the time of the report. The remaining strategies were scheduled for completion by the end of 1995.

At the time of Edward's appointment to the Henrico County superintendency, Henrico County was experiencing not only a significant overall population growth, but also a shift in the diverse make up of the population.

The Henrico County school board actively sought input from the community in its search to fill the superintendent's position. The Henrico County school board held two community forums to hear comments from parents and other citizens as

to the personal and professional qualities they would like to see in the new school superintendent. Excerpts from those forums provide insight as to the climate of Henrico County prior to Edward's assuming the superintendency: "The superintendent must be clearly able to make all schools good and serve all students regardless of social status," said Willie Thomas, a resident of the Fairfield District. "My only child was a part of this system, and it served her well. However, there is room for improvement . . . and I'm concerned that the next [superintendent] be capable of building on what we already have." Thomas said there is "a perception in this county that some schools are better than others in the county . . . I have heard such words as east versus west, minorities versus majority, blacks versus whites", (A. Lindsey, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 19, 1994, p. L1).

According to a report from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Section *Henrico Plus*, p. L1), several speakers at the forums asked that the new superintendent be committed to maintaining and expanding programs for gifted students. "While I understand the superintendent must be concerned with the quality of education for all Henrico students, I strongly believe the superintendent must concentrate more resources on gifted students," said George Moxley, Tuckahoe District's delegate to the Gifted Advisory Council, who has three children in the county schools. "The present expenditure is \$381.00 per gifted student, compared to \$4,511 per

exceptional education student” (A. Lindsey, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 19, 1994, p. L1).

A fifth grade teacher asked that the new superintendent be someone “willing to meet with teachers, staff, parents, and students to discuss their concerns.” Carol Townes, president of the Henrico County Education Association, added, “. . . hope you will select someone who truly enjoys working with children and young adults and supports us [teachers] in our efforts to meet their [children] needs” (A. Lindsey, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 19, 1994, p. L1).

In addition to the forums, the school board provided the citizens a means for submitting written comments. The board set a March 31st deadline for receipt of applications, but on April 12, 1994, the deadline was extended to the end of April.

The board announced that the extension would allow the school system to make more contacts with prospective applicants . . . at the National School Board’s Association meeting held in New Orleans, Louisiana in mid-April, (“More Schools Chief Applications Sought”, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 13, 1994, p. L.).

School board member K. Craig Thompson indicated that the board’s expectation of the new superintendent’s leadership would be that “students should continue their strong scoring on standardized tests and that the county should continue its excellence in providing top-notch facilities, specialized programs for

students, and technological advances in the classroom” (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, August 24, 1994, p. L1).

The New Superintendent

Dr. Mark A. Edwards was appointed superintendent of Henrico County Public Schools in June 1994. His prior experiences included that of middle school science teacher; an assistant principal in Manassas, Virginia; three elementary school principal positions in Virginia, Tennessee, and Florida; executive director of elementary education (which was considered the same as assistant superintendent) in Wake County, North Carolina; and a two year superintendency in Danville, Virginia. Edwards has a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from the University of Tennessee; a master’s degree in school administration from Tennessee Technological University; a doctoral degree in educational leadership from Vanderbilt University.

Edwards brought to the Henrico County Public Schools an accountability for the success of a number of significant educational initiatives. As superintendent of the Danville, Virginia system, a public school system with seventeen schools and approximately 8,000 students, Edwards instituted a plan that created an alternative school for students who were not achieving in regular or traditional classroom

settings. This plan was developed in response to the school system's documentation of an increase in student disciplinary problems. During his tenure in Danville, the city won the prestigious U. S. Senate Productivity Medallion, credited in part to the positive outcomes associated with the alternative school program instituted under Edward's direction (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995). Under Edward's leadership, the school system established a professional growth and staff development plan for employees. The plan was designed to insure the standardization of a continual process for improving teacher and staff professional performances. Additionally the school board adopted a weapons policy that banned students having been caught with a gun at school from returning to a regular class setting (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 19, 1994, p. B1.).

During his tenure in Danville, Edwards was involved in several controversial issues. In 1993, the school system denied a student's request to pray at graduation exercises. "Although we cannot give permission, we respect a student's right to express religious beliefs," Edwards was quoted as saying. In May of 1994 Danville became the first locality in the state to defeat the issues of elected school boards. A Methodist who sings in his church choir, he said, "I am a religious person, and I truly believe our country is based on the idea of respect for religious beliefs, but at

the same time, we must respect the law” (p. B1).

Colleagues, administrators and parents expressed support of Edwards’s tenure in Danville and regret at his leaving. “It is [his] ability to stand by his decisions that makes him a solid leader . . . This man’s philosophy deals with what is right for children . . . He shows his compassion, and he listens” (p. B1).

Charles H. Majors, chairman of the Danville school board stated, “He has provided outstanding leadership here. . . . I did all I could to talk him out of it [accepting the Henrico job]. We really wanted to keep him” (p. B1). However, before they agreed to release him from his contract, the Danville school board, required Edwards to repay half the \$15,000 fee charged by the firm contracted to conduct the search for their next superintendent. The school board and Edwards agreed that this was fair as compensation for leaving in the middle of his four year contract.

Edwards admitted that it was difficult for him to leave Danville.

I had two very wonderful years and a lot of success; the system had achieved more acclaim probably in that two year period than in its history . . . It was very difficult . . . there was a departure reception and other such events, and all in all people were very kind (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

In response to the question, "What prompted your interest in the Henrico County Public Schools superintendency?" Edwards indicated that he was approached by several colleagues from across the state who suggested that he apply for the position. At that point he admitted that he did not respond because he was not interested in making a lateral career move. Shortly afterwards, he was contacted by several "leaders within the state of Virginia including Dr. Vincent C. Cibbarelli, the executive director of the Virginia Association of School Administrators, and the state chapter of AASA (recognized nationally as the association of superintendents) who very "forcefully" urged him to apply for the position. Cibbarelli stated that he felt Edwards would be a good match with Henrico County. Dr. William Bosher, the former superintendent of Henrico County, also called and urged Edwards to consider applying for the position (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995). Following what he described as a significant push from a varied number of individuals, Edwards agreed to take a look at the system and eventually applied for the superintendency.

Edwards stated that his family played a very important role in his decision to apply for the Henrico County superintendency. One of their considerations was the number of moves his career goals had already generated. The ages of his children, then eight and five, made the move to Henrico County timely because he believed

that their adjustment would be less difficult. Since his wife was also an educator, they were confident that she could continue her own career goals in Henrico County. Edwards stated that his wife's feelings played a major role in the decision. Had she not felt positively about moving to Henrico County, he would not have applied for the position. Edwards was definitive in tagging himself and his wife as a "team" and indicated that they look very closely at any career move in terms of its significance to his career and the potential impact on their family and desired life style (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

When asked how he made the decision about where to build or buy a home for his family in the county, Edwards responded that since he was privy to all the information on individual school data as superintendent-elect, he reviewed all the pertinent data on file on the individual schools and school districts, talked to people who lived in Henrico County, and solicited input from friends. Ultimately, he and his wife selected a community based on the district that they felt would be "best for their children" and "one that would most match the type of community life as the one they had left in Danville making the move less traumatic for their children" (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

The Henrico County school board, which consisted of five members, conducted a national search through the National School Board Association. In a

5-0 board vote, Edwards was selected from a pool of thirty-one applicants which included twenty-five men and six women; twenty-four applicants were from outside of Virginia. The announcement of his appointment was made on May 9, 1994. He officially assumed the position of superintendent of Henrico County on July 5, 1994.

In an interview with the local newspaper, school board chairman Kay Sears stated, "We weren't looking for a replacement for Dr. Boshier. We were looking for the best person for our school system" (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 19, 1994, p. B1). She further stated that Edwards' vision, presence and high expectations of children were the main reasons he was chosen from among the thirty-one who applied (p. B1).

Establishing A Climate

Edwards officially assumed the position of superintendent on July 1, 1994. He succeeded Dr. William C. Boshier, Jr. who vacated the Henrico County Public Schools superintendency in January 1994 to assume the position of Virginia State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Kenneth R. Crush, Henrico County Public Schools director of finance, was appointed as acting superintendent and served in that position from January 11, 1994 to June 30, 1994 (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 7, 1994, p. B3).

Edwards described the relationship between him and Boshier as “amicable” (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995). He stated that Boshier made himself available to him by phone during the two month period prior to his assuming the superintendent’s position. Boshier provided Edwards with information relative to the scope of the Henrico County superintendency as he knew and understood it during his tenure. Additionally, Edwards was able to ask questions of the acting superintendent, Crush, who did not apply for nor express any interest in being considered for the superintendent position.

Edwards acknowledged that following Boshier as superintendent was a challenge. Boshier’s reputation as a “people person, a dynamic speaker, and a mover and shaker created a fairly good size foot print” (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995). While Edwards admitted that he shared certain philosophies with Boshier, he wanted the comparison to stop there. “I have great respect for Dr. Boshier and I admire him,” Edwards stated in a June 19, 1994 interview given the *Richmond Times Dispatch* newspaper. “There are a lot of similarities between us - we both have a conservative style and we both focus on the basics - but I do not pretend to be Dr. Boshier. We are two very different people” (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 19, 1994, p. B1).

Edwards stated that in discussions just prior to the announcement of his

appointment, the Henrico County school board voiced unconditional confidence in his ability. They informed him that they believed he had the leadership abilities needed to effectively administer the school system. They indicated strong board support for his pedagogical and philosophical positions and that based on the past successes of his day to day practical operations demonstrated in prior positions in other schools, they were confident of his potential (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 4, 1995).

Edwards acknowledged that the school board provided no clearly defined directives either during the interview process or at the time of his appointment. He stated that he found the school board's lack of specific position and expectations to be "quite interesting and somewhat surprising" (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 6, 1995). He indicated that he expected more direction and more clearly or specifically stated goals from the school board, much as he had received from the Danville, Virginia school board. The Henrico County school board simply told him to come and "do his thing" and pledged their full support to him as the education system's leader. The school board did not present him with an agenda or any particular direction. During the two month initiation phase of his tenure, they put the ones of establishing the climate on him. School board members invited Edwards to call them if he felt they could assist him in any way, but

basically said “Come in: Take a look at things; Scope it out and do what you need to do” (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

The school board held a major press conference announcing the appointment of Edwards as the new superintendent. They sponsored a reception and invited key community leaders and school administrators. Specifically, the school board assumed a role pretty much of being in charge of the public relations aspect of introducing the new superintendent to the community and opening the initial doors.

Edwards acknowledged that finding the answer to how one identifies the “key players” in a community and selects the strategies necessary to connect with those players is critical to an effective superintendent tenure. He stated that he felt it very important to be a proactive and visible superintendent, particularly in the initiation phase of the tenure. He defined “proactive and visible” as being that of moving into a new position in a new locale, and “negotiating the right connections” (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Since he did not actually establish residency in Henrico County, assume any administrative responsibilities, or participate in activities of the superintendency during the initiation phase of his tenure, Edwards began the process of identifying key players during the two month initiation phase from “afar” (M. Edwards, personal

communication, March 12, 1995). In order to identify the key players in the Henrico County community, Edwards asked various people, including school board members, the acting superintendent, the former superintendent and a few family members and friends who lived in the community to develop a list of people with whom they felt he should meet and establish linkages. This initiative resulted in a list with nearly 200 recommended names.

Edwards scheduled a series of meetings. He staggered the schedule so that some were held during the two month initiation phase of his tenure while others were held during the first one hundred days of the transition. In meeting with the individuals on the list, Edwards posed two questions, "What recommendations do you have for me personally?", and "What recommendations do you have for the school system?" (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995). Edwards compiled a summary of the comments from the various individuals, noting for future reference, the trends in what various individuals and groups of individuals recommended. Edwards reported that he used the information he received to develop a course of action for interacting with the community and he began implementation of the plan within the first one hundred days transition phase.

When questioned as to whether the key players he had identified provided a support system for him after he assumed the position of superintendent, Edwards

responded, "It depended on the issue . . . but I have an established reputation for being accessible and approachable; therefore, solutions or resolutions are rarely adversarial" (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

At the time of the interview, well past the first one hundred days transition phase, Edwards indicated that he still had not joined any organizations or civic groups and was uncertain as to whether he would or not. The decision, he stated, is a critical one. A superintendent's membership in certain organizations sends a message to the community. A new superintendent has to be careful not to send the wrong message (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Pushed to respond to the follow-up question, "What issues or factors are you considering in making the decision as to which civic, social, or community organization to join?", Edwards indicated that he would look for (1) organizations that added some value to the community as a whole, and (2) organizations that he felt had strong political, community, and resource contacts or connections. Edwards stated that the superintendent's position is very much immersed in the very real world of politics. His overall feeling was that a superintendent must be connected, know people, and be extremely proactive.

The Edwards family did select a church to join. The decision was made by visiting six or seven different Methodist churches in the area. The driving factor in

making the decision relative to the choice of churches was to find a church that had a good youth program for the benefit of the daughters. Edwards felt that selecting a church early in the transition was an indication to the community that he was committed to the community. "People generally accept your choice of a place to worship as being a personal - not professional - decision" (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Edwards admitted that he considered employing the same tactic in Henrico County that he had found effective in Danville. Deciding on membership in a few select organizations, as superintendent of Danville schools, Edwards volunteered to speak at every single civic and social organizational meeting or event he could identify. This commitment, he said, led to an even greater community involvement for him than it would have if he had joined just a few select clubs or organizations.

Vision and Plan

The initiation phase of his tenure was described by Edwards as being "very low key and somewhat low profile" (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995). Edwards stated that his vision and a plan of action for actualizing his vision for the Henrico County School System evolved after he assumed the position of superintendent of the school system. Edwards stressed that even after the announcement of his appointment to the Henrico County superintendency, he still

considered himself superintendent of the Danville School System, and as such, continued to put his energies and focus on bringing closure to that position (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

He added that during the initiation phase of his tenure he had very little dialogue with very few people about the Henrico County School System. He admitted that most of his proactive discussions were confined to conversations with the Henrico County school board chairman and vice chairman.

During the initiation phase, Edwards requested that he be sent copies of any printed material - budget plans, annual reports, media releases, board minutes, and other available informational material. He reported that he read through those documents and noted comments for future reference. Additionally, he listed questions that he wanted to ask of specific people to certain issues and programs. Admittedly, he gained a limited perspective from relatives who lived in the area and from a former colleague who had worked previously in the Henrico County School System and whose wife still worked in the system as a teacher. During the two month initiation phase of his tenure, Edwards communicated by phone with select senior staff members to track certain activities occurring within the school system during this phase of his tenure. "I received some immediate information from what I would call a very informal perspective, but I did not have a lot of information until

I actually assumed the position in July” (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

During the two month initiation phase, Edwards had regular contact with the school board chairman and vice chairman who he admitted were helpful in directing him through the appropriate channels for accessing information. This contact, he felt, was very positive and very important to his making an effective transition to the new position. He wanted to be able to “hit the ground running” when he came on board (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Once he brought closure to his Danville superintendency, Edwards addressed the immediate need to learn as much as he could about Henrico County - the people, the geography, and the community. He reported to the new superintendency position on July 5, 1994, beginning his first one hundred days transition phase of his tenure. Edwards used the first thirty days of that phase to begin assimilating information and developing a plan of action. Edwards indicated that during those first thirty days, he worked up to sixteen hours a day, six to seven days a week, getting to know the system as much as possible. His family moved to the county in August.

Edwards reported that it was during this time frame that he thoroughly reviewed *The Henrico Education: 2000 Management Plan*. The plans was in its last

phase of implementation when he assumed the Henrico County superintendent position. He described the plan as being very comprehensive and that, based on his initial review of the plan and its October 1993 status report, he determined to support the plan through its projected time line ending date of June 1995. He did not feel a need, at that stage of the transition phase, to enact any changes or modifications to the existing school system plan. The existing plan was built around 14 initiatives that he acknowledged as being initiatives to which no educational leader could, or would, object. He read the fourteen initiatives from *The Henrico Education 2000 Management Plan*:

Individual Potential/Intellectual Development

Individual Student Planning Profile

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving

Second Language Fluency

International Literacy

Employment and Lifelong Learning

Strengthened Community

Arts and Humanities

Character Development

Personal Fitness

Parent Education/Home Support

Community/Business/School Partnerships

Organization for Instruction

Human Resource Development

Edwards acknowledged several times throughout the interview that when he began the first one hundred days transition phase of his tenure in Henrico County, he did not have a specific focus or plan of action. What he did have was a very definitive commitment to certain pedagogical and administrative trends and practices. One of which was the practice of participatory management. Based on his analysis of the status or the degree of the use of participatory management strategies being used across the school system, it was Edwards' plan to institute or expand the practice. "I believe in engaging people and believe very much that we have to focus on classroom instruction and establishing flexible autonomy within individual schools and communities. I guess I did have a vision of sorts - a philosophy of education that I wanted to promote - but I had no specific plan because I really didn't know what I was going to find" (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Edwards began the development of his plan for the school system at the start of his first 100 days of his tenure. Edwards set the tone for his vision and plan for

the system in an interview with the *Richmond-Times Dispatch* in late June prior to assuming the position of Henrico County superintendent. "I believe Henrico County Schools are among the best in the nation . . . I believe they can be better than that. I am very excited to have a chance to be a part of that . . ." , (J. Gaggiano, *Richmond-Times Dispatch*, June 19, 1994, p. B1).

The First One Hundred Days

In response to the question, "What actions or changes did you initiate within the first one hundred days or the transition phase of your tenure?", Edwards responded

candidly, actually very few . I think that any superintendent who comes into a system with a plan without taking the time to get to know the people, the community and the system . . . tries to do things prior to becoming acquainted and having some information; they are probably going to move into a direction that may not be the right direction" (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Edwards stated that he used the first one hundred days of his tenure to become acquainted with and immersed in the school system. To that end, Edwards immediately scheduled and engaged in an intensive process of meeting with staff

people, parents and community members. During the sixty days following the onset of his transition phase, Edwards initiated a plan designed to provide him with the maximum level of visibility and access to information.

He discussed his meeting schedule and highlighted what he described as “key focus groups” with whom he met which included individuals and groups of community leaders and key players assembled from the list of two hundred people compiled during the initiation phase.

Edwards visited each school prior to the beginning of the school year meeting with custodians, secretaries, parents and others who may have been in the schools at the time of his visit. He asked all individuals to “explain to him what their roles or jobs expectancies entailed and to talk about what was important to them.” Furthermore, he asked them “what recommendations would you make to strengthen the school system?” (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Edwards met with the top management staff, the central office, and support administrators. These meetings were scheduled with both individuals and small groups.

His schedule included brief meetings with principals and assistant principals. Edwards indicated that these meetings were designed for him to establish an understanding between him and the building administrators of his style of

management and administration.

Sixty days into his first one hundred days transition phase, Edwards met with the Henrico County School Board and discussed his observations and analysis of the findings. He again received full board support to continue “moving ahead” (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Throughout the last forty days of the one hundred days transition phase, Edwards continued his plan to “meet and greet.” He established a goal to visit each classroom in the school system within the first semester. This totaled 2,400 classroom visits. The goal was to meet with every single teacher and principal, ask questions of them and provide them with an opportunity to ask questions of him. The visits were of very short in duration - approximately ten to fifteen minutes. Edwards further indicated that he began the scheduling to meet with each instructional and staff member in the school system. This process was designed to assist him in his goal to determine the perspective and perceptions of employees as they relate to the school system.

At some point during the first one hundred days transition phase, Edwards announced to teachers and principals that they would have the opportunity to evaluate him at the end of the first year of his tenure. Edwards acknowledged that the procedures he followed during the transition phase were mostly a replication of

what he had done in assuming the superintendency in Danville. He stated that he had also employed during his transition phase some of the same strategies when he served as an executive director, (which is considered the same as an assistant superintendent) in (Wake County) North Carolina (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Edwards felt that he was very fortunate to have had full school board support. He indicated that he did not request a financial audit of the school system neither during the initiation nor transition phases of his tenure. He stated that he was confident of the integrity of Dr. Boshers' tenure. Edwards reported that he did not discuss specific personnel changes or appointments with the school board. However, the board members made him aware of central office staff positions that could open up with the onset of his transition phase, which did, in fact, occur. Edwards considered himself fortunate to have the opportunity to fill four key, top-level administrative positions within the first one hundred days of his transition phase. This opportunity occurred as a result of attrition and of one individual's leaving the area. Edwards filled three positions from "the inside and one from outside of the system." He stated that being able to identify and hire administrators who share the same philosophies and understand the vision of the superintendent was very important to the success of a superintendent (M. Edwards, personal

communication, March 12, 1995). Edwards was able to fill the positions of director of elementary education, director of secondary education, assistant superintendent for instruction and director of human resources.

Within the first 100 days of his tenure, Edwards stated that he identified one particular area that he felt effected the overall quality of the Henrico County school program. He described this need as being reflected by the absence of what he called a strong leadership development program. He felt that a specific focus on planned recruitment and the hiring of teachers, staff, and administrators required aggressive attention. Once immersed in the transition phase of his tenure, Edwards observed that the infrastructure of the school system may not have been as strong as appearances had suggested. He assessed that the process of hiring, promoting, and training of school personnel did not reflect the level of scrutiny or attention that he felt was necessary to maintain and sustain a “leading” school system (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

In October 1994, Edwards met with the school board and this time shared very specific and critical observations and findings. As a result of his meeting with the school board regarding his findings, Edwards proposed the institution of two new initiatives. The proposals were complete with drafts of plans for infusing and implementing the new initiatives. The initiatives designed to address the issues of

a weak infrastructure were presented as (1) an early retirement incentive plan that would allow for the downsizing of central office staff and the possible reorganization of the system's infrastructure, and (2) a growth development plan which would include revisions of the systems' professional development goals and objectives; restructuring the existing recruitment and hiring practices and procedures; and the development of a more comprehensive and relevant teacher performance evaluation instrument.

Both plans paralleled retirement and growth development plans developed and implemented in Danville by Edwards during his tenure as superintendent of Danville City Schools. "These plans", Edwards stated, would enable him to "bring about a dramatic new direction focusing on growth rather than a continuation of existing practices" (M. Edwards, personal communication, March 12, 1995).

Essentially, Edwards used both the initiation and transition phases as a period to establish his administrative style and to identify the foci of his tenure as superintendent. Edwards acknowledged that it was actually after the first one hundred days that he felt he really understood the complexity and the degree of diversity in the make- up and needs from one school to another. Although his vision for the school system did not change, Edwards identified several critical areas which had the potential of impacting significantly on the school system that were not

addressed in the *Henrico Education: 2000 Management Plan*. One of those areas centered around the significant percentage (20%) of the school system's workforce - both teachers and administrators - who would retire by the year 1997. Edwards found no plan to insure a minimum of disruption that could be caused by that level of loss of human resources. Edwards also determined that the existing teacher evaluation system failed to measure the expectation of teacher performance and accountability as stated in the *Henrico Education: 2000 Management Plan*. Edwards admitted that he had a different perspective of the school system at the end of the first 100 days than he did prior to assuming the position of superintendent. However, this did not change his vision for the school system although he admitted he had to adjust his time line for achieving various goals.

Analysis

The initiation and transition phases of the superintendency for Dr. Mark Edwards were not problematic. He received full board support established at the time of his appointment. He came into the position with the board's belief in his leadership and support of his recommendations. Dr. Edwards established for himself a sixty day window during the first one hundred days transition phase through which he observed the system and talked with a variety of people about

their assessments of the school system. The critical objective of his initiation and transition phases, for him, was the establishment of a leadership style that would distinguish him from his predecessor.

According to Dunnerstick (1992), new superintendents should go into the job with few fundamentals, following key survival techniques. The new superintendent should know the board and know how to communicate with its members. He or she should also get to know administrators, begin to build and strengthen a leadership team, know the power base and understand the power of visibility. Following these techniques has the effect of easing the transition phase for new superintendents.

Edwards clearly followed the techniques that Dunnerstick outlined. After his appointment, he deliberately limited the number and scope of individuals with whom he communicated. He spoke with the chairman and vice chairman of the board, the former superintendent and the acting superintendent. He called upon some staff members for information as was needed. He used the initiation period, about two months in duration, to establish a working knowledge of the system so that he could come on board ready to move forward.

It is clear, too, that Edwards fully understood the necessity of being visible, both within the system and the community, and of identifying the community power base. He visited schools and classrooms, talked to principals, teachers and staff,

and community people. He scheduled speaking engagements with civic organizations, assessing those that would allow him to have strong political, community, and resource contacts. Consequently, he felt that he quickly established a reputation for being communicative and visible.

Langlois (1986) suggests that new superintendents must learn how to be good supervisors. This learning process entails holding periodic meetings with employees where the superintendent listens, makes suggestions, corrects and praises successes. He argues that a good and effective method of transitioning into a superintendency is knowing how to work with and through others. Edwards felt it was important to be proactive. Whenever he met with people, he asked for their recommendations, both for him and for the improvement of the school system. He also thanked them for their hard work. This method of transitioning is what Akenhead (1991) calls the art of enlightened management. Enlightenment management is defined as getting others into the decision making process and making sure that the decisions are implemented smoothly. Vann (1990) states that it is the responsibility of the new superintendent to create a climate that allows for strong, positive communication. Edwards followed a procedure that has established for him a profile of being actively and positively engaged and involved.

Edwards felt that it is essential for a new superintendent to engage in a

knowledge search in order to learn as much about the school system as possible. That means acquiring a full understanding of the visible issues as well as those that are not so visible. It is only through becoming fully acquainted with and immersed in the system that the new superintendent can move into the right direction. Following this procedure afforded Edwards an easy initiation and transition into the superintendency of Henrico County Public Schools.

SUMMARY: PATTERNS AND SIMILARITIES

This study was undertaken to describe and report the factors identified in an individual's initiation and transition into a new superintendency with the intent to identify discernible patterns and similarities in the initiation and transition phases. From these similarities and patterns can be culled certain basic, critical success factors as well as common challenges that could be determined as predictors of the length, scope and overall effectiveness of an individual's superintendency. The study proceeded on the premise that an individual's initiation and transition into a new superintendency were both formal and informal. Furthermore, it assumed that these phases occurred both prior to and after the assumption of the superintendent position.

This study focused on the perceptions of the five participants. Generally speaking, responses of the five participants were fairly consistent with the findings of earlier studies cited in the literature review. Where there are variances, it is important to acknowledge that the factors described in this study reflected the assessment of the five participants and may not be generalized to others.

The initiation and transition phases of a new superintendency are relatively brief and unique. This window includes the span of time between the announcement of the appointment and extends through the first one hundred days

after the assumption of the new position. During the interregnum period and the first three months in office, new superintendents choose personnel, set lines of authority and organization, and implement school board policies. The activities selected and strategies employed during the initiation and transition phases allow new superintendents to set a tone and to create important "first impressions" within the school system organization and throughout the school community. Although new superintendents may initially recommend many changes in policies and institute changes in both personnel assignments and the organizational structure, as they move further into their tenures it is generally accepted that superintendents would prefer to pace their actions carefully, rather than have to reverse their course of action after the fact. Therefore, the decisions made initially in the new superintendency should be well chosen.

Just as no two superintendents are exactly alike, neither then will the conditions, circumstances and personalities of a particular superintendency duplicate those of their predecessors or colleagues. As such, it was not the intent of this study to be interpreted as a manual for new superintendents or even a guide to be used in assuming a new superintendency. It was agreed that there were likely to be certain important similarities and recurring patterns identified throughout the initiation and transition phases and that, from those similarities and recurring

patterns, certain broad lessons, as well as suggestions and warnings, might be derived.

This study covered a narrow time frame relative to the superintendent's new tenure. The time frame began with the initiation phase, defined as the day the individual accepted the position, and continued up to and through the transition phase which began with the first one hundred days of the individual's actual tenure. This study was not designed to judge effective or ineffective tenures, but was designed to describe factors in each the initiation and transition phases as perceived by the individuals who participated in the study. These factors included the events and activities, the existing conditions and circumstances, and the agendas and relationships which occurred during the initiation and transition phases.

Five individuals were selected for this study: Dr. Billy Cannaday, Dr. Sue Burgess, Dr. Thomas Gaul, Dr. Mark Edwards, and Mrs. Joyce Trump. These individuals were selected as a sample of convenience from a list of superintendents serving in the first three years of a current position in a Virginia school system. Race and gender were considered in the selection process to the degree that the limited population would yield a varied representation. Of those selected, three were men, two were women. One was African American. Each individual was

interviewed for the study. The description of their responses provided the basis for each of the five preceding chapters.

The five school districts headed by each individual varied in student population. King William County, headed by Burgess, had less than 1,600 students. Dinwiddie County, headed by Gaul, had less than 3,000 students. Trump headed the Suffolk City Schools which served 10,050. The two larger school systems Henrico County, headed by Edwards, and Hampton, headed by Cannaday reported populations of 35,000 and 23,120, respectively. Although the school systems were different in size, the five superintendents reported significant similarities and patterns in several of the factors associated with their initiation and transition phases.

The study divided the five individual's responses into five broad categories. The interview questions were designed to yield specific information relative to the five categories. The categories described the (1) prevailing climate within the school district in which the superintendent vacancy occurred; (2) the professional and personal preparation for the superintendent position as reported by the individual; (3) the procedures used by the individual to establish a receptive climate; (4) the vision and plans of the individual for the school system; and (5) the first one hundred days of the superintendent's tenure. The following factors were identified

by the five individuals as recurring patterns and similarities:

- The relationship between the school board and the new superintendent during the initiation and transition phases was determined by the factors identified in the prevailing climate.
- The previous professional experience average was at least fifteen years and included classroom teaching, school site and central office administration.
- The completion of doctoral degree requirements is a factor that establishes credibility in the superintendency.
- The state school board association was involved in each of the superintendent searches.
- Each individual was married.
- The approval of a spouse in making the decision to apply for and accept the new superintendency was important to the three male individuals.
- While there was an apparent relationship between the former superintendent and the new superintendent, this relationship was not a factor that impacted the transition phase.
- The participants in this study described the importance and selection of membership in community organizations as being determined by various factors presented in their respective school communities.

- Neither church affiliation nor membership was considered by the subjects to be requisite in establishing a receptive climate.
- Involvement of the new superintendents in their respective school systems' activities during their initiation phase was encouraged by school boards and validated as being helpful to the transition phase.
- Key players in the community were identified as being representatives of similar community factions - governmental agencies, parent, civic and social organizations, special interest groups, business and industry centers.
- Identifying key players in the community was essential to the initiation and transition phases.
- The relationship between the new superintendent and the school board should be established by the new superintendent during either the interview or initiation phase.
- The primary activities of a new superintendent included the implementation of a plan of action; the establishment of a method of intraschool and community communication; management and control of the budget; and appointment of key personnel.

It was apparent from the five individuals' descriptions of the prevailing

climate that the chronology of events and circumstances surrounding the former superintendent's leaving had some influence on the factors associated with the initiation and transition phases of a new superintendency. The factors identified in the prevailing climate influenced the behavior of each of the individuals and affected how they evaluated and acted on establishing or discarding policies; the pacing of personnel appointments or changes; the expansion, enhancement, or dismantling of certain academic and support programs; and their relationship with the respective school boards. Each of the five described the factors they considered critical to the prevailing climate in which they began their tenures. Each individual appeared to have a basic knowledge about the circumstances of the vacancy and the roles of the former superintendents in each school system as well as the communities' feelings about their predecessors. Each of the superintendents identified the prevailing climate as a factor in the initiation and transition of their superintendency. Furthermore, three of the five individuals noted the ease they experienced in moving into systems where the prevailing climate was positive.

The prevailing climates of the five school systems in this study reflected, descriptions of very positive climates, as well as climates in apparent and varied states of turmoil. It was significant to note that two of the five studied, Trump and Cannaday, were "insiders" at the time of their appointment. However, this status did

not appear to be a factor in how they approached the activities of either the initiation or transition phases of their superintendencies. Both Cannaday and Edwards assumed positions in a school system where the former superintendent was leaving under very positive circumstances, retirement and upward career opportunity, respectively. In both cases, the prevailing climate offered a supportive, almost enthused welcome for the new superintendent.

In somewhat of the same atmosphere, Trump assumed a new superintendency in a climate described as positive. She enjoyed the same level of community support and welcome by the community as did Cannaday and Edwards' appointment to the Suffolk superintendency was well received. Although not forced by any controversy to leave the superintendent's position, the resignation of the former Suffolk City school system superintendent was tendered for reasons of poor health. However, his disability which resulted from his long term health problems contributed to an atmosphere in which the community was very receptive to new leadership. Trump inherited a school system that was in a recovery stage having endured a ten year stretch of flux and instability in previous superintendent leadership. She assumed her position in a climate where the demand for credibility, accountability and stability were clearly foremost on the community's agenda.

In contrast, Gaul and Burgess began their tenures in school communities

that were dissatisfied with the former superintendents and desired change. Both individuals described the challenges they faced when assuming a superintendency in a system where the prevailing climate was negative. For Gaul, the tone of the prevailing climate was clear in its demand for a “throw out the old, and get a brand new school agenda.” The prevailing climate of King William County, likewise, had established a mandate for change and an expectation for new leadership, although the general dissatisfaction of the community was reported to be more subtle and less controversial than that of Dinwiddie County.

The time span between the resignation of the former superintendent and the initiation phase of the new superintendent varied among the five individuals from three to seven months. For Gaul, Trump, and Cannaday, this included at least one month’s overlap with the former superintendent being on site both physically and “operationally” during this time period. In Henrico County (Edwards) and King William County (Burgess) the former superintendents left to assume new positions in other locales and the school boards appointed interim superintendents from within the system to serve until the start of the new superintendent’s first one hundred days transition phase. However, in Dinwiddie County (Gaul) where the former superintendent resigned after months of documented controversy, the school board did not appoint an interim superintendent but allowed the superintendent

who was the focus of the community ire to continue his tenure until the end of the fiscal year including a one month overlap between him and the new superintendent.

The involvement of the Virginia School Board Association in the search process was a factor in the appointment of each of the five individuals. With the exception of Cannaday's appointment, the other four school boards conducted a national search to select the new superintendent. Each school system utilized the resources of the Virginia School Board Association either as a search committee or as consultants in the search. The Hampton City School board sought the assistance of the Virginia School Board Association prior to their appointment of Cannaday to the superintendency.

Classroom teaching experience and service as building based administrators were common factors to five of the five individuals. The professional experiences of each of the five individuals included tenures in public school systems only. None of the five superintendents had attended or worked in private schools. This public school educational and professional experience ranged from seventeen to thirty-five years among the five individuals. Burgess was the sole individual whose teaching experience had been as a teacher at the elementary school level. Three of the five individuals reported all of their teaching experiences at the high school level and one reported his teaching experience to have been at the middle school level. All

five individuals reported that they had served as school based administrators prior to their appointments as superintendents - three as high school principals and one as an elementary school principal. Trump had not served as a school principal, but reported tenure as an assistant school principal at the high school level.

Experience as central office administrator was a factor in the professional profile of five of the five individuals. Four of the individuals reported that they were serving in a central administrative position at the time of their appointment. Edwards, however, who was serving in his second superintendency at the time of the study, identified experience as a central office administrator as being a factor of importance in the overall process of initiation and transition.

The completion of a terminal degree was identified as a factor by five of the subjects. Three of the five individuals held an Ed.D. degree at the time of their appointments. Although Gaul's appointment was announced prior to the degree, he completed the requirements for his Ed.D. degree prior to the onset of the first one hundred days transition phase. Trump acknowledged, that having been appointed to a superintendency, she felt compelled to complete requirements for a doctoral degree. She was enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the time of the study. Each of the five persons studied agreed that the completion of a terminal degree established a perception of authority and credibility. They did not feel that the

degree, itself, was a key factor in the ability to execute the dictates of the position, but agreed that it helped to establish a receptive climate. The three male superintendents considered family input as a key factor.

The three males considered family input an important factor. However, this may have been more a result of the geographical circumstances of the appointment than gender related. The matter of children as a part of the family structure may also have skewed this factor toward the appearance of being gender specific. Both Gaul, who had no children, and Edwards, who had two primary age children, were appointed to school systems which required a physical move to a new community. They reported that the support and acceptance of their spouses were critical factors in their decision to apply for and accept a new superintendency. Cannaday, who like Gaul had no children, but who unlike Gaul did not have to move to a new locale, described his family's influence in terms of his wife's concerns and anxieties. Cannaday admitted that he had to adjust his lifestyle in order to allay his wife's reservations.

Surprisingly neither of the two female superintendents reported concern as to the responses of their respective spouses. Both indicated that they received immediate support from their husbands and their grown children. However, it must be noted that neither Trump nor Burgess were required to relocate in order to

assume their new superintendencies. Their appointments did not require or cause a job or career change for their spouses. Four of the individuals, with the exception of Trump, were married to spouses who worked outside of the home. Trump's husband was reported to be retired.

All five of the individuals moved from positions in communities where they had enjoyed the respect of the school communities and where the prevailing climate had been positive and supportive of them as professionals. In the cases of Edwards, Burgess, and Gaul, the documentation reports a litany of expressions of disappointment at their leaving and well wishes for their future successes. While both Cannaday and Trump were promoted from positions within the school system, the same documentation of community support for both their past work and their appointments existed.

Although both Trump and Burgess were the first women to be appointed superintendents in their respective school systems, only Trump referenced the issue of gender as a factor in her new superintendency. Suffolk is a highly industrialized agricultural community and known to be historically conservative, relative to issues of gender and race. Trump did not identify her gender as a negative factor, but suggested it might be a factor she would need to remember as she strategized to develop her relationship with the school board. Her cognizance of this factor was

apparent in her descriptions of her relationship and interactions with the school board.

All of the five individuals felt that the unanimous appointment vote was a valid indicator of full board support of their leadership styles and projected agendas. They saw the members of their respective school boards as advocates for their tenures and initially supportive of their appointment. Even in Dinwiddie County, where the school board composition included some members who had supported the former superintendent, Gaul reported that the appointment vote coupled with the school board's mandate reflected unanimous board support for his agenda of immediate change.

Burgess, Gaul, Trump, Cannaday, and Edwards, all indicated that the establishment of a school community climate in the school community which would be receptive to the new superintendent's agenda was a critical factor in the initiation and transition phases. It was in this section that they each, independent of one another, introduced the concept of pursuing effective tenures and identified the establishment of a receptive climate as a factor in that process. All five individuals agreed that establishing a receptive school community climate was important to actualizing an effective tenure.

The availability, or lack of availability, of the former superintendent during the

initiation phase is a factor that each of the five individuals had to confront. Response to the question of whether the availability of the former superintendent was helpful to the initiation phase was conclusive, although each circumstance was different. Each of the five agreed that the availability of the former superintendent was not an important factor in establishing a climate. Both Trump and Gaul acknowledged that, while there may have been some gratuitous advantages to the former superintendent being not only available, but on site during their initiation phases, the actual presence of the former superintendent proved to be awkward at times. The five individuals agreed that the presence of the former superintendents often required that they expend energies and precious time in validating and acclaiming the continued presence of the “sitting” superintendents. Edwards and Burgess admitted to having had only phone access to the former superintendents of their respective school systems. They indicated that these phone conversations provided them with lists of names of some key community leaders and some general information relative to the school system, but both individuals indicated that the same information and lists were available from other sources within the school community. Trump and Cannaday agreed that their own knowledge of both the school system and the school community was so comprehensive that the availability of the former superintendent neither assisted nor impeded their being able to

access information needed during the initiation phase of their tenures. All agreed, though, that the relationship with the former superintendents was a factor in the transition phase.

Although all subject individuals reported the need to “get to know” the school community as being an important factor in establishing a climate receptive to their superintendency, they conceded that how that process and to the degree that it occurred during the initiation phase appeared to depend on the circumstances under which the individuals assumed the new superintendency. Four of the five individuals identified the collection of data as a factor during the initiation phase. Burgess and Gaul, who were assuming their first superintendency in a new locale, began collecting printed information relative to the school system operations almost immediately following the announcement of their appointments. Edwards, a second tenure superintendent, also requested that certain school system documents and information be sent to him, but wanted to do so in the last month of the initiation phase and just prior to his leaving the superintendency in Danville, Virginia. Trump, who was an “insider” reported no immediate need to engage in a review of school system documents and reports; however Cannaday, who like Trump, was promoted from within the school system, followed the same pattern as Gaul and Burgess and requested that information be made available to him shortly after his appointment.

Cannaday's position was expressed as a need to review the information from the perspective of a superintendent as opposed to that of an assistant superintendent in order to neutralize any biases he may have held as a result of his being an insider prior to his appointment.

Burgess, Gaul, Trump, Cannaday, and Edwards, listed essentially the same categories of printed information, documents, and reports that they felt provided critical information relative to learning about the school community. These included, but were not exclusive, to annual school plans, reports of student standardized tests scores, job descriptions of administrative positions, copies of school budgets covering a two to three year span, organization charts, packets of school promotional brochures, school board minutes, reports and profiles of special programs, and subscriptions to local newspapers.

Five of the five individuals described the identification of key players as a factor. The identification of key players in the school community was acknowledged by each of the five individuals as being a very important factor in establishing a supportive environment receptive to a new administration. Three of the five described this factor as being an engaging and critical activity during the initiation phase and clearly connected its importance to achieving an effective superintendency. Although Edwards did not begin the actual process of interfacing

with key players until late in his initiation phase, he emphasized the importance of superintendent's making significant supportive connections in order to insure successful long range implementation of their agendas.

Not surprisingly, Trump and Cannaday expressed the least urgency to meet and greet these key players during the initiation phase. The differences in their reasons was, however, surprising. In fact, Cannaday's position on the issue of key players differed significantly from the other individuals. He did not agree that identifying and connecting with key players in the community should be a factor in the initiation phase of a superintendent's tenure. He classified that kind of overture as being political and he was emphatic about his intent to divorce the business of politics from the business of education. Unlike the other individuals, Cannaday viewed "politicking" as both a function and a responsibility of the school board. Cannaday agreed that these community influences should be identified and involved, to some degree, during the transition phase at which time support for changes, modifications, and new programs would be desired and helpful. Cannaday, however, did admit that as he moved further into his tenure, (beyond the first one hundred days transition phase) he realized that he might need to possibly rethink his position.

Trump, on the other hand, felt that having been a resident for thirty-five years

in the community in which she was appointed superintendent, she did not need to make a special effort to connect with key players during the initiation phase. She too, saw the key players issue as a factor of an effective superintendency, but did very little in terms of increasing her connectivity with them during the transition phase.

The categories of community key players were fairly similar amongst the five individuals. Members of governing bodies and heads of governmental agencies were included on the lists of each of the five individuals as were organization and religious leaders, and other citizens with obvious high visibility in the community. The larger the school system, the more extensive the categories were on the lists. Additionally, the lists reflected representatives of particular institutions unique to the individual communities, i.e., Cannaday's list included the military base commanders from Ft. Monroe Army Base and Langley Air Force Base while Trump's list included realtors and the leaders of various farmers' associations.

Trump and Burgess, the two female superintendents, also cited the existence of a two-tier list of community key players which included such unlikely categories as next door neighbors, spouses, secretaries and best friends of key players. They both agreed that sometimes a superintendent needed a way of connecting without being obvious. Both Trump and Burgess made the point that if a two tier list is not

“out there,” then a superintendent is not “playing with a full deck.”

Each of the individuals agreed that civic and social organizations are important to the welfare of a community. However, they all failed to identify memberships in community organizations as being a factor in either the initiation or transition phases of a new superintendency. In fact, they all agreed that joining community organizations or clubs actually had the potential to undermine the superintendent’s credibility and sense of objectivity in the community. Trump and Burgess reported that they maintained the memberships they held in organizations prior to being appointed to the superintendent position, but did not join any new ones after their appointments. Cannaday opted to obtain memberships in two organizations that he selected as a deliberate part of his overall plan. He reported that the two organizations provided a means by which he could connect with all facets of the community and help him establish broad based community support. The two organizations represented two distinct racial populations in the community. Gaul and Edwards chose not to join any new organizations nor maintain any memberships in organizations they had held in other communities before accepting the new superintendency. Although the five individuals appear to agree on the issue of organizational memberships, it is important to note the particular circumstances under which they reacted to this particular factor: Both Burgess and

Gaul were faced with very limited choices. Cannaday and Trump belonged to organizations that most likely represented microsome of their communities. Only Edwards seemed to have established a position relative to this factor.

All five individuals agreed that a superintendent's church affiliation was a separate consideration from organizational memberships. Five of the five individuals took the position that church affiliation was a private and personal choice and was not a factor they considered in the initiation and transition of individuals into a new superintendency.

Five of the five of the five individuals identified superintendent/school board relations as a factor. The relationship a superintendent has with the school board is viewed by some researchers as being the key factor in predicting both the quality and longevity of a superintendency. Each of the five individuals agreed that defining the parameters of the superintendent's relationship with the school board was a critical factor and that it should be established either during the interview process, early in the initiation phase, or at the beginning of the transition phase before any incidents occurred that would potentially test that relationship. Each agreed that the superintendent's expectations must be clearly established as early as possible in the relationship and that it is the new superintendent who should take the initiative in defining the relationship. Gaul, Trump, and Cannaday

established their expectations of the school board during the interview process before they were selected to fill the superintendent position. Burgess articulated her expectations of the school board at the onset of the initiation phase during her first official meeting with the school board. All agreed that the stated expectations should describe the leadership and management style of the individual and address and define the scope and authority of the school board's role. Edwards admitted that he did not establish ground rules with the Henrico County school board until the beginning of his transition phase, but that he concurred with the other four individuals as to what the ground rules included.

Only Gaul felt that he had received a clear mandate from his school board. Each of the other four individuals reported surprise at their school board's seemingly unfocused directions to them. The general feeling of those four individuals was that the board's position was "Come in. Find the problems. Fix them. We'll support you." It might be argued that Gaul's mandate from the board was so clearly defined because of the controversial prevailing climate which preceded his appointment in Dinwiddie County.

Surprisingly, discussions with the school board relative to the superintendent's performance evaluation was not a factor. Although the researcher did not discuss the issue of evaluations in detail with the five individuals specifically,

none of the five individuals acknowledge having the issue of evaluation addressed with their respective school boards. Follow-up questions to each individual indicated that the procedural issues of evaluation were not considered a factor in either the initiation or transition phases.

Establishing a vision during the initiation phase was identified as a factor for four of the five individuals. Each of the four individuals for whom this was a first superintendency were very clear in the statement of vision for their respective school systems. Although some of the vision statements were idealistic in their pronouncement, (e.g., "make Dinwiddie the best school system east of the Mississippi") the stated vision of each individual centered, in some way, around student achievement. All of the individuals reported that they wanted the improvement of student achievement to be a part of the legacy of their superintendency. Edwards admitted to having no vision for Henrico County prior to the beginning of his one hundred days transition phase. He contended that having comprehensive knowledge of the community was a prerequisite to a vision. He was satisfied to accept the school board's vision of having an outstanding school system as his vision for the school system.

While all of the five individuals agreed that the development of a school plan of action or the existence of an annual school plan was a key factor in the initiation

and transition phase of a new superintendency, they disagreed as to the timeline for developing and implementing these plans. Two of the five, Gaul and Cannaday, felt strongly that the plan should be developed during the initiation phase and implemented immediately at the onset of the transition phase. Edwards and Trump felt equally as strongly that a new superintendent should spend the initiation and transition phases getting to know the school community before instituting a new plan or direction.

Burgess' position relative to the factor of plan development and implementation most closely paralleled that of Edwards and Trump. However, in Burgess' situation, there was no existing plan at the time of her appointment. For her, the urgency of developing a plan during the initiation phase for immediate implementation resulted more from the need to meet the state mandates than from a position which supported the concept of a plan being developed prior to the transition phase. In point of fact, Burgess agreed with Edwards and Trump in their assertion that the new superintendent not make sweeping changes within the initiation phase or too early in the transition phase. The positions of the five individuals relevant to the institution of plans of action was consistent with their discussions of personnel issues. Based on the differences in the circumstances of each of the superintendencies, the differences in the positions of the five individuals

might arguably be attributed to differences in personalities.

Unlike presidents-elect, superintendents-elect generally do not enjoy the privilege of bringing their own staffs to the new superintendency. Five of the five individuals agreed that personnel issues and actions are factors in the transition phase of a new superintendency. Gaul and Cannaday stated that personnel changes and appointments should be made early in the transition phase, while Edwards, Trump, and Burgess did not support the urgency in making personnel changes even within the first year of the superintendency. All agreed that the opportunity to fill administrative openings that occurred as a result of attrition, relocation, or other causes was an important factor in the initiation and transition phases. However, five of the five agreed that such appointments were critical to the new superintendent being able to maximize the existing support system and build an administrative team to support the agenda of the new superintendency. Under those circumstances, all agreed that filling the positions quickly was an important factor.

The individuals' descriptions of the first one hundred days transition phase revealed that all five individuals agreed that early in the first one hundred days transition phase was the point at which the five superintendents should define, establish, and communicate their leadership and management styles, goals and

expectations to the school community. Implementing communication models appeared to be a priority with all five individuals. Whether it was in establishing a regular pattern of meetings with various internal groups of administrators as with Burgess, or instituting an elaborate check and balance electronic communication system as in the superintendency of Cannaday, or pledging to visit all classrooms as stated by Edwards, each individual introduced a “new” way of administrating and communicating during the transition phase that was different from their predecessors.

Only Burgess did not have the opportunity to make new personnel appointments in her first one hundred days transition phase, but each of the other four individuals appointed new administrators during that phase. In each instance, at least one of the administrators appointed by the individual was either a candidate from outside the school system, or, as in Trump’s case, a candidate from outside the traditional pool of candidates.

The subjects did not identify financial audits as a factor in either the initiation or transition phases. Surprisingly none of the five felt compelled to request an audit of the schools systems’ financial records either during the initiation or transition phases of their tenure. However, during the transition phase, each individual requested and received, school board approval to amend the school budgets they

had inherited in order to realign monies to support the goals and objectives outlined in their vision and plans for the school system. This factor they identified as being a crucial factor in the transition phase.

In terms of their overall concept of the transition phase, the five individuals lined up on two very definite sides. Gaul and Cannaday both acknowledged that a new superintendent had to “hit the ground running.” They felt that a superintendent’s effectiveness was determined by the fact that the individual started the job with a plan and moved quickly toward accomplishing established objectives. Both individuals viewed the initiation phase as an active planning and development phase and the transition phase as the execution phase. Conversely, Edwards, Trump and Burgess tended to view the initiation phase as more of a self acclamation period with the transition phase being the designated planning and development phase.

All five superintendents reported their first one hundred days as being fairly routine with no surprises. Cannaday reported two incidents that he felt tested the credibility and strength of his tenure. He acknowledged that the events caused him to review and reassess some actions taken during the early days of his transition phase, but he felt that the initiatives he had instituted early in his transition phase, and his credibility and standing reputation in the community, contributed to the

positive outcomes of both incidents.

Edwards introduced two new initiatives near the end of his first one hundred days transition phase. He indicated that the two proposed initiatives were based on his assessment of the Henrico County School System which he conducted during the transition phase. Both plans, however, were replications of plans he instituted in the Danville Public Schools during his tenure there.

None of the data collected during the study suggested that any of the five individuals were experiencing difficulties in their relationships with their respective school boards. Two expressed a growing concern with the demise of appointed boards and the dynamics of elected school boards. Both Cannaday and Trump acknowledged that the development of a community support base was rapidly becoming a critical factor in the process of managing board relations.

The results of this study suggest that there are basic factors that appear to be common to the initiation and transition phases of a new superintendency. These differences may be more related to differences in personality and style than other factors. However, the findings do reveal several recurring patterns and themes in both the initiation and transition phases.

Each of the five individuals identified factors that were affirmed by others as being appropriate to the initiation and transition phases of a new superintendency.

It appeared that Edwards' slower paced approach to implementation of deadlines and the degree of urgency as expressed by the other four individuals may be the results of his previous experiences as a superintendent. However, even given that variance, it appeared that the identification of certain factors are described with consistency amongst the five individuals regardless of background, gender, or ethnicity.

The chapters describing the initiation and transition phases would seem to verify that most factors identified can be subsumed under one of three categories: organization and structure, school community climate, and school board relationships.

During both the initiation and transition phases, the focus of the community generally was on the individual appointed as the superintendent. During the very critical initiation phase, the individuals considered personnel placements, planned policy changes, internalized and actualized school board mandates, and established relationships with school board members, community leaders, and school personnel. Once formal authority, was acquired, at the onset of the transition phase, the individuals put their individual agendas into action. They articulated the school systems' goals and objectives and developed strategies targeted to achieve those goals and objectives. During the transition phase, the

individuals established the tone for governing and the methodology for operating the school system.

The degree to which factors identified in the initiation and transition phases influence or impact the quality or the longevity of a superintendent's tenure, is a subject for future studies. This study provides an undergirding for follow up studies.

Possible topics for further study include:

- a three-year follow up study to examine the effectiveness of the tenure of the five individuals in the study. Such a follow up would entail a qualitative study complete with surveys targeted to gather input from the school community, school personnel, students, and the school board;
- an expanded study to examine the factors identified and their relativity and consistency to gender and race; demographics and geography; number of tenures served; or other variables;
- a three to five year follow up study with the same five individuals to determine their career paths and the changes, if any, in their perceptions of the factors identified in the initiation and transition phases of this study.

At the very least, this study should be expanded to include a broader

compendium of case studies. A content analysis of these five case studies would significantly enrich the literature resources and provide a spring board for a more in depth examination of superintendent leadership factors, as well as factors of leadership in other key administrative positions.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. By what margin of the school board were you appointed?
2. What was the reason for the vacancy of the superintendency at the time you applied?
3. If the previous superintendent was not "nonrenewed" or dismissed, what was the reason?
4. Was the outgoing superintendent available to you prior to your assuming the position?
5. Do you consider this an upward, downward, or lateral move for you? Why?
6. What did you do to prepare yourself prior to officially assuming the position?
7. Describe the kinds of discussions that occurred as you prepared your family for your new position.
8. What sparked your interest in this school system?
9. How did you bring closure to your position in the community you left? or
How did you bring closure to the position you left?
10. How did you identify the "key players" and what did you do to connect with them?
11. What service organizations or clubs did you join and how did you make the decision as to which ones to join?
12. How did you plan for your transition?

13. Describe and analyze the various activities the Board planned during your transition.
14. What or who constituted your support system prior to your assuming the position? Did that system change over the first one hundred (100) days?
15. What did you understand your charge from the Board to be? Was there a spoken and an unspoken agenda?
16. What functions did you feel were the most critical for you prior to assuming the position? After assuming the position?
17. What changes did you plan to initiate within the first one hundred (100) days? How did you determine these changes were necessary?
18. How successful were you in implementing your plan? Why or why not?
19. Describe those issues that provided the greatest challenge to you in your first one hundred (100) days.
20. What do you wish you had known or done prior to assuming the position? How would you have better accessed that information?
21. What is your vision for this school system?

QUESTIONS

Prevailing Climate

Under what circumstances did the former superintendent leave the position of superintendent?

The New Superintendent

What promoted the individual's interest in the superintendency vacancy?

What plan was used by the school board to select the new superintendent?

What factors were addressed by the individual's family in planning for the new superintendency?

How was closure brought to the position vacated?

Establishing A Climate

Describe the school board's charge to the individual in assuming the position of superintendent?

What role was played by the outgoing superintendent during the initiation and transition phases?

How were key players identified in the community and how was contact established?

Which service or community organization or clubs did the individual join and what criteria was used for making the decisions?

What role did the school board play during either the initiation or transition phase?

Vision and Plan

What issues and actions did the individual consider as they prepared to assume the new position?

What was the individual's vision for the school system during the initiation phase?
Was that vision altered during the transition phase?

The First 100 Days

What actions/changes were initiated within the first one hundred day (transition phase) of the superintendent's tenure?

What factors should have been considered during either the initiation or transition phases?

What was the individual's vision for the school system during the initiation phase?
Was that vision altered during the transition phase?

Analysis

PERSONNEL ISSUES

ISSUE	DECISION	Person Responsible	Time line
Contract Hours	At principals meetings Billy will share with principals teaching time for teacher specialist. Projects or activities need to be shared with leader first not specialist.	Billy	
Contract Year	Teacher specialist time in July for something voluntary it is voluntary. If division asks for specialist to be engaged in July the specialist is to discuss project with Ken and JoAnne. Teacher contact in late June and August is division time and to discussed with leader.		
Dual Pay	Compensation to be received outside of the contract such as Academic Tech must be shared with leader addresses it with Warren.	Warren needs to get into this issue before pay is negotiated.	
Evaluation Format	Billy will talk with Warren. There needs to be general expectations for all and specifics for areas with some equity for all. We all need to look at it.		
Teacher still receiving stipends for other duties.	Some do, some don't is an issue. Also, additional duties take time away from tasks required of the job responsibility. Real issue is do I want to be a specialist when I can be at a school and getting paid for extra duties at a school. Specialist are losing money in some respects.	Billy doesn't have the answer today but will talk with Warren.	
Specialist Responsibility	Issue is one specialist with no teaching assignment. Tried to avoid question of having someone with reading technical expertise. Decision was made in light of PR and student centered. In middle school the schedule doesn't allow for two periods because of team approach. The high school people are suffering because they can't be a part of the high school team and be a specialist.	Full time specialist will not be a reality next year. Specialists are being put in tenuous positions. Is it a high school issue? Is it a model issue? In middle school one has responsibility for grades one does not. Lesson plans responsibility, parent conferencing and student responsibility.	
Specialists not talking to each other	Teacher specialist are having problems getting along. Want to split roles K-5 and 6-12.	Leader needs to address problem and to make a decision as to whether or not specialist needs to remain by making a commitment to make the model work.	
Oscillating from teacher to administrator		Billy will talk to principals.	
Money is an issue	Billy is going to meet with Warren.		

LISTING OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Personal communication with Sue Burgess (March 22, 1995)

King William County, Virginia

Personal communication with Billy Cannaday (November 28, 1994)

Hampton, Virginia

Personal communication with Vincent Cibbarelli (September 28, 1994)

Charlottesville, Virginia

Personal communication with Mark Edwards (March 4, 1995)

Henrico County, Virginia

Personal communication with Mark Edwards (March 6, 1995)

Henrico County, Virginia

Personal communication with Thomas Gaul (February 21, 1995)

Dinwiddie County, Virginia

Personal communication with William R. Harvey, Jr. (June 5, 1992)

Hampton, Virginia

Personal communication with Joan Milteer (March 13, 1996)

Suffolk, Virginia

Personal communication with Clarence Penn (June 1994)

Surry, Virginia

Personal communication with Clarence Penn (March 22, 1996)

Surry, Virginia

Personal communication with Eric Smith (December 3, 1992)

Newport News, Virginia

Personal communication with Joyce Trump (January 31, 1996)

Suffolk, Virginia

Personal communication with Kenneth Underwood (October 4, 1994)

Falls Church, Virginia

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King William County Public Schools, Virginia

Friday Report (August 13, 1993)
King William County Public Schools, Virginia

Friday Report (August 27, 1993)
King William County Public Schools, Virginia

Friday Report (September 3, 1993)
King William County Public Schools, Virginia

Friday Report (September 17, 1993)
King William County Public Schools, Virginia

Friday Report (September 24, 1993)
King William County Public Schools, Virginia

Friday Report (October 1, 1993)
King William County Public Schools, Virginia

Friday Report (October 8, 1993)
King William County Public Schools, Virginia

King William County Long Range Planning Council (June 9, 1993)
Minutes

King William County Board of Education (March 10, 1993)
Minutes

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Suffolk Board of Education (August 3, 1995)
Minutes

Superintendent Meeting - Hampton City Schools (April 24, 1994)

Vines, V. (1995, May 31). Joyce H. Trump Is Unanimous Choice To Lead City Schools, pp. B2, B3.

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Dianne Boardley Suber

ONE KENILWORTH DRIVE • HAMPTON, VA 23666 • (804) 838-3488 HOME • (804) 727-5145 OFFICE

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Ability to prioritize, delegate, and motivate.
- High energy *process* and *results*-oriented professional.
- Outstanding communication and presentation skills.
- Effective team member who is comfortable with leading or collaborating.
- Maintains a sense of humor under pressure.
- Successful skill in personnel supervision and training.
- Strength in problem-solving and conflict resolution.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Program Administration, and Personnel & Program Development

- Twelve years of professional experience.
- Supervised day-to-day operations of elementary/middle schools.
- Assisted teachers and staff in reaching their professional and personal visions.
- Planned, delivered and evaluated employee development programs.
- Interviewed and recommended personnel for teaching and support staff positions.
- Developed proposals for two magnet schools for Newport News, Virginia schools; both still successfully operating.
- Designed two graduate level courses for Hampton University (Virginia) in Personnel Administration and Curriculum Design.
- Trained in and designed pilot programs designed to improve interracial relations among staff for schools in Greensboro, North Carolina and Williamsburg, Virginia, respectively.
- Developed and implemented "Teacher Assistance Team" initiative designed to help students experiencing academic and behavioral difficulties.
- Designed and presented workshops at national, regional, state and local conferences to administrators, teachers, and staff development personnel.
- Served on curriculum review, revise and design committees.
- Served on "At-Risk Commission".

Consultant/Workshop Presenter

- Virginia State Department of Education
- Headstart Directors/Teachers
- Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals
- Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children
- National Association of Black School Educators
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
- Newport News, Virginia Public Schools Department of Staff Development and Elementary Education
- The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
- The University of Botswana - Gabarone, Botswana, South Africa
- Montgomery County, Maryland Public Schools
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- Iowa City, Iowa Community Schools/University of Iowa
- Norfolk, Virginia Housing and Redevelopment Authority
- National Diffusion Network
- Sacred Heart Missions Catholic Schools, Holly Springs, Mississippi
- Richmond, Virginia Public Schools

Staff Development

Designed and Delivered Training in:

- Clinical Supervision
- Designing Effective Staff Development Initiatives
- Effective Instructional Skills
- Women and Minority Issues
- Managers as Change Agents
- Structuring the Work Environment for Success
- Staff Development for Multicultural Education
- Effective Teaching Strategies for Students At-Risk
- Validating and Valuing Diversity
- Relevant Curriculum Design
- Diversity in the Workplace
- Roles and Responsibilities of Leaders
- Making Meetings Work

Published

- "Its Not the Kids, Its the Schools", The Administrator, August 1992
- "Give Black Kids the Best, Too", The Administrator, February 1989
- "Kids Komer", The Journal and Guide Weekly Newspaper (monthly)
- "My Turn", The Times-Herald Newspaper, December 1, 1989
- "This Side Up" - monthly column, Safire magazine

WORK HISTORY

Currently	Assistant Provost - Academic and Administrative Services Hampton University - Hampton, Virginia
1992-1994	Dean - Administrative Services (The Registrar, Admissions, Financial Aid) Hampton University - Hampton, Virginia
1991 - 1992	Pilot School Principal - Newport News, Virginia
1989 - Present	Owner/Principal - DBS and Associates - Hampton, Virginia A human resources development consultant firm
1989 - 1991	Program Development Specialist - Newport News, Virginia
1986 - 1990	Adjunct Instructor - Graduate School of Education Hampton University - Hampton, Virginia
1983 - 1989	Public School Principal - Williamsburg, Virginia and Newport News, Virginia
1977 - 1983	Assistant Principal - Newport News, Virginia
1973 - 1977	Classroom Teacher Newport News, Virginia
1971- 1972	Classroom Teacher Greensboro, North Carolina

EDUCATION

Currently	Doctoral Candidate - Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, Virginia
M.Ed.	Curriculum Development - University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign, Illinois
B.S.	Early Childhood Education - Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1993	Strategic Planning Task Force - Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia
1992	Strategic Planning Team - AASA
1992	Multicultural Education Training - Effective Schools, Inc.
1992	Principal/Site Management Advisory Committee - AASA
1992	Group Counseling Leadership - Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia
1990	Task Force Member, Certification of School Administrators - National Academy of School Executives (NASE)
1989	Effecting Image Changes - Norfolk, Virginia
1988	Presentation/Consulting Skills - Creative Leadership, Inc. - Richmond, Virginia
1987	Women and Minorities Leadership Skills - AASA, Williamsburg, Virginia
1986	TEAM Training (effective team approaches) - Virginia State Department of Education, Staunton, Virginia
1984	NAEYC Program Validator Training - Williamsburg, Virginia
1983	Teacher Effective Student Achievement (TESA) - Training to Train, Columbus, Ohio

References Available Upon Request