

MISSOURI SUPERINTENDENT PERCEPTIONS OF  
LEADERSHIP IMPACT ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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MISSOURI SUPERINTENDENT PERCEPTIONS OF  
LEADERSHIP IMPACT ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
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By

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## **Abstract**

The increased need for the superintendent to be more than a manager of facilities and personnel is evident with the increasing requirements of federal and state accountability systems. Superintendents today must manage fiscal and operational duties but, more importantly, provide visionary leadership skills to improve school performance. This research establishes a view of the superintendent and the leadership transformation that has occurred. In addition, investigating and establishing the leadership standards and initiatives that are significant to improving school performance.

The research utilized seven leadership standards, the perceptual proficiency within each standard, relationship of the standards to the district level initiatives, and the demographic relationships that occur within leadership standards in Missouri. The survey instrument provided nine demographic questions, seven leadership proficiency standards questions, and two leadership priority perception questions. A population of 559 superintendents were surveyed and 301 participants, 54 percent, completed the survey providing superintendent perceptions of leadership.

Respondents provided significant demographic information related to the proficiency perceptions within each of the seven leadership evaluation standards. In addition, providing the priority of the leadership standards and initiatives as it applies to the superintendent leadership impact to school performance. Overall, the study provides an initial comprehensive review of leadership standards related to Missouri superintendent perceptions. Additional research and follow-up is recommended in review specifically to the demographic impacts on leadership and district level initiatives. Two demographic question related to leadership impact and leadership evaluation provided additional points of interest that would require further study.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

School district performance and superintendent leadership impacts have been reviewed, debated and analyzed seeking common threads that could be linked to school performance achievement. Upon the initial research review, the characteristics and traits involved in the superintendent position may not provide the perspective to link the superintendent to the school improvement process but rather effective management and budgetary oversight. However, the position of superintendent is much more than financial responsibility and management. The superintendent today should be the instructional leader who sets the tone and provides for the collective improvement vision (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Superintendents should possess certain leadership skills and be able to attain and utilize the leadership capacity to guide school improvement efforts across the school district.

Proficiency and evaluation of the leadership ability of each superintendent provides a diverse set of indicators which, may or may not, provide an effective review of the leadership impact ability. Leaders focusing on school improvement efforts rely on standards and indicators that will assist in directing the priority and proficiency of leadership ability. The set of standards and initiatives reviewed in this research provide an analysis of leadership impact based on the state of Missouri evaluation criteria and the impact the superintendent leadership proficiency may have on the school improvement process.

Therefore, the intent of the research was to evaluate the leadership perceptions of superintendents based on the proficiency and priority of leadership standards and initiatives. The leadership impact on school performance, based on effective leadership indicators, will be important in the analysis of individual superintendent leadership performance. In addition, this

research will evaluate the potential impacts that a variety of demographic indicators have upon leadership proficiency and priorities within each standard.

### **Rationale for the Study**

The need for high-impact superintendent leadership in school districts has increasingly become important in addressing school improvement and accountability needs. What should not be overlooked is the need to focus on specific performance targets that school leaders can utilize and direct leadership improvement efforts upon (Eadie, 2003). Likewise, it is important to evaluate district performance needs to superintendent performance needs and evaluation tools. The assessment of the superintendent performance has a significant impact on the ability of the district to meet and continue to be progressive in meeting school improvement needs and goals. The challenge is to ensure that the superintendent performance is actually measured and reflective against the targets and goals and not just subjective functional measurements (Eadie, 2003).

Assessing the leadership performance by evaluation standards can be subjective when compared to the district's performance needs, challenges, timeline for improvement, and personnel needs. The balance in evaluating leadership performance and school improvement can be unique to each school district and leader. However, the key focus is the structure and make-up of the evaluation tool and how it aligns to the superintendent leadership efforts to make positive and productive school improvement gains.

Instructional leadership and educational leadership continues to be a common theme in the effort to define effective superintendent performance. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2005) discuss the instructional leadership description and identify four dimensions of the instructional leader: resource provider, communicator, instructional resource, and a visible

presence (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). While other definitions and models have been proposed it appears those roles are defined by the climate and setting defined for public education through state or federal mandates. The effective leader is skilled in all the relevant areas needed for school improvement efforts. The effective leader utilizes the overall impact of leadership with each frame to be effective and implement performance improvement.

As school districts begin in the 2013-2014 school year to align with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) standards and accountability plans for school improvement and leadership qualities, school districts should consider a focus on standards and responsibilities that can sustain school improvement efforts and superintendents who possess leadership traits that will prove more effective in school performance improvement design and efforts ("DESE essential principle of effective evaluation," 2013).

### **Problem Statement**

The Missouri Superintendent Leadership Standards have a direct relationship to school performance as perceived by school superintendents; but not all superintendents practice these standards.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to analyze Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding Missouri Leadership Standards and District Level Initiatives importance to school performance. Through this research process, the researcher will review the guiding questions with respect to leadership's impact on school improvement:

- What are the relationships between the Missouri Superintendent Evaluation Standards and Missouri superintendents?

- What leadership standards are perceived to be most influential in the school improvement process?

### **Leadership Standards and Responsibilities Overview**

The research questions focus on the leadership evaluation criteria and superintendents' perception of those standards. The survey questions will be designed based on the Missouri Evaluation Superintendent Leadership Standards and the District-Level Leadership Initiatives.

The Missouri Leadership Standards include, ("Essential Principles," 2013):

- Standard 1—Vision, Mission, and Goals—Education leaders have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a district vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;
- Standard 2—Teaching and Learning—Education leaders have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing and effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff;
- Standard 3—Management of the Organization—Education leaders have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by managing the organizational structure, personnel, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
- Standard 4—Collaboration with Families and Stakeholders—Education leaders have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources;

- Standard 5—Ethics and Integrity—Education leaders have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by acting with integrity, responsibility, and in an ethical manner;
- Standard 6—Education System—Education leaders have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by understanding, responding to and influencing the large political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context;
- Standard 7—Professional Development—Education leaders remain current on best practices in education administration and school-related areas as evidenced by establishing a plan for his/her professional development each year ("Essential Principles," 2013).
- Initiative 1—Ensuring collaborative goal setting;
- Initiative 2—Establishing nonnegotiable goals for achievement and instruction;
- Initiative 3—Creating board alignment with and support of district goals;
- Initiative 4—Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction;
- Initiative 5—Allocate resources to support the goals for achievement and instruction, (Marzano & Waters, 2009, p. 6-8).

### **Limitations/Delimitations**

Limitations—The study measured the superintendent perceptions of the leadership standards and district leadership initiatives. This research study centered on school superintendents and those perceptions of leadership impact on school performance. The instructional leadership survey was limited to the superintendent's perception of those traits and the impact on school performance related to the seven superintendent leadership standards.

Delimitations—The study was based on Missouri superintendent perceptions regarding leadership impact on school performance. The study was sent to 559 Missouri superintendents

within all Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regions. Nine invitations were returned or rejected undeliverable providing a total of 550 possible respondents. The survey window was open for three weeks and collected 301 superintendent responses from across the state, resulting in a 54 percent collection rate. Based on the statistical analysis of the 301 survey responses and data collection questions the sample size ( $n = 259$ ) valid responses was larger than expected.

### **Summary**

Leadership is the foundation to effective school improvement performance. Superintendent leadership capacity can vary greatly depending on a variety of indicators and based on the school performance needs. The level of proficiency applied to those standards and initiatives may impact the success and effectiveness created by the leadership capacity of each superintendent. Leadership standards which provide specific guidelines with the performance expectations may assist superintendents in the school improvement process. While the standards are important, the proficiency and priority that the superintendent may place on each standard and initiative may well be in the most important indicator in leadership impact.

The impact that leadership can have, whether positive or negative, on school performance has inspired this review and research. The increasing federal and state accountability standards and the changing community expectations for public education has elevated the need for effective leadership analysis. The identification of effective leadership initiatives aligned to the evaluation standards may aid in the development of effective leaders and may assist with sustaining leadership efforts leading to greater school performance. Effective leadership analysis may provide current and future educational leaders, opportunities to be the effective learning leaders today's schools and communities require.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Literature**

The superintendent position and related duties have changed over time based on the needs of the school community, students, and federal or state structure of mandates and accountability. In the original setting the superintendent was focused on the supervision of students, curriculum offered to students, and instruction provided to students. The superintendent position was highly accountable to parents and reflected the needs of the community at large (Griffiths, 1966). A shift in the accountability to greater state and federal mandates created a change resulting in redefined expectations for the superintendent of schools. Management of the school district remains a paramount duty, but the pursuit of instructional improvement and accountability for student learning are now expectations that superintendents must focus their efforts through the vision and improvement analysis process.

According to an old proverb, “vision, without a plan, is just a dream and a plan without vision drudgery but, vision with plan can change the world” (Author unknown). Developing that plan and vision through leadership initiatives aligned to performance standards creates a systematic effort of improvement based on needs and goals. The right work is essential and key to the success of a school and identifies the understanding needed for the conditions to mediate the impact school leadership will have on student performance (Marzano et al., 2005).

Educational leaders, specifically superintendents, carry a burden of responsibility. Over time, the position has transformed and developed a variety of skills and expectations that are a direct result of what others could not do or what political influences expected others to facilitate. However, through the years, the primary focus and embedded foundation to the superintendent duty was student achievement; superintendents today or yesterday were only able to do this through the leadership influence they applied to the school system. The rationale for this

research was to study the perceptions that school superintendents have on the evaluation process of those leadership traits and standards they are accountable.

There is a difference between being a leader and leading or being hired as a leader and working as a leader. If one takes the time to sit and watch people shop at a mall and apply the same practice to your local, regional, or state association meeting, you start to realize that there are some significant similarities in mall shoppers and instructional leaders.

According to Reeves, “leaders, like mall shoppers, can demonstrate tendencies that likely relate to the success, struggle, or failure of an educational system” (Reeves, 2006, pg. xvii). Leaders cannot be window shoppers, and superintendent cannot base the leadership needs off the price, current trends, or upcoming special events. Leaders need to know how to work toward progressive school improvement, communicate the needs of the efforts, and ensure that the plan is a vision that will lead to effective change results.

### **Superintendent Transformation**

Historically, the superintendent was the single instructional leader and guide to performance. Since the development of the need and role of the superintendent, the expectations have changed and transformed. Transformation has not always led to a clear and concise job description; instead the transformation has created a rather variable set of performance expectations depending on the needs of the community, state, or federal accountability system. For example, in 2001, school districts and superintendents were challenged by the reauthorization and the legislative mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The NCLB directed much attention on school district performance needs and mandated that instructional leaders must come forward as superintendents.

Effective leadership in the school improvement process can be overcomplicated and lost within various messages of accountability, visions, planning, and of course, the always-used committee improvement effort. School improvement is actually a very simple concept: hire better teachers and improve the teachers you have (Whitaker, 2003). A simple plan, but the key Whitaker (2003) points out, will be having educational leaders willing to lead and not just facilitate school improvement efforts. “Whether a school operates effectively increases or decreases the school district and students’ opportunity for academic success” (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 3). Marzano (2005) goes on to review the impact that instructional leadership has upon school districts and the effectiveness of the school on instruction and improvement.

Ramsey asked, “Where have all the leaders gone?” (Ramsey, 1999, pg. 1); school leaders are asked to take on responsibilities of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Missouri School Improvement Program, and Common Core Standards. Educational leaders have to wonder if standards are running them away. Leaders need to understand that it is going to take hard work, dedication, knowledge, and skills that enable them to work with and direct teachers. Leaders will need to effectively communicate, collaborate, develop common goals, operate on shared beliefs, and manage the organizational system. While these traits will assist, there is definitely more that goes into creating and developing effective leaders (Ramsey, 1999).

The school superintendent is a diverse and complex position that has developed over 200 years and countless standards. The forces that have impacted those shifts and expectation changes vary greatly from rural and urban setting, state and federal mandates, diversity, legal and related changes, community or industrial needs, and today as technology and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning standards influence global educational standards. The superintendent is at best a

lawyer, a maintenance supervisor, a manager, banker, a curriculum expert, a researcher, a communicator, and politician; moreover, superintendents are learning leaders, specifically designed to carry on the task asserted in designing a successful public education system.

Each year members of school district board of education meet and confer about the superintendent position. Boards review, evaluate, and hire the leader of the school district, but rarely have a common view and understanding of expectations on what the superintendent should do or what type of manager or leader is needed to address the individual school improvement needs. In some cases, board and community members remember the superintendent as the person with the key to unlock the building.

In the early 1600s, states recognized that there was a need to place someone in charge of managing educational systems. Men, at the time, would handle the daily operational affairs of learning, hiring teachers, setting wages, establishing the school calendar, and managing the curricular expectations within the community (Campbell & Cunningham, 1990). These duties expanded over the transition of educational systems. Superintendents became responsible for many governmental duties in addition to the educational requirements (Sharp & Walter, 1997). Additional duties eventually resulted in the formation of a school committee (Campbell & Cunningham, 1990). Committees transformed into the first school boards with the role of overseeing the management of schools.

Even as one room school houses populated the nation in the 1800s, schools were supervised by teachers who were employed in most part by towns and communities. The need to provide additional curriculum at various grade levels came as the need to articulate the standards for students began to drive school accountability (Kowalski, 1999). Late in the 1800s, it became

apparent that the primary need for a superintendent was to fill the need of providing a supervisor of education for students along each age and grade level group.

As the educational system developed and expanded into the late 1800s, the system again evolved into a system that required a new type of duty and focus for the position of superintendent. Political and social reform efforts, such as gender, age, religion, and race, redirected the duties to management of the school under the control or decision making view of a board of education. The superintendent then shifted from a single leadership role to a management position rather than a leadership position (Kowalski, 1999). Resulting in leaders who lacked education and training in fiscal management and operations.

As board members and educational systems transformed beyond the need of a single leader and manager of daily operations became apparent, one room school houses combined to form large school and districts within counties and geographic areas or cities. On June 9, 1837, Buffalo appointed a superintendent of schools with other large cities following closely after in appointments of superintendents (Campbell & Cunningham, 1990). The duties varied from state and school, but the primary responsibility of the superintendent was the instructional leader. Board members continued to handle taxes, budgets, hiring, construction, and maintenance of schools. These duties later transformed the superintendent role in the early twentieth century.

From the historical view, the creation and transformation of superintendents is evident. From the early onset educational leaders realized the need and desire to employ the educational leader for the local educational system. However, as the educational system transformed and board understanding of school management became limited, the position rapidly changed to one of manager. This leadership exchange of duties and roles ultimately would come full circle with current trends, federal and state accountability standards, and growing need to refocus attention

on the impact the superintendent has upon the academic performance of a school (Kowalski, 2006).

Historically, or in comparison to the 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership roles, the superintendent has shaped the conversation in regard to education, learning, and student improvement needs. The superintendent leader needs to be the facilitator or improvement, change, learning, and also model those traits through a progressive knowledge. The leader must work collaboratively, exchange ideas, and utilize leadership styles that provide opportunities for individual and organizational growth.

Griffiths (1966) established three stages in the development of the superintendent position that correlate to the historical development of the superintendent (Griffiths, 1966). The timeline of development occurs in the years 1837 to 1910, 1910 to 1945, and 1945 to present. The first stage, 1837 to 1910, includes the focus on supervision of instruction. Analysis of the duties of the early superintendents reveals little or no responsibility for business management, buildings, or fiscal operations and management. The superintendent considered themselves as scholars responsible for working with teachers, rather than a chief executive (Townley, 2004). The impact of the agrarian society to the industrial needs of the nation and the move to urban living changed that perception and expectation.

Townley (2004) discusses the second phase, 1910 to 1945, of the historical timeline and the emphasis on the business needs of the superintendent leader. The board of education established the need for a chief officer to carry out the daily and operational needs of the school system. The primary focus of the superintendent was operational efficiency (Townley, 2004). Universities began preparation programs designed to meet the needs of the administrative and

operational management focus of the superintendent. In the 1930s the Great Depression began to impact the public view of the school superintendent as a business leadership position.

In 1945 and into the 1950s, states began to legislate and apply greater influence and control of public school districts within each state and depending on which region of nation. Impacts as established through school improvement efforts, Nation at Risk and No Child Left Behind, brought in the 20<sup>th</sup> century superintendent expectations (Townley, 2004). Extensive legislative and judicial decisions began shifting and changing the leadership focus of the superintendent and focus needed to operate successful school district and establish learning leaders.

During the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, states again reasserted their role in public education by setting up accountability standards through assessment systems. The federal government became increasingly involved in educational accountability over states through the use of funding controls and legislative renewal (Houston, 2001). President Jimmy Carter established the Department of Education as a cabinet level position in 1979 focusing even greater federal influence and power over states public education systems. The state and federal impacts during this time period allowed the compromising view of the superintendent to the public. Learning leaders became challenged by the perception and overwhelming task to meet standards which were unattainable. Houston (2001) asserts that it is unclear what the superintendent will become in the future. The new expectations for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning leaders will not be a superintendent of schools whose job is to oversee and manage, rather be a superintendent of learning will have to navigate the various skills and traits needed to establish successful schools.

The performance and leadership standards developed through DESE's evaluation system expect today's superintendent to provide dynamic leadership that allows schools to continually

reinvent and move progressively forward in performance gains. School leaders must facilitate initiatives, efforts, model a high level of professional learning knowledge, and guide employees utilizing a collaborative leadership style. In historical retrospect, the evolution of the superintendent and learning leader standards has redefined the job description and expectations.

### **Effective Leadership**

Leadership is dependent on a variety of factors and indicators, such as school size, setting, socio-economic indicators, and public resources that may be present in the school organizational system. Whether the school is involved in first or second order change, reveals, if not clearly dictates, the leadership style and efforts that will be needed to implement the improvement plan. Richard Elmore (2003) viewed leadership by identifying the right work to focus upon is essential to the success of a school; helping leaders understand conditions that mediate the impact of school improvement (Marzano et al., 2005).

Frost (2008), illustrates the linkage between leadership and school improvement is dependent on distribution of leadership duties and responsibilities. Leaders need to understand the value in placing leadership teams and teachers in roles that have greater responsibilities and duties to the school improvement change efforts. This learning-centered leadership will increase the focus on teaching, student learning, and school improvement goals (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). The focus to distribute leadership is important and provides greater opportunities to evaluate school leaders and the leadership traits that will be important in developing the school improvement culture.

Leaders, in this case superintendents, may have an understanding of leadership traits and skills, but those abilities rarely reveal an effective action plan toward improvement. “Rather a more organized set of coordinated actions that the superintendent can utilize to enhance student

and school performance” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 98). Developing that effective leadership plan of action assists the superintendent in implementing actions toward goals and improvement efforts. The plan for superintendents involves five parts; developing a passionate leadership team, distributing responsibilities among all members the leadership team, selecting the right goals and priorities, identifying the order of need of the priorities, and matching the leadership styles with the change initiatives needed to accomplish the goals.

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) establish a five step process and organizational efforts that is a plan based on research of proven practices. The first step is vital to the additional efforts and can be a significant positive or negative movement toward reaching the next set of improvement efforts. Superintendents must identify and establish a leadership collaboration team that holds similar priorities to system improvement needs. The second step begins to assert the 21 effective balanced leadership responsibilities; providing for the leadership team to trust and evaluate each members strengths for the total organization benefit. The focus here is to establish 12 key responsibilities, depending on the school districts improvement needs and the leadership change capacity, which can be shared within the leadership team members allowing for shared and collaborative ownership in the improvement efforts. Marzano (2003) utilizes the action steps established to identify the right work for the leaders and leadership team to focus time and efforts (Marzano, 2003). The fourth level of leadership planning involves the collaboration of each part of the leadership team structure to review the work that has been achieved and the work yet to be completed. These efforts are designed to qualify the order of change needed for each goal and stakeholder work efforts. Finally the fifth step brings back the leaders ability to determine the leadership style and behaviors needed to achieve the goals and improvement work.

Educational leaders, teachers, department chairs, principals, and superintendents all desire to exhibit leadership traits. Those traits, however, are more than just a mindset or inherent belief that one can possess. Every person who enters the field of education has both an opportunity and an obligation to be a leader (DeFour & Marzano, 2011). Across many diverse businesses, careers, churches, and activities people have come to perceive leadership as an individual activity that is related to a position: usually a supervisor, boss, team captain, or superintendent. Looking to the person who is in charge for leadership is not always necessarily, and is sometimes contrary to effective leadership. In American society, people often think the ability to lead is reserved for those individuals who hold some position within an organization. However, this is not necessarily productive and effective when evaluating school leadership needs and evaluation of leadership performance.

Marzano and DuFour (2011), explain and establish that it is time to let go of the myth of the charismatic individual leader who has it all figured out. Kouzes and Posner (2010), explain:

No single person can unilaterally bring about substantive change in an organization. In the thousands of cases we have studied, we've yet to encounter a single example of extraordinary achievement that didn't involve the active participation and support of many people. Throughout the years, leaders from all professions, from all economic sectors, and from around the globe continue to tell us: You can't do it alone. Leadership is not a solo act; it's a team performance and the winning strategies will be based upon the, we, not I philosophy. (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 16-23).

Effective leadership, educational leaders like superintendents, need to implement concepts and processes in order to improve and sustain student learning and ultimately comprehensive school improvement plans and needs. Marzano and DuFour (2011) establish

leadership processes, traits, and efforts intensely focused on nondiscretionary goals. However, Marzano and DuFour (2011) also establish that any description of effective leadership must acknowledge that the leaders who are accountable for themselves and other for providing effective and sustained student and school improvement also appeal directly to the emotions of all stakeholders that are accountable to them and strive to lead.

Superintendent success requires a collective effort within the school district, but the ultimate success or failure will depend on the leadership capacity of the superintendent. A highly effective principal should have a dramatic and overall positive influence on student growth and achievement in a school (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). DuFour and Marzano (2011) establish if superintendents are going to be successful instructional leaders, they must establish a framework for building the individual and collective capacity of learning throughout the district. Transforming schools into learning organizations requires an instructional leadership system from the leader.

Some of the most effective instructional leadership components needed are leaders who understand the vision and process of instructional leadership by: clarify the conditions and climate, and instructional expectations, establish collaboration within administrative leadership teams and within the building systems, monitors the instructional leadership process by guiding and offering support, limiting challenges, providing resources at each level, and creating systems that allow for analysis. “These systems are well organized and allow for cooperation and opportunities to adjust or revise based on needs” (DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 38).

Developing instructional leadership visions and priorities, demands superintendent efforts that are coordinated and specific. The district that can focus on student achievement will recognize that leadership in instruction is the responsibility of each member of the district and

not just the superintendent or building administrator. “The superintendent, however, is key to providing the overreaching instructional leadership capacity to achieve the individual instructional and system-wide learning improvement capacity in instructional leadership” (DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 41).

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) make it clear that sustainable and comprehensive improvement relies on successful leadership. However, creating sustained leadership is difficult, too (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Leaders must have the ability to do more than provide motivational speeches and literary vision statements about what leaders hope to accomplish. These in part are vital skills of leadership, but on their own provide no secure foundation for leadership in action and learning leaders. Better education and leadership will benefit all students and last over time only when it addresses the basis needs in the sustainability process (Fullan, 2006).

In comparison to the educational system, corporate sustainability is important and desirable as it is in the physical environment that companies are so often criticized for degrading (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Industry and private sector businesses that have a record of profits, success in the market, and innovation over those who do not can be key in establishing sustainable traits. In that corporate effort, companies are built to sustain the needs by establishing: purpose and goals before profits, preserving established purposes amid change efforts, beginning change efforts slowly and advancing in those efforts persistently. Next, making sure the organization does not depend on a single visionary leader rather, grow leadership within, instead of importing potential stars, and learn from diverse investigation and experimentation processes (Collins & Porras, 2002).

In the corporate evaluation, these companies are sustaining success by practice. Long-term investment by companies in efforts that exhibit that corporate leaders care about what is produced, how leaders treat the employees, customers, and community leads back higher yields in the market view of the company. Like these businesses educational systems need to seek leaders who provide for these profits to be realized within the improvement process.

The learning leader who seeks to sustain the efforts within the organization has a tremendous task each day. The task can be exhausting, as Reeves (2006) explains, but can be exhilarating journey. The leadership efforts provide opportunities for growth and generate value to the collective efforts of the stakeholder goals. Leaders need to find, document, and recognize the opportunities of sustained excellence within the operation of schools. “Leaders must also take the difficult step of organizational leadership by transforming the islands of excellence into systematic impact” (Reeves, 2006, p. 158). This is where sustained leadership in schools usually fails due to the time and efforts assumed to be needed in the improvement process.

Sustainability in the learning leader is about focusing on the corporate efforts to be profitable and successful while addressing the educational system need to be valued in the process regardless of the quality. “To be the best leader you can be, link the vision of the district, school, or classroom to the hopes and dreams of those you serve” (DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 203). Efforts to work collaboratively to develop the steps and vision you and those around you need to accomplish. Set out systems and communication efforts that will assist stakeholders that their work is valued and needed to accomplish individual or district goals.

Kouzes and Posner (2010) established that people said the leader made them feel empowered, listened to, understood, capable, important, and like they mattered (Kouzes & Posner, 2010). Establishing leaders who are sustaining leadership and creating a learning

leadership system for themselves and those around them establish value to those stakeholders have been asked to lead. Establishing a system, that when you are not there, continues to sustain progress in improvement efforts because of your work to establish individual leaders that remain to continue the learning leaders path.

From the early 1970s researchers, scholars, teachers, and educational leaders offered a variety of theories and perspectives on effective educational leadership. Leadership traits such as, a collaborative, visionary, proactive, system minded, results driven were offered as guiding principles for effective leadership. While these anecdotes and advice were offered in an organized and relevant approach to leadership needs, none were based on a large quantitative data review of proven research (Waters et al., 2003). Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning began in 1998 evaluating the research and additional studies regarding student and teacher learning practices with respect to school effectiveness (Waters et al., 2003). Following the analysis, additional review and meta-analysis of the leadership influence on student achievement was completed. Through that research Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) identified and developed the 21 leadership responsibilities, which have proven significant, in impacting student achievement.

To review McREL's findings the following analysis is offered: In two similar schools, with student and teacher populations both demonstrating achievement within standardized tests at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. The leadership, principal A and principal B, in both schools are average in comparison to the 21 leadership responsibility ability, also ranking at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. Through analysis and practice, principal B improves the ability level by one standard deviation. Mid-continent Research for Education's research indicated that the increase in the leadership ability of principal B would impact student achievement at principal B's school. Resulting in a

10 percentile point increase in performance above principal A's school and students (Waters et al., 2003). The leadership impact demonstrates statistical significance through student achievement gains from the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003), go on to establish that while this finding is important, it is possible for leadership to have a potentially negative impact on achievement when leadership performance decreases. Mid-continent Research for Education reviews the impact of situational leadership when a leader focuses on an improvement effort and corresponding leadership responsibility that results in the wrong analysis and improvement efforts lead to negative or decreases in student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). Mid-continent Research for Education's differential impact of leadership analysis indicates that the mean = .25 and 60<sup>th</sup> percentile for 1 standard deviation increase, high = .50 and 69<sup>th</sup> percentile for 1 standard deviation increase, and low = -.02 and 49<sup>th</sup> percentile for 1 standard deviation increase; resulting in achievement. At the highest increase, the analysis demonstrated leadership impacting student achievement as much as a 19 percent increase. At the lowest analysis Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) established that where leaders had focused understanding and practice in only specific leadership responsibilities student achievement decreased.

Mid-continent Research for Education also demonstrates that leaders should learn and have the ability to apply initiatives based on this 20 percentile difference in leadership ability and student achievement by establishing two primary variables in leadership capacity. First, focus of change, where the leader appropriately reviews the needs of the school and students that will most likely have a positive impact on achievement within the school or building (Marzano et al., 2005). Second, leaders must understand the order of change associated with the improvement

need or needs where they are leading (Waters et al., 2003). Superintendents will need to effectively analyze the needs and school without losing site of the individual groups that make up the school. In addition, once the priorities are established, focus efforts and resources of the leadership team on those tasks that create systems of change appropriate for the organization to sustain the improvement efforts.

The efforts to improve schools is an important focus of the leader or leadership team. The focus by federal and state mandates drives and creates political, social, and economic imperatives (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Efforts to improve school performance can be dependent on several environmental factors that can enhance or restrict the leadership change efforts. For example, Buser (2006) explains that schools are rooted in their socio-political environments with a variety of policy impacts on the daily operational and educational processes. These impacts reduce the impact of leadership initiatives and can constrict the influence of positive and proactive improvement efforts. In addition, the way teachers are expected to perform can be significantly reduced or impact the leadership responsibilities designed or intended to bring about productive change efforts (Buser, 2006).

Understanding leadership responsibilities and the ability of the leader to apply that knowledge within the working application and setting of the improvement effort is difficult. Selecting the appropriate leadership practice through that process is no less difficult and can, as Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) identifies, impact achievement efforts within a continuum of improvement gains. Through leadership responsibilities, McREL establishes the leadership practices according to the magnitude of change continuum (Waters et al., 2003). The 21 leadership responsibilities provide an understanding for first order and second order levels of practices dependent on the leadership need and improvement effort.

The concept regarding the order of change or the impact that the leadership efforts have upon school improvement is based on the first and second order change efforts of each leader. First order change efforts are focused on the constants of the system. These constants are the values and operational values that have been established or can be implemented with consensus from all stakeholders (Marzano et al., 2005). The first order change efforts are also based on the current knowledge and ability levels of the organizational members. First order change efforts require a leader to understand the values and develop knowledge and appreciation for the organizational structure that exists (DeFour & Marzano, 2011).

Second order change deals with knowledge and ability that may not be readily understood, valued, or be held as possible to achieve. The second order change requires the leader and the stakeholders to embrace a new approach or application of a new skill set in the teaching and learning process (Marzano et al., 2005). Many times second order change can produce conflicting views based on the effort to move from traditional methods or known skill sets that have been the basis of ability levels (Fullan, 2006). Second order change mandates that the leader work more effectively with all levels of stakeholders such as, teachers, students, parents and community patrons (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Second order change can create tension and disrupt the traditional relationships within the school building; challenging the leader to sustain and provide value to the change efforts.

The order and quality of change within the school improvement programs and leadership efforts continues to be associated with the quality of teaching and learning within each classroom (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999; Harris & Hopkins, 1999; Hopkins, Reynolds, & Gray, 2005). School leaders have the ability and responsibility to impact the quality of teaching and learning that occurs within the classrooms. These leadership efforts often begin with the selection of

teachers who will be within the classrooms directing learning efforts. More importantly, the leadership expectations of new or existing teachers creates the environmental conditions for school improvement. The local initiation of the change efforts and expectations within teaching and learning are directly linked to the leadership ability, efforts, and design (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

Marzano, Waters, McNulty (2005), caution leaders to understand the challenges and difficulties of change efforts. Leaders have the traditional human reaction to attempt to respond to all challenges as first order problems. Leaders tend to approach problems and organizational challenges from the perspectives of previous experiences; attempting to apply past knowledge and solutions to the new improvement effort need (Marzano, 2003). Unfortunately, as leaders, the new challenges facing school improvement needs and reform efforts require a second order perspective and approach that requires moving from previous knowledge and experiences.

For example, culture, first order change practices require a leaders to promote cooperation and collaboration among staff, promote sense of positive well-being, and promote cohesion among staff (Marzano et al., 2005). In addition, culture, a second order change practice result in efforts to develop shared understanding and a shared vision of what the school achieve and be modeled. Only through the first order work can second order work be relative to the collaborative efforts of the leader and the stakeholders.

The collaborative leader focuses on those improvement goals that are common and have stakeholder value or goals that can be understood as improvement needs. The leader in this collaborative system should be an inspirational person who leads and directs the leadership team members and the system stakeholders towards understanding improvement needs and goals (Siddique, Aslam, Khan, & Fatima, 2011). The leadership style applied in the improvement

efforts directly impacts the process and to that end, the results. The leadership style and the responsibilities applied within the leadership process are important and will vary throughout the process and leadership career (Siddique et al., 2011). Within this leadership collaboration structure a clear vision of the leadership responsibilities is needed to create the school improvement focus and environmental culture.

Leaders evaluating that system or their own leadership capacity must look at available leadership responsibility designs and apply clear leadership values to school improvement efforts. Much time has been spent defining the leadership capacity and responsibility efforts. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis, establishing 21 responsibilities for leadership which, and for the purpose of this review, will be utilized as leadership traits. The first and second order change efforts for the 21 leadership responsibilities were established and Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) established statistical significance and relationship with student achievement. Those traits and first and second order change efforts, are important and provide a foundation to leadership standards (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 41-61).

The responsibilities' first and second order change efforts for the leadership responsibilities are important to leadership efforts designed to initiate productive and positive change efforts. Affirmation includes first order efforts through systematically and fairly recognizing and celebrating accomplishments of teachers and recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of students; and second order efforts through systematically acknowledging failures and celebrates accomplishments of the school (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 41-61). Leadership responsibility of being a change agent has no first order change efforts, however, the second order efforts include consciously challenging the status quo, has a comfort

with leading change initiatives with uncertain outcomes, and considers new and better ways of doing things.

Next, contingent rewards include first order change efforts by recognizing individuals who excel, and second order efforts through evaluating performance vs. seniority as the primary criterion for reward and advancement, uses hard work and results as the basis for reward and recognition. Leadership responsibility communication includes first order efforts including accessible to teachers, develops effective means for teachers to communicate with one another, and maintains open and effective lines of communication with staff, and no second order change efforts (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Culture, develops first order efforts by promoting cooperation among staff, promotes sense of well-being, and promotes cohesion among staff, and second order efforts through developing shared understanding and purpose and shared vision of what the school could be like.

Discipline's first order efforts include protecting instructional time from interruptions and protects teachers from distractions, and no second order efforts are applicable. Flexibility leadership responsibility includes no first order efforts and second order efforts include establishing a comfort with major changes in how things are done, encouraging people to express opinions contrary to those of authority, adapting leadership style to needs of specific situations, and can be directive or non-directive as the situation warrants (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

The next group of leadership responsibilities including focus, ideals/beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement in curriculum, knowledge of curriculum, and monitoring and evaluation include a variety of first and second order change efforts. Focus, which includes first order efforts through establishing concrete goals for curriculum, instruction, and assessment, establishing concrete goals for general operations of the school, and keeping attention on

established goals and second order efforts of establishing high, concrete goals, and expectations that all students should meet (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Next, ideals/beliefs includes first order change efforts of sharing beliefs about school, teachers, and learning with staff and parents, and demonstrating behaviors that are consistent with beliefs. Second order efforts include holding strong professional beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Input develops first order efforts through providing opportunities for input on all important decisions and second order efforts by providing opportunities for staff to be involved in developing school policies and uses a leadership team in decision making. Intellectual stimulation provides first order leadership change efforts through keeping informed about current research and theory regarding effective schooling and continuously involves staff in reading effective practices work and second order efforts by continually exposing staff to cutting edge ideas about how to be effective and systematically engages staff in discussions about current research and theory (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Effective leaders will develop involvement in curriculum responsibility by first order efforts in ensuring that teachers have necessary materials and equipment, is involved with teachers to address instructional issues in their classrooms, and is involved with teachers to address assessment issues; there are no second order change efforts for this responsibility. Next, knowledge of curriculum includes first order efforts through being knowledgeable about instructional practices, assessment practices, and providing conceptual guidance for teachers regarding effective classroom practice and no second order change efforts (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Monitoring and evaluation responsibilities include first order efforts of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and no second order change efforts (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

The final set of leadership responsibilities include optimizer, order, outreach, relationships, resources, situational awareness, and visibility skills and efforts. Optimizer includes first order efforts including inspiring teachers to accomplish things that might seem beyond their grasp and portrays a positive attitude about the ability of the staff to accomplish substantial things, and second order priorities of developing the driving force behind major initiatives (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Order including first order efforts through providing and enforcing clear structures, rules, and procedures, for students and staff; establishes routines regarding the running of the school that staff understand and follow; there are no second order change efforts within this responsibility (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Next, outreach includes first order efforts through assuring that the school is in compliance with district and state mandates, advocating on behalf of the school in the community, with parents, and ensuring that the central office is aware of school accomplishments; there are no second order change efforts (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Relationship leadership responsibility provides first order efforts in remaining aware of personal needs of teachers, maintains relationships with teachers, and staying informed about significant personal issues within lives of staff, and acknowledges significant events in the lives of staff; there are no second order change efforts for relationship leadership responsibility standard (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Leadership responsibility of resources offers first order efforts through ensuring teachers have necessary materials and equipment, and second order efforts by ensuring teachers have necessary staff development opportunities that directly enhance their teaching.

Situational awareness provides first order efforts through being aware of informal groups and relationships among staff of the school and second order efforts through awareness of issues

in the school that have not surfaced but could create discord and can predicting what could go wrong from day to day. Finally, visibility, includes first order efforts through making systematic and frequent visits to classrooms, maintaining high visibility around school, and has frequent contact with students; second order efforts are not applicable for this leadership responsibility (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Application and understanding of these responsibilities are vital to the effectiveness of the learning leader. In order to determine the influence of the superintendent on performance improvement efforts and priorities of effective leaders McREL produces research with foundations dating back 30 years. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) explains that the 21 responsibilities do not represent all of the important duties leaders are expected to fulfill (Waters & Marzano, 2006). The responsibilities aligned to leadership standards represent opportunities to impact school performance when effectively implemented and applied to school performance improvement efforts.

Waters, Marzano, McNulty, (2003) notes as important as the 21 balanced leadership indicators are, there is another important finding that must be considered in the leadership impact on student performance. “Leaders can have a positive impact but also may have a marginal or even negative impact on student performance” (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003, p. 5). Learning leaders need to focus on right priority and focus of improvement needs. When superintendents mistake improvement efforts for change efforts they risk student achievement efforts being delayed or lost within the political power efforts in establishing misguided improvement efforts.

Within these first and second order change levels, leaders need to understand the value that leadership cannot be centered in one level or with only one person (Harris, 2004). Rather, as

Harris (2004) points out, leaders who distribute leadership responsibilities among leadership teams or within the organizational membership are more likely to build capacity for change and attain school improvement goals. The distribution of leadership can be an important means to overcoming environmental challenges where stakeholders are not linked to the school improvement goals and efforts (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). The level of leadership distribution and the initiatives used to attain school performance improvement efforts is important to fostering the improvement in teaching and learning (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). The improvement goals focus the leadership needs and efforts in to positive strategies designed to continue progressive school improvement and conversely overcome negative impacts that may occur along the leadership and school improvement process (Whitaker, 2010).

Waters, Marzano, McNulty, (2003) found that there are two primary initiatives that determine whether or not leadership will have a positive or negative impact on achievement. First, is the focus of change—that is, whether leaders properly identify and focus on improving the school and classroom practices that are most likely to have a positive impact on student achievement in the school; and second, whether the leaders properly understand the magnitude and order of the change they are leading and adjust the leadership practices and traits accordingly (Waters et al., 2003).

The balanced leadership framework is based on the belief that effective leadership will mean more than knowing what to do, but rather what to do, when to do it, and why you are doing it. Balanced leadership and leaders who are effective will understand how to impact change efforts and initiatives while at the same time, protect the culture, values, and traditions that are valued. Effective leaders will know which practices, resources, policies, and incentives to align and how to align those needs with the organizational priorities (Waters et al., 2003).

Superintendents will have to develop the ability and knowledge-base to gauge the efforts that school improvement efforts will need to be effective. In addition, effective and learning leaders will need to understand the value of the relationships they have with the people involved in the improvement efforts. These skills combined with the knowledge, is the essence of balanced leadership (Waters et al., 2003).

Leadership ability and development is important to the school improvement process but provides many hidden needs and challenges (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). The need to find effective leaders and leadership systems that are reflective of the needs of the students and school is as important to establishing the right improvement focus school improvement goals. Leadership improvement that is personalized to the leader and the stakeholder needs is essential to developing the successful transition to effective leadership action and improved school improvement (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009).

Evaluating successful leadership results in the next level of challenges in the school improvement process. Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) ask, how can leadership be viewed strategically so that better outcomes and school improvement can occur at the various levels. For many educational leaders, school leadership must be more than mere management and attempts to maintain the status quo and current levels of performance. However, the ability to effectively evaluate the leadership also must be considered as part of the effective leadership review.

### **Leadership Evaluation**

As the superintendent position transformed into a mixture of views, expectations, and attributes one clear role not expected was instructional leadership. Duties were outsourced and delegated out for a variety of reasons and needs; school business transformed the leader into a business official and management supervisor rather than the learning leader or leader of learning.

Preparation programs which focused much attention in the 80s and 90s into facility management, budgeting, and resource allocation began to shift and realize the need to focus on the core learning and teaching improvement efforts and leadership traits.

Impacts by legislation like No Child Left Behind (NCLB) focused great attention on school performance and the leaders who were directing that performance. Answers to those improvement expectations had to be developed and managed in a system of expectations that would again shift the focus and need of the superintendent to be the learning leader. The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for superintendents, developed in 1994, were released providing a guiding document of standards for educational leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). The ISLLC standards, originally a set of six standards, for school leaders and are based on promoting success of all students in each school system. Those set of standards acknowledged the operational, management, and political needs of the superintendent position, but added the focus on aspects more directly related to the learning, collaboration, vision, and improvement process.

Murphy (2005) indicated that ISLLC standards provided a specific set of leverage points that were meant to reshape the profession. The key, however, in standards and the reality of how universities prepared superintendent leaders left a gap in implementation. Instructional leadership had to become a more important role of the superintendent leader (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007). Instructional leadership needs to maintain a focus on teaching and learning.

Since 2000, accountability standards have placed educational leadership at the forefront of education policy research and debate. Research has taught us that school leaders are crucial to improving instruction and raising student achievement. At the policy level, school performance

measures have been codified in state and federal law to hold schools increasingly accountable for raising student achievement among students from all population subgroups. At the same time, schools are under pressure to produce high school graduates who are better trained and who can adapt to an ever-changing workplace (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).

The ISLLC Standards organize the functions that help define strong school leadership. The standards represent a broad, high priority theme that school leaders can utilize to coordinate efforts in making school improvement efforts for the district, school, and each student. The standards call for setting a widely shared vision for learning, and work towards developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. Additionally the leader must ensure effective management of the organization, operation, and resources; leaders must collaborate with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. Finally, understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards have been helpful to states and local school districts. States will need to build upon the work efforts created through the leadership improvement process to produce successful public schools through effective leaders.

Whether evaluating historical needs or today's technological learner needs it is apparent that evaluating superintendent leadership and performance is key to effective academic improvement (Eadie, 2003). The need for high impact superintendent leadership traits in the ever changing accountability times is very important for school boards and communities. High impact evaluation of superintendent leadership involves far more than merely developing a

structure of assessments items that are reviewed annually. Rather systems of continual analysis and evaluation of the district and superintendent's capacity to lead the instructional improvement efforts.

Each state has the responsibility to establish the leadership standards and guidelines for evaluating performance. The basis of those standards does not have to be random or so expansive as to create an evaluation system which takes away from the leader's capacity to initiative leadership change and improvement efforts. States continue to focus on opportunities to formalize the leadership expectations. Implementing leadership evaluation systems to ensure that there are indicators to continually evaluate the superintendent's leadership capacity and proficiency are important (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).

Districts need evaluation systems that have specific targets for superintendent leadership performance within academic and operational achievement (Eadie, 2003). Assessing performance in learning categories allows for evaluation of proficient and nearing proficient targets. Without targets, leadership performance, assessment is ultimately subjective to the board or person monitoring progress. Instructional or operational leadership should be based on accomplishments to specific improvement needs or goals.

The superintendent position is responsible for fiscal, academic, operational, and personnel management. However, the evaluation of any one of these areas becomes problematic when non-specific goals or performance targets are identified as performance measurements. Therefore, superintendent leadership capacity needs to be specific to the organizational needs within each defined area. Narrowing the focus on what needs to be accomplished rather than what needs to be competent to the individual's knowledge.

The superintendent will need to continue to monitor achievement of students and organizational instructional goals. This process is accomplished by the educational leader assessing district progress toward comprehensive school improvement program goals and needs. The district will evaluate goals and collaborate on the needs of each building with the superintendent and the guiding improvement goals. Reeves (2009) points out that educational leaders, need to ensure that resources are available to the organization to ensure high performance and sustained learning change initiatives. The growing expectations that superintendents must provide the leadership and educational vision to allow schools to reach improvement goals and needs will not be achieved without focused efforts on evaluation criteria and realistic improvement and evaluation goals.

The evaluation system developed to provide the framework and guidelines to monitor the leadership expectations for superintendents is important. Within each leadership system, state, region, or local school district, it becomes important that each level is working toward all the improvement efforts identified in the system. The leadership standards and initiatives can drive and establish the priorities on how systems align toward assigning responsibilities, level of importance, groups needed, collaborative structure, and those who accountable within the improvement system (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). The evaluation system created can clearly identify the standards and the ability to create professional learning improvement so that, superintendent leaders can evaluate and seek leadership development within each standard or initiative.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has spent time and effort in establishing a Missouri Theory of Action system of evaluation. The Theory of Action was developed by hundreds of educators representing current practitioners teaching and

leading in schools, educator preparation institutions, and every major education organization in the state (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011; “Essential Principles,” 2013). Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education expects and effectively desires to provide leadership to assess baseline performance accurately and identify growth and professional learning needs. Then through feedback and learning the system will address the areas of improvement with the goal to validate and replicate improved educator performance. Finally, the system will develop an effective system that produces higher student performance and district performance through leadership accountability systems.

In 2007, the Missouri Commissioner of Education appointed a committee to provide guidelines for revising the content and documents of the Missouri Performance Based Superintendent Evaluation (PBSE) model. Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has attempted to move toward evaluating the superintendent in a manner that reflects an integrated systems approach. The criteria and process in the new model are derived from national preparation standards from Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), the national leadership standards of Educational Leadership Policy Standards (ELPS, formerly ISLLC), and local district improvement goals maintained through the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011; DESE, 2012).

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education establishes that the evaluation of the superintendent is one of the most important responsibilities of the board of education. The evaluation criteria and the associated process represent the key means by which the board of education can address and effectively serve the needs of the school district as it seeks to improve student achievement and district operations. It is not a means to an end; instead, it is an ongoing and dynamic process. Implementing an evaluation tool that is agreed

upon by the board and superintendent in a collaborative manner is often the most effective approach. An effective high quality superintendent evaluation process that is practical across a broad demographic spectrum which develops good board/superintendent relationships, promotes professional growth, provides clarity of roles, creates common understanding of leadership, and provides a mechanism for accountability, including student achievement determined by multiple assessments (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011).

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) model seeks to provide an overview and evaluation tool of superintendent leadership traits needed to effectively lead school improvement efforts within a school district. The indicators will provide a focus area for ongoing learning and leadership growth. The indicators are selected to support the increasing leadership capacity to improve student learning. The model seeks to create an alignment between the CSIP, leadership traits, and the growth of the superintendent.

In many instances superintendents are evaluated through a checklist and a rating scale that focuses on traits, skills, knowledge, and style (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). While acceptable in the traditional evaluation view it is apparent that Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and instructional improvement will require more formative forms of evaluation with standards, indicators, and sources of evidence and expectations for professional learning (Kowalski, McCord, Pattersen, Young, & Ellerson, 2010). Kowalski (2006) identifies, a well-structured evaluation plan for superintendents fortifies the improvement efforts needed for school improvement while defining the roles between the superintendent and board members.

A well-structured evaluation process communicates to the superintendent the expectations and needs the district have based on the improvement needs of the district and the

board of education. In addition, a well-structured performance evaluation should identify strengths as well as areas of growth articulating clear methods and specific prescriptions to improve job performance where needed (Kowalski et al., 2010).

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) state evaluation model is designed to provide a focus area for ongoing learning and professional growth. The focus for the evaluation and improvement model will be guided by as many or few indicators as needed to address the learner improvement system needs. The criteria are based on the student learning needs; derived from the comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP); and indicators based on student or staff needs, priorities of district leadership, and potential growth opportunities that are communicated with the board of education evaluation and district improvement process (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011; Essential Principles, 2013).

Improving the learning of students requires the improvement of effective practice of those teaching in classrooms and providing leadership in schools. While the teacher is the most significant factor in a student's learning, effective leadership is paramount to establishing the goals and systems of support needed for that teaching. As such, Missouri's Educator Evaluation System focuses on the formative development of teachers and leaders (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2012).

The teacher and superintendent standards and quality indicators draw evidence from three professional frames at each level of the professional continuum. This reflects the research base on educator development as well as feedback from Missouri educators on how to make the standards meaningful to teachers and leaders. The three frames are professional commitment, professional practice and professional impact. These frames, which together constitute a determination of educator effect, organize the standards and indicators to facilitate the

improvement of effective practice of teachers and leaders (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2012).

Establishing a reliable determination of educator effect requires the use of multiple criteria. Research from the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project confirms that a combination of measures has the greatest potential for a reliable assessment of performance. Data sources specific to each of the three professional frames provides a reliable process to establish current levels of practice, accurately promote and document growth, and determine overall educator effect (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011).

The Missouri Superintendent Standards convey the expectations of performance for professional superintendents in Missouri. The standards are based on the national Interstate Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards which emphasize an education leader as a competent manager and instructional leader who continuously acquires new knowledge and skills and is constantly seeking to improve their leadership practice to provide for high academic achievement for all students. Thus these standards recognize that superintendents continuously develop knowledge and skills. Therefore the Missouri Superintendent Standards employ a developmental sequence to define a professional continuum that illustrates how their knowledge and skills mature and strengthen throughout their career. Professionals in school superintendent positions are expected to exercise good professional judgment and to use these standards to inform and improve their own practice (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2012; Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012).

## **Summary**

The superintendent is paramount to the operation of the district. However, the focus cannot be the management roles that have been historically tied to the superintendent job

description and leadership model. The researcher acknowledges that effective and successful superintendents have the increased capacity to be effective managers when dealing with budget needs and operational impacts, communication efforts with staff, students, and community, political discussion and reform efforts; and personnel management within all levels of the organization.

The difference today from the early superintendent roles has changed in capacity in need and accountability to the various state and federal levels. Schools of today and tomorrow need superintendents who have the instructional leadership capacity to lead others in support of learning at all levels. Failure to fill that leadership void with effective leaders leaves building leaders, teachers, students and parents, and communities searching for direction or following empty efforts that cannot sustain progressive improvement needs.

The educational leader of any organization will directly influence the improvement, profitability, or system upgrades needed over time. The actions and vision the leader takes must be aligned with the evaluation and improvement priorities of the organization to impact successful change efforts. Evaluating the improvement needs of the organization and the individual leader is paramount to the focus of efforts, vision, planning, and system change.

Developing the leadership standards and expectations is important to evaluating the leadership capacity at each level. The standards developed within each state, in this case Missouri, are important to ensuring school districts and superintendents invest in the right work. Superintendents whose proficiency can be improved and focused in the different levels of leadership standards will influence student achievement. However, the design of the leadership evaluation system will only be as effective as the implementation and structure provided in the improvement system.

The superintendent will need to lead by influencing others to achieve a collaborative goal helping the district stretch to a higher level. Instructional leadership does not mean moving people along a specific line; rather, that is management. The superintendent must be the leader who mobilizes the members to go beyond where the current capacity allows or is based. The superintendent today needs to confront the needs of the organization deny or obstruct systemic and progressive learning improvement. Superintendents who embrace the instructional leadership capacity to improve academic performance will capitalize on the energy created to achieve academic performance improvement goals.

The transformation, development, and policy impacts that have occurred to the superintendent position have impacted the leadership priorities. However, it is important to note that within Missouri, the focus on developing comprehensive system that provides an evaluation system with clear standards, focused initiatives, proficiency ability measurements, and a comprehensive support system for each leader is key to effective leadership and school performance improvement. The ability to provide a standards-based evaluation system that can clearly provide performance measurements with opportunities for professional improvement will be key to moving forward with leadership impact understanding and involvement.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between superintendent leadership standards and the perception of leadership initiatives impact on school district performance. The study investigated the importance and demographic impact of the leadership standards of superintendents in Missouri public schools compared to the Missouri Educator Evaluation System.

This research review was a descriptive, non-experimental, quantitative dissertation studying the perceptions of superintendent leadership standards on school performance. The survey instrument was developed by the researcher and focused on superintendent leadership proficiency and priorities within each leadership standard.

Because no existing survey was available for use, the researcher needed to evaluate and create a survey instrument that was designed to collect Missouri superintendent leadership perceptions. The researcher developed a survey instrument to collect data responses regarding proficiency perceptions and the priority of the Missouri leadership standards. Data was collected from superintendents of Missouri school districts and was reviewed and disaggregated by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education designated regions, rural or urban setting, school size, superintendent experience and mobility, leadership impact view, and leadership evaluation.

The absence of a functional and reliable leadership survey within the state of Missouri provided an opportunity to focus attention and efforts on the leadership standards and proficiency within those standards. In addition, the move to state-wide evaluation standards provides an opportunity to effectively evaluate superintendent perceptions and a timely review of the leadership standards related superintendent proficiency, priority, and demographic impacts.

The researcher hopes that the survey instrument provides future opportunities to evaluate the superintendent leadership impact within Missouri and other states.

### **Research Participants and Response Rate**

The proficiency and priority leadership standard analysis survey was sent to all Missouri superintendents through an email invitation and request to participate. Each superintendent represents demographic region of Missouri established by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The superintendents surveyed, were employed in the 2013-2014 academic year and of K-12 Missouri school districts. The survey requested perceptions related to the leadership standards and initiatives compared to the Missouri Leader Standards provided by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Educator Evaluation System. The researcher invited 559 superintendents to participate in the research request.

The researcher invited all K-12 Missouri school district superintendents to complete the survey. Contact information was acquired through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The target audience was 559 school superintendents; 9 survey responses were returned undeliverable. The overall rate of return for the survey response was 54 percent, resulting in 301 responses.

### **Survey Design and Development**

The researcher developed an initial 33 question survey which included demographic, Missouri leadership standard proficiency, and McREL's 21 balanced leadership standards. The researcher created a draft of survey questions, which were reviewed by professional colleagues and the researcher's advisor. The draft survey, Appendix B, provided a review of the Missouri

leadership standards and the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) balanced leadership responsibilities.

The initial survey design (Appendix B) was taken from a review of questions the researcher developed to evaluate the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) data while incorporating Missouri demographic information. Through a professional colleague review, the initial survey instrument design provided several concerns.

First, the demographic questions may not provide an effective review of superintendent mobility or experience. Second, that the leadership review of McREL's 21 balanced leadership responsibilities would provide no additional or new data regarding the priority of the responsibilities that were not already established through the meta-analysis of these traits. Third, no opportunity was provided for the research population, Missouri superintendents, to reflect on Missouri leadership standard importance. Fourth, no opportunity to establish a priority of importance of district level initiatives for Missouri superintendents. Finally, the 37 questions took considerable time and created a problematic survey tool related to the leadership standards and proficiency review.

### **Pilot Survey Development**

After the initial draft survey was provided to professional colleagues, the resulting challenges and data concerns were reviewed with the researcher's advisor. Through that professional review process, the survey was revised to include greater opportunity to collect demographic information related to the proficiency and priority of leadership perceptions. Revisions to the survey (Appendix C) were made allowing for more specific data collection focused on Missouri superintendent experience, administrative and school mobility, leadership

perceptions, and proficiency within the Missouri leadership standards and district level initiatives.

### **Pilot Survey Standards and Initiatives**

The researcher utilized current performance based leadership evaluation tools that were developed by DESE and McREL as the foundational review of standards and responsibilities. Permission by McREL for the leadership responsibility and district level initiatives are included in Appendix E. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Superintendent Evaluation Model Leader Standards and Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) District Level Leadership Initiatives are:

Standard 1—Vision, Mission, and Goals

Standard 2—Teaching and Learning

Standard 3—Management of the Organization

Standard 4—Collaboration with Families and Stakeholders

Standard 5—Ethics and Integrity

Standard 6—Education System

Standard 7—Professional Development

Initiative A—Ensure Collaborative Goal Setting

Initiative B—Establish Nonnegotiable Goals for Achievement and Instruction

Initiative C—Create Board Alignment and Support

Initiative D—Monitor Goals for Achievement and Instruction

Initiative E—Allocate Resources

The pilot survey instrument was designed to analyze leadership evaluation criteria for school superintendents. Data was used to compare the perceived leadership responsibilities of

superintendents in Missouri public schools with the Missouri Superintendent Evaluation System. The researcher also utilized a leadership standards questionnaire to evaluate the superintendent leadership perceptions of the evaluation standards and initiatives.

### **Pilot Survey Question Review**

The research questions are important to this study and focus on the leadership perceptions of superintendents in Missouri schools. The research questions were applied to the design of the pilot survey instrument (Appendix D) and rank the priority and importance of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Superintendent Evaluation criteria and the superintendent perception of each standard. The guiding research questions to this research were:

- What are the relationships between the Missouri Superintendent Evaluation Standards and Missouri superintendents?
- What leadership standards are perceived to be most influential in the school improvement process?

The survey developed was a unidimensional tool with demographic and rating questions providing for insight about superintendent perceptions related to the leadership scale. The 18 survey questions were used to provide insight into the guiding questions and utilized demographic indicators, leadership proficiency, and priority perceptions within each leadership standard and district initiative.

### **Pilot Survey Review Process**

To increase reliability and to ensure survey questions were aligned and communicated effectively, with respect to the perception request, a survey review and pilot process was initiated. The researcher created a draft of the survey questions, which were reviewed with the

researcher's advisor, compared against the related Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) leadership standards, and presented to professional colleagues. The survey was revised multiple times as information and discussion was presented for review.

### **Pilot Survey Testing**

Prior to the release of the survey to the target population a pilot survey was administered to a selection of superintendents with additional opportunity to evaluate content, question accuracy, and the data collection tool process. The results of the discussions and pilot survey provided the opportunity to revise and improve the survey collection tool.

A pilot survey was sent to a new group of 30 superintendents on January 6, 2014 for a one week return window. The pilot group was established to review and reflect on opportunities to improve the survey instrument and were professional colleagues that the researcher had previous professional communications regarding leadership evaluation and impact on school performance. The pilot group represented three Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regions including, southwest, northwest, and south central; and three demographic school size groups, including less than 500 students, 500 to 1,000 students, and 2,000 to 5,000 students.

Each pilot participant had an opportunity to complete the survey instrument, provide feedback, and develop questions regarding the survey design. In addition, the pilot group collection process offered an opportunity to evaluate data collection process and how it would be collected through the on-line collection system. The process provided questions and input regarding specifically, questions 10 and 18. Those questions were revised and the final survey (Appendix D) was completed.

### **Final Survey Data Collection Invitation**

A letter (Appendix A), summarizing the research design and procedures to protect all participants was submitted to the target population of superintendents. The initial correspondence contained a request for the superintendent to complete and return an electronic questionnaire identifying survey questions regarding the Missouri Superintendent Leadership Standards and the District-Level Leadership Initiatives. Demographic data was collected regarding DESE region, rural or urban setting, student population, total years of superintendent experience, mobility, previous district administrator experience, leadership impact, and evaluation of leadership ability by the board of education.

### **Final Survey Informed Consent**

The researcher informed participants that data will be collected anonymously, secured, and appropriately deleted at the conclusion of the study process. In addition, the researcher provided a statement of benefits for completing the survey and provide for feedback or requested data results as requested by participants. The RRB approved informed consent and explanation materials were included in the request for participation. The data was collected through an electronic instrument and on-line survey tool. The questionnaire survey was distributed via e-mail to all participants. The survey collection window was three weeks. The cover letter reminded the superintendent participants of the importance of the study and the confidential responses.

### **Final Survey Format**

The final survey format established 18 questions divided into four sections of response categories. Section one, demographic review, provided respondents nine questions to frame the demographic indicators that would impact the leadership view. Section two, leadership standard

review, provided respondents the opportunity to prioritize the seven leadership standards in order of importance. Section three, leadership standard proficiency, provided respondents seven leadership standards to evaluate perceived proficiency. Section four, district level initiative review, provided respondents the opportunity to prioritize the five district level initiatives in order of importance.

### **Final Survey Overview**

Section one, questions one through nine, included questions establishing the following demographic frames: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education region (Northeast, Southwest, St. Louis, Northwest, Central, South Central, Southeast, Kansas City, and West Central), school setting (Rural or Urban), school size (<500, 500-1,000, 1,000-2,000, 2,000-5,000, 5,000-10,000, and >10,000 students), total superintendent experience (<3, 3-5, 5-10, 10-15, 15-20, >20 years), current school superintendent experience (<3, 3-5, 5-10, 10-15, 15-20, >20 years), other-district superintendent experience (Yes or No), in-district administrative mobility (Yes or No), leadership impact on school performance (Yes or No), and effective leadership evaluation by the board of education (Yes or No).

Section two, question 10, provided superintendents the seven Missouri leadership standards and a likert-type scale to prioritize the standards. Each standard could be prioritized based on the perceived level of importance from (1) Most Important to (7) Least Important.

Section three, questions 11 through 17, reviewed the seven leadership standards and provided a proficiency scale for superintendents to evaluate their leadership capacity within each leadership standard. The proficiency scale included: Emerging—this level describes the performance expected of a new superintendent as they assume an administrative position or new assignment. Base knowledge and skills are applied as they assume the leadership position and

begin to advance student growth and achievement; Developing—this level describes the performance expected of a superintendent early in their assignment as the leadership content, knowledge and skills that she/he possesses continue to develop by encounters with new experiences and expectations in classrooms, schools, and throughout the district, and community as they continue to advance student growth and achievement; Proficient—this level describes the performance expected of a career, professional superintendent who continues to advance her/his knowledge and skills while consistently advancing student growth and achievement; and Distinguished—this level describes the career, professional superintendent whose performance exceeds proficiency and contributes to the professional community while consistently advancing student growth and achievement.

Section four, question 18, also provided superintendents a likert-type scale to prioritize district level initiatives similar to section two. Each initiative could be prioritized based on the perceived level of importance from (1) Most Important to (5) Least Important.

### **Final Survey Reliability**

Upon completion of the final survey instrument the researcher conducted an analysis of standards and perceptions of Missouri superintendents. The researcher utilized Cronbach's Alpha to establish a statistical analysis of the reliability of the seven leadership standards, which are: Standard 1-Vision, Mission, and Goals, Standard 2-Teaching and Learning, Standard 3-Management of the Organizational System, Standard 4-Collaboration with Families and Stakeholders, Standard 5-Ethics and Integrity, Standard 6-Education System, and Standard 7-Professional Learning.

Cronbach's alpha was the measure of reliability and consistency that the research participants answered each survey item. Cronbach's alpha for the seven leadership standards was performed providing an analysis and finding ( $\alpha = .817$ ) was established.

### **Face Validity**

Through the review of literature it is apparent that the individual and collective work of Robert Marzano, Timothy Waters, and Brian McNulty, through the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) system provides the leading evaluation and proven leadership practices research. Evaluating the McREL expertise and impact on school district leadership is evident through the wide variety of studies, research, applied analysis within working papers, and resources such as School Leadership that Works, Balanced Leadership Profile, Sustaining Coherent Reform, and Understanding the Common Core State Standards. These examples offer only a limited view of the vast resources Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) has developed and offer to learning leaders.

The researcher also conducted interviews with Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) leaders, Greg Cameron, Brian McNulty and Timothy Waters; in addition, interviews and discussions with Paul Katnick, representing DESE's collective work on the Missouri Evaluation Standards and System. The review of text, research, and interviews provides in-depth analysis of the standards and initiatives included in this research.

### **Content Validity**

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) utilizes the work of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) for the foundation and reliability to the Missouri Leadership Standards utilized within the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Educator Evaluation System. The Council of Chief State School

Officers, previously Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC), utilized the model leader standards established in 1996. The Council of Chief State School Officers has relied heavily on the professional groups and stakeholders to develop reliability within the standards.

The researcher developed the survey utilizing the Missouri Evaluation Standards and the McREL district level initiative. The standards reflect over a decade of lessons and information on educational leadership and impact on school performance. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, through their meta-analysis process, examined 27 studies. These inquiries used quantitative methods to study the influence of school district leaders on student performance. The computed correlation between district level leadership and student achievement was .24, significant at the .05 level (Marzano et al., 2005). This work is reviewed in Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)'s, *District Leadership that Works: Striking the Right Balance*, by Robert Marzano and Timothy Waters (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Based on the extensive work by McREL, CCSSO, and DESE has dedicated to identifying the leadership standards and initiatives that impact school performance, it is apparent that the reliability of the standards and initiatives is significant.

### **Construct Validity**

Construct validity analysis was performed on the seven research leadership standard questions. The factor analysis is a multivariate statistical process used to determine if the questions actually measured or collected the information it was intended to collect. In this process the researcher attempted to evaluate the leadership perceptions based on the leadership proficiency and related demographic indicators.

The survey results were uploaded to the SPSS software to perform the factor analysis to determine validity. Using load values of  $< -.300$  or  $> .300$  as a baseline, considered by researchers to be a rigorous level, the seven leadership standard questions met scale values and were retained. A four scale proficiency level indicator was utilized for each of the leadership standard questions. The proficiency scale ratings included: Emerging, Developing, Proficient, and Distinguished, lowest in ability level to highest ability level, respectively. Based on that analysis the construct validity on question 11 through 17 is provided in the following table.

Table 1: Construct Validity Analysis (Question 11-17)

11. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a district vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.	.733
12. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing and effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.	.754
13. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by managing the organizational structure, personnel, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.	.762
14. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources.	.661
15. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by acting with integrity, responsibility, and in an ethical manner.	.569
16. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by understanding, responding to and influencing the large political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.	.681
17. I remain current on best practices in education administration and school-related areas as evidenced by establishing a plan for his/her professional development each year.	.670

Based on this evidence the construct validity demonstrated, the proficiency measurement correlated with the leadership standard, measures the construct ( $>.500$ ), or the proficiency levels within the leadership standards.

## **Summary**

Chapter III presented an overview of the methodology used for the study. A key element of this study was the development of the survey to evaluate superintendent perceptions regarding the leadership standard proficiency, priority, and demographic indicators that may impact leadership. The survey development process provided opportunities to refine and evaluate the survey questions to provide an effective and efficient method of collecting the respondent population perceptions. Information was provided regarding reliability and validity, based on the work of DESE, McREL, and CCSSO, with respect to the leadership standards and initiatives utilized in the research review and analysis. Through the pilot survey process and the high level of participation within the survey, 54 percent, the resulting survey instrument was evaluated as reliable and valid tool available for additional leadership impact analysis.

The survey instrument was established to collect data from Missouri school superintendents and provided an analysis of their perceptions. The survey was identified as the Missouri Superintendent Leadership Perceptions (MSLP). The survey provided details of the respondent population that generalized the perceptions of Missouri superintendents with regard to the superintendent leadership impact on school performance. Superintendent leadership is a relevant and important topic related to school improvement efforts and initiatives. This research collected quantitative data related to the demographic indicators of Missouri superintendents, their leadership proficiency, and leadership standard and initiative priorities. The data from the survey collection is presented in the following chapter four data presentation and analysis.

## Chapter Four

### Data Presentation and Analysis

Survey responses were collected in a three week window, from January 13 through January 31, 2014. The collection window invited 559 Missouri superintendents to participate in the leadership standard data collection process; nine email addresses or contacts were returned undeliverable. A survey response rate of 54 percent was achieved, resulting in 301 data responses. These responses were collected through an on-line survey tool, called SurveyMonkey, and then exported to a SPSS database for statistical analysis.

Based on the final survey questions and the statistical analysis of those questions, seven questions were reported as valid. Nine demographic questions were used to evaluate the differences in the leadership perceptions, in addition, two leadership priority perception questions and seven leadership standard proficiency questions. Data from the seven leadership questions, provided high enough values to proceed with the inferential statistical analysis. To represent the reliability Cronbach's Alpha was used for the seven questions and provided a value of ( $\alpha = .817$ ). The value represents high reliability and provides confidence in the application of data responses and potential further study analysis.

The inferential statistics provided in the following tables and narrative review were developed from those seven leadership and nine demographic survey items. The data was analyzed using nine demographic questions for each superintendent participant response which included the following: DESE Region (Q1), Rural/Urban (Q2), School Size (Q3), Superintendent Experience (Q4), Current Experience (Q5), Other District Mobility (Q6), In-District Mobility (Q7), Leadership Impact (Q8), and Effective Evaluation (Q9). Data is presented in the following tables and narrative explanations on items showing levels of significance.

## Analysis of Data

An item analysis was conducted on the seven leadership standards using all 301 survey respondents. Based on that analysis,  $n = 259$ , valid responses were determined to meet the statistical analysis criteria. Table 2 displays the mean and standard deviation for each of the seven leadership standards. Range for the mean value are reported from 1.00 to 4.00; where 1.00=Emerging or lowest level of priority, and 4.00=Distinguished or highest level of priority.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Leadership Standards

Leadership Standards	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Vision, Mission, Goals	2.8031	.61303
2. Teaching & Learning	2.9266	.61508
3. Management of Organization	3.1042	.67682
4. Collaboration with Stakeholders	2.6757	.65520
5. Ethics & Integrity	3.4324	.60222
6. Educational System	2.7490	.71172
7. Professional Learning	2.7876	.67434

Note:  $n = 259$

The mean value of Table 2 represents the perceptual value Missouri superintendents place on the priority of each leadership standard. Within this analysis the standard deviation difference from the highest to lowest was .1095, reflecting more consistent and focused response to each of the leadership standard responses within each demographic indicator.

### DESE Region and the Seven Leadership Standards

Question one reviewed the relationship between Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Region and the seven leadership standards, only standard six reported statistical significance between groups (Table 2).

Table 3: ANOVA for DESE Region (Q1) and Standard 6

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	10.221	8	1.278	2.704	.007*
Within Groups	121.404	257	.472		
Total	131.624	265			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .01$

When Tukey’s Honest Significance Difference (HSD) test was performed to leadership perceptions within Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regions, provided only one significant relationship, the St. Louis and Central region,  $p \leq .05$ .

These two regions are geographically located and share similar leadership collaboration structures. The two Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regions indicated a shared belief in the application and proficiency within the standard six, based on the common leadership traits within the St. Louis and Central regions. One could postulate that the common regional professional learning design focuses attention on standard six, the educational system, resulting in superintendents who share common practices and beliefs.

#### Rural v. Urban and the Seven Leadership Standards

Question two, evaluated the relationship between rural and urban demographic indicators and the seven leadership standards. Within this question, leadership standard three related to rural and urban school district settings, reported significant relationships for evaluation and review; results and the group statistics for the independent  $t$ -tests are provided for review.

An independent-samples  $t$ -test was conducted, comparing leadership standard three proficiency within rural and urban school district conditions. In this analysis, the results reported for rural, ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) and urban, ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) conditions. The  $t$ -test 2-tailed

results, revealed a statistically reliable difference between the rural and urban school district settings for standard three,  $t(265) = 2.38, p \leq .05$ .

Question two reported results indicating superintendents in both rural and urban settings understand the value of managing the organizational structure, personnel, and resources, in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. One could postulate superintendents in either setting, rural or urban, understand the value school performance resulting from standard three. While standards one, two, four, five, six, and seven were not determined to be statistically significant, the resulting statistical significance in standard three provides the researcher important data to review regarding the overall impact resources and management of resources has upon school leadership.

#### School Size and the Seven Leadership Standards

Question three, analyzed the demographic indicator of school size based on student populations and resulted in two statistically significant groups related to standards six and seven (Tables 3 and 4). Those groups include schools with less than 500 students and schools with 2,000 to 5,000 students, group one; and schools with less than 500 students and schools with 1,000 to 2,000 students, group two.

Table 4: ANOVA for Enrollment Size (Q3) and Standard 6

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	6.270	5	1.254	2.570	.027*
Within Groups	126.846	260	.488		
Total	133.117	265			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .05$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, standard six and enrollment size, evaluated the value to understand and respond to and influencing the large political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context, provided one related group. Schools with less than 500 students and schools with 2,000 to 5,000 students,  $p \leq .05$ , shared leadership priorities within the standard. The possible assumptions could indicate the importance of school size related to community needs impacting the knowledge and ability to respond to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural context within each size school community.

Table 5: ANOVA for Enrollment Size (Q3) and Standard 7

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	7.639	5	1.528	3.535	.004*
Within Groups	113.238	262	.432		
Total	120.877	267			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .01$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, standard seven and enrollment size, evaluated the value to remain current on best practices in education related to the professional development plans and improvement focus, provided two related groups. Schools with less than 500 students and schools with 1,000 to 2,000 students,  $p \leq .05$ , and schools with less than 500 students and schools with 2,000 to 5,000 students,  $p \leq .05$  level of significance. One could postulate the importance of standard seven on smaller schools, would indicate the need to remain current on best practices with limited administrative structure or resources compared to larger school size districts whom have the capacity and opportunity to maintain professional learning systems. In addition, the possible assumptions could indicate the importance of professional learning upon

school districts with common size demographics; which in comparison, may rely upon outside best practices input or development activities for current and relevant improvement planning.

Total Superintendent Experience and the Seven Leadership Standards

Question four, total superintendent experience, provides an analysis review and statistical significance between multiple groups of superintendents related to all seven leadership standards (Tables 6-12). The value and statistical significance between groups and among each of the seven leadership standards indicates opportunities to more readily define and evaluate the relationships and statistical significance within each experience group.

Table 6: ANOVA for Superintendent Experience (Q4) and Standard 1

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	15.424	5	3.085	9.577	.000*
Within Groups	83.106	258	.322		
Total	98.530	263			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .001$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard one perceptions and superintendent experience, provided five significant groups. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .001$ ; superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .001$ ; superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 15 to 20 years of experience,  $p \leq .001$ ; superintendents with three to five years of experience and superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .01$ ; and superintendents with three to five years of experience and superintendents with 15 to 20 years of experience,  $p \leq .001$ .

The five groups identified within the statistical analysis provides possible assumptions which could indicate interrelationship and common collaborative leadership learning based on experience indicators. One could postulate the increasing number of superintendents with fewer years of experience within the superintendent position maintain the value, training, and understanding of standard one within the operation and leadership of a school district.

Table 7: ANOVA for Superintendent Experience (Q4) and Standard 2

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	6.292	5	1.258	3.524	.004*
Within Groups	92.486	259	.357		
Total	98.777	264			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .01$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard two perceptions and superintendent experience, provided two significant groups. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .05$ ; and superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .05$ .

Again, one possible assumption within the group significance could be attributed to the common leadership development within standard two. In addition, one could postulate that the value of standard two, teaching and learning, would be an indicator of superintendents whom have recently transitioned from building level leadership positions. These transitions may indicate the strong relationships and perceptual value placed within standard two and superintendent experience.

Table 8: ANOVA for Superintendent Experience (Q4) and Standard 3

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	14.327	5	2.865	7.168	.000*
Within Groups	103.933	260	.400		
Total	118.259	265			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .001$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard three perceptions and superintendent experience, provided three significant groups. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .001$ ; superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .001$ ; superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 15 to 20 years of experience,  $p \leq .001$ .

Standard three, management of the organizational system, and the identified groups potentially offer additional reinforcement with respect to experience impact on superintendent perceptions. One could postulate that the additional emphasis on superintendent perceptions within this standards are also impacted by current fiscal trends within each school district. The emphasis placed on management of organizational is likely no less important to more experienced superintendents, however, these individuals’ collective leadership experience may temper the relationship between standard three and leadership practices.

Table 9: ANOVA for Superintendent Experience (Q4) and Standard 4

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	7.480	5	1.496	3.730	.003*
Within Groups	103.893	259	.401		
Total	111.374	264			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .01$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard four perceptions and superintendent experience, provided one significant group. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .01$ .

The lack of statistical groups within this standards provides opportunities for additional review and analysis. Two possible assumptions could be postulated. First, the correlation between superintendents whose inexperience is dependent on developing these type of relationships and second the value placed on this standard for superintendents whom have sustained experience.

For example, a superintendent with less than three years of experience may have moved into a new community in order to assume a new administrative position. This move may provide important emphasis on developing new relationships and building stakeholder support. In contrast, one could postulate that a superintendent with 10-15 years of experience may already have those relationships established and has the perceptual value within this standard due to established stakeholder and known family collaboration within the community.

Table 10: ANOVA for Superintendent Experience (Q4) and Standard 5

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	3.985	5	.797	2.273	.048*
Within Groups	91.158	260	.351		
Total	95.143	265			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .05$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard five perceptions and superintendent experience, provided one significant group. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .05$ .

The lack of multiple statistical groups within this standards provides opportunities for additional review and analysis. In comparison to the perceptual proficiency within this standard (Question 15) over 95 percent of superintendents perceived their performance within this standard to be at or above proficiency levels. However, the statistical significance of superintendents with less than three years of experience and five to 10 years of experience, provides the researcher the assumption that experience, or lack of in this case, may impact the leadership perceptions.

In addition, one could postulate that the current trends within education may impact the inexperienced superintendent to reflect on decision making needs within standard five. One would expect that no less value in standard five for more experienced superintendents, however, the lack of statistical significant groups among experience groups may provide more clear decision making efforts based on previous experiences or standard five needs.

Table 11: ANOVA for Superintendent Experience (Q4) and Standard 6

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	18.421	5	3.684	8.434	.000*
Within Groups	113.142	259	.437		
Total	131.562	264			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .001$

When Tukey's HSD test was performed, leadership standard six perceptions and superintendent experience, provided five significant groups. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .01$ ; superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .001$ ; superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 15 to 20 years

of experience,  $p \leq .001$ ; superintendents with three to five years of experience and superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .001$ ; and superintendents with three to five years of experience and superintendents with 15 to 20 years of experience,  $p \leq .05$ .

One could postulate that the significance among multiple groups may indicate greater leadership value within standard six. Standard six, the educational system, provides a specific focus on the understanding and response to political, social, economic, legal, and cultural needs of a school district. These indicators and expectations within standard six are likely important if not critically important to the overall leadership emphasis within each superintendent experience group. The value among groups and experience levels may indicate the perceptual value within the standard, as well as, the performance needs within the superintendent leadership capacity. Superintendents with varied experience levels view and respond to standard six leadership capacity needs in order to effectively respond to student or district performance needs.

Table 12: ANOVA for Superintendent Experience (Q4) and Standard 7

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	7.795	5	1.559	3.664	.003*
Within Groups	111.037	261	.425		
Total	118.831	266			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .01$

When Tukey's HSD test was performed, leadership standard seven perceptions and superintendent experience, provided one significant group. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .001$ .

The lack of multiple statistical groups within this standards provides opportunities for additional review and analysis. In comparison, one could postulate that standard seven is no less

important that the other standards. However, experience impacts within the perceptual value of the standard may be directly impacted by greater or less leadership experience.

In addition, one could postulate that superintendents whom lack experience are more dependent on professional learning needs and activities to maintain leadership focus and ability levels. Superintendents, who have greater experience levels, may have more established professional learning systems or are less dependent on the professional learning expectations placed upon school districts. Within each leadership standard, the superintendent experience within groups indicates common leadership focus.

One could also assume the increasing number of superintendents with less than 15 years of experience share common leadership goals and have developed a more common collaborative approach to leadership and school improvement efforts shared within experience group. These group relationships may provide important trend data and indicators of leadership response needs within the state. Response to leadership standard needs and approach to the addressing standard priorities may also be important to developing support systems focused on experience levels and common leadership standard proficiency.

#### Current School Superintendent Experience and the Seven Leadership Standards

Question five, current school district superintendent experience or experience within the district the superintendent is currently employed, also provided statistical significance between experience groups and the seven leadership standards (Tables 13-19).

Table 13: ANOVA for Current Experience (Q5) and Standard 1

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	9.910	5	1.982	5.682	.000*
Within Groups	90.692	260	.349		
Total	100.602	265			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .001$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard one perceptions and current school superintendent experience, provided two significant groups. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .001$ ; and superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .05$ .

Within standard one and current school experience statistical groups have focused experience levels. One could postulate the mobility within the school district related to the experience indicators may impact the relationships between those groups. One possible assumption could be the proficiency level within standard one. Superintendents who have sustained school experience may already have a known and understood value of the district’s vision, mission, and goals.

Table 14: ANOVA for Current Experience (Q5) and Standard 2

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	6.079	5	1.216	3.350	.006*
Within Groups	94.708	261	.363		
Total	100.787	266			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .01$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard two perceptions and current school superintendent experience, provided one significant group. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .01$ .

Again, one possible assumption to the lack of statistical significant groups within standard two may indicate the shared instructional value and importance of teaching and learning. Superintendents with less than 10 years of experience may have recently transitioned from building level leadership positions or from other districts where the focus on teaching and learning was the performance expectation. Superintendents with greater years of experience within this standard may have greater understanding and proficiency at a district level or have delegated standard two monitoring expectations to other administrators.

Table 15: ANOVA for Current Experience (Q5) and Standard 3

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	12.535	5	2.507	6.119	.000*
Within Groups	106.934	261	.410		
Total	119.468	266			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .001$

Tukey’s Honest Significance Difference (HSD) test could not be applied to question five and standard three, because at least one group had fewer than two cases.

Table 16: ANOVA for Current Experience (Q5) and Standard 4

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	8.896	5	1.779	4.436	.001*
Within Groups	104.677	261	.401		
Total	113.573	266			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .001$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard four perceptions and current school superintendent experience, provided two significant groups. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with three to five years,  $p \leq .01$ ; and superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .05$ .

One possible assumption within the group significance could be attributed to the value indicated in collaboration with stakeholders, community members, and families. The possible need for new superintendents or superintendents with 10 to 15 years of experience to develop or maintain these type of standard relationships may be directly related to the entry or sustained job experience. The potential lack of significance within the five to 10 years of experience may also indicate the possible mobility impacts at this level of experience. Indicating that current experience and standard four proficiency may be impacted by mobility based on experience levels.

Table 17: ANOVA for Current Experience (Q5) and Standard 5

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	7.410	5	1.482	4.400	.001*
Within Groups	88.243	262	.337		
Total	95.653	267			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .001$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard five perceptions and current school superintendent experience, provided one significant group. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .001$ .

Similar to total superintendent experience (Question 4), the lack of multiple statistical groups within this standards provides opportunities for additional review and analysis. The statistical significance of superintendents with less than three years of experience and five to 10 years of experience, provides the researcher the assumption that experience, or lack of in this case, may impact the leadership perceptions. One could postulate that the current trends within education may impact these experience level groups. Again, one would expect that no less value in standard five for more experienced superintendents, however, the lack of statistical significant groups among experience groups may provide more clear decision making efforts based on previous experiences or standard five expectations.

Table 18: ANOVA for Current Experience (Q5) and Standard 6

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	8.923	5	1.785	3.749	.003*
Within Groups	124.253	261	.476		
Total	133.176	266			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .01$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard six perceptions and current school superintendent experience, provided two significant groups. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .01$ ; and superintendents with less than three years of experience and 10 to 15 years of experience,  $p \leq .05$ .

One could postulate the importance of understanding the needs of standard six, the educational system, and the current or total superintendent experience. Superintendent leadership capacity within standard six may be impacted by current experience and the needs

associated within each school district. Superintendents understand the value of standard six however, it is an assumption that superintendents within these two groups share proficiency and priority of leadership performance within standard six based on individual school needs.

Table 19: ANOVA for Current Experience (Q5) and Standard 7

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	8.242	5	1.648	3.848	.002*
Within Groups	112.680	263	.428		
Total	120.922	268			

Note: \* =  $p \leq .01$

When Tukey’s HSD test was performed, leadership standard seven perceptions and current school superintendent experience, provided one significant group. Superintendents with less than three years of experience and superintendents with five to 10 years,  $p \leq .01$ .

One possible assumption for standard seven, professional learning, and current experience can be placed on school performance or proficiency within the superintendent expected performance. For example, a new superintendent may not have the same proficiency or background experience needed to be effective. However, the shared value within standard seven between the two groups also may indicate the need to be collaborative based on mobility needs and experience levels.

Similar to total superintendent experience, current school experience indicates that a larger population of superintendents have less than 15 years of experience and have less than 10 years of experience within the current school superintendent placement and share leadership standard perceptions within each standard.

## Out-District Mobility and the Seven Leadership Standards

Question six, regarding previous superintendent mobility experience, out-district and in-district demographic indicators, and the seven leadership standards. Within this question, leadership standards one, three, and six reported significance for evaluation and review related to the mobility experience of the superintendent; group statistics for the independent *t*-tests are provided for review.

For standard one, an independent-samples *t*-test was conducted, comparing leadership standard one proficiency for superintendent mobility or previous school district experience conditions. In this analysis, the results reported significance for yes, having previous superintendent experience, ( $M = 3.00, SD = .59$ ) and no, not having previous school superintendent experience, ( $M = 2.72, SD = .61$ ) conditions. The *t*-test 2-tailed results, revealed a statistically reliable difference between mobility, superintendents with previous school district experience and superintendents without prior school district experience, for standard one,  $t(177) = 3.55, p \leq .001$ .

For standard three, an independent-samples *t*-test was conducted, comparing leadership standard three proficiency for superintendent mobility or previous school district experience conditions. In this analysis, the results reported significance for yes, having previous superintendent experience, ( $M = 3.24, SD = .65$ ) and no, not having previous school superintendent experience, ( $M = 3.02, SD = .67$ ) conditions. The *t*-test 2-tailed results, revealed a statistically reliable difference for mobility, superintendents with previous school district experience and superintendents without prior school district experience, for standard three,  $t(262) = 2.51, p \leq .05$ .

For standard six, an independent-samples *t*-test was conducted, comparing leadership standard six proficiency for superintendent mobility or previous school district experience conditions. In this analysis, the results reported significance for yes, having previous superintendent experience, ( $M = 2.98, SD = .65$ ) and no, not having previous school superintendent experience, ( $M = 2.65, SD = .72$ ) conditions. The *t*-test 2-tailed results, revealed a statistically reliable difference for mobility, superintendents with previous school district experience and superintendents without prior school district experience, for standard six,  $t(188) = 3.73, p \leq .001$ .

Within question six results and perceptions indicate that maintaining value to the individual district vision, leadership standard one; managing the organizational structure, personnel, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, leadership standard three; and understanding and responding to the community needs, leadership standard six, are a priority among superintendents. Superintendent mobility, previous school superintendent experience, provided common value in leadership application within the standards. One could postulate that mobility would not impact the importance of leadership standards one, three, and six; likely indicating the importance of the standards within all school achievement plan designs.

#### In-District Mobility and the Seven Leadership Standards

Question seven, regarding superintendent mobility within a district, from previous administrative positions, and the seven leadership standards. Within this question, no leadership standards provided statistical significance related to the mobility within a school district, from previous administrative positions.

### Leadership Impact and the Seven Leadership Standards

Question 8, evaluating the perceptions on leadership impact on school performance provided an interesting finding. Of the 301 responses and 266 valid responses, 265 superintendents perceived, in their opinion, leadership did impact the overall school performance efforts of the school district. However, since only one individual disagreed, or perceived that leadership did not impact school performance no statistical analysis could be performed.

### Effective Board Evaluation and the Seven Leadership Standards

Question nine, evaluated perceptions of superintendents of the board's ability to effectively evaluate the leadership standards. Within this question, leadership standard four reported significance for evaluation and review; group statistics for the independent *t*-test are provided for review.

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted, comparing leadership standard four proficiency for effective evaluation of leadership by the board of education conditions. In this analysis, the results reported significance for yes, the board effectively evaluates the superintendent leadership ability within the school district, ( $M = 2.78, SD = .64$ ) and no, the board does not effectively evaluate the superintendent leadership ability within the school district, ( $M = 2.57, SD = .66$ ) conditions. The *t*-test 2-tailed results, revealed a statistically reliable difference for the board's ability to effectively evaluate the superintendent leadership ability within the school district, for leadership standard four,  $t(251) = .779, p \leq .01$ .

Superintendents, who evaluated the board of education's ability to effectively evaluate the leadership standards versus having no ability to effectively evaluate those leadership standards found only one leadership standard that provided for common proficiency. Leadership standards four, where superintendents could reasonably expect the board to have the capacity to

effectively evaluate the leadership efforts in collaborating with families and stakeholders, standard four. One can postulate that this leadership standard is most readily visible in the board’s ability to evaluate the superintendent’s leadership capacity based on personal interactions with patrons, and the superintendent’s involvement within the community.

Priority of Missouri Leadership Standards

Research question 10, evaluated superintendent leadership perceptions regarding importance of each of the seven Missouri Leadership Evaluation Standards. Table 20 provides the collective responses regarding the perception of each standard based on 301 responses and 279 valid responses.

Table 20: Priority of Leadership Standards-Question 10

Priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
Ethics & Integrity	89 33.3%	42 42%	39 14.6%	30 11.2%	34 12.7%	22 8.2%	11 4.1%	2.96
Teaching & Learning	67 25.3%	52 19.6%	47 17.7%	42 15.8%	26 9.8%	19 7.2%	12 4.5%	3.05
Vision, Mission, & Goals	64 24.3%	70 26.6%	41 15.6%	19 7.2%	20 7.6%	21 8.0%	28 10.6%	3.14
Management of Organizational System	18 6.8%	45 17.0%	54 20.5%	54 20.5%	38 14.4%	29 11.0%	26 9.8%	3.91
Collaboration with Families & Stakeholders	8 3.0%	22 8.3%	45 17.0%	65 24.6%	57 21.6%	47 17.8%	20 7.6%	4.37
Professional Learning	10 3.6%	22 8.0%	23 8.4%	36 13.1%	37 13.5%	65 23.7	81 29.6%	5.14
Educational System	11 4.1%	16 6.0%	21 7.9%	22 8.2%	52 19.5%	60 22.5%	85 31.8%	5.28

Superintendents were able to prioritize the leadership standards and provide a matrix of importance based on the individual needs of each leader. Those responses within Table 20 identify that overall priority of standards. One could postulate that the level of priority within each standard is important to superintendents based on school and personal leadership needs. The priority of standards offers a perceptual evaluation of leadership values. Those values offer superintendents, within all demographic groups, the opportunity to establish priorities based on school and personal leadership needs. For example, a superintendent whom places emphasis on leadership standards not aligned to district needs will require more leadership effort and likely additional leadership adjustment to address leadership and school performance efforts.

The priority of the standards and perception of those standards may provide insight into the current trends within education and possible school improvement goals. In addition, the level of involvement within each standard, based on school size or leadership team design, could also be indicators to the level of importance the standard holds for each leader.

#### Priority of District Level Leadership Initiatives

Question 18, evaluated the perceptual priority of district level initiatives that are correlated to the seven leadership evaluation standards and McREL's 21 balanced leadership responsibilities. Research question 18 reported the superintendent leadership perceptions regarding the importance of each of the five district level initiatives (Table 21).

Table 21: District Level Initiative-Question 18

Priority	1	2	3	4	5	Average
Ensure Collaborative Goal Setting	92 35.2%	55 21.1%	47 18.0%	33 12.6%	34 13.0%	2.47
Establish Nonnegotiable Goals for Achievement & Instruction	62 23.9%	60 23.2%	63 24.3%	54 20.8%	20 7.7%	2.65
Allocate Resources	56 21.4%	59 22.5%	50 19.1%	50 19.1%	47 17.9%	2.90
Create Board Alignment & Support	43 16.7%	59 23.0%	68 26.5%	47 18.3%	40 15.6%	2.93
Monitor Nonnegotiable Goals	9 3.5%	27 10.4%	32 12.4%	74 28.6%	117 45.2%	4.02

There were 301 respondents and 264 superintendent perceptions regarding the priority of district level initiatives to the leadership capacity with each school district. It is important to note that the initiatives, Ensure Collaborative Goal Setting and Establish Nonnegotiable Goals for Achievement and Instruction, provide the greatest focus to the overall student performance and are specifically aligned to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) evaluation standards reflecting the greatest impact on school and student performance. Item five, Monitor Nonnegotiable Goals, becomes less important or possibly an initiative clearly expected within the leadership team or building levels, rather than with the superintendent leadership level.

### Summary of Statistical Results

The statistical analysis reported results from a variety of demographic indicators. The following information summarizes the significant differences and perceptual proficiency within each standard found as a result of the leadership analysis (Table 22 and 23).

Table 22: Statistically Significant Leadership Summary

Demographic Indicator	Leadership Standard	Group(s) or Significance Level
DESE Region	6-Educational System	Central & St. Louis Regions
Rural v. Urban	<b>3-Management of Organization</b>	Significant $p \leq .05$
School Size	6-Educational System	<500 : 2,000-5,000
	<b>7-Professional Learning</b>	<500 : 1,000-2,000 & 2,000-5,000
Superintendent Experience	<b>1-Vision, Mission, &amp; Goals</b>	<3 : 5-10, 10-15, & 15-20
	2-Teaching & Learning	<3 : 5-10 & 10-15
	<b>3-Management of Organization</b>	<3 : 5-10, 10-15, & 15-20
	4-Collaboration	<3 : 10-15
	5-Ethics & Integrity	<3 : 5-10
	6-Educational System	<3 : 5-10, 10-15, & 15-20; and 3-5: 10-15 & 15-20
	<b>7-Professional Learning</b>	<3 : 5-10
Current School Experience	<b>1-Vision, Mission, &amp; Goals</b>	<3 : 5-10 & 10-15
	2-Teaching & Learning	<3 : 5-10
	<b>3-Management of Organization</b>	Unable to Determine Significance
	4-Collaboration	<3 : 3-15 & 10-15
	5-Ethics & Integrity	<3 : 5-10
	6-Educational System	<3 : 5-10 & 10-15
	<b>7-Professional Learning</b>	<3 : 5-10
Mobility Out-of-District	<b>1-Vision, Mission, &amp; Goals</b>	Significant $p \leq .001$
	<b>3-Management of Organization</b>	Significant $p \leq .05$
	6-Educational System	Significant $p \leq .001$
Mobility In-District	All Standards	No Significance
Leadership Impact View	All Standards	Unable to Determine Significance
Effective Evaluation	4-Collaboration	Significant $p \leq .01$

Note: Column one indicates information from each of the nine demographic questions. Column two identifies the leadership standard within the demographic relationship. Column three provides a summary of significance, lack of significance, or depending on question type the groups identified as statistically significant. Bold leadership standard indicate the common perceptual threads that provided statistical significance and shared value among all superintendent demographics.

Table 23: Leadership Standard Proficiency Summary

Leadership Standard	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Distinguished
1-Mission, Vision, & Goals	2.63%	<b>22.18%</b>	<b>66.54%</b>	8.65%
2-Teaching & Learning	1.12%	<b>19.10%</b>	<b>65.17%</b>	14.61%
3-Management of Organization	1.87%	12.36%	<b>59.93%</b>	<b>25.84%</b>
4-Collaboration	2.62%	<b>34.08%</b>	<b>55.43%</b>	7.87%
5-Ethics & Integrity	.37%	4.48%	<b>47.01%</b>	<b>48.13%</b>
6-Educational System	3.37%	<b>29.96%</b>	<b>54.31%</b>	12.36%
7-Professional Learning	3.35%	<b>25.28%</b>	<b>60.59%</b>	10.78%

Note: Column one indicates the leadership standard. Column two, three, four, and five identifies the leadership standard perceptual proficiency within each leadership standard. Bold proficiency percentages indicate the two highest levels of proficiency based on all superintendent perceptions.

Summary findings presented a review of the research and where statistical significance was found. In Table 22, column one represents the nine demographic indicators that were utilized to review the superintendent proficiency and priority of each leadership standard. Column two, represents the leadership standard that reported significant through the ANOVA or t-test analysis. Column three, represents the group or level of significance of each standard related to the demographic indicators for each condition.

Table 22 summary findings provides an overview of the statistical significance within each standard and demographic indicators. Common or shared value perceptions were identified in bold. Those standards, standard one—vision, mission, and goals, standard three—management of organization, and standard seven—professional learning, offered common perceptual importance and understanding. One could hypothesize the common shared value among Missouri superintendents is important and provides opportunity to evaluate the leadership impact within the superintendent position and duties. In addition, the perceptual value could also be based in preparation programs or professional collaboration organizations which place emphasis on these standards based on current state or federal trends.

In Table 23, leadership standard proficiency was evaluated and summarized for survey respondents within each proficiency category. Leadership standard proficiency and the perceptions of Missouri superintendents varied depending on the standard. In this table the bold percentage proficiency levels indicate the two highest proficiency levels attained within the standard. Specifically for each standard the following analysis is offered:

Standard 1-Mission, Vision, and Goals—Missouri superintendents, 66.54 percent, perceived their level of performance as proficient. However, 22.18 percent, believed their performance within this standard was at the developing level. This finding, related to table 22,

offers an interesting finding based on the statistical significance and shared value of standard one. One could make the assumption that level of proficiency is not related to the value and statistical significance within standard one.

Standard 2-Teaching and Learning—Again, Missouri superintendent perceptions of performance within this standard did not directly relate to table 22 statistical values. While 66.54 percent of respondents perceived their performance at the proficient level, a combined 33.71 percent of superintendents were divided between distinguished and developing performance levels. Possible assumptions were reviewed previously with respect to the building level administrators who may have recently transitioned to the superintendency with greater emphasis on standard two.

Standard 3-Management of Organization—Within this standard, 85.77 percent of superintendents perceived performance levels at or above the proficient level. One could postulate the specific state and federal fiscal trends and local need to provide emphasis on this standard provides greater proficiency. In addition, one could assume that as greater number of superintendents have fewer years of experience, less than 15, the perceived performance expectations within standard three have become more diverse than specifically budgetary oversight.

Standard 4-Collaboration—Within this standard a significantly larger number, 34.08 percent, of superintendents performance perceptions were at the developing level. This finding presents additional questions with respect to the standard and the level of involvement and or understanding required of performance within the standard. One could postulate that within smaller or larger school systems this standard become difficult to define and create high levels of performance activities.

Standard 5-Ethics and Integrity—Respondents overwhelmingly provided the perceived performance level within this standard based number of proficient and distinguished responses. Within this standard 95.14 percent of superintendents perceived their performance at the two highest levels; additionally almost equally split at 47.01 percent proficient and 48.13 percent distinguished. One could assume the value placed on this standard is important to the position of the superintendent based on the organizational structure, legislative and legal duties, budgetary oversight, and policy regulations provided to appropriately perform daily duties.

Standard 6-Educational System—This standard offers a diverse set of performance expectations including responding and influencing the political, social, legal and cultural context of each school district organization. This broad and diverse standard provides some indication to the 84.27 percent of superintendents who perceive their performance as developing or proficient. One possible belief to this perceived performance could be the impact of decreasing level of experience and increasing political, social, economic, and legal impacts upon school districts at each demographic level.

Standard 7-Professional Learning—While performance proficiency levels contrast statistical significance levels presented previously and within table 22 it is important to note that 71.37 percent of superintendents responded at the proficient and distinguished levels. However, 25.28 percent perceived performance at the developing level providing a combined 85.87 percent group who were largely new or had fewer than 15 years of superintendent experience. Once again, one could postulate the current trends within leadership performance expectations have changed based on level of experience. The possible assumption based on state, federal, and local impacts require superintendents to be more collaborative, attentive to new expectations,

legislative and legal changes, and educational expectations required in classrooms and of teachers and students.

## **Summary**

The researcher first analyzed the survey results holistically from the response to each of the demographic, proficiency, and leadership standard priority questions. The researcher also reviewed the results compared to the work of Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) and Missouri Evaluation System leadership standards. The survey results were exported to a database and entered into SPSS data software for statistical analysis and significance. The nine demographic questions were utilized to outline the data analysis and presented tables regarding the leadership standards and superintendent perceptions of those leadership standards.

In the data analysis process *t*-test and ANOVA values with the corresponding Post Hoc, Tukey's HSD test results, for each of the demographic questions were presented in tables and narratives to present the significant statistical comparisons within each standard and demographic analysis. The data results provide evidence that there is statistically significant information between the demographic factors and the leadership standards as perceived by Missouri superintendents.

Finally, recognition was provided to the respondent's perceptions regarding the importance of the seven leadership standards and the five district level initiatives. Those tables provide an overall representation of the perception of those standards and initiative indicators. Additionally, the impact those perceptions have based on Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) and DESE's leadership standards and district leadership initiative capacity.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the importance of the Missouri Leadership Standards and the District Level Initiatives to school performance. Through this research process, the researcher reviewed the following guiding questions regarding leadership impact on school improvement:

- What are the relationships between the Missouri Superintendent Evaluation Standards and Missouri superintendents?
- What leadership standards are perceived to be most influential in the school improvement process?

### **Conclusions**

In review of the survey results, the researcher was pleased with the response rate of 54 percent. The 301 individual responses provide indicators that the research request was relevant to the leadership conversations that are occurring in the state of Missouri and within each school district. The overall results of the survey, based on the demographic populations, were diversified and representative of the state of Missouri's superintendent population.

The researcher reviewed the perceptions of the superintendent proficiency within the leadership standards, survey questions 11-17. Proficiency perceptions for the seven leadership standards indicated that a majority, greater than 65 percent, perceived their leadership ability at or above the proficient level. Those indicating that proficiency levels were at the Emerging level had limited experience within the superintendent position, indicating proficiency gain through experience.

An interesting finding was reviewed regarding the proficiency perception question 15, I have the knowledge ability to ensure success of all students by acting with integrity,

responsibility, and in an ethical manner. A significant majority, over 95 percent or 255 superintendents, perceived their ability at the proficient or distinguished levels. The overwhelming proficiency response to this standard reinforces the review of literature findings that the superintendents of today are faced with many challenges that require significant levels of responsibility and ethical decision making on a day to day basis.

Research question ten, regarding the priority of leadership standards, provided respondents the opportunity to prioritize the standards relative to each standard. As indicated previously, Missouri superintendents perceive standard 5—Ethics and Integrity as the most important standard in the evaluation process; with Standard 2—Teaching and Learning and Standard 1—Vision, Mission, and Goals, following in perceived importance. Standard 3—Management of the Organizational System, and Standard 4—Collaboration with Families and Stakeholders, were all closely aligned in perceived importance. While Standard 7—Professional Learning and Standard 6—The Education System ranked lowest in importance.

Research question 18, regarding leadership initiatives, provided superintendents the opportunity to evaluate the importance of five district level initiatives related to the leadership impact on school performance. Superintendents perceived Collaborative Goal Setting and Establishing Nonnegotiable Goals for Achievement and Instruction as the top priorities. Initiatives of Allocating Resources and Creating Board Alignment and Support were closely ranked in perceived importance, however Monitor Nonnegotiable Goals was clearly lowest on the perceived importance to the leadership initiatives. The researcher evaluated that rank priorities and believes that of the five initiatives, the superintendent likely has little daily ability or opportunity to monitor nonnegotiable goals; indicating the perceived lower value in the leadership initiatives.

The researcher found an interesting comparison when evaluating the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Leadership Standards and District Level Initiatives and the perceptions that could indicate opportunity for additional research and inquiry. Leadership Standard 3—Management of the Organizational System and District Level Initiative—Allocate Resources, were perceived more important in the leadership impact than the researcher expected. However, it is important to note that within each of the standards or initiatives the leadership ability can be significantly impacted by the financial management challenges or opportunities that may exist within each school district. Providing a question to discover if the leadership capacity directly impacted by fiscal resources or lack of fiscal resources within each school.

Research question one through nine, regarding the demographic impact on leadership standards and initiatives was analyzed and each standard was reviewed regarding the significance within the leadership impact on school performance. The findings provided a comprehensive review of the leadership standards and perceptions of Missouri superintendents. Confidence in applying the information and data is high, due to the rate of return and demographic representation from each area of the state.

Within the review of each Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) region only standard six reported significance related to the Central and St. Louis regions of the state. While the standard is important to all superintendents it is important to note the proximity these two regions have to one another. Indicating a common priority within the state for this standard and likely also indicating the superintendent mobility within these two regions. The lack of significance between Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regions and the leadership standards was not surprising, however, the

researcher had made assumptions that certain standards would prove more important within each region.

Demographic question two, regarding the urban or rural traits of the district and the leadership standards, offered three standards to review. These standards relate to the overall leadership ability of the superintendent regardless of the school setting. Standard One—Vision, Mission, and Goals, Management of the Organizational System—Standard 3, and Standard 7—Professional Learning offer common emphasis with respect to the urban or rural school setting needs. The researcher evaluates these standards as extremely common and necessary to the superintendent position. These standards indicate that a superintendent will need to hold these as paramount priorities in addressing the leadership needs within these two school district settings. Regardless of the leadership capacity within the other standards, superintendents will need to focus on the vision, mission and goals, management of organizational resources, while also understanding the value and importance that professional learning and improvement offers the leader in an effort to address other improvement needs or leadership standard development.

Superintendent experience provided interesting findings related to each of the seven leadership standards. The impact of superintendent experience provides great interest in evaluating the leadership standard and the capacity within each standard. The potential impacts related to years of services within each standard provides links to superintendent groups based solely on experience and likely the leadership capacity and knowledge within the standards. Superintendents with greater than 15 years of experience represented only 10.6 percent of the respondents. Providing the researcher statistical information that more superintendents are retiring and a greater number of superintendents in Missouri are relatively new or within the first five to ten years of the superintendent leadership position.

Mobility within the superintendent leadership capacity has also provided an unexpected and interesting view of leadership standards. Many superintendents, 92 percent, have less than 10 years of experience in their current district. While only 33 percent were superintendents in other districts, compared to 67 percent, who were not superintendents in other districts. This finding is interesting and provides insight into mobility and the impacts that effect superintendent leadership priorities. Mobility within the district or building level administrators who are promoted within the educational system also offers interesting findings related to leadership standard proficiency and ability. For example, of 297 superintendents responding to this question, 54 percent were previous in-district administrators prior to becoming superintendent. This finding provides many opportunities to evaluate how mobility, in and out-district, impacts leadership ability and proficiency within each leadership standard.

Leadership impact on school performance was the center to this research regarding leadership capacity, proficiency, and demographic impacts. In this research, 99 percent of respondents believe that the superintendent leadership impacts the overall school performance efforts. This response makes it clear that leadership is key in the role and responsibility superintendents have in the school performance efforts. Superintendents, regardless of leadership standard capacity or proficiency, know and understand the impact they will have on school and student performance. The researcher acknowledges that school performance across the state varies greatly and so does the leadership ability of superintendents. This item creates potential for additional follow-up research related to how mobility, resources, and experience levels impact the various levels of leadership impact on school performance.

Surprisingly, the superintendents' perceptions regarding the leadership ability being effectively evaluated by the board of education was uniquely split. Respondents indicated that

55 percent believed that the board did effectively evaluate their leadership ability, while 45 percent did not believe that the board effectively evaluated leadership ability. This response specifically draws questions and potential research analysis to the impact board of education members have on the collective leadership capacity of the superintendent. In addition, the training, ability level, and proficiency the board may or may not have in evaluating the seven leadership standards related to school performance created many questions and assumptions.

The researcher utilized and reviewed the work of Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) and Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The leadership review completed by these organizations is important and relevant to this research. The priority within each of the standards provided a guide as the Missouri superintendent leadership perceptions were reviewed. The analysis of this research provided two important findings.

First, leadership standards and initiatives are important and based on the proficiency perceptions of Missouri superintendents are ideally identified in providing an effective model evaluation standard system. Second, the priority of standards of Missouri superintendents through this research did not align with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) standards and perceived level of importance. This finding could be due to the collection and demographic measurements used to evaluate the standards. Further analysis and study would be needed to clarify the priority of the leadership standards based on Missouri superintendent leadership needs and indicators impacting the superintendent leadership proficiency.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) collective work and analysis of the leadership standards based on the 21 balanced leadership traits and the district

level initiatives that impact school leadership provided interesting relationships. The researcher believes that the McREL leadership work and professional development focus on leadership initiatives is important and has a direct impact and relationship to the leadership perceptions of Missouri school superintendents. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) continues to provide leading research and analysis of leadership impact on school performance improvement efforts for teachers, principals, and superintendents. The research analysis conducted through this study reinforces the need to evaluate the demographic indicators that enhance or restrict leadership development, application, and evaluation with Missouri school districts.

### **Recommendations**

Building upon this research, several recommendations can be made regarding leadership impact and related demographic indicators to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant relationship between leadership and school performance. The review of literature outlined a basis for the superintendent leadership development and focused standards of achievement. The review of literature has also provided clear indications that the work of Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), through the collective work of Robert Marzano, Tim Waters, and McNulty, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provides leading research, proven practices, and professional leadership standards for evaluating and measuring the superintendent leadership capacity.

Specifically, it could be beneficial to evaluate the impact the following items have on leadership proficiency within the leadership standards of Missouri superintendents:

1. Experience—Evaluating the need to focus professional learning improvement on leadership standards that may require additional experience related to proficiency;
2. School Size—Further research and analysis could be reviewed in order to ascertain the impact that may result due to school size and the leadership team structure or related delegation of leadership standards to other leaders within the school improvement process.
3. Mobility—Evaluating the in-district and out-district mobility indicators on the development, emphasis, and proficiency within each leadership standard;
4. Resource Allocation and Management—Evaluating the impact that school district resources have on the capacity of leadership and the priority of standards placed on superintendents with decreased resources;
5. Effective Evaluation of Leadership—Evaluating the need to effectively evaluate the superintendent leadership ability by the board of education and the specific needs related to the preparation programs needed to prepare board members to effectively evaluate superintendent leadership.

## **Summary**

Superintendents strive to be effective leaders. The ability and proficiency within leadership is dependent on a variety of demographic and system indicators. Leadership impact on school performance is an important indicator and relevant to the improvement process. Superintendents will need to focus on standards and initiatives that provide opportunities for growth within the leadership capacity but also aligned to the individual district needs. The research survey provided insight into the impacts leadership had on school improvement.

However, more analysis could occur to evaluate the impact, capacity, and specific demographic indicators that enhance or limit leadership capacity.

Schools who are progressively attending to school performance needs have leaders that understand the leadership standards and the application of the skills needed to accomplish school improvement needs and agendas. This research has indicated that external and internal demographic factors can impact the leadership standards. Superintendents will need to apply leadership initiatives that will create a culture designed to meet, at various levels, the leadership standards that create collaborative leadership. This system will need to be focused on implementing the collaborative leadership vision of improvement. Leadership is a learning process and progressive school improvement will require learning leaders who will take on the leadership responsibility to improve school performance.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A—Informed Consent

#### MISSOURI SUPERINTENDENT PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP IMPACT ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Dear Superintendent:

My name is Richard Asbill and I am a doctoral student at Southwest Baptist University in the Educational Administration Department. This project is being supervised by Dr. Michael Arnold, Professor, Graduate Education, Southwest Baptist University (800-792-4191). I am inviting you to participate in a research study that is critical to the field of educational leadership and my completion of the Southwest Baptist Educational Doctoral Degree program.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Participation in this research will require you to complete survey questions regarding your self-perception of leadership standards and responsibilities and demographic questions utilized to analyze the results. The risks to you as a participant are minimal and the survey results will be anonymous. The survey responses may be published in scientific research journals or presented at professional conferences however, your name and identity will not be revealed.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the RRB Committee at Southwest Baptist University. The committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard your privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. Your email was obtained from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. If you choose not to participate, there is no penalty to you. You may withdraw from this study at any time by not submitting your responses.

If you have questions about participation, have difficulty accessing the survey or would like to have the results of this study forwarded to you, please contact Richard Asbill, [rasbill@cassville.k12.mo.us](mailto:rasbill@cassville.k12.mo.us) or call (417) 847-2221.

Respectfully,

*Richard L Asbill*

Richard L. Asbill  
Doctoral Graduate Student  
Southwest Baptist University

To participate, please click on the following link:

**Missouri Superintendent Leadership Perception**

## Appendix B—Missouri Superintendent Leadership Perceptions Survey, Draft #1

Please take a moment to complete the following demographic questions:

1. In what DESE region of Missouri are you a superintendent?  
Northeast Region                      Northwest Region                      Southeast Region  
Southwest Region                      Central Region                      Kansas City Region  
St. Louis Region                      South Central Region                      West Central Region
2. Do you consider your school district to be rural or urban?  
Rural                      Urban
3. What is the size of your school district?  
<500 students                      500-1,000 students                      1,000-2,000 students  
2,000-5,000 students                      5,000-10,000 students                      >10,000 students
4. In your opinion, do you feel that your leadership as superintendent impacts the overall school performance efforts of you school district?  
YES                      NO
5. In your opinion, do you feel that given all the challenges facing your school district that your leadership ability is effectively evaluated by your board of education?  
YES                      NO

Utilizing the following Rating Scale; please take a moment to reflect on each item and determine your perception of the leadership standards and your current level of achievement for each question.

- Emerging—this level describes the performance expected of a new superintendent as they assume an administrative position or new assignment. Base knowledge and skills are applied as they assume the leadership position and begin to advance student growth and achievement.
- Developing—this level describes the performance expected of a superintendent early in their assignment as the leadership content, knowledge and skills that she/he possesses continue to develop by encounters with new experiences and expectations in classrooms, schools, and throughout the district, and community as they continue to advance student growth and achievement.
- Proficient—this level describes the performance expected of a career, professional superintendent who continues to advance her/his knowledge and skills while consistently advancing student growth and achievement.
- Distinguished—this level describes the career, professional superintendent whose performance exceeds proficiency and contributes to the professional community while consistently advancing student growth and achievement.

6. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a district vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
7. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing and effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
8. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by managing the organizational structure, personnel, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
9. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
10. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by acting with integrity, responsibility, and in an ethical manner.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
11. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by understanding, responding to and influencing the large political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
12. I remain current on best practices in education administration and school-related areas as evidenced by establishing a plan for his/her professional development each year.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished

Utilizing the Rating Scale; please take a moment to reflect on each item and determine your perception of the importance of the leadership responsibility for each question.

	1	2	3	4	5
13. Situational Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Intellectual Stimulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Change Agent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Input	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Outreach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Monitor/Evaluates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Order	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Ideas/Beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Affirmation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Focus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. Flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Optimizer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. Relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. Visibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Contingent Rewards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix C— Missouri Superintendent Leadership Perceptions Survey, Draft #2

Please take a moment to complete the following demographic questions:

1. In what DESE region of Missouri are you a superintendent?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Northeast Region	<input type="checkbox"/> Northwest Region	<input type="checkbox"/> Southeast Region
<input type="checkbox"/> Southwest Region	<input type="checkbox"/> Central Region	<input type="checkbox"/> Kansas City Region
<input type="checkbox"/> St. Louis Region	<input type="checkbox"/> South Central Region	<input type="checkbox"/> West Central Region
2. Do you consider your school district to be rural or urban?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Rural	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban
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3. What is the size of your school district?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> <500 students	<input type="checkbox"/> 500-1,000 students	<input type="checkbox"/> 1,000-2,000 students
<input type="checkbox"/> 2,000-5,000 students	<input type="checkbox"/> 5,000-10,000 students	<input type="checkbox"/> >10,000 students
4. In your opinion, do you believe that your leadership as superintendent impacts the overall school performance efforts of your school district?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
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5. In your opinion, do you believe that given all the challenges facing your school district that your leadership ability is effectively evaluated by your board of education?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
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Utilizing the following Rating Scale; please take a moment to reflect on each item and determine your perception of the importance of the leadership standard within your superintendent leadership capacity.

6. Priority of Standards	1=Most Important				7=Least Important		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a. Vision, Mission, & Goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Teaching & Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Management of the Organizational Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Collaboration with Families & Stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Ethics & Integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. The Educational System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Professional Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Utilizing the following Rating Scale; please take a moment to reflect on each item and determine your perception of the leadership standards and your current level of achievement for each question.

- Emerging—this level describes the performance expected of a new superintendent as they assume an administrative position or new assignment. Base knowledge and skills are applied as they assume the leadership position and begin to advance student growth and achievement.
- Developing—this level describes the performance expected of a superintendent early in their assignment as the leadership content, knowledge and skills that she/he possesses continue to develop by encounters with new experiences and expectations in classrooms, schools, and throughout the district, and community as they continue to advance student growth and achievement.
- Proficient—this level describes the performance expected of a career, professional superintendent who continues to advance her/his knowledge and skills while consistently advancing student growth and achievement.
- Distinguished—this level describes the career, professional superintendent whose performance exceeds proficiency and contributes to the professional community while consistently advancing student growth and achievement.

7. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a district vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
8. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing and effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
9. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by managing the organizational structure, personnel, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
10. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
11. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by acting with integrity, responsibility, and in an ethical manner.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
12. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by understanding, responding to and influencing the large political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
13. I remain current on best practices in education administration and school-related areas as evidenced by establishing a plan for his/her professional development each year.  
 Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished

Utilizing the Rating Scale; please take a moment to reflect on each item and determine your perception of the importance of the district level initiative for each question.

14. District Level Initiative	1=Most Important			5=Least Important	
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
a. Ensure Collaborative Goal Setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Establish Nonnegotiable Goals for Achievement & Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Create Board Alignment and Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Monitor Nonnegotiable Goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Allocate Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix D— Missouri Superintendent Leadership Perceptions Survey, Final Draft

Please take a moment to complete the following demographic questions:

1. In what DESE region of Missouri are you a superintendent?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Northeast Region	<input type="checkbox"/> Northwest Region	<input type="checkbox"/> Southeast Region
<input type="checkbox"/> Southwest Region	<input type="checkbox"/> Central Region	<input type="checkbox"/> Kansas City Region
<input type="checkbox"/> St. Louis Region	<input type="checkbox"/> South Central Region	<input type="checkbox"/> West Central Region
2. Do you consider your school district to be rural or urban?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Rural	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban
--------------------------------	--------------------------------
3. What is the size of your school district?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> <500 students	<input type="checkbox"/> 500-1,000 students	<input type="checkbox"/> 1,000-2,000 students
<input type="checkbox"/> 2,000-5,000 students	<input type="checkbox"/> 5,000-10,000 students	<input type="checkbox"/> >10,000 students
4. How many **total** years have you been a superintendent?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> <3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10
<input type="checkbox"/> 10-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-20	<input type="checkbox"/> >20
5. How many years have you been a superintendent in the district you are in **now**?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> <3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10
<input type="checkbox"/> 10-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-20	<input type="checkbox"/> >20
6. Were you a superintendent in another district?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
------------------------------	-----------------------------
7. Were you an administrator (any level) in your **current** district prior to becoming superintendent?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
------------------------------	-----------------------------
8. In your opinion, do you believe that your leadership as superintendent impacts the overall school performance efforts of you school district?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
------------------------------	-----------------------------
9. In your opinion, do you believe that given all the challenges facing your school district that your leadership ability is effectively evaluated by your board of education?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
------------------------------	-----------------------------

Utilizing the rating scale; Based on your superintendent leadership performance, please prioritize the following leadership standards (1 to 7) based on your perception of their importance (Rank each standard once).

10. Priority of Standards	1=Most Important				7=Least Important		
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
a. Vision, Mission, & Goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Teaching & Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Management of the Organizational Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Collaboration with Families & Stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Ethics & Integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. The Educational System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Professional Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Utilizing the following Rating Scale; please take a moment to reflect on each item and determine your perception of the leadership standards and your current level of achievement for each question.

- Emerging—this level describes the performance expected of a new superintendent as they assume an administrative position or new assignment. Base knowledge and skills are applied as they assume the leadership position and begin to advance student growth and achievement.
- Developing—this level describes the performance expected of a superintendent early in their assignment as the leadership content, knowledge and skills that she/he possesses continue to develop by encounters with new experiences and expectations in classrooms, schools, and throughout the district, and community as they continue to advance student growth and achievement.
- Proficient—this level describes the performance expected of a career, professional superintendent who continues to advance her/his knowledge and skills while consistently advancing student growth and achievement.
- Distinguished—this level describes the career, professional superintendent whose performance exceeds proficiency and contributes to the professional community while consistently advancing student growth and achievement.

11. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a district vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
12. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing and effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.
- Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
13. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by managing the organizational structure, personnel, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
14. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
15. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by acting with integrity, responsibility, and in an ethical manner.
- Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
16. I have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by understanding, responding to and influencing the large political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.
- Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished
17. I remain current on best practices in education administration and school-related areas as evidenced by establishing a plan for his/her professional development each year.
- Emerging                       Developing                       Proficient                       Distinguished

Utilizing the rating scale; Based on your superintendent leadership performance, please prioritize the following district level initiatives (1 to 5) based on your perception of their importance (Rank each standard once).

18. District Level Initiative	1=Most Important			5=Least Important	
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
a. Ensure Collaborative Goal Setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Establish Nonnegotiable Goals for Achievement & Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Create Board Alignment and Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Monitor Nonnegotiable Goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Allocate Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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