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An Analysis of School Superintendents' Responses to Ethical Dilemmas

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AN ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS'
RESPONSES TO ETHICAL DILEMMAS

By

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B.S. Music Education, Southern Illinois University, 1977

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A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree

Department of Educational Administration and Higher Education
in the Graduate School
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May 2013

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

AN ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS'
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By

Daniel Curtis Cross

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In the field of Education

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April 3, 2013

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

DANIEL C. CROSS for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education, presented on April 3, 2013, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: AN ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS' RESPONSES TO
ETHICAL DILEMMAS

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. John McIntyre

The purpose of this study was to examine ethical responses to problematic school situations among public school superintendents nationwide. An additional goal was to compare responses of the proposed study with those of school superintendents in an earlier study (Fenstermaker, 1994) in order to determine whether there has been a significant change in the attitudes and ethical behavior of superintendents over the past 20 years.

A pilot study was conducted in order to update and validate the current survey. Fenstermaker's survey, including his scenarios, were distributed to seven local school superintendents to determine if these scenarios are still valid and to suggest other possible scenarios that would address current educational issues that may or may not have existed 21 years ago. The response to the pilot study was that the scenarios are relevant to today's school superintendent. In the current survey, I used suggestions offered by current superintendents regarding dilemmas faced by today's superintendents.

A survey instrument was randomly given to a sample of 419 superintendents who were members of the American Association of School Administrators.(AASA). A total of 297 surveys were returned, a response rate of 70.1%. The survey questions were updated from the survey questions originally used by Fenstermaker in his survey. The

survey questions asked for answers to dilemmas that were of a borderline type. The 2007 AASA Code of Ethics were used to determine the correct responses.

The current study examined whether superintendents' responses were an 'actual' response (in other words, respondent is answering from the perspective of having been in this situation – or a similar one - prior) or a 'hypothetical' response (respondent imagines being in the situation, but never actually experienced anything like it).

In the current study, more of the ethical responses are indicated as hypothetical. Overall, non-ethical decisions appear to be made more by superintendents who had actually experienced the situation.

The findings of research question one denote that there has not been much change since 1991. Fenstermaker recorded 1306 ethical responses out of a possible total of 2701, or an overall score of 47 percent. With equivalent criteria, the present study documented 1485 ethical replies out of a possible total of 2951, a total score of 49.8. The bulk of the responses to both surveys were unethical, with variation less than three percentage points from Fenstermaker's (1994) study to the present. The finding then would be that there has been no significant change since 1991.

Overall, this study confirmed the results found in Fenstermaker's study. Fenstermaker did not examine race. Interestingly, this study found that Blacks scored consistently higher in correct ethical responses than Caucasians.

In general, I conclude that ethics play a heavy role in the decision-making practice of superintendents. Preparation programs for superintendents should emphasize ethics training as well as legislative studies. Certainly, the consistent low scores indicate that there is a need for ethical training among superintendents and a

need for more studies such as the one presented.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A recent article in the *Southern Illinoisan* newspaper reported on an investigation by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* regarding the reporting of high-stakes test scores. It found a high possibility of cheating related to the reporting of these scores in 196 of the nation's 3,125 largest school districts. The newspaper speculated that the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and tougher teacher evaluation standards may be responsible for some school districts reporting higher student test score gains than were caused by learning. In some cases, the student achievement score gains were so large that the odds were less than one in 1,000 that they were actually caused by learning (*Southern Illinoisan*, March 25, 2012, p. 4B).

School superintendents, school board members, building principals and classroom teachers are all responsible for learning in their school districts. However it is the superintendent who must ultimately accept the responsibility for what occurs within his or her district. School superintendents are the leaders who make a variety of decisions on a daily basis that involve discovering and assessing the operations and processes that allow for the continuous functioning of the school. Equally important are the tasks of diagnosing problems as well as seeking solutions, then finally resolving the issue. Consequently, it is important for superintendents to understand the successes and failures of their constituents for both their personal and professional growth (Harsy, 2001).

Clearly, superintendents have an advantage in controlling information that flows

into the schools and making changes as needed. Superintendents also are responsible for the financial disposition of their districts, and losing money can have a detrimental impact upon their schools. Pecinovsky (2005) notes that schools lose money when they have negative labels, specifically, the failing labels of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Pecinovsky (2005) further discusses the influence that NCLB has on school leaders, observing that superintendents do not want to lose money for their schools and may do what is necessary to not have a deduction of school funds. He contends that the attitude and behavior of superintendents who take their work seriously have an effect on the ethics of the teachers and the students (Pecinovsky, 2005).

Wendler (2012) mentions that leaders are judged by the fruit of their leadership and that integrity matters, not the greedy, politically charged, personal gain characteristics found in too many institutions. Mijares (1996) supports this claim that administrators should have integrity. Mijares also claims that superintendents should enforce a code of ethics. The author lists several unethical behaviors of administrators, such as changing test scores, misappropriating monies, that ruin professional lives, and claims that ethical infringements destroy professions. Additionally, Sawyer's 2006 study asks superintendents how they respond with day-to-day difficulties. Results show that superintendents' responses vary depending on gender and their region (Sawyer, 2006). However, it is possible that superintendents may be "faking-good" when responding to questionnaires. In other words, superintendents may respond in a way that makes them look good, or superintendents may say what they believe, rather than what they actually believe (Rees & Metcalfe, 2012).

There are often decisions that a superintendent must make that are not so clear

cut and can lead to compromising situations. Some leaders may not know that their choices are not in the best interest of the school. Incentives, financial or otherwise, may persuade others to act outside of the best interest of the school, staff, or students. How can we know when a superintendent is acting for the school's best interest and keeping his or her actions and choices as ethical as possible at all times? Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) note that a leader's decision may affect what goes on beyond the four walls of his or her office; decisions can affect families and communities (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

To determine whether the superintendent is acting within the best interest of the school district as well as to determine whether the decisions of the superintendent constitute ethical behavior, Fenstermaker (1994) examined superintendents across the United States. This study is valuable because it helps analyze the aspects and differences in ethical decision-making of public school superintendents occurring over a 20-year time frame as well as to help educators lead tolerant and democratic schools (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). I intend to use Fenstermaker's (1994) survey as a basis to determine how current superintendents would respond to a variety of educational issues and also to determine if these ethical choices differ from the superintendents' responses in the earlier survey. This instrument is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Fenstermaker (1994) concludes from his study that the majority of superintendents were not making ethical decisions in their day-to-day operations according to the American Association of School Administrators' (AASA) Code of Ethics. The low scores in Fenstermaker's survey may indicate that superintendents are either confused in their understanding of the AASA professional code of ethics or that

they simply ignored the set of ethics presented in the AASA 1962 Code of Ethics. In an era when people do not trust leaders, the current study might help with the credibility of practicing superintendents. It is important that the community view superintendents as leaders that can be trusted because they are leading one of its most valuable institutions.

One of the potential outcomes of this study is to help superintendents improve the quality of their decision-making through a better understanding of ethical relationships when dealing with various scenarios involving school activities. It is important that superintendents recognize ethical issues and the far-reaching effects of unethical decision-making. The results from this study will help university professors determine curriculum for prospective superintendents in dealing with dilemmas. Also, additional research will help AASA and the administrative profession by providing information which may help in planning future workshops and training programs (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the responses to problematic situations among public school superintendents and to determine if current superintendents have more or less of an ethical commitment to their jobs. In addition, the results of this study will be compared to those of Fenstermaker's (1994) earlier study. Moreover, if scores reveal a less than ethical approach to decision-making, it is hoped this study will assist preparation programs for school superintendents to see if curricula need restructuring. Horsford (2009) mentions that research addressing the dilemmas and practices of

educational leaders is relevant to improving leadership practice for school leaders. Schools are so diverse that educational philosophies, research, and the experiences of school leaders must be taken into account to observe what is actually taking place in the work world of superintendents. In the proposed research, results will show if current superintendents are ethical in their practices within the workplace. I analyzed the aspects and differences in ethical decision-making that occurred in Fenstermaker's (1994) survey of public school superintendents and my current survey. The procedure of overseeing school districts has become more complicated and demanding as our culture and schools persist in complexity.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do the ethical responses of the present study participants differ significantly from those in Fenstermaker's 1994 study?
 - a. Specifically, does the overall percentage of correct responses differ significantly?
 - b. Specifically, is there a significant difference in the patterns of correct responses across items?
2. Do 'actual' responses (respondent is answering from perspective of having been in this situation – or a similar one - prior) differ significantly from 'hypothetical' responses (respondent imagines being in the situation, but never actually experienced anything like it)?
3. Do ethical responses of superintendents differ significantly by demographic

characteristics?

- a. Specifically, do males and females differ in their ethical responding?
- b. Specifically, do Caucasians and non-Caucasians differ in their ethical responding?
- c. Is level of education differentially related to ethical responding?
- d. Is age differentially related to ethical responding?
- e. Is total district enrollment differentially related to ethical responding?
- f. Is level of salary differentially related to ethical responding?
- g. Are years of experience differentially related to ethical responding?

Significance of the Study

The present research analyzes aspects and differences in ethical decision-making of public school superintendents. Noteworthy and unique to this study is that women took part in this survey, whereas in Fenstermaker's previous survey there were no women superintendents participating. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has provided the mailing addresses of superintendents who are current members. AASA has also expressed interest in the results of the study. Consequently, this study is needed because of underrepresentation of women in leadership positions during the times that Dexheimer (1970) and Fenstermaker (1994) conducted their surveys. Currently, women outnumber men in the education teaching workforce and yet the number of women in leadership positions is not representative. In my findings, I report how the women who are superintendents responded when compared to the men in my research. I report whether women were more ethical in

their responses when compared to the men in my study, or if the men were more ethical in their responses.

At a time when there are increasing challenges for truthfulness and openness from both designated and selected civic bureaucrats, schools should neither require nor expect less from superintendents. MacArthur (2004) states:

I realize that the severity of the current leadership crisis is common knowledge. The problem is that we live in an era where the very definition of character has become fuzzy. People bemoan the loss of integrity in general terms, but few have any clear idea of what integrity entails anymore. Moral standards have been systematically obliterated. However, how to solve the crisis seems to be a puzzle to most, even to some of the most powerful men and women in the academic world. Could it be that people don't see how the leadership crisis stems from a loss of integrity? People certainly seem to have at least a vague notion that character, decency, honor, and ethics issues lie at the heart of the leadership crisis. (p. 4)

Therefore, Ethics and ethical behavior should be the concern of all members of the education profession, especially for those who desire the position of superintendent (Fenstermaker, 1994).

It is important that superintendents have insight and understanding concerning ethical issues. It is also important that superintendents have the means for making ethical decisions that connect with the issues. Furthermore, awareness of ethical studies should be made available to superintendents in the public schools; such ethical studies help superintendents identify the methods that educators must use in producing

decisions that are ethical. Each ethical study has its own flaws and strong points. However, it is better to have an understanding, than to not have an understanding of these ethical studies which will allow the superintendent to use the experience of other superintendents. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) note, "Educators are influenced by age, race, and gender in the decision making process. Furthermore, social reforms and politics have not solved the problems in education" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 5).

In other words, educators are human beings who are all different. They are not robots, but differ in their thinking due to age, race, and gender and the experiences from living life in various cultures with various dynamics. Leaders draw from each of those differences. Younger superintendents may be more diverse in their thought patterns and less patient to wait on change than superintendents who are older. The experiences and upbringing that one may have as an African American will differ from the experiences of Caucasians, Asians, or Hispanics. One's rearing and indoctrination in a predominately African American Church may differ from indoctrination in a church predominately Caucasian. Whether one's rearing is by two males, two females, male and a female, Christian or non Christian, whoever and whatever feed the thinking in one's upbringing ultimately control that person's future actions, behaviors, and decision-making styles.

Limitations

The study is limited by the self-reporting and mailing procedures of the survey instrument. A suitable rate of response assures a valid account of the collection. Integrity and compliance of the subjects in their replies are limitations of this study. The

responses measured compliance the 2007 American Association of School Administrators Code of Ethics. Honesty and integrity are common threads among the codes of ethics reported in this study. The importance of truthful, reflective, and complete responses to the survey is vital to the study.

Delimitations

This is a nationwide study using subjects who are members of AASA and superintendents or administrators in 2011. Each subject was sent a survey. As with Fenstermaker's (1994) study, states with very small AASA membership representation may not have been represented in the results of this current study.

Definitions

This study uses the following terms:

American Association of Superintendents Code of Ethics (AASA). The code of ethics developed in 2007 by the AASA specifically for school superintendents (AASA, 2007).

Ethical. A quest for the good, or the right (Fein, 1988). Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) state:

According to John Dewey (1902), ethics is the science that deals with conduct insofar as this is considered to be right or wrong, good or bad. Ethics come from the Greek word *ethos*, which means customs or usages, especially belonging to one group as distinguished from another. Later, ethics came to mean disposition or character, customs, and approved ways of acting. (p. 10)

In other words, if there is no right or wrong in an organization, there is chaos. If the superintendents and teachers had no expectations of how they are supposed to act and behave, did not expect any certain customs of behavior for superintendents and teachers, children would not have the needed guidance, or role models for ethical behavior, and our jails would be full. We cannot have administrators that will not stop at any evil (Blumenfeld, 2009).

Superintendent. The chief school administrators in public schools (AASA, 2007).

Overview

The proposed dissertation contains five major chapters. Chapter One includes eight categories: an introduction, the purpose statement, research questions, the significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, definitions, and an overview of the study. Chapter Two is the review of the literature. Chapter Three shows the methodology and procedures used; incorporated in this chapter are an explanation of the subjects, the instrument, procedures for collecting the data and the procedure for analyzing the data, or the treatment of the data. Chapter Four presents the results of the study, and Chapter Five includes a summary of the results, limitations, conclusions, recommendations, and final thoughts.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter 2 focuses on studies and journal articles regarding ethical standards involving school administrators, specifically school superintendents and ethical dilemmas arising from everyday practice as well as legislation governing education. In turn, these topics are brought together to set the foundation for the current study, including questions that guided the research. A brief summary finishes the chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine ethical responses to problematic school situations among public school superintendents nationwide. An additional goal is to compare responses of the proposed study with those of school superintendents in an earlier study (Fenstermaker, 1994) in order to determine whether there has been a significant change in the attitudes and ethical behavior of superintendents over the past 20 years.

Background

Superintendents must be aware that there are factors that hinder or improve their ethical decision-making process. There are particular factors in a school district, such as gender, race, age, years of experience, level of education, and district size, which could have an effect in the course of ethical decision-making. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) say:

Factors such as age, gender, race, or more likely a confluence of factors may influence the paradigm one prefers. The four paradigms include the ethics of justice, critique, care, and the profession. The ethic of the profession is extremely important and complements the other paradigms. (p. 7)

To be more specific, the ethics of justice, critique, and care are subjective in nature when applying to matters of decision making. They are subjective in nature in that they are dependent on feelings and experiences. The experiences from one's age, gender, and race may have an effect on how one critiques a matter or applies justice or care to a situation. On the other hand, the ethics of profession is more objective in nature in that it lends its focus toward a set of rules or a code. University students aspiring to be principals and superintendents should be aware of the ethical paradigms involved in making ethical decisions. The aspiring administrator could then create stronger standards for dealing with the day-to-day dilemmas of the public school. The persistent climate of upheaval characteristic of our schools and communities and the increasing diversity of our societies are having a profound impact on schools and leadership practices. The heavy traffic of students returning from prisons and detention centers add to this upheaval that is characteristic in our schools.

Increasingly, value conflicts have become a defining characteristic of school administration, thereby promoting interest in the study of values and ethical decision-making (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). In an article titled "The Myth of Value-Free Education," Nash (1991) states:

Our educational crisis is to some extent a closing of the American mind, as Allan Bloom examined in his best-selling book of that title. But it is also something

more profound, a closing of the American heart. No real progress towards improving American education can occur until all of us realize that an education that ignores moral and religious beliefs cannot qualify as a quality education. Recently, no less a person than Mikhail Gorbachev admitted that the major reason his nation is in such trouble is because his people are ignorant of moral and spiritual values. (para. 6)

In other words, for the superintendent to ignore moral, spiritual, and religious values would be fundamental grounds for failure. Moral and spiritual values are tools for depicting right and wrong. Blumenfeld (2009) alludes that the knowledge of moral things are the ingredients of how to begin to understand the things around us. Moral decline is not only the downfall of leaders, but nations as well, which may be the reason that many parents are home schooling their children rather than sending them to be under the umbrella of a leader void of morals and religious beliefs (Blumenfeld, 2009).

Therefore, for a superintendent to make an ethical decision will depend on how he or she envisions the school community and how the superintendent deals with his or her own personal morals, beliefs, spiritual values, and perspectives of what the superintendent perceives as important to the community (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1998). Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) state:

If an individual has a strong religious upbringing, then, depending on the religious persuasion, the ethic of justice with an emphasis on rights and laws may be the favored approach, or perhaps the ethic of care with its emphasis on compassion and empathy may be the paradigm of choice, rather than the ethics of critique or profession. (p. 7)

For instance, many leaders who may have upbringings in the Christian faith may favor gleanings from the Ten Commandments or the biblical Beatitudes, over other ethical considerations. The Ten Commandments deal with aspects of law and justice, whereas the Beatitudes deal with factors of care (Blumenfeld, 2009).

Codes of Ethics

Ethics originates from the Greek word *ethos*, which describes customs belonging to a particular group (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011); such customs distinguish one group from others. Shapiro and Stefkovich (1996) also describe ethics as the disposition of character, customs, and approved ways of acting.

Mijares (1996) offers this list of questions to guide ethical behavior:

Is the decision balanced? What are the intended and unintended consequences of the decision? How will it make me feel about myself? How will I feel if my family knew of this decision? If this decision appears in the town newspaper, will it cause my relations or me to feel ashamed? (pp. 26-28)

Thus, Mijares indicates that definitions assimilate ethics with traditional behaviors and imply consequences of unethical behavior. Gross (2008) also reminds us that educational leaders make difficult decisions every day. Some of those decisions are complex when dealing with sensitive issues such as teacher/student love affairs, as well as love affairs between married and unmarried teachers and administrators, not to mention terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and school shootings. The educational leader's job can indeed be difficult and complex (Gross, 2008).

Marshall (1992) agrees with Mijares (1996) in principle. Marshall explains that

behavior guides reasonableness, integrity, religion, and family values. Both Marshall's (1992) and Mijares' (1996) definitions of ethics indicate that ethics apply to everyday situations that school administrators face. Their views mark a strong link between the abstraction of principles and the practical issues of everyday actions.

Marshall (1992) further suggests that leaders should be honest and that dealing fairly would not always render a feeling of success when dealing with various dilemmas. Decisions are made that can leave one with feelings of uncertainty or bafflement. Yet, Gonzales (1999) notes that the ethics of justice and the ethics of critique may provide ways for administrators to deal with the various daily dilemmas that present themselves unannounced.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) describe the ethic of justice:

As an ethic that focuses on rights and law and is part of a liberal democratic tradition. The ethic of justice emanates from two schools of thought. The former school considers the individual as central and sees social relationships as a type of a social contract where the individual gives up some rights for the good of the whole or for social justice. Moreover, philosophers and writers coming from a justice perspective frequently deal with issues such as the nature of the universe, the nature of God, fate versus free will, good and evil, and the relationship between human beings and their state. (p. 11)

In other words, one must be willing to give up some of their rights for the good of others in order to get along with those in a democratic society. Moreover, Theohari (2007) points out that there are superintendents who have a social justice orientation in their training. These educational leaders make issues such as gender, disabilities,

sexual orientation, gay/straight agenda, race, and class, their focal point as educational leaders.

Also, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) describe the ethic of critique as an ethic: Based on critical theory, which has, at the heart, an analysis of social class and its inequities. More recently, critical theorists have turned to the intersection of race and gender, as well as social class in their analyses. An example of the work of critical theorists may be found in their arguments, occurring over many decades, that schools reproduce inequities similar to those in society. Tracking, for example, may be seen as one way to make certain that working class children know their place. (p. 14)

Tracking students in the public schools is a way of categorizing students. It is grouping the best students with the best students, the mediocre with the mediocre, and the worst with the worst. Public schools categorize many African American students as poor students with special needs, and they are placed together in special programs.

Furthermore, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) describe the ethic of care as: Growing out of the ethic of justice, as it relates to education, the ethic of care is at the top of the educational hierarchy. The first job of the schools is to care for our children. The ethic of care is important not only to scholars but to educational leaders who are often asked moral questions. (p. 7)

In other words, superintendents allocate a great deal of time searching for funding to balance the school's budget. However, superintendents must be careful not to forget that the real business of school is caring for kids and protecting their safety, rather than how much money one can garner from the state (Shapiro & Stefkovich,

2011).

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) describe the ethic of the profession as:

Complementary, and not incompatible to the ethics of justice, care, and critique; the combination of which results in a richer, more complete, ethic. In addition, a number of education-related professional organizations have developed their own professional ethical codes. However, ethical codes set forth by the states and professional associations tend to be limited in their responsiveness in that they are somewhat removed from the day-to-day personal and professional dilemmas which educational leaders face. Thus, the problem lies not so much in the Codes, but in the fact that we sometimes expect too much from them with regard to moral decision making. Rather, professional ethics should be recognized as a dynamic process requiring administrators to develop their own personal and professional codes. Thus, actions by school officials are likely to be strongly influenced by personal values... it is not always easy to separate professional from personal ethical codes. (p. 23)

In other words, if superintendents do not apply a touch of common sense to the professional code, decisions in the work place will be chaotic. Day to day dilemmas may call for a superintendent's good judgment, personal experience and beliefs. The beliefs of the superintendent will bring to life aspects of what the professional code may not be able to presently address. Situations vary from day to day and the superintendent can not apply a cookie cutter to all situations. In other words, many situations are unique and may call for various means that were not put to use in a previous situation (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

Various professions, such as education, medicine, and business, promote a code of ethics that helps to guide behavior and practice in these fields. Codes of ethics (guidelines for ethical behavior) are standard protocol for most professions. Most superintendents have codes of ethics implemented at the local and/or state levels. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) is a national organization that provides networking and career development information to school leaders, but also maintains a routinely updated code of ethics directed at school leadership. In its most recent rendition, the American Association of School Administrators 2007 Code of Ethics notes:

An educational leader's professional conduct must conform to an ethical code of behavior, and the code must set high standards for all educational leaders. The educational leader provides professional leadership across the district and also across the community. This responsibility requires the leader to maintain standards of exemplary professional conduct while recognizing that his or her actions will be viewed and appraised by the community, professional associates and students. (p. 1)

AASA Codes of Ethics

Originally adopted in 1962 (Appendix B), the AASA Code of Ethics (ethical code of American Association of School Administrators, 2007; Appendix C) offers an updated set of ethical directives for superintendents practicing in education. The 2007 Code of Ethics "requires the leader to maintain standards of exemplary professional conduct while recognizing that his or her actions will be viewed and appraised by the community,

professional associates and students” (AASA, 2007, para. 1).

The 2007 Code of Ethics is a shorter version of the lengthy AASA 1962 statement. The 2007 AASA Code of Ethics posits that the educational leader:

makes the education and well-being of students the fundamental value of all decision-making, fulfills all professional duties with honesty and integrity and always acts in a trustworthy and responsible manner, supports the principle of due process and protects the civil and human rights of all individuals, and commits to serving others above self. (AASA, 2007, para. 3)

However, the 2007 AASA Code of Ethics is not the only code of choice for superintendents. Earring (1999) compares and contrasts the American Association of School Administrators’ Code of Ethics (1962) to local school district codes of ethics. The purpose of Earring’s study was to reveal distinctions between the embraced code of ethics of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the embraced codes of ethics of various State Education Agencies (SEA) by contrasting four components: specific duties, general duties, enforcement mechanism; and specific functions addressing the profession. All 50 state departments of Education and Certification comprised the population for this study. Earring (1999) used a 12-question survey checklist questionnaire as an instrument and reported a return rate of 86%. Based on the data, Earring (1999) reports that (a) 14 State Education Agencies adopt codes of ethics for school leaders, (b) three State Education Agencies adopt codes of ethics specifically for school leaders, (c) 11 State Education Agencies adopt codes of ethics for teachers, and (d) false statements, fraud, illegal drugs, deceit, embezzlement, and abuse were causes for revoking certificates (Earring, 1999).

Theoretical and Conceptual Constructs

Before examining superintendents and their ethical dilemmas, it is important to establish the linkage of theoretical and conceptual constructs with the practical issues of life. Eisenhart (1991) describes a theoretical framework as “a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory ... constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships” (p. 205). Thus, theoretical frameworks call upon values and beliefs not unique to the researcher. Conversely, Eisenhart (1991) purports that a conceptual framework is a skeletal structure of justification rather than explanation. This structure contains either formal logic or experience. This involves a potential argument for favoring one viewpoint over another and ultimately guides the research and analysis. Conceptual frameworks are more flexible, while theoretical frameworks are more rigidly tied to the body of theory to which they adhere. By using conceptual frameworks for decision-making, leaders are able to reflect on extensive choices of consequences and select the outcome required (Strike, 2007).

Theory serves to offer a justification for decision-making. An explicit understanding of the theoretical framework underpinning practice in educational institutions enhances managerial actions. However, there is no single comprehensive theory of educational management. Ribbins (1985) stated that:

Students of educational management who turn to organizational theory for guidance in their attempt to understand and manage educational institutions will not find a single, universally applicable theory, but a multiplicity of theoretical approaches each jealously guarded by a particular epistemic community. (p.

223)

Said differently, there is no one-stop shopping or exclusive approach with regards to organizational theories (Ribbins, 1985).

Griffiths (1997) agrees with this concept and provides strong arguments to underpin the advocacy of what is referred to as theoretical pluralism. Griffiths postulates:

The basic idea is that one cannot study all problems in a fruitful way using a single theory. Some problems are large and complex and no single theory is capable of encompassing them, while others, although seemingly simple and straightforward, can be better understood through the use of multiple theories.

...particular theories are appropriate to certain problems, but not others. (p. 372)

There are times when one single theory cannot be the answer to the many problems that a superintendent may face in his or her particular district.

This study employs Act Utilitarianism as the theoretical framework to learn more about superintendents' ethical decision-making. When using utilitarianism as groundwork for decision-making, one tries to see who will be hurt the most and who will gain the most. As a matter of fact, when using this framework in decision-making, the superintendent can choose from a variety of consequences that will bring the most desirable outcome (Strike, 2007).

One of the good things about utilitarianism is that it seeks to make the world a better place; the office, the place of work, a better place. A weakness of utilitarianism is that it is difficult to measure joy, peace, happiness, a good feeling, which all are debatable. Utilitarianism directs the leader to consider who will be happy and who will

be hurt by a decision. One of the strongest arguments for utilitarianism is that it gives administrators a construct to work from when the lines are blurred concerning the right thing to do. In a borderline scenario as such, applause is in order for utilitarianism in that there is a rule, a code, or a standard on which to lean (Hinman, 2003).

To use Act Utilitarianism in decision making is to think about the consequences of how things will turn out after the decision is made. Once the scenario is thought through, the superintendent takes the plan of action that will work best for all involved. (Strike, 2007). Superintendents who use Act Utilitarianism handle situations case by case and are not bound for instance, by a zero tolerance principle. Superintendents who use Act Utilitarianism know that exceptions can be made in the process of making decisions. An illustration of this can be seen in the sixth question of my survey. The question:

Your district is a rural one, and quite homogenous in its population. The teaching staff reflects this homogeneity; that is, they are mostly white, middle class, and protestant. In your search for new staff members, an excellent candidate with extremely promising credentials appears. The interview turns up the additional fact that this candidate is a Black American and a Muslim. This is a combination generally not found in your area. The board will back any recommendation you make. How will you proceed?

If the superintendent says that the most ethical answer is to hire the highly qualified candidate on your own authority and allow the Board to ratify any recommendation you make to them; this decision is an example of the superintendent examining and making a decision on its own worth using the act utilitarianism framework. The superintendent

used his/her own choice in making the best final decision in hiring the teacher. The superintendent realized that this was the best candidate and would do the most good for the students, as well as, strengthen their staff.

Superintendents and Ethical Decision-Making

With this theoretical-conceptual background, it is important to set another foundation for the current study: previous research about superintendents and ethical decision-making. The first consideration is the qualifications of the superintendent.

Job Qualifications for Superintendents

Superintendents provide educational leadership and oversee the daily procedures of school districts in addition to being honest and having integrity and good will, which are important concerns to superintendents in decision-making. The procedure of overseeing school districts has become more complicated and demanding as our culture and schools persist in complexity. For superintendents to measure up to these anticipations, many abilities and skills are required (Rosborg, McGee, & Burgett, 2006).

Job qualifications for many states are comparable to job qualifications for superintendents in the state of Louisiana. In Louisiana, a candidate needs a valid administrator's license issued by the State Department of Education and a graduate (master's) degree to qualify for the position of superintendency (AASA Career Center, 2008). A superintendent in Louisiana needs a minimum of three to five years of experience in public administration, business administration, or educational programs or

services. A superintendent does not need a Ph.D., but if a superintendent does have a Ph.D., it will substitute for three years of experience as a superintendent (AASA Career Center, 2008).

However, job qualifications for the position of superintendent in the state of Texas include having a valid Texas superintendent certification or a Mid-Management Certification (with the capability to receive certification for superintendent within a year). A doctorate is preferable but not required. The job description for superintendency in the town of Lake Texas, Texas, asked that the superintendent have a doctoral degree, five years of teaching experience, and experience as a principal or central office administrator with knowledge concerning budgets and public school finance (AASA Career Center, 2008).

In North Carolina, job qualifications for the position of superintendent include having a valid administrator's license issued by the State Department of Education. The state of North Carolina does not require a doctoral degree but prefers a superintendent to have one. The job description for the superintendent in Lexington, North Carolina, asks that the superintendent have a doctoral degree or be progressing toward a doctorate and live within the Lexington city school attendance area (AASA Career Center, 2008).

However, qualifications for a prospective superintendent in Mississippi are different than the states previously mentioned. In the State of Mississippi, job qualifications for the position of superintendent include having a valid administrator's license issued by the State Department of Education. The State of Mississippi prefers the superintendent to have a doctorate degree to hold the position of superintendent.

The job description for the superintendency in Greenville, Mississippi, requires the superintendent have a doctorate (AASA Career Center, 2008). The application for superintendent in Greenville, Mississippi, also asks that the applicant have three to five years of experience in teaching or administration. The Mississippi Code of 1972 requires that the superintendent have a minimum of four years of experience. The superintendent job application in Greenville, Mississippi, asks for fewer years (three) than the Mississippi Code of 1972 requires. The rural towns may not feel the need to adhere to the state code because of the necessity and scarcity of obtaining superintendents in those areas (AASA Career Center, 2008).

It is unclear from these findings whether stated job qualifications specifically call for knowledge of and adherence to any particular code of ethics – state or national – for the educational administrator profession. Yet, when looking for candidates for superintendencies, school boards may (at least tacitly) seek candidates who have qualities of honesty and integrity (Petersen & Short , 2001).

Using the AASA Code of Ethics, two major studies, Dexheimer (1970) and Fenstermaker (1994), are compared.

Dexheimer (1970) Study

Using the AASA 1962 Code of Ethics, Dexheimer (1970) examined whether administrators made ethical decisions when given a choice. The purpose of this study was to determine whether school superintendents were more frequently making unethical choices than ethical ones when measured against the 1962 AASA Code of Ethics. Dexheimer (1970) mailed a questionnaire to a random sample of 443 AASA-

member superintendents nationwide. A panel of AASA officers also completed the survey, indicating the choices that they considered most ethical to serve as a guide for scoring. Of the 443 surveys, 242 replied for a response rate of 54 percent. The survey questions called for solutions to situations of a borderline ethical nature (Dexheimer, 1970).

Dexheimer (1970) found that school superintendents frequently select responses that are inconsistent with the AASA Code of Ethics. In their responses to the hypothetical situations that he describes, superintendents actually offer more unethical responses than ethical ones, as measured against the AASA code. Dexheimer found differences in the number of ethical responses relative to superintendents with higher salaries and larger school districts, but not relative to level of education. Dexheimer also stated that “districts that can afford to pay high salaries attracted superintendents who were very qualified personally and professionally, and were extremely ethical when compared to superintendents in the lower wage bracket” (p. 56).

In other words, superintendents making a substantial salary do not need to cut corners ethically because of the risk of losing a good-paying job. However, Dexheimer (1970) also found that “superintendents at the lower end of the wage bracket were not as ethical in the day-to-day dealings because of the pressure to get a better deal for goods bought for personal use” (p. 57). Superintendents who receive a low salary may feel the need to receive compensation in other ways, even if that means personal gains and dealings with vendors.

Dexheimer (1970) noted that “[s]uperintendents in large school districts were highly visible. Societal pressure comes to them in greater force, therefore removing the

number of chances to behave unethically in marginal situations” (p. 58).

I might add that no superintendent wants to embarrass himself or herself or the district with front page news about that district, especially if it is a large school that is highly visible. The pressure from parents and the community would be tremendous.

Dexheimer (1970) concluded that the educational experience of the superintendent had no bearing on superintendents’ ethical or unethical decision-making in their day-to-day dealings in the workplace (Dexheimer, 1970).

Fenstermaker (1994) Study

Fenstermaker (1994) conducted a modified replication study to test Dexheimer’s results (1970). The purpose of Fenstermaker’s (1994) study was to determine superintendents’ range of responses to various daily dilemmas in the workplace. The survey questions called for solutions to situations of a borderline ethical nature. Fenstermaker concluded that school superintendents more frequently selected unethical choices than ethical ones when measured using the AASA Code of Ethics in place at that time. A panel of AASA officers also completed the survey, indicating the choices which they considered most ethical to serve as a guide for scoring. There were 419 surveys mailed to a random sample of AASA member superintendents nationwide. A total of 279 responses were received for a 66.6 percent response rate.

Fenstermaker eliminated one previous question that asked the respondent to consider the possibility of hiring his wife for a teaching position. There are several reasons for excluding this question. First, many school systems now enforce policies that would prevent the hiring of a relative, so the superintendent might not have the

freedom to respond with his/her actual preference. Also, the question assumes the superintendent is male, with his wife being a certified teacher. Overall, the use of this question would likely produce skewed results (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Fenstermaker (1994) eliminated a second question because it raised issues concerning school prayer, asking what the superintendent would do about the fact that teachers are requiring students to participate in mandatory prayers in class and in the Pledge of Allegiance (reinstated after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC, in September of 2001). Considering the widespread publicity concerning this issue in recent years, the idea of teachers requiring students to pray or recite the Pledge of Allegiance seems improbable enough to make the question not credible (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Each superintendent in the sample received the same survey and cover letter (Appendix D), and each responded by selecting the course of action that best described what he or she would do in that particular situation. In addition, each respondent indicated whether his/her actual experience influenced the response (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Fenstermaker (1994) calculated two separate scores for each survey response, one using the Dexheimer (1970) criteria from the 1968 Code of Ethics, and the other using the responses from the AASA officers. Dexheimer (1970) had a sample of 242 and used 15 questions; Dexheimer's (1970) results yielded a total of 1,725 replies that he logged as ethical out of a possible total of 3,630. Two hundred seventy-nine respondents completed Fenstermaker's (1994) survey, which incorporated 10 questions, producing a total of 2,790 responses; of these responses, Dexheimer (1970)

judged 1,341 as ethical (Fenstermaker, 1994).

When Fenstermaker (1994) compared the numbers of actual responses from 1968 to those from 1991, the results showed that the two distributions were significantly different. Fenstermaker obtained a similar result when comparing the hypothetical columns, meaning they are also dissimilar. When Fenstermaker scored the surveys using the 1968 criteria, results show patterns similar to Dexheimer's (1970) in demographic sub-groupings. Superintendents with higher salaries or larger districts tended to score higher. Superintendents with more years of service scored lower. These same patterns were evident when applying the criteria obtained from AASA officers (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Fenstermaker's (1994) study generally affirms the results obtained by Dexheimer (1970). Also, Dexheimer (1970) did not examine differences based upon gender; Fenstermaker's (1994) study found females scoring consistently higher than males.

Each situation in the Fenstermaker (1994) survey instrument involves a borderline ethical dilemma, a minor problem of a routine nature, designed to elicit a response or choice of action from the administrator. Of the choices provided, only one was considered appropriate, based upon the guidelines and examples of the 1962 AASA Code of Ethics. Fenstermaker (1994) reports that when responding to these and similar questions in his study, superintendents selected the appropriate (or ethical) response less than half the time. However, the survey describes situations that most administrators are likely to encounter at some time in their professional careers. Each situation on the survey implies something that is ethical in principle as spelled out in the 1980 Code of Ethics (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Using the 1962 criteria, overall results were nearly identical to Dexheimer's (1970) results. The results also showed patterns similar to Dexheimer's (1970) in demographic subgroupings. Superintendents with higher salaries or larger districts tended to score higher, and those with more years of service tended to score lower. These same patterns were also evident when applying the criteria obtained from the AASA officers, although the overall scores were higher due to the elimination of questions (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Segars (1987) conducted a study of public education in the state of Mississippi to determine to what degree certain clusters of public school superintendents conformed to the AASA Code of Ethics. Another purpose was to determine whether there was any difference when compared to Dexheimer's (1970) study. Segars' study population consisted of 154 public school superintendents in Mississippi and 84 superintendents in other southern states (i.e., 84 superintendents identified in the *Executive Educator 100* for 1986). Segars also compared the responses of superintendents in small school districts to the responses of superintendents in large school districts in Mississippi. The questionnaire for Segars' study consists of 15 descriptions of ethical situations that a superintendent would likely face. Overall, Segars found that there was no difference in the responses of small-school district superintendents recognized as successful by *Executive Educator Magazine* and the responses of public school superintendents in Mississippi in conforming to the tenets of professional ethics as contained in the AASA Code of Ethics.

Related Studies and Articles

Over the past few decades, a number of related studies and journal articles have touched on or directly addressed the ethical decision-making of educational leaders, especially school district officials. These are summarized in this section of the chapter.

Superintendents not only have the concerns of dealing ethically with teachers and students, but proper allocation of finances must be dealt with in an ethical manner as well. For instance, superintendents in Illinois will receive \$21.4 million for their districts as part of the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top Program. Race to the Top is a reform program aimed at helping improve the academics of Kindergarten through 12th grade students. Race to the Top was instituted in an effort to improve instruction and to help teachers to know how to teach students that find it difficult to learn. Race to the Top is instituted to improve instruction in the core courses of reading, science, and math or reading strategies in history; Race to the Top is an effort to insure that all kids learn. The lowest performing schools will get the majority of the monies from the state. The money must be used on professional development, curriculum, assessments, and instructional improvements to help make kids college and career ready. Not only must superintendents be wise concerning the use of state monies, but also the circle of politics. With the state of the economy, educational leaders must be more astute in the political arena to recognize where monies and grants can be obtained to help out a district's financial gaps. This must be done without bowing in unethical ways to politicians, promising votes or promising to disseminate literature in teachers' mailboxes (Horsford, 2010). Furthermore, Arsen and Yongmei (2012) affirm that finances have become more of a focus with public school superintendents who

must also deal with competition from the Charter schools. In the wake of NCLB, superintendents are concerned with differences that may come about in the adjustments of resource allocations, especially in districts that do not succeed regarding the benchmarks within NCLB.

Superintendents must deal with many diverse situations. For instance, if a new student, who was avoiding expulsion in her former district, tried to enroll as a homeless student in a new district, it would be unethical to deny the homeless student entry in the new district based on her homeless status. There are superintendents, for instance, in southern Illinois who face serious challenges of dealing with students and families with problems that threaten to be a danger to the school community as they move often from district to district, seemingly under the driving force of poverty. Yet superintendents must allow enrollment of potentially dangerous students who have the label as homeless (Baker & Prusaczyk, 2011).

It is not an exaggeration that today's educational leaders have such an enormous task before them in trying to cater to the many facets that the communities bring to school districts. For instance, in a 1990 study, Millerborg sought to determine whether administrators can make ethical and legal decisions and determine differences between these forces in educational administrators' decisions, especially when ethics are in conflict with the law. The researcher examined (a) when ethical/legal conflicts exist and (b) whether an ethical/illegal, legal/unethical, or unethical/illegal decision pattern emerges. The data revealed that educational administrators can make ethical and legal decisions and that administrators make accurate ethical choices considerably more often than legal decisions. Millerborg concluded that ethics strongly influence

administrative choices. When ethical/legal conflicts existed in decision-making, the ethical decision pattern dominated. There was no noteworthy variation in ethical/illegal and legal/unethical decision patterns when respondents were categorized by the size of district. However, Millerborg found no significant differences among such factors as age, gender, school population, size of district, highest degree level, or ethics preparation.

The purpose of Hudgens' (1991) study was to resolve the primary factors that swayed job mobility amid public school superintendents in Illinois. Hudgens gathered data from teacher service records of public school district superintendents. The descriptive method focused on superintendents who resigned from their position in the state of Illinois during 1988-1989. Hudgens mailed 109 questionnaires to superintendents in Illinois, asking for the following information: background, rapport with school boards and community, educational training, state initiatives and enrollment.

Hudgens (1991) discovered that 50% of the respondent superintendents expressed board interference with their jobs as well as problems with having a rapport with their board. Two-thirds of the respondents observed board turnover. Hudgens reported disapproving opinions of superintendents toward certain mandated reforms in 1985. Hudgens concluded the following: Fifty percent or more of the superintendents noticed (a) an increased work load, (b) a harmful effect on district funding, and (c) no significant amount of progress at local or state levels. Although the study was not directly focused on issues of ethical decision-making, the findings clearly demonstrated some of the significant issues that affect superintendents' decisions. These are echoed in the case study questions that are presented in the current study and somewhat

reflect the then-current issues of both the Dexheimer (1970) and Fenstermaker (1994) studies.

More directly, the purpose of Walker's (1991) study was to identify the makeup of ethical decision-making among educational leaders. Ethical leaders understand ethical challenges confronting them by exploring the environment of ethical decision-making. Walker suggests that perceptions of types of ethical problems encountered may influence the basis for ethical decision-making and for ethical choice-making, acknowledging lively definitions by participants, such as community, dichotomy, core value, difficulty, code, mandate, and people. In a sample, Walker identified two basic categories of ethical problems: misdeeds or quandaries. The ethical misdeeds were transgressions of core ethical values, identified as black-and-white acts or attitudes that were against such values as caring, respect, fairness, professional conduct, resource stewardship, integrity, loyalty, honesty, and citizenship. Walker also pointed out that public school leaders face many problems relating to lack of resources, inequities, and employment concerns. Walker's findings also identified personal factors that influence leaders. Factors such as honesty and loyalty may account for persons in a profession that recognizes them as role models. Internal influences relate to organizational responsibilities and politics. Pressures resulting from economic, diversification, and community factors were external influences that played a part in how leaders make decisions.

However, Beck's (1996) analytical article offers ideas for managing difficult problems. The author notes that reflection and discussion about ethical dilemmas would be key for ethical leadership success. Beck points out that administrators have a

great deal of responsibility that may at times cause conflicts with professional ethics, commenting that ethical decisions and procedures make a significant import in the lives of some people. He explains that educational leaders must have more than legal knowledge to operate as current superintendents, but should include a feel for principles, patience, and discernment to guide schools through difficult issues. Beck further contends that the administrator has complex ethical situations, such as students residing in less than desirable living conditions, ethnicity in the community, teachers, and school boards, in the day-to-day activities of the superintendent. The author explains that administrators who deal with people of various cultures find themselves occupied with opposing attitudes and power struggles.

Mijares (1996) offered several suggestions to avoid unethical behavior: (a) stay visible because unethical behavior occurs more in isolation; (b) the consensus group process of shared decision-making is the best ethical way of making decisions; (c) public discussion discourages unethical behavior; (d) a love for research will add strength to final decisions; (e) follow board bylaws and policies is to follow ethical law; and (f) hide nothing and do not shy away from controversial issues. Mijares added that if leaders expect students to behave in an ethical manner, educational leaders must model the utmost level of ethical behavior for teacher loyalty and teachers must mimic proper ethical decision-making skills.

Campbell (1996), investigating the degree of moral and ethical perceptions, noted a school of thought that is unique to administrators and teachers outside of the administrators' and teachers' personal values of right and wrong. The purpose of Campbell's study was to determine whether teachers and administrators consider

existing values that guide their decision-making in day-to-day dealings in the school culture. Campbell examined the contradictory and ethical gears of the chief school administrator and the instructor.

The next year, Campbell reported on complications in explaining the practice of theoretical values when surrounded by an existing environment of value relativism. The author speculates about emphasizing purposes concerning ethical management, acknowledging ethics as instinctively characterized standards of beliefs and inclinations. In the article, Campbell reported then-current writings that focus on the values found in education and administration. The author also shows disapproval in the lack of training venues to further the teaching of ethics for superintendents. The author summarizes support for using the case study method as instruction in preparing school leaders to analyze the ethics of school administration. Campbell further argues that it would be difficult to maintain discussions about ethics; he contends that there is only so much to say before exhausting the subject of value relativism. After Campbell (1997) addressed (a) the new imperative of ethical leadership and (b) challenges of preparing ethical school administrators, he concluded that dealing with ethical proportions and ethical issues are key components of addressing educational administration. He also contended that when discussing relationships, ethical consideration and realistic treatment barely come into consideration.

Gonzales (1999) used naturalistic inquiry for the design of a qualitative study involving 10 superintendents from Texas to describes ethics in the lives of superintendents and the function of ethics in the decision-making process. The study examined how superintendents defined ethics when dealing with their most complicated

predicaments. Gonzales pointed out that “ethical leadership requires superintendents to consider the fundamental principles of education, the nature of schools as institutions, and the roles and responsibilities of educational leaders” (p. 33). In other words, the superintendent must also have an understanding of the professional codes of ethics that local or state schools may institute. The study helped the superintendents to understand and learn about themselves and the expertise they use in decision-making. Gonzales (1999) notes that superintendents clearly define ethics in this study, although they were tentative in giving definitions of ethics and when speaking of factors that help develop their values. Gonzales (1999) also notes that the superintendents said, “Ethics do not result from taking courses, but rather acquire a personal, adventurous journey that begins at birth and ends with death” (p. 112). That is, the superintendent’s race, years of experiences from the cradle to the grave as well as level of education are major factors when making ethical decisions. Cognitive knowledge can never replace the attributes of experience.

Knutson (1999) investigated the relationship between school learning culture and leadership social interest in three groups of schools. Group One included schools attempting to improve student performance through participating in a staff development consortium. Group Two schools, also members of the staff development consortium, made an additional commitment to participate in an action research process to improve student achievement. Group Three schools are community schools. Knutson explored four research questions: (a) Is there a relationship between school leadership social interest and school learning culture? (b) Is there a relationship between school leadership social interest and school type? (c) Are there differences in school leadership

and faculty perception of school learning culture? (d) Are there differences in school learning culture by school type? School administrators and team leaders at 12 South Florida schools received a total of 600 questionnaires. Administrators and leaders of the 12 schools who were members of the South Florida Center for Educational Leaders Consortium of Schools or were Broward County Community Schools voluntarily submitted data. School administrators and teacher leaders completed the Basic Adlerian Scales for Interpersonal Success (BASIS-A Inventory). School leadership and faculty completed the School Professional Staff as Learning Community (SPSLC) and a demographic questionnaire. Knutson found that a major difference between school culture and leadership social interest (transformational learning) was that the latter showed a statistical relationship to relying on learning environments that aid transformational learning. Knutson maintained in the findings that leadership social interest was characteristic of school designers, teachers, and school administrators. Moreover, the superintendents spoke fluently of their day-to-day dilemmas as school leaders. One of the three females mentioned the use of research as a framework in her decision-making. Five of seven males mentioned the use of research as a framework in their decision-making.

Walker (1999) investigated whether superintendents from California made ethical choices in agreement with the statement of ethics embraced by the Association of California School Administrators. Walker took into consideration the following factors: district size, gender, years employed in present district, years of practice as superintendent, and salary. He also merged two types of inquiries in this study: descriptive and ex post facto; the researcher used a self-report questionnaire and

examined data produced from that questionnaire, to which 171 responded. He found that superintendents were honest and fair in their decision-making.

Harsy (2001) noted that administrators are leaders who must make practical decisions and must first concern themselves with doing the right thing. Harsy added that doing what is right, just, and fair may involve shared decision-making, decentralized types of decision-making and school-based management types of decision-making, noting that it is ethical to do what is best for the group as well as the individual. Harsy stated:

Freedom of expression makes for a good topic in moral reasoning. Freedom of expression contributes to refining ideas, competent decision-making, and personal growth. However, freedom of expression can also hurt individuals or groups. Rights are not absolute. Intellectual freedom is an almost important right in our society, but needs to be balanced against other rights and interests.

(p. 1)

Burns (2001) analyzed possible linkages correlating (a) Texas public school superintendents making ethical decisions with (b) demographic variables, including district accountability ratings, gender, salary, years of experience, degree attainment, ethics course participation, district size, undergraduate major, and graduate major. The Texas Education Agency supplied a population register of Texas public school superintendents; 1,041 superintendents in Texas public schools received a survey from the researcher. Of these, 434 superintendents completed surveys. Results show that superintendents from larger school districts made more ethical decisions compared to those from smaller school districts. Burns found no significant difference within the

ethical decision-making scores of superintendents; no differences based on gender or years of experience; no difference based on salary or graduate courses taken; and no difference based on level of degree or major. Burns concluded that the respondent superintendents were honest and fair in their decision-making concerning day-to-day school affairs. Burns noted that the surveys of Walker (1999) and Texas respondents were similar.

Moreover, Wenger (2004) developed an instrument for his study from the instruments of Dexheimer (1970) and Fenstermaker (1994). The purpose of Wenger's study was to observe the ethical decision-making process of public school superintendents in the Commonwealth of Virginia to identify whether superintendent responses vary when asked to respond to situations necessitating an ethics-based decision. The researcher distributed a questionnaire (survey) to 134 superintendents in Virginia; the two-part survey included a sequence of 10 situations containing moral predicaments. Of the 134 surveys sent, 71 of the surveys came back from his mailings. In the first part, Wenger attached a score to each survey with the percentage depending on the appropriate response, with only one answer to be the appropriate ethical response. In the second part of the survey, he asked superintendents to answer a sequence of 14 demographic questions. Wenger correlated the 14 demographic questions with the ethics scores to establish any significant difference. Wenger noted:

The best combination of two variables was the total years of experience as a superintendent and the total years of experience in education. Finally, the best combination of three variables was the total years of experience as a superintendent, the total years of experience in education, and the method of

school board selection. (p. 101)

Superintendents with more years of experience as a superintendent as well as more years as a superintendent in education were more ethical in their decision-making than superintendents with less experience on the job and a smaller number of years in education. Wenger also found that the overall score of appropriate answers given on the questionnaire was one percent different from Fenstermaker's (1994) and a little more than two percent different from Dexheimer's (1970). Wenger noted that the findings of the three researchers were very much alike, and the areas found to be significant were: (a) manner of school board selection; (b) years of education; and (c) years of experience. Wenger reported that the novice superintendent responded more ethically than the experienced superintendent when considering the following variables: (a) manner of school board selection; (b) years of education; and (c) years of experience. Thus, the author concluded that no improvement had been made of an ethical direction in the past three decades, in the resolve that superintendents are making ethical decisions in leadership positions, in spite of declaring to finishing graduate courses in the field of educational leadership. Wenger's study was similar to those of Dexheimer (1970), Segar (1987), and Fenstermaker (1994).

Clark's (2005) study was similar to Burns (2001) in analyzing data compared to other regions in the United States. However, in Clark's study of Illinois superintendents, the author observed that superintendents' responses were different in different regions and that superintendents may have responded differently based on gender when asked questions related to salary, gender, and honesty. Clark examined the range of everyday common occurrences among school administrators to identify whether where

an event occurred made a difference in administrators' decision-making. One hundred fifty Illinois superintendents were randomly chosen from 893 superintendents who were then-current members of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Clark found that administrators respond differently to various situations depending on the situation and superintendent's personal orientation and the way issues are personally viewed. Clark also noted that superintendents were honest and fair in their decision-making; differed in responses in regard to region and gender; demographics or levels of development were not precursors to be a successful superintendent. Evans (1984) had similar results regarding demographics or levels of development not being precursors to a superintendent's success.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001: Ethical Dilemmas

Before pulling together the threads of research associated with ethical decision-making by school district leaders, it is necessary to take note of a historic federal legislative action that introduced new issues in decision-making. The landscape of the school structure has changed in light of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. Collins (2005) indicates that our government is more concerned about competing with other countries and mandating laws for instant success in education rather than an enduring educational distinction. Furthermore, when students continue to score poorly on state exams, this could affect job security for the superintendent. The possibility of a superintendent losing his or her job could have an effect on superintendents' ethical decision-making (Collins, 2005).

Furthermore, superintendents face a number of issues in terms of accountability

concerning the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) noted:

NCLB asks for [more] accountability than previously required for better test results and although all the reports include accountability, it is important to understand that this concept comes from an accountant's ledger that all too often places the budget at the center of the decision-making process. In fact, there are as many as 10 kinds of accountability. They include political, legal, bureaucratic, professional, and accountabilities. Added to these are parent, student, fiscal, and personal forms of accountability. (p. 137)

Will superintendents convey bias reports to keep funds and students from exiting their schools? NCLB raises ethical concerns due to implementation of NCLB on the local and national levels in learning institutions all over the United States. A look at NCLB is relevant to the overall study of ethics and decision-making for today's public school superintendent (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

Furthermore, Colgan (2004) wrote that:

Superintendents face further ethical confrontations beyond the subject of honesty in handling the district's money. These ethical issues revolve around high stakes testing and the reporting of these data to state agencies as required by federal and state legislation such as NCLB. NCLB requires students to be tested annually, and has caused concern among educational leaders of increased incidents of misreporting scores to state agencies by school districts. The pressure of high stakes testing required by NCLB has led to the unintended consequence of more cheating by school leaders. (p. 16)

When looking at all the heartaches felt by the Atlanta Public Schools in the

aftermath of the test cheating scandals, the cause of all of this was not due to the strict guidelines of NCLB, but rather pride and greed associated with human nature.

Administrators and teachers were fighting for job security.

Similarly, Vogel (2011) demonstrates the ills of NCLB and the pressure put upon superintendents to avoid having funds cut, as well as, an incident of misreporting scores to state agencies by the Atlanta Public School Districts. After an investigation into academic unethical behavior in Atlanta Public Schools, cheating was found to be at every level. Behind closed doors, staff worked in secret to change test failures into passing grades. It is not surprising that superintendents, administrators, and teachers may not be so ethical in their decision-making if their jobs are at stake.

Miller (2005) reported that there are more than 14,000 school districts in the United States. Each state has been affected by the NCLB of 2001. The main component of the NCLB ideal requires schools to provide accountability of making Academic Yearly Progress (AYP). President George W. Bush implemented NCLB allowing the federal government to acquire a voice in how public schools operate (Villanueva, 2005).

The following study by Adams (2005) sheds more light. The purpose of Adams' study was to examine the effect of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) on schools and their literacy programs. Adams uses a qualitative study and analysis to examine awareness of 21 New York school administrators' reactions to conditions of NCLB. Adams noted that the federal government signed NCLB into law in 2002, as an addendum to the Elementary and Secondary Act found in Title I. The intent of NCLB is to move forward literacy among low socio-economic groups. NCLB affected many issues, including

school finance and students' progress. When schools do not make Academic Yearly Progress (AYP), students are allowed to find better schools. Adams made the point that state tests are indicators of a school attaining AYP. Tracking socio-economic and ethnic subgroups seems to be a full-time job for some public school administrators and guidance counselors (Adams, 2005).

Adams (2005) explains that the group's progress calculates a school's efficiency. The study identified larger schools as failing. Adams (2005) noted from the data that NCLB caused reactions among upstate New York school administrators by adding consequences; schools not making Average Yearly Progress (AYP) would lose money. Perceptions related to intent of NCLB reflected anger from respondents (Adams, 2005). The study concludes that even though larger schools are failing, superintendents are reporting the correct test scores; therefore, they are ethical in their decision-making (Adams, 2005).

Sawyer (2006) felt that NCLB helped some schools but hindered most African-American urban superintendents. Sawyer's study indicates and evaluates everyday challenges faced by Black urban superintendents as they work to put into operation the goals and objectives of NCLB. Sawyer sought to discover how NCLB legislation strengthened efforts of African-American superintendents to move toward a proactive program for academic success in school systems with inner-city challenges (Sawyer, 2006). Sawyer interviewed 18 African-American school district superintendents from coast to coast in the United States. In the interview, Sawyer asked superintendents about difficulties that they confront within day-to-day activity. Sawyer conducted most interviews in person using a tape recorder or by telephone; of 18 interviews, 11

interviews were conducted face to face, seven by telephone (Sawyer, 2006). Sawyer asked superintendents how NCLB legislation assisted or delayed their efforts. He also asked about methods they used to deal with difficulties. Superintendents were asked how success was achieved. Superintendents responded to questions about graduate studies and whether they felt these programs could provide more success for them as superintendents. Responses were grouped by themes and color-coded using a word processor (Sawyer, 2006).

NCLB affects every aspect of education. In the findings, Sawyer (2006) notes that while the NCLB legislation helps in some venues to improve efforts in regard to academic activities, it also hampers their progress. Sawyer reported that superintendents agree on significant issues. Sawyer pointed out that graduate programs could prepare them better for experiences as superintendents in inner-city settings. Findings also suggested that while the NCLB legislation helps in some venues to improve efforts in regard to academic activities, it also hampers progress. Sixteen of the 18 African American superintendents were strongly against the mandates of NCLB. The response rate was 100%. Of the 18 respondents interviewed, 15 (83%) reported that parents were supportive of the superintendent's effort to apply the NCLB plan. Thirty-three percent, six of 18 superintendents interviewed, viewed media exposure as positive while 33%, six of 18 superintendents, were neutral, and 33 viewed media coverage as unfavorable. However, developing professional and personal ethics are obtained from other dimensions beside printed ethic codes and graduate programs (Sawyer, 2006). NCLB may have an impact on the ethical decision-making of superintendents in regard to superintendents being tempted to change test scores in

order to keep their school off the watch list so that superintendents, teachers, and other administrators can keep their jobs (Sawyer, 2006).

Although Sawyer (2006) describes NCLB as more of a hindrance than it is a help to education, NCLB legislation does help in some venues to improve efforts in regard to academic activities, especially with respect to the integration of schools in the South. Bolton (2005) contends that white parents tolerated black children riding in the front of the buses, but were adamant about not having their white children in the same classroom with black children. White parents were also against their children taking standardized tests in the public schools. White parents and white administrators feared that black students would score higher than white students and receive a white student's placement in the charter schools supported by white parents and businesses. There are white parents and politicians in the South who are still in favor of a simulated segregated system. However, NCLB helps southern schools to take a look at bringing students to grade level work. Administrators, concerned about keeping their jobs, had to listen to NCLB (Bolton, 2005). Moreover, in a school with no minorities, it is unethical to privilege a group of students with the best of updated reading and math resources, while the schools with a majority of Black students continue with subpar outdated resources. Yet, superintendents must be ethical in allocating monies for areas as labeled. NCLB helps to make sure schools that lack certain resources are given attention (Horsford, 2010).

In contrast, Sawyer (2006) contends that NCLB causes much confusion for superintendents. When test scores do not meet NCLB standards, superintendents fear that their jobs are in jeopardy. To qualify for NCLB standards, superintendents lean

toward the dishonest practice of changing test scores when their jobs are threatened (Sawyer, 2006). Superintendents shuffle from district to district, and some have lost their jobs due to NCLB. Though NCLB may not be the only reason for job vacancies for the position of superintendents, at the same time, there is a need to fill those vacancies with the necessary job qualifications (Sawyer, 2006). Notwithstanding, the superintendent must make ethical decisions despite the possibility of advantage through dishonesty or pressures from such agencies as No Child Left Behind (Kjos, 1995).

Rohn (2002) concludes that the job of the superintendent is impossible, but points out that successful superintendents should have the interest and desire to be a superintendent with strong people skills. Rohn (2002) suggests that school boards want a superintendent with integrity and honesty, one who has done his or her homework on what is expected. There will be problems and job turnover when superintendents and school boards do not have a good working relationship. Hudgens (1991) also noted this job turnover.

Moreover, in 2012 NCLB is still an issue that causes great concern for superintendents. In an attempt to cut down on the percent of students not making progress by 2018, the State Board is no longer using the outdated one size fits all criteria, but a new system that stresses graduation rates, progress in math, science and reading, English language, school climate, and the courses offered. This new accountability will affect 4,000 schools in Illinois alone (Illinois State Board of Education, 2012b).

Chapter Summary

Although one can find many articles concerning the matter of professional ethics, research conducted with attention to educational administrators is more recent, yet expanding. Codes of ethics in medicine and business include some of the same attributes that are within the 2007 AASA Code of Ethics; namely, leaders should exhibit character, honesty, integrity, and good will.

This current research was designed to convey how superintendents responded to this survey when compared to Fenstermaker's (1994). In regard to this study and Fenstermaker's (1994), this present study shows the responses and results of current superintendents. Results determine if there are differences in responses from those in Fenstermaker's (1994) study because of race, gender, population, and subjective decisions as opposed to objective decisions. These issues would affect the day-to-day decisions of superintendents (Fenstermaker, 1994).

As superintendents deal with day-to-day dilemmas, they try to balance their decision-making with the duties of their profession and their personal values (Millerborg, 1990). The capability to make quality decisions is the most important of these abilities (Langolis, 2004). In choosing the right act or the right decision, Pojman (2002) states that "an act is right if and only if it results in as much good as any available alternative" (p. 111).

Aspects and differences in ethical decision-making which occur through surveys of public school superintendents in 1991 and 2012 were analyzed. The procedure of overseeing school districts is more complicated and demanding as our culture and schools persist in complexity. There is an obvious need for this study to see if

superintendents are more or less committed to their jobs. There is a need for this study to see if the caliber of superintendents is changing in terms of their commitment. This information will be valuable to others in the educational arena. Research will show if superintendents' responses to the selected scenarios have changed over a 20-year period.

This study may help present superintendents improve the quality of their decision-making through a better understanding of ethical relationships in day-to-day activities. It is important that superintendents recognize ethical issues and the far-reaching effects of unethical decision-making. The results from this study may help university professors determine curriculum for prospective superintendents in dealing with dilemmas. Also, the information from this study is helpful to AASA and the administrative profession. It provides information that may help in planning future workshops and training programs (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

It is the hope of the superintendent that a good outcome in every situation will follow decisions resulting from a sense of right and wrong, experience, and knowledge of the AASA Code of Ethics. From the research conducted in the past few decades, it is clear that this topic is complex and challenging for today's school administrators. The scope and depth of the research, taken together, illuminates the highly diverse issues involved. The amount of research – even with the range of approaches and outcomes – indicates significant scholarly and practical interest in this societal concern.

Many ethical problems are episodes involving individual actions; however, they are symptoms of unconscious institutional discrimination. By borrowing ideas from ethical philosophy and from the literature of discrimination, adult educators can address

both dimensions of the ethical dilemmas in their profession more effectively. If university students who are aspiring to be principals and superintendents were made aware of the ethical frameworks involved in making ethical decisions, the aspiring administrator could create stronger standards for dealing with the day-to-day dilemmas of the public school. Increasingly, value conflicts have become a defining characteristic of school administration, thereby promoting interest in the study of values and ethical decision-making (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

In closing, the results and conclusions of this chapter showed that administrative leaders, namely superintendents, depend on personal values as well as professional ethics when looking to come across a sense of balance between what is done at their workplaces and what is done in their personal lives.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to examine the ethical responses of public school superintendents to problematic school situations. A secondary purpose is to compare current responses with those of school superintendents in an earlier study by Fenstermaker in 1994.

This chapter describes the methodology and procedures used in this study. The methodology contains the following sections: (a) purpose of the study, (b) research questions, (c) research design, (d) participants, (e) instrument design, (f) scenarios and corresponding appropriate responses, (g) treatment of data, and (h) collection of data. A summary concludes the chapter.

Research Questions

The questionnaire has been designed to address the following research questions:

1. Do the ethical responses of the present study participants differ significantly from those in Fenstermaker's 1994 study?
 - a. Specifically, does the overall percentage of correct responses differ significantly?
 - b. Specifically, is there a significant difference in the patterns of correct responses across items?

2. Do 'actual' responses (respondent is answering from perspective of having been in this situation – or a similar one - prior) differ significantly from 'hypothetical' responses (respondent imagines being in the situation, but never actually experienced anything like it)?
3. Do ethical responses of superintendents differ significantly by demographic characteristics?
 - a. Specifically, do males and females differ in their ethical responding?
 - b. Specifically, do Caucasians and non-Caucasians differ in their ethical responding?
 - c. Is level of education differentially related to ethical responding?
 - d. Is age differentially related to ethical responding?
 - e. Is total district enrollment differentially related to ethical responding?
 - f. Is level of salary differentially related to ethical responding?
 - g. Are years of experience differentially related to ethical responding?

Research Design and Data Collection

A quantitative research design is used to address this study's research questions. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) define quantitative research as "inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that features of the social environment constitute an objective reality that is relatively consistent across time and settings. In quantitative research, the investigator specifies narrow questions, locates or develops instruments to gather data to answer the proposed research questions, and analyzes the data using some method of statistical analysis" (p. 767). In other words, the data serves to test the

stated questions and assist the researcher with writing an objective final report (Creswell, 2003).

Fenstermaker's (1994) survey (Appendix A) was adapted to collect data. Surveys are beneficial for collecting data from a large sample in a short amount of time. Any concerns regarding maturation or history as a threat to internal validity did not have a significant influence over the results of this study. Fenstermaker (1994) surveyed five recent AASA officers or officers-to-be to deal with the validity issue.

To deal with reliability issues, Fenstermaker (1994) conducted a pilot survey using superintendents as the pilot group. This was done in two phases. Fenstermaker (1994) compared the distribution of the first responses to that of the second, thereby producing a measure of reliability. Fenstermaker's (1994) survey was used because it allows for consistent data collection while reducing the potential for researcher bias (Fowler, 1984).

Upon receiving permission from the SIUC Human Subject Committee, I received the list of names for those superintendents obtained by the AASA office to create mailing labels. The participants were sent a packet containing a cover letter (Appendix D), a two-part questionnaire (Appendix E), and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Surveys were mailed during the first week of August 2012. Those participants who did not respond within 10 to 14 days received a postcard (Appendix F) restating the purpose of the study and urging them to complete, return their surveys or request a new survey. The postcard had my contact information in case the participant needed a new copy of the survey (Fenstermaker, 1994).

To prepare the survey for mailing, each survey form was numbered and the

number recorded with the name and address of the superintendent receiving the mailing. This method allowed the researcher to know who had or had not responded and the area of the United States from which the responses were coming. Responses were entered into a database excluding the names of the respondents for confidentiality. A reminder post card was sent if the survey had not been returned after two weeks. If the first survey was lost, another was sent.

Questions concerning race and district enrollment, which were not included in Fenstermaker's survey, were added to the current survey. This new data was expected to be useful to researchers wanting to compare the variables of race and district enrollment in their surveys. After checking the dependent variable, ethical responding, and the ethical dilemma scenario questionnaire for internal consistency reliability via Cronbach's (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003) alpha, I scored the questionnaire in a manner that was consistent with Fenstermaker's (1994) questionnaire in that participants received a percentage of total correct answers out of 10.

Participants

Superintendents who were then-current members of AASA and employed as chief school administrators in public school systems in 2012 were the focus of this nationwide research. I focused on AASA members as the population for this study because (a) they are more familiar with the AASA Code of Ethics and (b) this present study is a modified research approach of previous studies by Fenstermaker (1994). Given that a single state has an average of 89 superintendents, and that we could expect a 25%-30% response rate, a nationwide study was considered sufficient to

obtain a large enough number of superintendents for statistical power. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), a sample of 370 is adequate to represent a population of up to 10,000.

In order to choose the sample for the study, I contacted AASA, who in turn randomly chose 419 superintendents from its database to represent the national membership of AASA without regard to geographic or demographic considerations. While this population did not include all practicing superintendents, it did include all superintendents who regularly receive copies of the most recent code of ethics from the AASA. The AASA can, therefore, reasonably expect superintendents to be aware of its contents. Since the AASA sends copies of its ethical code to superintendents who are members, I decided to focus solely on those superintendents committed to this association. A total of 419 superintendents were surveyed during the summer of 2012. Of these, 287 responded, a rate of 70.1%

Instrument Design

The instrument utilized in this study was patterned after one developed by Fenstermaker (1994), who surveyed superintendents to assess their ethical responses to problematic school situations. Fenstermaker's (1994) instrument consisted of two sections and was adapted from the original instrument designed by Dexheimer (1970). The first section included ten descriptions of ethical hypothetical conditions that the superintendents experienced in day-to-day operations on the job. Dexheimer's (1970) instrument consisted of fifteen items based on the AASA Code of Ethics. Along with each question, the survey asked respondents if their experiences were actual

experiences, the same or similar experiences. Dexheimer (1970) patterned his study after one by Carlin (1966) involving New York City attorneys to observe how attorneys responded to situations comprising ethics in the Bar Association Code of Ethics. Dexheimer (1970) based the survey scenarios on experiences used in the *American School Board Journal* and the *School Management* journal. Using the AASA as a standard, each of Dexheimer's (1970) survey questions had one correct ethical response. Each situation in the Fenstermaker (1994) survey was like that of Dexheimer's (1970). Fenstermaker (1994) omitted several questions, including formal training and religion. Fenstermaker (1994) included an ethical dilemma on a situation that would likely occur in school. Fenstermaker (1994) presented several options of action to assess ethical responses to problematic school situations to elicit a response or choice of action from the participant. Of the choices, only one was appropriate. The scenarios in the survey approximate situations that most administrators were likely to encounter at some time. The scenarios fell within an area of borderline ethics. However, only one response was the most ethically suitable (Fenstermaker, 1994).

A pilot study was conducted in order to update and validate the survey instrument in this study, Fenstermaker's survey, including his scenarios, were distributed to seven local school superintendents to determine if these scenarios were still valid and to suggest other possible scenarios that would address educational issues that may or may not have existed 21 years ago. Respondents considered the scenarios were relevant to today's school superintendent. One respondent said, "What a great assortment of ethical dilemmas! I believe that they are all quite current and valid. If I were taking your survey, I would have to say that I have experienced a majority of them."

Good luck with your research!” Another stated, “All of these issues are still relevant today in my opinion. Best wishes with your study.” As a result of the responses from current superintendents indicating the validity of these scenarios, I decided that these scenarios could be used in the study. However, I have changed questions 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 to address current issues, such as high-stakes testing in question 1.

Question 3 dealt with religious beliefs. Question 5 dealt with obtaining sophisticated electronic devices, such as the Apple iPad 3. Question 6 referred to a religious issue. Question 8, again, dealt with the issue of high-stakes testing. Question 9 referred to rhetorical sensitivity, and Question 10 dealt with misuse of funds. The superintendent may or may not be aware that the choices made in these scenarios may not be in line with the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics.

In my study, I presented dilemmas consistent with the overall ethical implications provided in the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics (Appendix C). Also, the demographic data section of my survey included questions concerning salary range, highest level of education completed, and ethnic background. In question eleven of my survey, I also used the word “gender” rather than the word “sex” used in Fenstermaker’s survey. Fenstermaker (1994) titled this section as biographical data rather than demographic data. I omitted Fenstermaker’s (1994) biographical data questions three, six, and nine as write-in or fill-in-the-blank questions and replaced those questions with questions that the respondent must fill in or color in the circle in my survey. Question three asked the number of years as superintendent in the present district. In my survey (question 13), I asked the respondent to fill in the circle for the years of experience in this position, including the current year. Question six asked for student enrollment in the current

school district. My survey (question 15) asked the respondent to fill in the circle for student enrollment in the district rather than writing it in. In question 11 of my survey, I used the word “gender” rather than the word “sex” found in Fenstermaker’s (1994) survey question nine. The “fill in the circle” or coloring in the circle answer is more convenient for the respondent and adds to expediency in filling out the survey. My survey had ten superintendents’ survey scenarios, six demographic data questions with multiple “color in the circle” responses, and seven write-in or fill-in-the-blank responses in the demographic data section of the survey. Coloring in the circle allows the respondent to choose the most appropriate response. The survey and demographic data were a continuous flow of questions. Fenstermaker’s (1994) study was more cluttered with questions on both sides of the same page. The respondents needed added time to fill in the blanks in Fenstermaker’s (1994) biographical data section, which was labeled demographical data in my instrument. Filling in the blanks can be very time-consuming as opposed to filling in a circle for a multiple choice-style survey.

Fenstermaker (1994) had ten superintendents’ survey scenarios and seven write-ins or fill-in-the-blank responses in the biographical data section of his survey, all of which are fill-in-the-blank-type responses. I had fill-in-the-blank responses in my survey, but the respondent did not fill in blanks for the entire survey; only the final seven questions of the survey were fill in the blank responses.

Scenarios and Corresponding Appropriate Responses

I used the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics (Appendix C) to determine the appropriate ethical answer for my study, whereas, Fenstermaker used the AASA 1962 Code of

Ethics (Appendix B). The AASA 2007 Code of Ethics was a shorter version of the AASA 1962 Code of Ethics. The AASA 2007 Code of Ethics version comprised only 12 statements of ethical standards. The AASA 1962 Code of Ethics version tripled that in length. It was wordy, very detailed, lengthy, and comprised multiple statements of ethical standards. Fenstermaker derived the correct answers for his survey from Dexheimer's (1970) research, survey, and findings. Fenstermaker (1994) also used the responses of five AASA officers that he surveyed to establish a measure of validity. The responses of the five AASA officers were in agreement with Dexheimer's (1970). I used Fenstermaker's (1994) findings as a guide for the appropriate answers to the questions in my survey. The questions and the appropriate answer to the questions, with the rationale for their appropriateness, are presented below.

Question one: Your staff has worked intensely to transform testing failures into successes. Results for the annual state Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests have just arrived and they show your district trailing the established goals in several areas – particularly reading. This is especially distressing because there have been In-Service workshops and subsidies for teachers to attend conferences on the teaching of reading, math, etc. What do you do with the report?

The appropriate answer in scenario question one of the survey is letter B. The letter B answer makes the contents of the standardized testing report known to the Board, the staff, and community at large. Element number five of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics supports this answer in advising the school board of the results of the standardized testing report. Scenario one asked each superintendent to respond to

receiving unfavorable test results. Answer letter E excluded everyone. Answer letter E shared the information with staff members, but excludes the board and parents while answer D shared the information with the board while excluding staff and community (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Question two: You are attending, at district expense, a major national conference of school administrators (such as the AASA convention). While there, you meet a group of friends in the hotel lobby. After a few moments, your group is approached by the sales representative of a computer based product (Sisk12-Tyler Pulse), which is a parent/student portal computer reporting system used by all of your schools. He mingles with the group and, before long, insists that all of you accompany him to dinner at one of the city's elite restaurants at his expense. How do you respond to the invitation?

The appropriate answer in scenario Question two of the survey was letter D, "accept the invitation, but only if you pay for your own meal." Number two of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics supports this answer, which states that a professional should act in a trustworthy and responsible manner. Letter B implies that the individual would allow the salesman only to buy the meal if he can keep it secret from others. Letter C initially indicated that the administrator decline the invitation, which the code would not support, but continues by indicating that the administrator lie about the reasons he or she does not attend. Not telling the truth is a behavior that the code does not endorse (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Question three: The parents of a good student and generally responsible youngster have come to you with a complaint about the teaching style of a

history teacher. They claim she is using biased materials and slanted opinions concerning her religious beliefs in her classes. Further, they claim that when their own son tried to question these approaches, he was greeted with sarcasm and thinly veiled threats to have his grades lowered. The father is well known for his involvement in civic and community affairs, and he demands evidence of your immediate action. What is your response?

The appropriate answer in scenario question three of the survey is D, "Indicate to the parents that you will take up the matter with the teacher and his supervisors, but that no direct action will be taken until both sides of the controversy have been aired." Numbers three and eight of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics support this answer. In question three, the superintendent's responsibility to parents, students, and staff came into direct conflict. A well-known parent approached the superintendent with concerns about the teaching style and conduct of a teacher. The parent was demanding immediate action from the superintendent. Answer letter A indicated full agreement with the parent. Answer letter B avoided the issue at the risk of slandering the teacher. The action in answer letter C looked attractive, but indicated that one is assuming that the allegations are true and that action would be forthcoming (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Question four: You are leaving the district at the end of this school year. The Board, not wishing to involve itself with outside consultants, has decided to handle the recruitment of your successor itself, using you as the main resource of advice and help. After going through the normal procedures, a final group of five candidates remains. These candidates have visited the district, have met with the Board, and have chatted with you and other staff members. Now the final

selection process has begun, and the Board is asking for some firm opinions from you on these candidates. What is your response?

The appropriate answer in scenario question four of the survey is letter A, "You excuse yourself and leave the Board entirely to its own devices in these final stages." Number five of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics supports this answer. While the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics calls for an administrator to do what is in the best interest of the schools and division, it is also specific about the ethical issues dealing with the individual's relationship to colleagues. Assisting the Board as requested in scenario four implies offering positive and negative comments about the candidates competing for the job. Answer letter B indicated that the outgoing superintendent is freely expressing his opinion of the candidates, indicating a particular emphasis on the negative. Answer letter B implied that the superintendent gives the school board the facts that are already in their possession. This is not the intent of the school board's request, and the superintendent is avoiding the issue through omission, a practice that the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics condemns. These candidates are obviously colleagues, but more importantly, they are potential competitors for the job that an individual may be entering as he or she leaves the district. The appearance of choosing a candidate on basis of past positive or negative encounters is difficult to avoid. Additionally, the appearance that the selection of an individual was to avoid competition for other positions for which the outgoing superintendent expressed an interest is also a concern. All of these were of particular issue when examining letter D for the answer. Additionally, letters B and D as answers are unacceptable because of number six of the AASA 2007 Code (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Question five: Spring has arrived and the new Apple Store is having its grand opening at the mall. You have been promising yourself for some time a new personal Apple iPad 3. One of the principals in the district has just purchased a beautiful Apple iPad 3, and you suspect she did so through the district's contractor for tech supplies, at a reduced price. How do you obtain your new Apple iPad 3?

The appropriate answer in scenario question five of the survey is letter B, "You stay away entirely from the school supplier, preferring to make your own deal elsewhere. You stay away entirely from the school supplier, preferring to make your own deal elsewhere." Number seven of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics regulated the answer to question number five. The other three answers indicated that some kind of deal can be worked out though it may be unethical. To obtain the equipment, a degree of deceit is a factor in two of the cases (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Question six: Your district is a rural one, and quite homogenous in its population. The teaching staff reflects this homogeneity, that is, they are mostly white, middle-class, and protestant. In your search for new staff members, an excellent candidate with extremely promising credentials appears. The interview turns up the additional fact that this candidate is a Black American and a Muslim. This is a combination not generally found in your area. The Board will back any recommendation you make. How will you proceed?

The appropriate answer in scenario question six of the survey is letter B, "Hire the highly qualified candidate on your own authority and allow the Board to ratify any recommendation you make to them." Number five of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics

supports this answer. The correct response reflects the position that the superintendent hires the candidate on the basis of teaching ability and not on the basis of race or ethnicity (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Question seven: A local service organization, of which you are a member, puts on an impressive talent show annually to raise funds. This year they have designated the proceeds to help the girls' varsity volleyball team to help obtain uniforms that are not form fitting. All rehearsals and the final show will be in the high school auditorium. The chairman of the talent show has come to ask you for a reduction in the normal rates charged by the school for use of the facilities so that a maximum profit may be realized. As superintendent, and as a member of the organization, how do you respond?

The appropriate answer in scenario question seven of the survey is letter B, "Refuse the request, point out the policy as it stands, and note that other equally deserving groups use the auditorium during the year and pay the advertised amount." Number six of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics supports this answer. This type of preferential treatment should not be for any group or organization seeking special favors. It would set a bad precedent. Three of the answers, letters A, C, and D, indicated preferably to facilitate a process that honors the request of the group seeking special consideration (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Question eight: Disgruntled with low test scores and low scoring students, you set out to make sure that this year's overall scores will be better. What action do you take?

The appropriate answer in scenario question eight of the survey is letter A. "Say

nothing to anyone and move forward with the test.” Numbers one and six of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics support this answer. The scenario in question eight may be difficult to contemplate for many readers. A situation develops that many believe they would never find themselves in because they would advise the Board that the policy is not legal or ethical. The question did not ask the individual to answer based on what he/she might do before the fact, but in the situation outlined. In this case, the superintendent ponders a policy that he or she considers to be wrong. The policy discourages teachers from taking an active role in politics. (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Question nine: Each year the Masons fraternity, in cooperation with the Budweiser distributors, offers – free of charge – book covers for the children in your district. Aside from the beer symbol and a few ‘don’t drink and drive” quotations, they are unmarked and in school colors. The book covers have been delivered. What do you do with them?

The appropriate answer in scenario question nine of the survey is letter C, “Send them back to the donor, with a note of thanks for the gesture.” Number one of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics supports this answer. In answers letters A and B, the superintendent distributes the covers containing the advertisement for Coke, and in answer B, the superintendent is not forthright with the distributor. Thus, letter C is the most appropriate answer (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Question 10: Your district is a rural one, and lacking in funds due to the current state of the budget. The competition for teachers in the critical subject matter area of chemistry is always keen. Because of economic conditions in your district-as in neighboring districts-salary schedules are generally below state

average. The Board has made it clear in the past that all hiring is entirely in your hands; they'll ratify any recommendation you make to them. You are thinking about using the new County 1% sales tax to help booster the salary of a highly qualified math teacher. How will you proceed?

The appropriate answer in scenario question 10 of the survey is letter A, "Try to find some other way to make the job attractive, such as rearrange class load, unique fringe benefits, etc." Numbers one and six of the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics support this answer. Scenario 10 presents a particularly difficult situation both in its dilemma for the superintendent and in the interpretation of the code. This situation asks the superintendent what he or she would do when faced with a hiring situation in which the best candidate will take the job but not at the offered salary. Therefore, the superintendent must be consistent with the salary situation for all staff. In these three areas, it seemed evident that the superintendent is doing everything possible to hire the best candidate while adhering to established policies and regulations. Answer B involves the offering of salary, which changes regulations or policy and creates inequities for other employees. Answers C and D offer options that weaken the teaching staff without making an adequate effort to obtain the best candidate for the position (Fenstermaker, 1994). Also, concerning question ten of Fenstermaker's (1994) survey, I omitted answer letter E in my 2012 survey because the discussion of merit increases and pay steps is irrelevant to this question.

Data Analysis

The study assessed the ethical responses of school superintendents nationwide

who were AASA members in 2012. The fill-in-the-circle design of this survey allowed me to scan the survey directly into the computer using Gravic[®] optical recognition software. To convert the data for statistical analysis, I used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 13.0.

The following denotes how Research Questions One, Two, and Three were analyzed:

Research Question 1: Do the ethical responses of the present study participants differ significantly from those in Fenstermaker's 1994 study? Percentages, means, frequencies, Pearson's *r*, and Chi-square tests were used to analyze the data. SPSS Graduate Pack 13.0 was used to process the data.

Research Question 2: Do 'actual' responses (respondent is answering from perspective of having been in this situation – or a similar one - prior) differ significantly from 'hypothetical' responses (respondent imagines being in the situation, but never actually experienced anything like it)? Chi-square was used to examine actual versus hypothetical results.

Research Question 3: Do ethical responses of superintendents differ significantly by demographic characteristics? The third research question was intended to examine differences between current school superintendents in 2012 and superintendents in 1991 and how they responded to the survey questions to determine if the ethical responses of superintendents differ significantly by demographic characteristics.

- a. Specifically, do males and females differ in their ethical responding?
- b. Specifically, do Caucasians and non-Caucasians differ in their ethical responding?

- c. Is level of education differentially related to ethical responding?
- d. Is age differentially related to ethical responding?
- e. Is total district enrollment differentially related to ethical responding?
- f. Is level of salary differentially related to ethical responding?
- g. Are years of experience differentially related to ethical responding?

Chi-square tests were calculated for each sub-question of Research Question 3.

In particular, a *t*-test was used to calculate for gender differences. Regarding race, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with the four categories of race (Caucasian, African American, Hispanic/Mexican/Puerto Rican/Cuban, Asian) was calculated. For age, a one-tailed Pearson correlation was used. For superintendents' years of experience, an ANOVA was utilized. For general years of experience, a one-tailed Pearson's correlation was employed.

Furthermore, to answer research Questions Two and Three, I computed cross-tabulations. Also the chi-square data provided information to answer the question. Chi-square tests compared the expected distribution of superintendents' ethical responses against the observed distributions for the variables of race, years of experience, level of education completed, total enrollment in district, and salary. If the chi-square (χ^2) value was greater than the critical test value, it rejected the null hypothesis tested. The level of significance for this study was .05 (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Also, I used Chi-squares and Pearson *r* correlations to analyze the data. I used Chi-squares for statistical testing of categorical data and Pearson *r* for continuous data. Chi-square tests of independence compared the expected distribution of superintendents' ethical responses against the observed distributions for the variables

of race, gender, years of experience, level of education completed, total district enrollment, salary, and gender. The variables aforementioned were not write-in answers as is the age variable; neither were they continuous variables. Rather, they were a response to a range of categorical items. Respondents answered these items by filling in a circle on the survey. I did not use Pearson's r correlations between demographic variables and total ethical response for the items discussed above. I used Pearson's r for size of district (total enrollment), years of service within the district, years of experience as an administrator, salary, including the continuous variable such as age and other write-in answers. Race and gender are not continuous variables or write-ins (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). I used Pearson's r when viewing age against patterns of ethical responding. The Pearson's r produces more information concerning continuous data than the Chi-square test. In my survey, as in Fenstermaker's (1994), participants wrote in their age rather than put the response into categories or a range of ages (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The variables of race and gender were not used in Fenstermaker's (1994) survey. I used the variables of race and gender and reported the findings.

As per Fenstermaker (1994), I analyzed for both *actual* and *hypothetical* responses (*actual* defines those superintendents who actually experienced a similar ethical dilemma; *hypothetical* for those who have not), and I compared the responses between the two types of participants. Where available and appropriate, I made comparisons of the Chi-squares and Pearson's r from each study to determine how similar the patterns of responding were, while taking into account demographic variables.

Table 1 depicts the research questions for the study along with the appropriate analysis and requisite survey questions (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Table 1

Proposed Research Questions with their Corresponding Analysis and Survey Questions

Research Question	Analysis	Survey Items
RQ 1, 2	Chi-square	1-10, 12-16
RQ 3	ANOVA, Pearson r	1-10

Collection of Data

Upon receiving permission from the SIUC Human Subject Committee, I received the list of names for those superintendents obtained by the AASA office to create mailing labels. The participants received a packet containing a cover letter (Appendix D), a two-part questionnaire (Appendix E), and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Those participants who do not responded within 10 to 14 days received a postcard (Appendix F) restating the purpose of the study and urging them to complete, return their surveys, or request a new survey. The postcard had my contact information in case the participant needed a new copy of the survey (Fenstermaker, 1994).

I took various measures to ensure the anonymity of those who choose to participate in this research. First, I assigned a number to each superintendent, which I also placed on the corresponding survey before mailing the research participation request. I kept the list matching the superintendents' names and survey numbers in a secure place in either my home or office so that I was the only person who could directly

identify each participant. In addition, the return address label had the corresponding number for the survey to assist with correct matching of returned versus non-returned surveys. By so doing, it was possible to determine which respondents responded and contact only those who did not reply (Fenstermaker, 1994).

Summary

Chapter Three presented the methods for the study. This chapter included the purpose of the study, the research questions, research design, participants, instrument design, treatment of data, and collection of data. Chapter Four presents the results obtained after applying these methods.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine ethical responses by public school superintendents nationwide to problematic school situations. An additional goal was to compare responses of the proposed study with those of school superintendents in an earlier study (Fenstermaker, 1994) to determine whether a significant change has occurred in the attitudes and ethical behavior of superintendents over the past 20 years.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyze the data collected from superintendents who were then-current members of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) in 2012. The first section of this chapter includes the research questions, demographics, and information related to the return of the survey instrument. Tables are also presented. In the second section of this chapter, respondents are described in relationship to the demographic section of the questionnaire along with presentation of tables. Also, data are discussed in relationship to the research questions. The third section of this chapter includes analysis of data concerning ethical decision-making and the patterns that surface in relation to the research questions.

Research Questions

The primary question addressed by this research concerns current superintendents making ethical choices when compared to superintendents 20 years previously, taking into account potential demographic differences.

A survey was conducted to answer the following specific research questions:

1. Do the ethical responses of the present study participants differ significantly from those in Fenstermaker's 1994 study?
 - c. Specifically, does the overall percentage of correct responses differ significantly?
 - d. Specifically, is there a significant difference in the patterns of correct responses across items?
4. Do 'actual' responses (respondent is answering from perspective of having been in this situation – or a similar one - prior) differ significantly from 'hypothetical' responses (respondent imagines being in the situation, but never actually experienced anything like it)?
5. Do ethical responses of superintendents differ significantly by demographic characteristics?
 - a. Specifically, do males and females differ in their ethical responding?
 - b. Specifically, do Caucasians and non-Caucasians differ in their ethical responding?
 - c. Is level of education differentially related to ethical responding?
 - d. Is age differentially related to ethical responding?
 - e. Is total district enrollment differentially related to ethical responding?
 - f. Is level of salary differentially related to ethical responding?
 - g. Are years of experience differentially related to ethical responding?

Demographic Data

While Fenstermaker (1994) did not include a demographic table in his study, this study's demographic data revealed the gender, race, years of experience, education, district enrollment, salary, age, total years as superintendent, and years as AASA member of the respondents. These responses are summarized in Table 2.

Gender. The total number of male superintendents responding was 55.7%; the total number of female respondents was 43.3%.

Race. Concerning race, the majority of respondents were Caucasian. The second largest number of respondents was African American. Hispanic and Asian school superintendents were a small number of respondents.

Education. Nearly 90% of the respondents had an advanced degree while others reported a bachelors, masters, or other degree.

Age. The average age of respondents was 57 years. The correlation between age and total score was $r(296) = .09, p = .06$, suggesting a marginally significant positive trend for older workers tending to score higher.

District Enrollment. More than 75% of the school superintendents served in districts with a student enrollment of 5,000-25,000 students. A little more than 18% of the responding superintendents were in districts having 2,000 or fewer students.

Salary. Nearly 70% of the school superintendents earn over \$125,000 while about 10% earn less than \$90,000.

Total Years as a Superintendent. The average number of years the respondents had served as school superintendents was 12 years.

Years Experience in this Position. The highest number of respondents had 10-

14 years' experience with 15-20 years being the second highest number of years serving in superintendence.

Years as AASA Member. Respondents had been members of AASA, on average, for almost 11 years.

Table 2

Demographic Information

Gender:	Male	55.7%	Female 43.3%
Race:	Caucasian	51.3%	
	African American	36.0%	
	Hispanic	6.0%	
	Asian	5.7%	
Education:	Bachelors only		0.7%
	Masters		2.7%
	Advanced College Degree		89.7%
	Other		5.7%
District enrollment:	Under 2000	3.7%	
	2001-5000	14.3%	
	5001-10,000	39.7%	
	10,001-25,000	35.3%	
	25,000+	5.7%	
Age:	Mean = 57.33 years		
Salary:	\$50,000-\$75,000		0.7%
	\$75,001-\$90,000		1.6%
	\$90,0001-\$100,000		7.0%
	\$100,001-\$125,000		8.7%
	\$125,001-\$150,000		40.7%
	over \$150,000		28.0%
Years in current position:	1-4 years	3.0%	
	5-9 years	24.0%	
	10-14 years	5.3%	
	15-20 years	23.7%	
	21+ years	6.7%	

Total Years as a Superintendent:	Mean = 12.22 years
Years as AASA member:	Mean = 10.97 years

Research Question 1: Overall Correlation of Group Scores

The first research question examined differences in how current school superintendents in 2012 and superintendents in 1991 responded to the survey questions. Fenstermaker's (1994) survey, which was completed in 1991, had a sample of 279 and used ten questions. Fenstermaker received a total of 1,341 ethical replies out of a total of 2,790 possible replies for an overall group score of 48.1%. The current study, modified from Fenstermaker's 1991 survey with updated scenarios, was distributed to 419 superintendents nationwide who are members of AASA. A total of 297 responses were received (70.1%). The current survey included ten questions for a total of 2,970 responses (not including missing data: 2970 - 43 missing = 2927 total responses), of which 1,488 responses were judged to be ethical, yielding an overall score of 52.6% ethical responding. Out of ten possible, scores ranged from 2 to 9, with the average correct being 5.02, $SD = 1.38$. The difference between the group means from 1991 to 2012 is less than one percentage point. Therefore, the researcher determines that there is no difference between the ethical responses provided by school superintendents in 1991 and the superintendents who responded in 2012.

Percentages, means, frequencies, t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), LSD post-hoc test, a one-tailed Pearson Correlation, Pearson's r , and Chi-square tests were used to analyze the data. SPSS Graduate Pack 13.0 was used to process the data. One important finding of this study is that many of the responses were considered

to be in the unethical categories, which is similar to Fenstermaker's 1994 study (see Table 4-5).

Tabulation of Data

The following pages illustrate the raw data gathered from the survey responses. Table 3 reveals the responses considered most ethical by the AASA. These answers were used in the Fenstermaker (1994) survey.

Table 3

Answer Key

Responses Considered Most Ethical by AASA

Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Answers	B	C	D	A	B	B	B	A	C	C

The following section examines the responses to each survey question related to Research Question 1. The frequency tables for how the superintendents responded to these questions are located in the appendix.

Question 1: Your staff has worked intensely to transform testing failures into successes. Results for the annual state Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests have just arrived and they show your district trailing the established goals in several areas – particularly reading. This is especially distressing because there have been In-Service workshops and subsidies for teachers to attend conferences on the teaching of reading, math, etc. What do you do with the report?

In question one, 28.7% of the superintendents said they would review the contents of the report with the total staff. Superintendents may have chosen this answer because it just seemed like the right thing to do, that is, to have the staff be aware of the reports' results. However, this was not the right answer, but was the answer missed the most for question one. The correct answer, chosen by 35.7% of the superintendents, is to make the contents of the report known to the Board, the staff, and community at large.

Question 2: You are attending, at district expense, a major national conference of school administrators (such as the AASA convention). While there, you meet a group of friends in the hotel lobby. After a few moments, your group is approached by the sales representative of a computer-based product (Sisk 12-Tyler Pulse), which is a parent/student portal computer reporting system used by all of your schools. He mingles with the group and, before long, insists that all of you accompany him to dinner at one of the city's elite restaurants at his expense. How do you respond to the invitation?

In question two, 45.7% of the superintendents said they would accept the gift with thanks. Superintendents may have chosen this answer because it seemed like the courteous thing to do. This was the answer missed the most for question two. The correct answer, chosen by 24.7% of the superintendents, is to decline the invitation, claiming that you have another commitment, even though that is not really the case. A potential reason that most of the superintendents selected the incorrect answer may be because they believed it would not be truthful to state that they have another commitment, when in fact, that is not really the case.

Question 3: The parents of a good student and generally responsible youngster have come to you with a complaint about the teaching style of a history teacher. They claim she is using biased materials and slanted opinions concerning her religious beliefs in her classes. Further, they claim that when their own son tried to question these approaches, he was greeted with sarcasm and thinly veiled threats to have his grades lowered. Father is well known for his involvement in civic and community affairs, and he demands evidence of your immediate action. What is your response?

In question three, 32.7% of the superintendents said they would call the most immediate supervisor of the teacher and ask for some corroboration of the incidents, then proceed with action. Superintendents may have chosen this answer because it is usually protocol to report matters to your supervisor. This was the answer missed the most for question three. The correct answer, chosen by 65.3% of the superintendents, is to indicate to the parents that you will take up the matter with the teacher and the teacher's supervisors, but that no direct action would be taken until both sides of the controversy have been aired.

Question 4: You are leaving the district at the end of this school year. The Board, not wishing to involve itself with outside consultants, has decided to handle the recruitment of your successor itself, using you as the main resource of advice and help. After going through the normal procedures, a final group of five candidates remains. These candidates have visited the district, have met with the Board, and have chatted with you and other staff members. Now the final selection process has begun, and the Board is asking for some firm opinions

from you on these candidates. What is your response?

In question four, 30% of the superintendents said since some of the candidates exhibited personal characteristics that you believe would not fit well for this particular district, you enter these opinions freely. Superintendents may have chosen this answer with thoughts that they were being a team player and wanted the best candidate that would best fit in with the present team of teachers. This was the answer missed the most for question four. The correct answer, chosen by 54.3% of the superintendents, is to excuse yourself and leave the Board entirely to its own devices in these final stages. Most of the superintendents selected this answer.

Question 5: Spring has arrived and the new Apple Store is having its grand opening at the mall. You have been promising yourself for some time a new personal Apple iPad 3. One of the principals in the district has just purchased a beautiful Apple iPad 3, and you suspect she did so through the district's contractor for tech supplies, at a reduced price. How do you obtain your new Apple iPad 3?

In question five, 7% of the superintendents said they would call the supplier, identify themselves and their position, and ask him what he can do. Not many of the superintendents chose this answer. This was the answer missed the most for question five. The correct answer, chosen by 87.3% of the superintendents, is to stay away entirely from the school supplier, preferring to make your own deal elsewhere.

Question 6: Your district is a rural one and quite homogenous in its population. The teaching staff reflects this homogeneity, that is, staff members are mostly white, middle-class, and Protestant. In your search for new staff members, an

excellent candidate with extremely promising credentials appears. The interview turns up the additional fact that this candidate is a Black American and a Muslim. This is a combination not generally found in your area. The Board will back any recommendation you make. How will you proceed?

In question six, 22.7% of the superintendents said although other candidates are clearly inferior, you hire one of them as the best course of action for this particular community at this particular time. Superintendents may have chosen this answer because they may believe that it is better to have peace in the workplace rather than contention. This was the answer missed the most for question six. The correct answer, chosen by 66.3% of the superintendents, is to hire the highly qualified candidate on your own authority and allow the Board to ratify any recommendation you make to them.

Question 7: A local service organization, of which you are a member, puts on an impressive talent show annually to raise funds. This year they have designated the proceeds to help the girls' varsity volleyball team to help obtain uniforms that are not form fitting. All rehearsals and the final show will be in the high school auditorium. The chairman of the talent show has come to ask you for a reduction in the normal rates charged by the school for use of the facilities so that a maximum profit may be realized. As superintendent and as a member of the organization, how do you respond?

In question seven, 40.7% of the superintendents said they would recommend that the request be granted. Superintendents may have chosen this answer because they thought that a good deed should be rewarded. This was the answer missed the most for question seven. The correct answer, chosen by only 27% of the

superintendents, is to refuse the request, point out the policy as it stands, and note that other equally deserving groups use the auditorium during the year and pay the advertised amount.

Question 8: Disgruntled with low test scores and low scoring students, you set out to make sure that this year's overall scores will be better. What action do you take?

In question eight, 48.3% of the superintendents said they would call in the teachers and encourage them to move low-scoring students out on a field trip the day of the test since you only need to test 95% to reach that percentage. Superintendents may have chosen this answer in fear of NCLB consequences and their jobs potentially being at stake. This was the answer missed the most for question eight. The correct answer, chosen by 37% of the superintendents, is to say nothing to anyone and move forward with the test.

Question 9: Each year the Masons fraternity, in cooperation with the Budweiser distributors, offers – free of charge – book covers for the children in your district. Aside from the beer symbol and a few 'don't drink and drive' quotations, they are unmarked and in school colors. The book covers have been delivered. What do you do with them?

In question nine, 13% of the superintendents said they would keep the book covers, but accidentally file them in a place which guarantees they will not be distributed. Superintendents may have chosen this answer because they did not want to seem ungrateful for the amount of charitable efforts of the Masons fraternity. This was the answer missed the most in Fenstermaker's survey for question nine. The correct

answer, chosen by 85.7% of the superintendents in the present survey, is to send the book covers back to the donor, with a note of thanks for the gesture.

Question 10: Your district is a rural one and lacking in funds due to the current state of the budget. The competition for teachers in the critical subject matter area of chemistry is always keen. Because of economic conditions in your district—as in neighboring districts—salary schedules are generally below state average. The Board has made it clear in the past that all hiring is entirely in your hands; they'll ratify any recommendation you make to them. You are thinking about using the new county 1% sales tax to help boost the salary of a highly qualified math teacher. How will you proceed?

In question ten, 65% of the superintendents said they would look at the current staff to see if someone can be retained for the chemistry job, and thus make it possible for you to recruit in a less critical and less competitive market. Superintendents may have chosen this answer due to budget concerns. This was the answer missed by most of the superintendents for question ten. The correct answer, chosen by only 20.3% of the superintendents, is to continue the search, hoping that an adequate teacher will be attracted to your salary schedule.

In the appendix, Table A1 describes the frequency with which superintendents answered the questions most correctly. The term “most correctly” specifies how many superintendents chose the correct answer.

Research Question 2: Actual vs. Hypothetical Responses

The second research question was intended to examine whether the

superintendent's response was from an actual experience or an 'actual' response (respondent is answering from perspective of having been in this situation – or a similar one - prior) or from a 'hypothetical' response (respondent only imagines being in situation; never actually experienced anything like it). Survey is intended to show if the actual responses of superintendents differ significantly from the hypothetical response. Table A1, which illustrates whether the response was recorded as either "actual" or "hypothetical," is located in Appendix G.

The dilemmas described in this survey mimic situations that administrators may encounter at one time or another. Each survey question required a response that may initially seem to have no ethical inferences, but did involve an ethical principle discussed in the 2007 Code of Ethics (Appendix C) for school administrators. Each superintendent in the survey was asked to respond to the option he or she would select in regard to that dilemma. Furthermore, in the survey, superintendents were asked to fill in the appropriate circle indicating whether the superintendent's response was from actual or a hypothetical experience. In the survey, superintendents circled the response that indicated, "I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career," or "I have not encountered a situation very similar to this in my career."

Table 4 illustrates the number of ethical or non-ethical responses on the present study and in Fenstermaker's study. The answer key used for the correct answers was shown in Table 3.

In Table 4, the Chi-square column is used to measure comparability of the response distributions. The Chi-square column also represents the values computed after tallying the numbers found to the left of the Chi-square column. A one degree of

freedom and a level of significance of .05 were used. The critical value for Chi-square is 3.84 ($p < .05$). The largest of the Chi-squares is found in question 10. The responses cannot be compared when the value of Chi-square exceeds 3.84. Consequently, only the responses from questions 3 and 10 from 2012 cannot be compared to those of 1991.

Table 4

Comparison of Tallies from Fenstermaker Study to Present

Qstn. No.	Fenstermaker Study		Present Study		
	Ethical Replies	Non-ethical Replies	Ethical Replies	Non-ethical Replies	Chi-square
1	185	94	107 35.7%	190 63.3%	2.28
2	68	210	82 27.7%	213 71.0%	1.80
3	244	35	196 65.3%	100 33.3%	7.01**
4	97	182	163 54.3%	134 44.7%	1.31
5	216	63	262 87.3%	32 10.7%	0.44
6	242	34	199 66.3%	98 32.7%	1.02
7	122	156	81 27.0%	213 71.0%	3.38
8	76	202	107 35.7%	187 62.3%	3.47, $p = .06$
9	44	234	257 85.7%	39 13.0%	1.14
10	43	236	33 11.0%	263 87.7%	8.34*

* The critical value for Chi-square is 3.84 ($p < .05$). The largest Chi-square is found in question 10. Responses cannot be compared when the value of Chi-square exceeds 3.84.

** The responses from questions 3 and 10 from 2012 cannot be compared to those of 1991.

These results showed that for three questions, the answers were impacted by whether or not the respondents had actually experienced such a situation. In particular,

for question 3, those who **had experienced** the situation were more likely ($n = 131$) to answer correctly than those who **had not experienced such a situation** (Appendix G, Table A1). Question 3 was the only question in which the individual cells on the bar chart *Means* differed significantly from each other. Furthermore, those with experience were significantly more likely to get the answer correct than those without.

For question 10, the pattern was reversed; if respondents **had experienced** ($n = 38$) such a situation, they were much more likely to answer incorrectly than correctly. Also, those who **had not experienced** ($n = 23$) it also tended to answer incorrectly than correctly. Moreover, the pattern for question 8 was similar to question 10, in that those who **had experienced** ($n = 44$) a similar situation tended to answer more incorrectly than correctly, as did those who **had not experienced** ($N = 63$). Yet no individual cells were significantly different from each other. Indicated below are the percentages of correct responses by question and The Bar Chart.

Table 5

Percentages of Correct vs. Incorrect Responses by Question

Qstn. No.	Percent correct	Percent incorrect	Qstn. No.	Percent correct	Percent incorrect
1	35.7	63.3	6	66.3	32.7
2	27.7	71.0	7	27.0	71.0
3	65.3	33.3	8	35.7	62.3
4	54.3	44.7	9	85.7	13.0
5	87.3	10.7	10	11.0	87.7

Table 6 shows the comparison of ethical vs. non-ethical responses in Fenstermaker's study and the present study. Two items are noteworthy concerning the data in the current study and data in the Fenstermaker study, as revealed in Table 6. First, in the Fenstermaker study, there were more ethical responses under the actual column as opposed to the hypothetical (716 actual vs. 590 hypothetical). In the current study, more of the ethical responses are indicated as hypothetical (533 actual vs. 952 hypothetical). This is almost twice as many ethical answers indicated as hypothetical as ethical responses coded as actual. There was much less of a difference in the two columns in the Fenstermaker study. Moreover, in the Fenstermaker study, there were more non-ethical responses under the actual column as opposed to hypothetical (754 actual vs. 641 hypothetical). In the current study, more non-ethical responses are implied as actual. Interestingly, the current study had the same number of actual non-ethical responses (754) as did Fenstermaker.

Table 6

Summary of Ethical Responses

	Current Study		Fenstermaker Study	
	Actual	Hypothetical	Actual	Hypothetical
Ethical	533	952	716	590
Non-ethical	754	712	754	641
Total	1287	1664	1470	1231

Chi-squares were calculated using the above results, specifically testing whether the actual condition (have experienced) or hypothetical condition (have not

experienced) significantly impacted correct/incorrect responses for each question.

Fenstermaker did not have these particular data, but the information is very helpful in establishing the picture.

Table 7

Chi-square Results for Actual vs. Hypothetical Condition

Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Chi-square	2.28	1.80	7.01**	1.31	0.44	1.02	3.38	3.47 $p = .06$	1.14	8.34*

* For question 10, superintendents were non-ethical in their decision-making response, even though they had actual experience in that situation.

** For Question 7, superintendents who actually experienced the situation were more inclined to respond correctly or ethically.

These results showed that for three questions, the answers were impacted by whether they actually had experienced such a situation before or not. In particular, for question 3, those who ***had experienced the situation*** were much more likely to answer correctly than those who ***had not experienced such a situation***.

For question #10, the pattern was reversed: if respondents had experienced such a situation, they were much more likely to answer incorrectly than correctly. As well, those who had not experienced it also tended to answer incorrectly than correctly.

Even though the Chi-square did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance for question 8, it was close enough to bear examination. The pattern for this question was similar as for question 10: those who had experienced a similar situation tended to answer more incorrectly than correctly, as did those who had not experienced a similar situation. Although the hope of the writer of this study was that

superintendents would be more ethical in actual application than in hypothetical examples, non-ethical decisions appear to be made more by superintendents who had actually experienced the situation. In the following pages, a series of tables are presented to illustrate data collected by Fenstermaker and data collected from the current study.

Research Question 3

Do ethical responses of superintendents differ significantly by demographic characteristics? The third research question was intended to examine differences between current school superintendents in 2012 and superintendents in 1991 and how they responded to the survey questions to determine if the ethical responses of superintendents differ significantly by demographic characteristics.

- a. Specifically, do males and females differ in their ethical responding?
- b. Specifically, do Caucasians and non-Caucasians differ in their ethical responding?
- c. Is level of education differentially related to ethical responding?
- d. Is age differentially related to ethical responding?
- e. Is total district enrollment differentially related to ethical responding?
- f. Is level of salary differentially related to ethical responding?
- g. Are years of experience differentially related to ethical responding?

Regarding possible gender differences, males ($n = 160$) had a mean correct score of $M = 4.93$, that is, 49.3%; females ($n = 127$), 51.4%. A t -test was calculated for

these total scores to see whether or not there was a significant difference in the means by gender; there was no significance: $t(285) = -1.29$.

Interestingly, Chi-square tests were also calculated for each question, corrected by gender, and one significant difference was revealed; on question 2, $\chi^2 = 6.20$, $p < .05$. Examining cell means, males were more likely to get the question incorrect ($n = 129$) compared to females ($n = 84$) and less likely to get it correct (males, $n = 37$; females, $n = 46$). This was the only individual question that had a statistically significant difference (see also Gender Bar Chart Table A in Appendix G).

Concerning race, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with the four categories of race (Caucasian, African American, Hispanic/Mexican/Puerto Rican/Cuban, Asian) was calculated; the overall results were not significant: $F(3, 283) = 2.07$. However, a LSD post-hoc test revealed a significant difference between Caucasians ($M = 4.86$) and African Americans ($M = 5.29$), $p < .05$; indicating African Americans tended to respond more correctly than Caucasians. Fenstermaker did not present statistical data concerning race.

Regarding results in identifying the Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the total percent correct for respondents' level of education (bachelor's, master's, advanced college, and other), only two respondents had a bachelor's degree only, and eight superintendents had a master's degree only. These numbers make further analyses untenable, that is, not enough respondents about whom to draw any meaningful inferences or conclusions.

In Table 8, the data suggest that scores tended to be slightly higher for the older subjects. The means given in Table 8 could be of use for further study. For age, the

one-tailed Pearson correlation revealed a marginally significant relationship, $r(286) = .09$, $p = .06$, such that as age increased, the percentage of ethical responses tended to be higher as well: the older superintendents responded to survey questions more correctly than did younger superintendents.

Table 8

Means by Scores by Age of Respondents

Age (yrs)	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
30-34	5.0000	1	.
35-39	3.0000	2	1.41421
40-44	4.5833	12	1.62135
45-49	4.9130	23	1.41142
50-54	5.1277	47	1.45389
55-59	4.9872	78	1.40031
60+	5.0976	123	1.32080
Total	5.0210	286	1.38649

The discussion of enrollment is presented in Chapter 5 with a related table.

Table 9 presents the statistics concerning salary scores. Correlation between salary and score: $r(286) = .01$, n.s. (not significant), was not similar to Fenstermaker's and not statistically significant. There was no linear relationship between salary and total answers.

Table 9

Superintendents' Salary

SALARY (annual)	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
00	5.0000	1	.
50,000-75,000	7.0000	2	1.41421
75,001-90,000	4.8000	10	1.39841
90,001-100,000	5.0952	21	1.78619
100,001-125,000	4.8889	54	1.31273
125,001-150,000	4.9744	117	1.43516
over 150,000	5.1235	81	1.23878
Total	5.0175	286	1.38528

An interesting note is that the largest number of superintendents on this table (117) making \$125,001 – \$150,000 responded correctly to less than half of the questions on the survey. It may be that they are confident and feel secure in their positions to take risks in decision-making.

Table 10 shows the superintendents' years of experience in their current position. The correlation between categories of years of experience and total correct was $r(296) = -.06$, which is statistically nonsignificant and is very similar to Fenstermaker's (1994) results: .09 and -.05.

Furthermore, superintendents' years of experience was measured categorically. For superintendents' years of experience, an ANOVA indicated that there was no significant effect for superintendents' years of experience on correct ethical responding: $F(4, 282) = .69, n.s.$ As well, follow-up post-hoc tests indicated no significant differences between groups.

For general years of experience, a one-tailed Pearson's correlation showed no significant relationship between years of experience and percent correct ethical responding: $r(286) = -.06, n.s.$

Table 10

Superintendents' Years of Experience in Current Position

Years of Experience	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
1-4	5.3214	28	1.74385
5-9	5.1111	72	1.27330
10-14	4.9200	100	1.36833
15-20	4.9118	68	1.40080
21+	5.1579	19	1.25889
Total	5.0209	287	1.38407

Table 11 illustrates data grouped by total years as a superintendent. Correlation between superintendent years and total correct was nearly identical to Fenstermaker's (1994) two reported: $r(286) = -.03$ (not significant).

Table 11

Respondents' Years of Experience as a Superintendent

Total Years of Experience	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
1-5	5.3871	31	1.72583
5-9	5.1471	68	1.30744
10-14	4.8621	87	1.33967
15-19	4.9483	58	1.28994
20-29	4.9250	40	1.47435
30+	5.6667	3	0.57735
Total	5.0209	287	1.38407

In Table 10, the first column presents the superintendents' years as a superintendent. The data in this table indicated that the greatest number of superintendents who were most ethical in their responses were the superintendents with three years of experience.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 4, I illustrated and examined the data from a nationwide survey of superintendents who were current members of the American Association of School Superintendents during the fall of 2012. Chapter 4 commenced with a summation of the demographic data from superintendents who responded to the survey. In successive segments, I analyzed and presented data on three research questions dealing with ethical decision-making. Some of the statistical measures used to analyze the data included percentages, frequencies, means, and *t*-tests using the SPSS GRADUATE PACK 13.0. The analysis showed that superintendents do make unethical decisions and

that there were no significant differences between the present survey and the survey conducted by Fenstermaker (1994).

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS,
AND FINAL THOUGHTS

The purpose of this study was to examine ethical responses to problematic school situations among public school superintendents nationwide. An additional goal was to compare current responses with those of school superintendents in an earlier study (Fenstermaker, 1994) in order to determine whether there has been a significant change in the attitudes and ethical behavior of superintendents over the past 20 years.

A key goal of this study was to compare the research conducted by Fenstermaker in 1991 to discover any change in ethical decision-making practices of current superintendents who are members of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). The primary question to be addressed by this research was whether or not superintendents today more consistently selected ethical choices compared with their counterparts of 21 years ago. Additional questions were to examine what variations exist among superintendents of varying demographic or biographic conditions.

In recent years, more than a few books and articles have been written about ethics, but there were not many studies like that of Fenstermaker (1991), dealing with superintendents following a code of ethics and measuring its achievement. This updated study may help to strengthen his results and provide current standards for the support for further study.

Summary of Findings

Decision-making for today's superintendent is an intricate practice. Disputes or problems may occur when superintendents make decisions on issues such as freedom of speech, special education, separation of church and state, gender issues, safety of staff and students, school shootings, funding, tensions concerning race issues, and family conflicts (Pardini, 2004). Personal values, laws, professional codes of ethics, and local policies play an important role in how superintendents make decisions. This study investigated the decision-making of superintendents to identify whether there were any patterns in the responses.

This study used Act Utilitarianism as the theoretical framework to learn more about superintendents' ethical decision-making. When using utilitarianism as groundwork for decision-making, one tries to see who will be hurt the most and who will gain the most. As a matter of fact, when using this framework in decision-making, the superintendent can choose from a variety of consequences that will bring the most desirable outcome (Strike, 2007).

One positive aspect of utilitarianism is that it seeks to make the world a better place, and the office, the place of work, a better place. A weakness of utilitarianism is that it is difficult to measure joy, peace, happiness, a good feeling, which all are debatable. Utilitarianism directs the leader to consider who will be happy and who will be hurt by a decision. One of the strongest arguments for utilitarianism is that it gives administrators a construct to work from when the lines are blurred concerning the right thing to do. In a borderline scenario as such, applause is in order for utilitarianism in that there is a rule, a code, or a standard on which to lean (Hinman, 2003).

To use Act Utilitarianism in decision-making is to think about the consequences of how things will turn out after the decision is made. Once the scenario is thought through, the superintendent takes the plan of action that will work best for all involved (Strike, 2007). Superintendents who use Act Utilitarianism handle situations case by case and are not bound, for instance, by a zero tolerance principle. Superintendents who use Act Utilitarianism know that exceptions can be made in the process of making decisions. An illustration of this can be seen in the sixth question of my survey:

Your district is a rural one and quite homogenous in its population. The teaching staff reflects this homogeneity; that is, they are mostly white, middle class, and Protestant. In your search for new staff members, an excellent candidate with extremely promising credentials appears. The interview turns up the additional fact that this candidate is a Black American and a Muslim. This is a combination generally not found in your area. The board will back any recommendation you make. How will you proceed?

If the superintendent says that the most ethical answer is to hire the highly qualified candidate on his or her own authority and allow Board members to ratify any recommendation made to them, this decision is an example of the superintendent examining and making a decision on its own worth using the act utilitarianism framework. The superintendent used his/her own choice in making the best final decision in hiring the teacher. The superintendent realized that this was the best candidate and would do the most good for the students as well as strengthen the staff.

The significance of this study is that it was intended to fill a gap in the literature on the possible causes of the aspects of ethics in decision-making and the decision-

making patterns formed by superintendents. I trust that the demographic information will assist school boards and community members in formulating better decisions as they determine whether to retain, continue, or end the contract of a superintendent. I also trust that the results of this study will aid present superintendents to enhance the quality of their decisions by helping them better grasp decision-making. School districts deal with many issues as superintendents try to have a sense of balance in their decision-making in the workplace, their private and professional values (Millerborg, 1990).

Federal legislation, like that of NCLB, has increased the amount of legal demands on all superintendents in public schools (Pardini, 2004). As a result, superintendents cope with dilemmas during the decision-making process as they try to act in accordance with the law while protecting the confidentiality and privileges of students (Millerborg, 1990).

Most of the research on dilemmas that superintendents face has focused on the ethical decision-making of the superintendents (Fenstermaker, 1994). The basis for these studies was the 2007 Code of Ethics of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Researchers in these studies found that superintendents rely heavily on ethics in their decision-making on the job. Millerborg (1990) indicated that superintendents make ethical choices 63% of the time when dealing with job-related matters.

In the literature review, I generally focused on ethics and, chiefly, the ethical decision-making of superintendents. The literature review revealed how ethics influenced the superintendent, codes of ethics, ethical decision-making of superintendents, related studies and articles, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The data for this project was collected from superintendents who were current

members of the American Association for School Administrators (AASA). The survey instrument was borrowed with permission from Fenstermaker's (1994) survey on "Superintendent Decision-Making: The Ethical Dimension." Fenstermaker (1994) also conducted a nationwide study and recommended that further study be done to validate his findings. I modified the survey by using updated scenarios that approximate situations that most administrators are likely to encounter at some time. The scenarios fall within an area of borderline ethics. However, only one response is the most ethically suitable (Fenstermaker, 1994).

A pilot study was conducted in order to update and validate the current survey. Fenstermaker's survey, including his scenarios, were distributed to seven local school superintendents to determine if these scenarios were still valid and to suggest other possible scenarios that would address current educational issues that may or may not have existed 21 years ago. The response: these scenarios are relevant to today's school superintendent.

In the current survey, I also used suggestions offered by superintendents regarding current dilemmas faced by today's superintendents. The survey was given to superintendents in K-12 school districts. Superintendents' names were obtained from AASA. A total of 419 surveys were disseminated during the spring of 2012; 297 superintendents responded, a rate of 70.1%.

The instrument utilized in this study was patterned after one developed by Fenstermaker (1994), who surveyed superintendents to assess their ethical responses to problematic school situations. The instrument consisted of two sections. The first section included ten descriptions of ethical hypothetical conditions that the

superintendents experienced in day-to-day operations on the job. Along with each question, the survey asked respondents if their experiences were actual experiences, the same or similar experiences. Several options of action to assess ethical responses to problematic school situations were given to elicit a response or choice of action from the participants. The scenarios in the survey approximate situations that most administrators are likely to encounter at some time. The scenarios fell within an area of borderline ethics. However, only one response was the most ethically suitable. In my study, I presented dilemmas consistent with the overall ethical implications provided in the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics (Appendix C). Also, the demographic data section of my survey included questions concerning salary range, highest level of education completed, and ethnic background. My survey had ten superintendents' survey scenarios, six demographic data questions with multiple "color in the circle" responses, and seven write-in or fill-in-the-blank responses also in the demographic data section of the survey. Coloring in the circle allowed respondents to choose the most appropriate response. The survey and demographic data were a continuous flow of questions.

Data for this project was treated using SPSS GRADUATE PACK 13.0 and analyzed by utilizing percentages, frequencies, means, and *t*-tests. The descriptive statistics consisted of the measures of central tendency as well as standard deviation. The inferential statistics consisted of paired sample *t*-tests ($\alpha = .05$).

Review of Results

The findings of research question one denote that there has not been much change in the ethical responses of school superintendents since 1991. Fenstermaker

recorded 1306 ethical responses out of a possible total of 2701, or an overall score of 47 percent. With equivalent criteria, the present study documented 1485 ethical replies out of a possible total of 2951, which denotes a total score of 49.8. The bulk of the responses to both surveys were unethical, with a variation of less than three percentage points from Fenstermaker's (1994) study to the present. The finding then is that there has been no significant change since 1991.

Research question two examined whether the superintendents' responses were from 'actual' experience (respondent is answering from the perspective of having been in this situation – or a similar one - prior) or were 'hypothetical' responses (respondent only imagines being in situation; never actually experienced anything like it). In the current study, more of the ethical responses were indicated as hypothetical. Overall, non-ethical decisions appear to be made more by superintendents who had actually experienced the situation.

The results of research question three denoted possible differences regarding gender, race, level of education, age, district enrollment, salary, years of experience in current position, and years of experience as a superintendent. Overall, there were no significant differences in gender found in both Fenstermaker's (1994) study and the present study. However, one significant difference was revealed on question 2; males were more likely to get the question incorrect compared to females. This was the only individual question that yielded a statistically significant difference.

Differences relative to race. Concerning race, the overall results were not significant. However, a LSD post-hoc test revealed a statistically significant difference between Caucasians and African Americans, indicating African Americans tended to

respond more correctly than Caucasians. Fenstermaker did not present statistical data concerning race.

Variations relative to level of education. Two respondents had a bachelor's degree only and eight superintendents had a master's degree only. These numbers make further analyses untenable, that is, not enough respondents about whom to draw any meaningful inferences or conclusions.

Differences based upon age. For age, statistics revealed that as age increased, the percentage of ethical responses tended to be higher as well. The older superintendents responded to survey questions more correctly than did younger superintendents.

Variations relative to district enrollment. Table 12 illustrates that the

Table 12

District Enrollment Data, 2012 Survey

ENROLLMENT	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
under 2000	5.7273	11	1.61808
2001-5000	5.2857	42	1.43622
5001-10,000	5.0000	113	1.41421
10,001-25,000	4.9038	104	1.32577
25,000+	4.6875	16	1.13835
Total	5.0175	286	1.38528

correlation is $r(287) = -.14, p < .05$, which is a significant correlation indicating, that the larger the district enrollment, the worse the respondent scored (illustrated in the Mean

column, which represents the average number of questions answered correctly in the survey); this is unique compared to Fenstermaker's correlations on Table A (Appendix G). Fenstermaker's study revealed that the larger the district enrollment, the better the respondent scored.

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run with the five categories of enrollment (see Table 12), and the overall results were not significant: $F(4, 281) = 2.92$, *n.s.* However, a LSD post-hoc test revealed several significant differences in correct responses from superintendents who presided over districts with fewer than 2000 compared to three of the other district enrollment categories; yet, these results should be interpreted with caution as there were only 11 respondents from districts with fewer than 2000 enrolled. The average number of correct responses was an exact inverse trend with size of enrollment (see Table 12) such that those with fewer than 2000 answered the most correct ($M = 5.73$), which was significantly (marginally) different from those in a district with 5001 – 10,000 (M correct = 5), $p = .096$; marginally significantly different from those in a district with 10,001 – 25,000 (M correct = 4.90), $p = .06$; and marginally significantly different from those in a district with more than 25,000 (M correct = 4.69), $p = .055$. This is above and beyond what Fenstermaker had done. This may be informative for future study.

Differences centered on salary. Correlation between salary and score were not similar to Fenstermaker's and not statistically significant. There was no linear relationship between salary and total answers. An interesting note is that the largest number of superintendents, making \$125,001 – \$150,000, responded correctly to less than half of the questions on the survey.

Differences concerning years of experience in current position. The correlation between categories of years of experience and total correct was statistically nonsignificant and very similar to Fenstermaker's (1994) results. Fenstermaker (1994) did not present these results in his study and is worthy of attention for future study.

Differences concerning years of experience as a superintendent.

Superintendents' years of experience was measured categorically. For superintendents' years of experience, an ANOVA indicated that there was no significant effect for superintendent years of experience on correct ethical responding. Also, for general years of experience, a one-tailed Pearson's correlation showed no significant relationship between years of experience and percent correct ethical responding.

An interesting note here, is that the data indicated that the greatest number of superintendents who were most ethical in their responses were the superintendents with three years of experience.

Overall, aside from a few items, the present study was very similar to Fenstermaker's study 21 years ago.

Implications

The responses of superintendents in this nationwide survey indicate perplexity about ethical standards, or rather superintendents do not hold the American Association of School Administrators' (AASA) Code of Ethics in high regard or do not view it as practical to survive in the district schools of today. The low scores presented in this survey may be a mixture of both issues concerning how superintendents deem the AASA Code of Ethics in practicality and perplexity of how it fits in the superintendents'

day-to-day duties. Either superintendents do not know about the AASA Code of Ethics or are baffled by the Code, or superintendents are just not concerned about the AASA Code of Ethics. Whatever the reason, the matter obviously requires some thought.

The fact that Fenstermaker's (1994) survey had a nationwide ethical score of 47 percent and my current survey yielded a score of 49.8 percent indicates that the pattern of ethical decision-making by school superintendents has not changed since 1991. This may be due to superintendents not taking the AASA 2007 Code of Ethics into consideration when having to make capricious and job-threatening decisions. Superintendents face matters of ethical and legislative concern on a daily basis in an ever-changing society. Therefore, further study concerning ethical issues and the findings in this current study should not be thought of as just an option, but rather as something that is critical.

Even though the superintendents' scores were low in Fenstermaker's study as well as in the current study, I do not believe that this indicates that superintendents are basically unethical in their decision-making and practice. Many factors come into play when making a decision, such as personal beliefs, work climate, and what's at stake. The dilemmas that superintendents face are situational in nature, and the solution may not be as clear cut as designated in the AASA Code of Ethics. The answer/solution may not be as simple as choosing A, B, C, or D. The answer to the problem may embrace A, B, and C.

Furthermore, when viewing Fenstermaker's (1994) and the current study, the current study has a higher percentage of ethical responding. Yet, I cannot say that there was a statistically significant difference because I was not replicating Fenstermaker's

study, rather, conducting a modified study of Fenstermaker's research. Moreover, I have raw data from the current study, but do not have Fenstermaker's raw data; this denotes that statistical means cannot be compared accurately because the context of those numbers is not known. That is, it would be like comparing apples and oranges.

Also, my survey was not identical to Fenstermaker's survey. Though both sets of scenarios are practical in the current and previous surveys, the current survey presents updated scenarios that have a different flavor than those of the previous survey. Unless a researcher has the individual raw data with sample sizes for all the groupings, etc., comparison would be statistically untenable, though not impossible, yet a less rigorous testing.

The bottom line is that in both the current study and Fenstermaker's (1994) study, the numbers are relatively similar and approximately fifty percent of respondents in each study answered survey questions ethically. Rather, the "take home" message is that approximately fifty percent of superintendents did not answer in a manner considered ethical. This is important because the findings indicate the need to prepare educational administrators better so that they respond more ethically in their day-to-day practices.

These results would be less interesting if ninety percent of superintendents had responded ethically. Seen through such a lens, these results would be remarkable, statistically speaking, and would suggest that professional training or professional development efforts over the past 20 years have had a notable impact. Yet, this is not the case. Our schools are not better. The ethical codes in our schools and businesses are not panacea. They cannot reform men/women and make them good. The codes

cannot force men/women to be honest and have integrity.

Consider the axiom: “One bad apple can spoil the whole barrel of good apples.” Yet, it is also noteworthy that “One good apple cannot make the whole barrel of bad apples good.” In addition to codes of ethics, there must be something intrinsic, something “within,” that holds the reins of a person’s inclination to act unreasonable, unethically, or immorally.

With only fifty percent of superintendents responding ethically, there is room for improvement. Current superintendents have been given a herculean task of leading our public schools “against a back-breaking load.” It would be worthy to dove tail this subject of superintendents to a small segment of the history of public education. Viewing the history of public schools, I believe that schools are necessary, but not necessarily public schools. One of the bright spots in the panorama of public schools is the technological wonder that capitalism, not necessarily public education, has brought to mankind.

Recommendations

This study was a survey of superintendents who were current members of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) in 2012. The AASA 2007 Code of Ethics was used to evaluate the superintendents’ responses. Given the relatively low scores of Fenstermaker’s survey and the current survey, it is evident that further studies should examine the developmental progression of school administration graduates and superintendents as they learn how to make better choices when faced with constructing an ethical decision. This does not imply that superintendents disregard or do not care

what is embodied in the AASA Code of Ethics. Rather, I suggest that a greater effort be made by superintendents to assimilate the AASA's ethical principles. The AASA Code of Ethics could be infused in preliminary administrative coursework and reviewed annually in school board meetings.

Further, a qualitative study concentrating on the reasons superintendents make the decisions that they do when dealing with ethical dilemmas would be valuable. School boards should make available as many occasions as needed for administrators to polish their skills concerning ethical dilemmas. Allowing superintendents diverse opportunities to polish their skills may diminish the number of unethical choices by district school leaders.

Final Thoughts

This research explored issues that influence superintendents who are making decisions concerning day-to-day school dilemmas. It is surprising that the scores were not higher in this study given the grave consequences for superintendents, including losing their jobs, replacement of teachers, and/or transfer of students to other schools, to mention only some consequences.

For more than 20 years, especially recently, superintendents have had to make bureaucratically influenced decisions concerning the way schools are structured and function. One result of these circumstances is that school superintendents should lean even more heavily on making ethical decisions because state legislation has such a weighty hand in what schools can and cannot do. Such conditions and contexts definitely influence the decision-making and response patterns of superintendents today

and in the future.

Noting that we live in a very litigious society, I also conclude that superintendents must continue to lean more heavily on making ethical decisions. Although Millerborg (1990) reported that superintendents relied on ethics in the decision-making process 63% of the time, surprisingly, the superintendents in this study relied on ethics only 49% of the time.

Ethics have a central role in the decision-making process of superintendents. Superintendents should make decisions based not only on the AASA Code of Ethics, but also on personal values and beliefs as well as legislation. Based on the findings of this study, much more attention should be given to ethics in training programs and in continuing professional development for superintendents. Collaboration and training should assist superintendents in polishing their ethical decision-making abilities.

Viewing the broader scope – I know that this mindset may be seem somewhat radical when you read the following lines – but consider some other aspects of this issue. I do not think that public education is a cure-all for mankind's moral diseases. Nor would the entire educational theoretical framework make superintendents respond ethically. Nor is it right to hold superintendents accountable for all the ills of society that enter our schools. The public school is for students of elementary and secondary age and those of corresponding mental age. I liken the advent of the public school to that of the prison. That is, public school systems were supposed to reform men, make them good. However, now that the results are in, this grand idea looks less than grand. Mankind has not been reformed, taxes are higher, crime rates are higher, and literacy rates are a lot lower. It is clearly a botched series of systems.

Yet, in the midst of what may look like a failure, I implore the reader to also note that “Failure is not final.” If we truly want better superintendents who are not going to prison for various scandals, and if we want better schools, we do not need to convene for one more meeting! We need to “put it in shoe leather,” put into action some of the wonderful ideas being discussed on improving how superintendents respond ethically. Seriously, have not we heard enough “talk” about this matter from our nation’s “think tanks?” They may be part of the problem. It is approaching the point where “the best words are falling from the worst lips, and the worst words are falling from the best lips.” We are hearing so many excuses why initiatives like NCLB have not accomplished all of the intended goals. Writer and keynote speaker Debra Anderson says it best concerning making excuses: “Birds fly, bees fly, but ‘excuses’ don’t fly.”

A side note ... sometimes, I wonder whose side NCLB is on! You can’t “run with the foxes and bark with the hounds.” NCLB has done a nice job of putting the public schools on alert to dot their “I’s” and cross their “T’s.” Yet, many good schools with good teachers, good administrators, and a caring school board are disciplined for not making “adequate progress,” according to state standards. I am offended by this because I work in a good school. I see progress made daily by teachers and students at that school. It is not progress according to NCLB standards, yet, it is definite progress.

Consider this vignette to drive home the point. In our town’s secondary school, there is a classroom for mentally handicapped students called the Choices Classroom. Students enter that class with low skills, some not being able to read or write and having no hands-on job skills. They may not ever pass the state tests, but if that student who

could not read or write his or her family members' names and addresses, nor read "Men's Restroom" or "Women's Restroom," nor respond to details to hold a job, but now can do all of the above, who can rightfully argue that such students have not made progress? Only NCLB.

NCLB and the state should applaud a school that has made such strides with students. These forgotten and "ignored by the state" students certainly have made "progress" according to local standards of one day being productive citizens in society and their community. People can jump up and down and scream all day long about what's wrong with education, what's wrong with superintendents, why aren't we making progress. However, it's not how high you jump, but "It's how straight you walk when your feet hit the ground." I hope one day the "think tanks" (those in decision-making positions) can recognize progress when they see it through the lens of superintendents, principals, teachers -- "those who have their hands to the plow" and are focused on doing a good job. To "have your hands to the plow" and to keep looking back at schemes and methods that do not work have not worked. "Won't Work" is to "plow a crooked row." In other words, we will continue to be disappointed in our efforts because we see no progress.

So what can be done to help future superintendents or those aspiring to be superintendents? I know the educational component is important for our future leaders. A mandatory "shadowing" program should be established. Since the government loves the idea of guiding education, our government can use some of the citizens' monies to ensure that when a course of study has been satisfied for leadership, prospective leaders can be placed with successful superintendents across this nation. A stipend or

grant can be given to the mentor and the school for accepting the challenge. Traveling, lodging, and cost-of-living expenses can be given to novice superintendents who are getting serious offers or inquiries from school boards. Proof of these inquiries can be established with letters from the school boards. Certainly, the particulars would need to be worked out.

I personally have a better answer than NCLB and similar government-driven initiatives when pondering what might be a positive change for public school superintendents and for public education. What is that remedy? Perhaps It is not a cure-all, but it is certainly a road to progress. Rather than have a monopoly by the state's government schools, free enterprise might be the more suitable for implementing education in United States. Putting God back into 'History," which to me simply implies "His Story," would not be a bad idea either.

Furthermore, I have a final thought concerning superintendents and the doctoral degree. Just from personal observation, I don't think that it is necessary for today's superintendent to have a Ph.D. Nor do I think that, outside of the university professor who does research, anyone looking for steady jobs in the workforce would ever need a Ph.D. I wanted the Ph.D. because I wanted the challenge. Now that I have finished the doctorate, I would agree with the unidentified economist-writer who acknowledged that getting the Ph.D. degree can be honestly and sadly compared to Ponzi schemes or pyramid schemes. Outside of medicine, law, and research, one is better off with their highest degree being a Master's when positioning yourself to be hired in the workforce. If you must get a doctorate for education, the Ed.D is better for professional opportunities. Unless the degree-holder is doing research at a university, the Ph.D. may

greatly lessen his or her chances of ever being hired in the workforce. Why? Ph.D.s are often viewed as a threat to management, and employers may feel that they cannot pay and/or do not want to pay what Ph.D.s might be worth.

A stranger reversal of mindsets in this technology explosion age is the notion - and maybe fact - that in the work world, people may be more attractive as prospective employees "without" any of the higher degrees! In some cases, that includes a bachelors degree outside of the teaching profession.

NCLB and other initiatives are driving the American mind-set toward academic excellence, and that academic excellence means better jobs in the workforce. This frame of thought is misleading and simply not true! I have a son with three degrees, a wife, and five children, and he has been declined for many jobs because according their standards of employment, he is over qualified. Are we simply blowing smoke when we tell our children that education equals good jobs?

What is the answer? We may need to "rearrange the mental furniture" of employers throughout the US in an effort to let them know that the educated should not be discriminated against. Further, if the government really wants to help, legislators and government leaders need to throw some money to employers who are willing to hire an educated America.

In other words, "put it in shoe leather," which means, "Don't just talk the talk ... walk the walk!"

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Original Survey

Appendix A: Original Survey

Please read each situation carefully and mark the responses in the spaces to the right that best represent the actions you would implement.

1. Your state has instituted a yearly program of standardized testing for grade levels and subjects other than those tested by the state program. Results for this year have just arrived, and they show your district trailing the established goals in several areas – particularly in reading. This is especially distressing because there have been board-sponsored workshops and subsidies for teachers to attend conferences on the teaching of reading. What do you do with the report?

A. File it. Make some adjustments in planning privately and without a formal presentation to the Board or the total staff.

B. Make the contents of the report

Check one:

I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response below is from actual experience.

I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

The following best describes what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

A B C D E

known to the Board, the staff, and community at large.

C. Review the contents of the report with the total staff and ask for guidelines.

D. Make a presentation to the Board, in executive session, pointing out the more positive aspects of the report.

E. Meet privately with key staff members, such as the reading specialists or supervisors, and plan new approaches.

2. You are attending, at district expense, a major national conference of school administrators (such as the AASA convention). While there, you meet a group of friends in the hotel lobby. After a few moments, your group is approached by the sales representative of a product used by all of your schools. He mingles with the group and, before long, insists that all of you accompany him to dinner at one of the city's elite restaurants at his

Check one:

I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response below is from actual experience.

I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is

expense. How do you respond to the invitation?

- A. Accept with thanks.
- B. Try to get the salesman aside, indicating that you would enjoy having dinner with him privately some time.
- C. Decline the invitation, claiming that you have another commitment, even though that is not really the case.
- D. Accept the invitation, but only if you are allowed to pay for your own meal.

3. The parents of a good student and generally responsible youngster have come to you with a complaint about the teaching style of a social studies teacher. They claim he is using biased materials and slanted opinions in his classes. Further, they claim that when their own son tried to question these approaches, he was greeted with sarcasm and thinly veiled threats to have his grades lowered.

hypothetical.

The following best describes what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

- A B C D

Check one:

- I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response below is from actual experience.
- I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in

Father is well known for his involvement in civic and community affairs, and he demands evidence of your immediate action. What is your response?

my career, so my response is hypothetical.

A. Agree with the parents that the teacher is in the wrong and indicate that censure will be applied in some form.

The following best describes what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

B. Have the boy transferred to another classroom with a teacher whose techniques and methods are well known to you, and which you know will placate the irate parents.

A B C D

C. Call the most immediate supervisor of the teacher and ask for some corroboration of the incidents, then proceed with action.

D. Indicate to the parents that you will take up the matter with the teacher and his supervisors, but that no direct action will be taken until both sides of the controversy have been aired.

4. You are leaving the district at the end of this school year. The Board, not wishing to involve itself with outside consultants, has decided to handle the recruitment of your successor itself, using you as the main resource of advice and help. After going through the normal procedures, a final group of five candidates remains. These candidates have visited the district, have met with the Board, and have chatted with you and other staff members. Now the final selection process has begun, and the Board is asking for some firm opinions from you on these candidates. What is your response?

A. You excuse yourself and leave the Board entirely to its own devices in these final stages.

B. Since some of the candidates have exhibited personal characteristics which you believe would not fit well for this

Check one:

I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response below is from actual experience.

I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

The following best describes what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

A B C D

particular district, you enter these opinions freely.

C. Any advice you give is restricted to comments upon the professional qualifications of the candidates, as revealed in the placement folders and letters of recommendation.

D. Knowing that the Board would probably want this advice, you have done additional follow-up work with each candidate (such as telephone calls), have arrived at what you believe to be the best choice for the district at this time, and you now offer that opinion to the Board.

5. Spring has arrived, and it's time for that new tennis racket and perhaps even the new set of golf clubs that you have been promising yourself for some time. The athletic director in the district has just purchased a lovely personal set of irons, and you suspect he did so through the district's contractor for athletic supplies, at

Check one:

I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response below is from actual experience.

a reduced price. How do you obtain your new set?

A. You call the supplier, without identifying yourself, and ask for the price of the clubs.

B. You stay away entirely from the school supplier, preferring to make your own deal elsewhere.

C. The athletic director offers to negotiate the new clubs at a good price, especially since he does all the ordering for the district. You allow him to proceed.

D. You call the supplier, identify yourself and your position, and ask him what he can do.

6. Your district is a rural one, and quite homogenous in its population. The teaching staff reflects this homogeneity, that is, they are mostly white, middle-

I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

The following best describes what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

A B C D

Check one:

I have encountered a situation very similar to this in

class, and Protestant. In your search for new staff members, an excellent candidate with extremely promising credentials appears. The interview turns up the additional fact that this candidate belongs to a racial or ethnic group not generally found in your area (imagine any you wish). The Board has made it clear in the past that all hiring is entirely in your hands; they'll ratify any recommendation you make to them. How will you proceed?

- A. You turn to other candidates, not out of prejudice, but as a form of protection for this applicant, who would clearly be in a lonely and vulnerable position if hired.
- B. Hire the minority candidate on your own authority or allow the Board to hear the facts and decide for itself.
- C. Although other candidates are clearly inferior, you hire one of them as the best course of action for this particular

my career, so my response below is from actual experience.

I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

The following best describes what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

A B C D

community at this particular time.

D. You do not hire the candidate yourself, but you do make efforts to seek placement for him in the form of contacts you have in other districts.

7. A local service organization, of which you are a member, puts on an impressive talent show annually to raise funds. This year they have designated the proceeds to help the AFS Exchange Student Program in your school. All rehearsals and the final show will be in the high school auditorium. The chairman of the talent show has come to ask you for a reduction in the normal rates charged by the school for use of the facilities so that a maximum profit may be realized. As superintendent, and as a member of the organization, how do you respond?

Check one:

I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response below is from actual experience.

I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

A. You recommend to the Board that the

The following best describes

request be granted.

B. Refuse the request, point out the policy as it stands, and note that other equally deserving groups use the auditorium during the year.

C. Since the request will mean more benefits to the district's AFS program, you grant it as an administrative action.

D. You give no definite answer, but urge the chairman to state his case before the Board, with your support guaranteed.

8. The Board has lately taken to adopting a number of "protective" policies for the district. Examples include a policy requiring teachers to wear ties and jackets, a limitation on facial hair and requirement that all hair be neatly trimmed, mailboxes may not be used for teacher association literature, and a statement that discourages teachers from taking an active role in local politics. You have not been pleased with these policies, and now you learn that one

what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

A B C D

Check one:

I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response below is from actual experience.

I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is

young history teacher plans to campaign as a candidate for town councilman. What action do you take?

A. Call in the teacher, try to discourage his candidacy, and warn him of the policy in effect.

B. Say nothing to anyone, hoping that the Board will feel that the policy is not enforceable in this case.

C. Go immediately to the Board, inform them of the actions, and point out that the teacher is non-tenured and therefore easy to release.

D. While taking an ostensibly neutral position, you openly support the candidacy in a staff meeting, feeling that this might be an excellent way to get at what is, in truth, a dubious Board policy.

hypothetical.

The following best describes what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

A B C D

9. Each year the American Legion, in cooperation with the Coca-Cola distributors, offers – free of charge – book covers for the children in your

district. Aside from the Coke symbol and a few patriotic quotations, they are unmarked and in school colors. The book covers have been delivered. What do you do with them?

my career, so my response below is from actual experience.

- A. Offer them to the students on a first-come, first-served basis.
- B. Pass them out to all children in the district, using a rationing technique.
- C. Send them back to the donor, with a note of thanks for the gesture.
- D. Keep the book covers, but accidentally "file" them in a place which guarantees they will not be distributed.

I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

The following best describes what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

A B C D

10. The competition for teachers, especially the critical subject matter areas of math and science, is always keen. Because of economic conditions in your district – as in neighboring districts – salary schedules are generally below state average. This, in turn, means you sometimes have to bargain with individual candidates in these critical subject areas, and the resulting salary offers often exceed what is called for by the local salary schedule. This puts the new teachers some dollars ahead of the already employed teachers of similar training and/or experience. This situation has come up again: your chemistry teacher has left, and the best candidate you have unearthed will come, but not at the salary

Check one:

- I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response below is from actual experience.

- I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

the schedule calls for. How do you proceed to fill the position?

A. Try to find some other way to make the job attractive, such as rearrange class load, unique fringe benefits, etc.

B. Offer whatever salary is necessary, on the assumption that superior teaching will overcome possible staff grumbling at the extra pay differential.

C. Continue the search, hoping that an adequate teacher will be attracted by the salary your schedule calls for.

D. Look at the current staff to see if someone can be retrained for the chemistry job, and thus make it possible for you to recruit in a less critical and less competitive market.

E. Continue to offer the job at

The following best describes what I have done, or would do, in this situation. (check one)

A B C D E

the proper step, but indicate that
rather substantial "merit"
increases will be forthcoming
after some time on the job.

Appendix B

1962 AASA Code of Ethics

Appendix B

AASA Code of Ethics (1962)

PREAMBLE

Public Education in America rests on firm commitments to the dignity and worth of each individual: to the preeminence of enlightenment and reason over force and coercion: and to government by the consent of the governed. Public schools prosper to the extent they merit the confidence of the people. In judging its schools, society is influenced to a considerable degree by the character and quality of their administration. To meet these challenges school administrators have an obligation to exercise professional leadership.

Society demands that any group that claims the rights, privileges, and status of a profession prove itself worthy through the establishment and maintenance of ethical policies governing the activities of its members. A professional society must demonstrate the capacity and willingness to regulate itself and to set appropriate guides for the ethical conduct of its members. Such obligations are met largely by practitioners through action in a professional society such as the American Association of School Administrators.

Every member of a profession carries a responsibility to act in a manner becoming a professional person. This implies that each school administrator has an inescapable obligation to abide by the ethical standards of his profession. The behavior of each is the concern of all. The conduct of any administrator influences the attitude of

the public toward the profession and education in general.

These policies of ethical behavior are designed to inspire a quality of behavior that reflects honor and dignity on the profession of school administration. They are not intended as inflexible rules nor unchangeable laws. They serve to measure the propriety of an administrator's behavior in his working relationships. They encourage and emphasize those positive attributes of professional conduct which characterize strong and effective administrative leadership.

POLICY 1

The Professional School Administrator Constantly Upholds the Honor and Dignity of His Profession in All His Actions and Relations with Pupils, Colleagues, School Board Members and the Public.

The following examples illustrate but do not limit applications of this policy:

The professional school administrator:

A. is impartial in the execution of school policies and the enforcement of rules and regulations. It is a breach of ethics to give preferential consideration to any individual or group because of their special status or position in the school system or community.

B. recognizes and respects fully the worth and dignity of each individual in all administrative procedures and leadership actions.

C. demonstrates professional courtesy and ethical behavior by informing a colleague in another system of his intention to consider for employment personnel from that system.

D. never submits official and confidential letters of appraisal for teachers or others which knowingly contain erroneous information or which knowingly fail to include pertinent data.

E. never fails to recommend those worthy of recommendation.

F. is alert to safeguard the public and his profession from those who might degrade public education or school administration.

G. seeks no self-aggrandizement.

H. refrains from making unwarranted claims, from inappropriate advertising, and from misinterpreting facts about his school system to further his own professional status.

I. never makes derogatory statements about a colleague or a school system unless he is compelled to state his opinion under oath or in official relationships where his professional opinion is required.

J. exhibits ethical behavior by explaining and giving reasons to individuals affected by demotions or terminations of employment.

POLICY 2

The Professional School Administrator Obeys Local, State, and National Laws, Holds Himself to High Ethical and Moral Standards, and Gives Loyalty to his Country and to the Cause of Democracy and Liberty.

The following examples illustrate but do not limit the applications of this policy:

A. A legal conviction for immorality, commission of a crime involving moral turpitude or other public offense of a similar degree shall be sufficient grounds for

expelling a school administrator from membership in the American Association of School Administrators.

B. Affiliation with organizations known to advocate the forcible overthrow of the government of the United States is evidence of unworthiness of public trust. A person who is so affiliated shall not be permitted to become or to continue as a member of the American Association of School Administrators.

C. A professional school administrator, in common with other citizens, has a right and in many instances an obligation to express his opinion about the wisdom or justice of a given law. An opinion questioning a law, however, does not justify failure to fulfill the requirements of that law.

D. The ideals of his profession require a school administrator to resist ideological pressures that would contravene the fundamental principles of public education, or would pervert or weaken public schools. their educational program, or their personnel.

E. It is unethical to ignore or divert attention from laws which are incompatible with the best interests and purposes of the schools, as a way of avoiding controversy. Rather the professional school administrator will take the initiative to bring about the reconsideration, revision, or repeal of the statute.

F. The professional school administrator will not withhold evidence or knowingly shield law breakers.

POLICY 3

The Professional School Administrator Accepts the Responsibility Throughout His Career to Master and to Contribute to the Growing Body of Specialized Knowledge,

Concepts, and Skills Which Characterize School Administration as a Profession.

The following examples illustrate but do not limit applications of this policy:

A. In addition to meeting the minimum standards required for legal certification in his state, the professional school administrator has a responsibility to satisfy the preparation standards recommended by his professional association, and has an obligation to work toward the adoption of these professional standards by the appropriate certification authorities in his state.

B. The school administrator has a professional obligation to attend conferences, seminars, and other learning activities which hold promise of contributing to his professional growth and development.

C. It is in keeping with the highest ideals of the profession for the administrator to support local, state, and national committees studying educational problems and to participate in such activities whenever and wherever possible, consistent with his obligations to his district.

D. The school administrator has a leadership responsibility for the professional growth of his associates which requires encouragement of their attendance at appropriate professional meetings and their participation in the work of local, state, and national committees and associations.

E. Concern for improving his profession, and for education generally, requires that the school administrator seek out promising educational practices and relevant research findings and that he share with others any significant practices and research from his own institution.

F. The school administrator has a special obligation to contribute to the

strengthening of his own state and national professional association.

POLICY 4

The Professional School Administrator Strives to Provide the Finest Possible Educational Experiences and Opportunities to All Persons in the District.

The following examples illustrate but do not limit applications of this policy:

A. The school administrator will base differentiation of educational experiences on the differing needs and abilities of pupils, giving no preference to factors such as social status or other undemocratic or discriminating considerations.

B. A school administrator has an obligation to inform the board and the community of deficiencies in educational services or opportunities.

C. A school administrator resists all attempts by vested interests to infringe upon the school program as a means of promoting their selfish purposes.

D. A school administrator resists all attempts to exclude from consideration as teaching personnel members of any particular race or creed. He also resists pressures to employ teachers on the basis of the political, marital, or economic status of the applicant. The ability and fitness of the candidates for teaching positions are the sole criteria for selection.

E. A school administrator recognizes that the provisions of equal educational opportunities for all pupils may require greater or different resources for some than for others.

F. A school administrator is professionally obligated to assume clear, articulate, and forceful leadership in defining the role of the school in the community and pointing

the way to achieve its functions.

POLICY 5

The Professional School Administrator Applying for a Position or Entering into Contractual Agreements Seeks to Preserve and Enhance the Prestige of His Profession.

The following examples illustrate but do not limit applications of this policy:

A. A school administrator is morally committed to honor employment contracts. He shall refuse to enter into a new contractual agreement until termination of an existing contract is completed to the satisfaction of all concerned.

B. A school administrator does not apply for positions indiscriminantly, nor for any position held by an administrator whose termination is not a matter of record.

C. Misrepresentations, use of political influence, pressure tactics, or undermining the professional status of a colleague are unethical practices and are inimical to his professional commitment.

D. Advertising, either to solicit new school positions or to offer professional consultation services, is inconsistent with the ideals of the profession of school administration.

E. A school administrator refrains from comments about candidates competing for a position.

F. A school administrator refuses to accept a position in which established principles of professional school administration must be seriously compromised or abandoned.

G. A school administrator does not apply for or accept a position where a competent special professional investigating committee endorsed by the Association has declared working conditions unsatisfactory until such time as appropriate corrections in the situation have been made.

POLICY 6

The Professional School Administrator Carries Out in Good Faith All Policies Adopted by the Local Board and the Regulations of State Authorities and Renders Professional Service to the Best of His Ability.

The following examples illustrate but do not limit applications to this policy:

A. Adoption of policies not in conformity with the administrator's recommendations or beliefs is not just cause for refusal by the administrator to support and execute them.

B. It is improper for an administrator to refuse to work at his optimum level.

C. A school administrator has an obligation to support publicly the school board and the instructional staff if either is unjustly accused. He should not permit himself to become involved publicly in personal criticism of board or staff members. He should be at liberty, however, to discuss differences of opinion on professional matters.

D. If a situation develops whereby an administrator feels that to retain his position would necessitate that he violate what he and other members of the profession consider to be ethical conduct, he should inform the board of the untenable position. In the event of his imminent dismissal the superintendent should request adequate reasons and, if they are not forthcoming, or if the situation is not resolved to his

professional satisfaction, he should report to the public.

POLICY 7

The Professional School Administrator Honors the Public Trust of His Position Above Any Economic or Social Rewards.

The following examples illustrate but do not limit applications of this policy:

A. To resist, or fail to support, clearly desirable approaches to improving and strengthening the schools is unbecoming to a professional person and unethical conduct on the part of a school administrator.

B. The school administrator has a commitment to his position of public trust to resist unethical demands by special interest or pressure groups. He refuses to allow strong and unscrupulous individuals to seize or exercise powers and responsibilities which are properly his own.

C. The rank, popularity, position, or social standing of any member of the school staff should never cause the professional school administrator to conceal, disregard, or seemingly condone unethical conduct. Any and all efforts to disregard, overlook, or cover up unethical practices should be vigorously resisted by a school administrator.

POLICY 8

The Professional School Administrator Does Not Permit Considerations of Private Gain nor Personal Economic Interest to Affect the Discharge of His Professional Responsibilities.

The following examples illustrate but do not limit applications of this policy:

A. A school administrator refuses to permit his relationship with vendors primarily interested in selling goods and services to influence his administration of the school system he serves.

B. It is improper for a school administrator to accept employment by any concern which publishes, manufactures, sells, or in any way deals in goods and services which are or may be expected to be purchased by the school system he serves.

C. It is improper for a school administrator to be engaged in private ventures if such endeavors cause him to give less than full-time concern to his school system.

D. This policy in no way precludes investment of personal funds of the school administrator in ventures not influenced by his position in a given school system provided his own professional obligations are not neglected.

E. During the time of his employment the school administrator shall have no personal interest in, nor receive any personal gain or profit from school supplies, equipment, books, or other educational materials or facilities procured, dispensed, or sold to or in the school system he serves.

F. It is a breach of public trust for a school administrator to use confidential information concerning school affairs (such as the knowledge of the selection of specific school sites) for personal profit or to divulge such information to others who might so profit.

G. It is inappropriate for a school administrator to utilize unpublished materials developed in the line of duty by staff members in a school system in order to produce a publication for personal profit, without the expressed permission of all contributors.

H. A school administrator must be wary of using free consultative services from a

commercial concern which may in effect be a skillful technique for promoting the sale of instructional or other materials in which that concern has a pecuniary interest.

I. A school administrator does not publicly endorse goods or services provided for schools by commercial organizations.

J. The school administrator should not recommend the appointment of immediate relatives to positions under his jurisdiction.

POLICY 9

The Professional School Administrator Recognizes That the Public Schools Are the Public's Business and Seeks to Keep the Public Fully and Honestly Informed about Their Schools.

The following examples illustrate but do not limit applications of this policy:

A. A school administrator has an obligation to interpret to the community the work and activities of the school system, revealing its weaknesses as well as its strengths. It is unethical for a school administrator to present only the favorable facts to the patrons of the district.

B. A school administrator maintains confidences or qualified privileged communications entrusted to him in the course of executing the affairs of the public schools. These confidences shall be revealed only as the law or courts may require or when the welfare of the school system is at stake.

C. It is proper for a school administrator to discuss confidential information with the board of education meeting in executive session.

D. A school administrator considers that those with whom he deals are innocent

of any disparaging accusations until valid evidence is presented to substantiate any charges.

OVERVIEW

High Standards of Ethical Behavior for the Professional School Administrator Are Essential and Are Compatible with His Faith in the Power of Public Education and His Commitment to Leadership in the Preservation and Strengthening of the Public Schools.

The true sense of high calling comes to the superintendent of schools as he faces squarely such widely held beliefs as the following:

A. The effectiveness of the schools and their programs is inescapably the responsibility of the superintendent.

B. Every act, or failure to act, of the superintendent has consequences in the schools and in the lives of people.

C. In many situations and to many people in a community the superintendent is the living symbol of their schools.

D. The public entrusts both the day-to-day well-being and the long-range welfare of its children and of its school system to the superintendent and the board of education.

E. The ultimate test for a superintendent is the effort which he makes to improve the quality of learning opportunity for every child in the schools.

F. In the long run, what happens in and to the public schools of America happens to America.

Appendix C
2007 AASA Code of Ethics

Appendix C: 2007 AASA Code of Ethics

American Association of School Administrators

Code of Ethics

AASA's Statement of Ethics for Educational Leaders

An educational leader's professional conduct must conform to an ethical code of behavior, and the code must set high standards for all educational leaders. The educational leader provides professional leadership across the district and also across the community. This responsibility requires the leader to maintain standards of exemplary professional conduct while recognizing that his or her actions will be viewed and appraised by the community, professional associates and students.

The educational leader acknowledges that he or she serves the schools and community by providing equal educational opportunities to each and every child. The work of the leader must emphasize accountability and results, increased student achievement, and high expectations for each and every student.

To these ends, the educational leader subscribes to the following statements of standards.

The educational leader:

1. Makes the education and well-being of students the fundamental value of all decision-making.
2. Fulfills all professional duties with honesty and integrity and always acts in a trustworthy and responsible manner.
3. Supports the principle of due process and protects the civil and human rights of all individuals.

4. Implements local, state and national laws.
5. Advises the school board and implements the board's policies and administrative rules and regulations.
6. Pursues appropriate measures to correct those laws, policies, and regulations that are not consistent with sound educational goals or that are not in the best interest of children.
7. Avoids using his/her position for personal gain through political, social, religious, economic or other influences.
8. Accepts academic degrees or professional certification only from accredited institutions.
9. Maintains the standards and seeks to improve the effectiveness of the profession through research and continuing professional development.
10. Honors all contracts until fulfillment, release or dissolution mutually agreed upon by all parties.
11. Accepts responsibility and accountability for one's own actions and behaviors.
12. Commits to serving others above self.

— Adopted by the AASA Governing Board, March 1, 2007

Appendix D

Cover Letter

Appendix D: Cover Letter

Dear Participant,

My name is Daniel Cross, and I am a doctoral candidate in Educational Administration and Higher Education at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

I am currently studying the ethical decision-making of school superintendents as part of a replication of a study originally conducted in 1994. The information I obtain from this study will help me in completing the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Administration and Higher Education.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do choose to become involved, it should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the enclosed survey. By completing this survey, you are giving your consent for participating. All of your answers will be anonymous and confidential. You will not give your name or any other information that would identify you as a respondent on the survey. The survey does contain demographic questions that will simply assist in describing my final sample. It is not a source of identification. Upon completion, please place the survey in the self-addressed envelope provided and return in the U.S. mail.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. The committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights. Questions concerning your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee chairperson through the Office of Research Development and Administration, Carbondale, IL, 62901-4709. Their phone is 618-453-4533, or e-mail: siuhsc@siu.edu.

Questions about this study can be directed to me or my supervising professor at the contact information below.

Thank you for your time in assisting me with this research.

Sincerely,

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Appendix E
Follow-up Postcard

Appendix E: Follow-up Postcard

Dear Superintendent

This is a reminder of your opportunity to contribute your thoughts and opinions regarding your experiences as a superintendent.

This information is part of the requirements for the completion of my Ph.D. at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Your feedback is important, as the daily encounters that superintendents face are varied and require difficult decisions at times. It is the intention of the researcher to use these results to provide tangible evidence that reform is needed and potential suggestions for this reform.

If you have completed and returned the survey, I appreciate your input and thank you for your time. If you haven't done so yet, please share your thoughts and opinions. Your feedback is vital for the success of this project.

If you have any questions about the survey or need another copy, please contact me at (618) 536-4434.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Daniel Cross

SIUC Doctoral Candidate

Appendix F
Final Survey (2012)

Appendix E: Final Survey

SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY

Directions: Please read each situation carefully and mark the ONE BEST response that represents the action you would implement. After each question you are asked whether or not this type of scenario is something that you have experienced in your position. Please answer this for each scenario.

1. Your staff has worked intensely to transform testing failures into successes. Results for the annual state Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests have just arrived and they show your district trailing the established goals in several areas – particularly reading. This is especially distressing because there have been In-Service workshops and subsidies for teachers to attend conferences on the teaching of reading, math, etc. What do you do with the report?
 - A File it. Make some adjustments in planning privately and without a formal presentation to the Board or the total staff.
 - B Make the contents of the report known to the Board, the staff, and community at large.
 - C Review the contents of the report with the total staff and ask for guidelines.
 - D Make a presentation to the Board pointing out the more positive aspects of the report.
 - E Meet privately with key staff members, such as the reading specialists or supervisors, and plan new approaches.
 - F I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
 - G I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

2. You are attending, at district expense, a major national conference of school administrators (such as the AASA convention). While there, you meet a group of friends in the hotel lobby. After a few moments, your group is approached by the sales representative of a computer based product (Sisk12-Tyler Pulse), which is a parent/student portal computer reporting system used by all of your schools. He mingles with the group and, before long, insists that all of you accompany him to dinner at one of the city's elite restaurants at his expense. How do you respond to the invitation?
- A Accept with thanks.
 - B Try to get the salesman aside, indicating that you would enjoy having dinner with him privately some time.
 - C Decline the invitation, claiming that you have another commitment, even though that is not really the case.
 - D Accept the invitation, but only if you are allowed to pay for your own meal.
 - E I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
 - F I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.
3. The parents of a good student and generally responsible youngster have come to you with a complaint about the teaching style of a history teacher. They claim she is using biased materials and slanted opinions concerning her religious beliefs in her classes. Further, they claim that when their own son tried to question these approaches, she was greeted with sarcasm and thinly veiled threats to have his grades lowered. Father is well known for his involvement in civic and community affairs, and he demands evidence of your immediate action. What is your response?
- A Agree with the parents that the teacher is in the wrong and indicate that censure will be applied in some form.
 - B Have the boy transferred to another classroom with a teacher whose techniques and methods are well known to you, and which you know will placate the irate parents.
 - C Call the most immediate supervisor of the teacher and ask for some corroboration of the incidents, then proceed with action.
 - D Indicate to the parents that you will take up the matter with the teacher and his supervisors, but that no direct action will be taken until both sides of the controversy have been aired.

- E I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
- F I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.
4. You are leaving the district at the end of this school year. The Board, not wishing to involve itself with outside consultants, has decided to handle the recruitment of your successor itself, using you as the main resource of advice and help. After going through the normal procedures, a final group of five candidates remains. These candidates have visited the district, have met with the Board, and have chatted with you and other staff members. Now the final selection process has begun, and the Board is asking for some firm opinions from you on these candidates. What is your response?
- A You excuse yourself and leave the Board entirely to its own devices in these final stages.
- B Since some of the candidates have exhibited personal characteristics which you believe would not fit well for this particular district, you enter these opinions freely.
- C Any advice you give is restricted to comments upon the professional qualifications of the candidates, as revealed in the placement folders and letters of recommendation.
- D Knowing that the Board would probably want this advice, you have done additional follow-up work with each candidate (such as telephone calls), have arrived at what you believe to be the best choice for the district at this time, and you now offer that opinion to the Board.
- E I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
- F I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.
5. Spring has arrived and the new Apple Store is having its grand opening at the mall. You have been promising yourself for some time a new personal Apple iPad 3. One of the principals in the district has just purchased a beautiful Apple iPad 3, and you suspect she did so through the district's contractor for tech supplies, at a reduced price. How do you obtain your new Apple iPad 3?
- A You call the supplier, without identifying yourself, and ask for the price of the iPad 3.
- B You stay away entirely from the school supplier, preferring to make your own deal

- elsewhere.
- C The principal offers to negotiate the new iPad 3 at a good price for you. You allow him to proceed.
 - D You call the supplier, identify yourself and your position, and ask him what he can do.
 - E I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
 - F I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.
6. Your district is a rural one, and quite homogenous in its population. The teaching staff reflects this homogeneity, that is, they are mostly white, middle-class, and protestant. In your search for new staff members, an excellent candidate with extremely promising credentials appears. The interview turns up the additional fact that this candidate is a Black American and a Muslim. This is a combination not generally found in your area. The Board will back any recommendation you make. How will you proceed?
- A You turn to other candidates, who may not be as experienced.
 - B Hire the highly qualified candidate on your own authority and allow the Board to ratify any recommendation you make to them.
 - C Although other candidates are clearly inferior, you hire one of them as the best course of action for this particular community at this particular time.
 - D You do not hire the candidate yourself, but you do make efforts to seek placement for him in the form of contacts you have in other districts.
 - E I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
 - F I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.
7. A local service organization, of which you are a member, puts on an impressive talent show annually to raise funds. This year they have designated the proceeds to help the girls' varsity volleyball team to help obtain uniforms that are not form fitting. All rehearsals and the final show will be in the high school auditorium. The chairman of the talent show has come to ask you for a reduction in the normal rates charged by the school for use of the facilities so that a maximum profit may be realized. As superintendent, and as a member of the organization, how do you respond?

- A You recommend that the request be granted.
 - B Refuse the request, point out the policy as it stands, and note that other equally deserving groups use the auditorium during the year and pay the advertised amount.
 - C Since the request will mean more benefits to the volleyball program, you grant it as an administrative action.
 - D You give no definite answer, but hope the chairman of the talent show will go elsewhere.
 - E I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
 - F I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.
8. Disgruntled with low test scores and low scoring students, you set out to make sure that this year's overall scores will be better. What action do you take?
- A Say nothing to anyone and move forward with the test.
 - B Call in the teacher, encourage teacher to move low scoring students out on a field trip the day of the test since you only need to test 95% to reach that percentage.
 - C Make sure you do not have enough students to count a disaggregate group such as special ed.
 - D Reassign special ed. students to regular ed. for that one day since it will not be enough of special ed. students to hurt the overall score for regular ed.
 - E I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
 - F I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.
9. Each year the Masons fraternity, in cooperation with the Budweiser distributors, offers – free of charge – book covers for the children in your district. Aside from the beer symbol and a few 'don't drink and drive' quotations, they are unmarked and in school colors. The book covers have been delivered. What do you do with them?
- A Offer them to the students on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - B Pass them out to all children in the district, using a rationing technique.
 - C Send them back to the donor, with a note of thanks for the gesture.
 - D Keep the book covers, but accidentally "file" them in a place which guarantees they will not be distributed.

- E I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
- F I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

10. Your district is a rural one, and lacking in funds due to the current state of the budget. The competition for teachers in the critical subject matter area of chemistry is always keen. Because of economic conditions in your district-as in neighboring districts-salary schedules are generally below state average. The Board has made it clear in the past that all hiring is entirely in your hands; they'll ratify any recommendation you make to them. You are thinking about using the new County 1% sales tax to help booster the salary of a highly qualified math teacher. How will you proceed?

- A Try to find some other way to make the job attractive, such as rearrange class load, unique fringe benefits, etc.
- B Offer whatever salary is necessary, on the assumption that superior teaching will overcome possible staff grumbling at the extra pay differential.
- C Continue the search, hoping that an adequate teacher will be attracted by the salary your schedule calls for.
- D Look at the current staff to see if someone can be retrained for the chemistry job, and thus make it possible for you to recruit in a less critical and less competitive market.
- E I have encountered a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is from actual experience.
- F I have not experienced a situation very similar to this in my career, so my response is hypothetical.

Demographic Data

11. **What is your gender?** Male Female

12. **What is your ethnic background?**

- Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic/Mexican/Puerto Rican/Cuban
- Asian
- Native American
- Other (please specify) _____

13. Years of experience in this position, including this year?

- 1-4 years
- 5-9
- 10-14
- 15-20
- 21+

14. What is your highest level of education completed?

- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Advanced college degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)
- Other (please specify) _____

15. Student enrollment in your district:

- Under 2000
- 2001-5000
- 5001-10,000
- 10,001 - 25,000
- 25,000+

16. Salary range

- \$50,000 – \$75,000
- \$75,001 – \$90,000
- \$90,001 – \$100,000
- \$100,001 – \$125,000
- \$125,001 – \$150,000
- Over \$150,000

17. What is your age?

(Please specify) _____ years

18. Your major field of study as an undergraduate?

(Please specify) _____

19. Total number of years as superintendent in all districts?

(Please specify) _____ years

20. What position did you hold prior to becoming a superintendent?

(Please specify) _____

21. Was this position in your district? Yes No
22. Have you attended an AASA national convention in the last five years?
 Yes No
23. How long have you been a member of AASA?
(Please specify) _____ years

Thank you very much for your assistance and cooperation!

**Please return the complete survey in the enclosed
pre-addressed, pre-posted envelope.**

Appendix G
Tabulated Data

APPENDIX G

Tabulated Data

Table 3 describes the frequency that superintendents answered the questions most correctly. The term “most correctly” specifies how many superintendents chose the correct answer. This Table was not provided in Fenstermaker’s (1994) study. Table 3 illustrates the entire distribution of responses for the survey and shows the number of times each answer was selected. In addition, this table also reveals the choices of answers that superintendents missed the most for each question. I will focus on the “most missed” answer and the reasons superintendents may have chosen that answer.

Table A1

*Frequency Table***Q1ANSWER**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
file it	20	6.7	6.7	6.7
make contents known	107	35.7	36.0	42.8
review contents with staff	86	28.7	29.0	71.7
make a presentation	55	18.3	18.5	90.2
meet privately with key staff	29	9.7	9.8	100.0
Total	297	99.0	100.0	
Missing System	3	1.0		
Total	300	100.0		

Q2ANSWER

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
accept with thanks	137	45.7	46.3	46.3
try to get salesman aside	2	.7	.7	47.0
decline the invitation	74	24.7	25.0	72.0
accept the invitation	83	27.7	28.0	100.0
Total	296	98.7	100.0	
Missing System	4	1.3		
Total	300	100.0		

Q3ANSWER

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
agree with parents	2	.7	.7	.7

	call immediate supervisor	98	32.7	33.1	33.8
	indicate to parents	196	65.3	66.2	100.0
	Total	296	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.3		
Total		300	100.0		

Q4ANSWER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	excuse yourself	163	54.3	54.9	54.9
	enter opinions freely	90	30.0	30.3	85.2
Valid	advice is restricted to comments	34	11.3	11.4	96.6
	follow-up and offer opinion to board	10	3.3	3.4	100.0
	Total	297	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.0		
Total		300	100.0		

Q5ANSWER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	call supplier	4	1.3	1.4	1.4
	stay away from supplier	262	87.3	89.1	90.5
Valid	negotiate a good price	7	2.3	2.4	92.9
	call and ask what he can do	21	7.0	7.1	100.0
	Total	294	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	6	2.0		
Total		300	100.0		

Q6ANSWER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	turn to oher candidates	24	8.0	8.1	8.1
	hire the candidate	199	66.3	67.0	75.1
Valid	hire the candidate that fits at this time	68	22.7	22.9	98.0
	do not hire yourself	6	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	297	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.0		
Total		300	100.0		

Q7ANSWER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
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					Percent
Valid	.00	1	.3	.3	.3
	recommend request granted	122	40.7	41.4	41.7
	refuse the request	81	27.0	27.5	69.2
	grant it as administrative action	76	25.3	25.8	94.9
	give no definite answer	15	5.0	5.1	100.0
Total	295	98.3	100.0		
Missing	System	5	1.7		
Total		300	100.0		

Q8ANSWER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	2	.7	.7	.7
	say nothing	107	35.7	36.1	36.8
	call in the teacher	145	48.3	49.0	85.8
	make sure you don't have a disaggregate group	1	.3	.3	86.1
	reassign special ed to regular ed	41	13.7	13.9	100.0
Total	296	98.7	100.0		
Missing	System	4	1.3		
Total		300	100.0		

Q9ANSWER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	1	.3	.3	.3
	send them back	257	85.7	86.5	86.9
	keep, but don't distribute	39	13.0	13.1	100.0
Total	297	99.0	100.0		
Missing	System	3	1.0		
Total		300	100.0		

Q10ANSWER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	find another way	33	11.0	11.1	11.1
	offer whatever is necessary	7	2.3	2.4	13.5
	continue the search	61	20.3	20.6	34.1
	look at current staff	195	65.0	65.9	100.0
	Total	296	98.7	100.0	

Missing System	4	1.3		
Total	300	100.0		

Table A2 illustrates whether the response was recorded as either “actual” or “hypothetical” responses is located in the Appendices. In this Table the “actual” responses are labeled “have experienced” and the “hypothetical” responses are labeled “have not experienced.”

Table A2

Response Distribution

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Q1ANSWER * Q1HAVE	297	99.0%	3	1.0%	300	100.0%

Q1ANSWER * Q1HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

	Q1HAVE		Total
	have experienced	have NOT experienced	
file it	1	19	20
make contents known	35	72	107
review contents with Q1ANSWER staff	36	50	86
make a presentation	24	31	55
meet privately wih key staff	18	11	29
Total	114	183	297

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent

Q2ANSWER * Q2HAVE	295	98.3%	5	1.7%	300	100.0%
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Q2ANSWER * Q2HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

	Q2HAVE		Total
	have experienced	have NOT experienced	
accept with thanks	111	26	137
try to get salesman	1	1	2
Q2ANSWER aside			
decline the invitation	49	24	73
accept the invitation	69	14	83
Total	230	65	295

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Q3ANSWER * Q3HAVE	296	98.7%	4	1.3%	300	100.0%

Q3ANSWER * Q3HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

	Q3HAVE		Total
	have experienced	have NOT experienced	
agree with parents	1	1	2
Q3ANSWER call immediate supervisor	50	48	98
indicate to parents	131	65	196
Total	182	114	296

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent

Q4ANSWER * Q4HAVE	297	99.0%	3	1.0%	300	100.0%
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Q4ANSWER * Q4HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

		Q4HAVE		Total
		have experienced	have NOT experienced	
Q4ANSWER	excuse yourself	46	117	163
	enter opinions freely	21	69	90
	advice is restricted to comments	7	27	34
	follow-up and offer opinion to board	2	8	10
Total		76	221	297

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Q5ANSWER * Q5HAVE	293	97.7%	7	2.3%	300	100.0%

Q5ANSWER * Q5HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

		Q5HAVE		Total
		have experienced	have NOT experienced	
Q5ANSWER	call supplier	2	2	4
	stay away from supplier	75	186	261
	negotiate a good price	5	2	7
	call and ask what he can do	4	17	21
Total		86	207	293

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	

	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Q6ANSWER * Q6HAVE	297	99.0%	3	1.0%	300	100.0%

Q6ANSWER * Q6HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

	Q6HAVE		Total
	have experienced	have NOT experienced	
turn to other candidates	3	21	24
hire the candidate	49	150	199
Q6ANSWER hire the candidate that fits at this time	14	54	68
do not hire yourself	2	4	6
Total	68	229	297

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Q7ANSWER * Q7HAVE	294	98.0%	6	2.0%	300	100.0%

Q7ANSWER * Q7HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

	Q7HAVE				Total
	have experienced	have NOT experienced	2.00	3.00	
.00	0	0	0	1	1
recommend request granted	66	55	1	0	122
Q7ANSWER refuse the request	35	46	0	0	81
grant it as administrative action	48	28	0	0	76
give no definite answer	1	13	0	0	14
Total	150	142	1	1	294

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Q8ANSWER * Q8HAVE	296	98.7%	4	1.3%	300	100.0%

Q8ANSWER * Q8HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

	Q8HAVE	Total		
		have experienced	have NOT experienced	2.00
.00 say nothing call in the teacher	0	0	2	2
Q8ANSWER make sure you don't have a disaggregate group	44	63	0	107
reassign special ed to regular ed	95	50	0	145
Total	1	0	0	1
	2	39	0	41
Total	142	152	2	296

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Q9ANSWER * Q9HAVE	296	98.7%	4	1.3%	300	100.0%

Q9ANSWER * Q9HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

	Q9HAVE	Total		
		have experienced	have NOT experienced	3.00
.00 send them back	0	0	1	1
Q9ANSWER keep, but don't distribute	25	231	0	256
Total	6	33	0	39
	31	264	1	296

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Q10ANSWER * Q10HAVE	296	98.7%	4	1.3%	300	100.0%

Q10ANSWER * Q10HAVE Crosstabulation

Count

	Q10HAVE			Total
	have experienced	have NOT experienced	3.00	
find another way	24	8	1	33
offer whatever is	3	4	0	7
Q10ANSWER necessary	38	23	0	61
continue the search	143	52	0	195
look at current staff	208	87	1	296
Total				

VITA

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An Analysis of Superintendents' Responses to Ethical Dilemmas

Major Professor: Dr. John McIntrye