Consistent with national trends, women in North Carolina are under-represented in superintendent positions. This qualitative study explored the factors influencing women employed in the North Carolina public school system who held both a doctoral degree and a superintendent’s certification not to pursue the public school superintendency. Through electronic interviews, 49 women shared the context affecting their decisions.

The women in this study held both a doctorate in the field of education and a superintendent’s license and all reported that they were not interested in the pursuit of the superintendency. The prevailing tone of the interviews was one of negativity toward the position of superintendent. Participants shared that their goals did not align with their perceptions of the superintendency. Even those participants who thought about seeking the position cited that their aspirations had changed. A number of participants cited that the superintendency created a dissonance between work and lifestyle pursuits and that they valued a more balanced role of home and work than the superintendency offered. Though the reasons were varied and the circumstances diverse, the following emerged as common factors participants were not interested in pursuing the superintendency: (a) lifestyle
issues; (b) age; (c) politics; (d) too removed from children; and (e) not a career goal.

The findings of this study indicated that no one factor influenced the decision of these women not to pursue the North Carolina public school superintendency. Rather, a multitude of factors influenced the study participants' decisions not to seek the superintendency. The contextual situations of each participant affected her decisions. Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, general recommendations were suggested to the following groups: (a) parents; (b) women; (c) superintendents; (d) school districts; (e) boards of education; (f) universities; and (g) professional associations.
CHOICES AND CIRCUMSTANCES:
NORTH CAROLINA WOMEN NOT PURSUING THE
PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY

by
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BIOGRAPHY

A native North Carolinian, Johna Lee Faulconer was born in December 1965 in Raleigh and spent her childhood in nearby rural Johnston County where she continues to reside. Johna remembers vividly her delight in going to school. Learning to read was an awesome experience and Johna became somewhat of a bookworm.

After completing high school, Johna earned her Bachelor of Science in Education from East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. She returned to Johnston County to teach middle school. Quickly Johna discovered that she wanted to know more about how to help her students maximize their learning experience. Johna began a graduate program while teaching full-time, coaching cheerleading and serving as pep club advisor. She earned a Master of Education and later added additional certification in Administration from Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina.

In 1994, Johna joined the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as an education consultant. At the Department of Public Instruction, she has been primarily responsible for middle grades English language arts. Believing in the importance of professional growth and wanting to achieve to her highest potential, Johna pursued her doctorate from North Carolina State University and graduated in May 2003.
Johna is surrounded by an encouraging and supportive family. She is the proud mother of a daughter, Lily; a son, Ethan; and, a very old and dear cocker spaniel, Tigger. She shares the delightful adventure of parenting with her husband and best friend, Lindy. Johna can be contacted at jfaulcon@dpi.state.nc.us
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Completing this study took the help and support of many. I am particularly indebted to the women involved in this study who took time away from their busy schedules to share their stories. These articulate, intelligent women are advocates for education and I feel proud to have worked with them in this endeavor.

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To my friends and family, you persevered along with me. Thanks for your support, encouragement and faith in me. Your patience and understanding were invaluable.

Finally, to my husband, Lindy, and to our very dear children, Lily and Ethan—knowing each of you believed in me kept me going. Thank you for everything you sacrificed to help me achieve this dream.
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CHAPTER 1
The Issue

In the United States public school educational hierarchy, the superintendency is the top ranking position in local education systems. Historically, education has been a profession dominated by women (Blount, 1998; Bell & Chase, 1993; Brunner, 1999; Gupton & Schlick, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1987). However, very few women have served as superintendents (Blount, 1998; Brunner, 1999; Grogan, 1996; Franklin, 2001; Manuel, 2001; Radcliffe, 1998; Walder, 2000). Female superintendents remain a remarkably small minority when in comparison nearly 75% of all public school teachers and 60% of central office administrators are women (Vail, 1999).

The number of women entering graduate programs for educational leadership certification and doctorates has been increasing since the 1970s (Edson, 1995; Grogan, 1996). In the North Carolina public school system, statistical information from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) for the school year 2001-2002 indicated that there were nearly equal percentages of men (16.61%) and women (15.88%) holding both a doctorate in the field of education and a superintendent’s certification employed in the North Carolina public schools (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2002). It is important to note from the data that only 16 of the 117 North Carolina school districts were
led by women; one position was vacant and one superintendent's gender was not reported (Appendix A). The under-representation of women in North Carolina employed as superintendents is consistent with national figures that indicate women hold about 13% of superintendent positions as compared to men who hold 87% of the positions (Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000).

A doctoral degree and a superintendent's certificate certainly indicate purpose. This research explores what factors—what choices and circumstances—are deterring women in North Carolina from pursuing the public school superintendency.

Study Topic and Background

There was, and continues to be, a documented need for research regarding women and the superintendency (Brunner, 1999; Glass et al., 2000; Grogan, 1996; Logan, 1999; Vail, 1999). This study explored and examined the choices and circumstances of North Carolina women with the credentials of a doctorate in education and a superintendent's certificate. At the time of this research, all women participating in the study were employed in the North Carolina public school system and indicated they did not plan to pursue the superintendency.

While there is much information on the barriers women face in attaining the superintendency (Grogan, 1996; Logan, 1999; Manuel, 2001; Tallerico & Tingley, 2001; Walder, 2000), very little has been written
about women who chose not to pursue the position of superintendent. Literature reviewed tended to suggest that barriers such as the “glass ceiling” and the “good old boys' club” were keeping women from the superintendency (Alston, 1999; Brunner 1999; Grogan 1996). However, over 70% of the respondents in the 2000 American Association of School Administrators (AASA) study on the superintendency (Glass et al., 2000) thought discrimination against women posed little or no problem compared to about 50% of respondents in 1992. And, Scherr (1995) argued that while the glass-ceiling phenomenon may be a partial explanation for the low percentage of women in the superintendency, it was not an adequate one. She suggested that unless the perceptions change about the role of a superintendent, women may continue to enjoy their success from other positions in the educational system.

Women's perceptions of the superintendency and a wider range of career opportunities may be influencing career paths. Hakim (2000b) reported that in the United States, the change in women's aspirations is seen in far fewer enrollments in courses in humanities and the arts and increasing enrollment in courses that are either vocational (e.g., business studies, pharmacy, or law) or courses that are perceived to have greater practical value. Hakim also suggested that attitudes, values, and personal preferences in lifestyle choices are increasingly important in the decisions women make about their careers. Changes in opportunities and options
for women in the 21st century have created a new scenario for women both in society and in the labor market.

Significance of the Issue

When thinking about the significance of a study, Marshall and Rossman (1999) encouraged the researcher to, “Think of the study's significance as discussing ways the study is likely to contribute. Who might be interested in the results?” (p. 34).

Very little has been written on the choices of women who have the qualifications and yet choose not to pursue the superintendency. To understand the under-representation of women superintendents in North Carolina, it is necessary to examine the circumstances affecting the choices of these women who have the credentials but are not seeking the superintendency. This study sought to discover what factors influenced these qualified candidates who chose not to pursue the superintendency.

“Preparing a pool of highly qualified candidates to fill increasing numbers of superintendent vacancies across the country calls for collaborate and deliberate efforts by policy makers, university professors, practicing administrators, and school boards to work together” (Bredeson, p.vi, 2000). There is a pool of qualified candidates in North Carolina who are choosing not to pursue the superintendency. Graduate schools, school boards, as well as educational policy makers should be interested in this study. Sharon Adams-Taylor, director of women and children's initiatives
at the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), states that the AASA is interested in discovering why fewer women than men consider themselves candidates for the superintendency (Vail, 1999). “One thing is certain: The pool of candidates willing to take on the titanic role of school superintendent is dwindling. And women remain the richest untapped resource for the job” (Vail, 1999, ¶ 10). Knowing this, it would seem that schools of education should reexamine their educational leadership programs. Additionally, this information suggests that districts should begin to target potential leaders and offer support and encouragement to these candidates.

Policy makers should be interested in this research. For women to feel that they can pursue high profile positions, situations must be created that allow this opportunity. It should be noted that when referring to the duties of superintendency, statutes in the Public School Laws of North Carolina (2001) still refer to the superintendent as “he,” “him” and/or “himself “(p.254). The descriptions of principal and teacher are gender neutral.

This study has the potential to impact the training of educational leaders as well as the recruitment and support of qualified candidates. It also should contribute by examining the increasing importance that work and lifestyle choices have on career pursuits.
Research Questions

Through exploration of the major research questions below, this study examined why, after putting forth the time and effort to receive a doctorate in the field of education and superintendent's certification, a majority of women with these credentials employed in the North Carolina public school system were not pursuing the superintendency.

- What factors influence a woman to attain a doctoral degree?
- What factors influence a woman to attain a superintendent's certificate?
- What factors influence women in North Carolina with an earned doctoral degree in the field of education and superintendent certification not to pursue the superintendency?

Specific interview questions designed to garner detailed responses needed to frame these answers are located in Appendix B.
Limitations of the Study

All studies have limitations and the researcher must responsibly recognize possible limitations (Glesne, 1999; Hakim, 2000a; Patton, 2002). For this study, the following limitations were considered: (a) single year data; (b) sample; (c) interview format; (d) interview response; and (e) self-reported data.

**Single year data**

This study took place during a limited time period using information from data obtained for the school year 2001-2002, the most current data available at the onset of the study.

**Sample**

To obtain detailed, rich information about a specific subject, the sample pool should be narrowly defined (Patton, 2002). The sample population for this study was very narrow in scope. The participant pool included women holding both a doctoral degree and a superintendent’s certification. These women had achieved the highest credentials offered for a North Carolina public school administrator. This study eliminated women who were presently serving as, or who were aspiring to serve as, a superintendent, women who had a doctoral degree but not superintendent’s certification, and women holding superintendent’s certification but not holding a doctoral degree. Men were also excluded from this study. Only data from women who held doctoral degrees and
superintendent certification currently employed in the public school system of North Carolina during the specified timeframe were examined. These participants were not pursuing the superintendency and each willingly participated in the research study.

Interview format

Electronic communication was used for this research study was and there were very limited resources and examples to use for guidance. Using electronic interviews in qualitative research is relatively new and in some instances may have been unfamiliar to the participants. Limitations considered were the time it took to answer the interview questions and how to elicit the richest feedback. The better the questions were written, the better it was anticipated that participants would be able to tell their stories. The format did not allow the participants to be seen or heard; it did, however, allow participants to have reflection time and to instantly review and/or edit their answers. Believing that the questions asked determined to a great extent the response received, the interview questions for this study were reviewed for improvements by two well-respected women educators as well as by the researcher’s proposal committee before being sent to the participants.

Interview response

Response rate was an issue for consideration. Ways to achieve a higher response rate were built in through tracking so that reminders
were sent. Even with reminders, there were some non-responders. Time to complete the interview may have negatively influenced participation.

Though every school system employee in North Carolina is offered access to electronic mail (e-mail), there was a possibility that some participants were not proficient users of e-mail. Additionally, the use of technology is not foolproof. Some participants did not receive the electronic interview and some returned responses may not have been received. These factors may have affected response rate.

It was anticipated that electronic interviews would have some of the same characteristics of surveys. Like surveys, a limitation of electronic interviewing was that no control was retained over who chose to participate in the study. The participating respondents may have been biased in their interpretation of the topic thereby affecting results (Borg and Gall, 1989).

*Self-reported data*

The validity of this study relied on the honesty and accuracy of participants’ responses (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The study was based upon the critical assumption that the responses of the interviewees were accurate and honest reflections. It is important to note that self-reported data are interwoven with self-bias. Self-bias is defined by Aronson (1995) as “a tendency for individuals to make disproportional attribution for their success and situational attributions for their failures” (p.168).
Overview

This study explored and examined the choices and circumstances of North Carolina women currently employed in the North Carolina public school system who had earned a doctoral degree in the field of education in education and a superintendent's certificate yet who were not pursuing the superintendency. Chapter 1 defined the need and the potential contribution of the study. A review of relevant literature is presented in Chapter 2. The methodology and the study framework are the focus of Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, study findings are reported. Summary, conclusions, recommendations and reflections are discussed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

There are limitations with reviewing any body of literature. The direction the research takes is influenced upon the intellectual climate in which it develops. It is important to note that much of the literature about women is written by women; therefore, it may reflect some gender bias.

Following the advice of Glesne (1999), the review of relevant literature for this study began by first collecting, scanning and reading literature to verify the choice of a justifiable topic. While there was much information about women who had attained the superintendency and the barriers that they had faced, there was very little information on why some women who were eligible did not pursue the superintendency.

Next, the literature collected was used to help identify other sources. Through the exploration of a multitude of sources, a foundation of information on which to support the examination and exploration of the factors affecting why many women who hold the highest of educational credentials were choosing not to pursue the superintendency was built.

The literature reviewed in this chapter directly or indirectly contributed to the investigation of why women were not pursuing the superintendency. The following four major areas were reviewed: (a) work-lifestyle choices; (b) acknowledging gender differences; (c) women as learners; and (d) women and the superintendency.
Work-Lifestyle Choices

To suggest that women do not have the opportunity to pursue the superintendency would be inaccurate. While radical feminists would contend that society and the organizations society supports do not facilitate the advancement of women, others would disagree. Women today have more opportunities in all aspects of life than women of earlier generations ever dared to imagine (Rimm, 1999). However, the expansion of choices creates complex situations as women work to balance work and home. There is a wide array of diversity and difference of opinion about the relationships between home, family, work and leisure pursuits.

In the United States women have different opportunities than their predecessors. These expanded opportunities have created new and complex choices for women. Women now have opportunities to choose between a home-centered or work-centered lifestyle or to choose a combination of home and work. Hakim (2000b) contends that contemporary women are not at all united on the complex issues of work and home. She proposes that new and expanded opportunities have created three groups of women: home-centered women—women whose main priority is family life or children (about 20% of women); work-centered women—women whose main priority in life is employment or equivalent activities like politics (about 20% of women); and, adaptive women—women who want to combine work and family (about 60% of
women). Based on her research on work-lifestyle choices of women, she proposes a theory for explaining and predicting current and future patterns of women’s choices between family work and market work. Preference theory is concerned primarily with the diversity among women and their choices; however, Hakim speculates that in the future, preference theory may be applicable to men. “Preference theory differs from many theories of social change in its greater emphasis on personal attitudes, values and preferences in their own right” (p.288).

Preference theory contends that in modern society, work style preferences and the roles played by women and men are not only the products of contextual influences, but also the expression of chosen gender identities. According to Hakim (2000b), five historical changes have led to a new scenario for women and their work choices: (1) the contraceptive revolution of the 1960s which gave women more control over their fertility; (2) the equal opportunities revolution which provided many women more opportunities in the labor market; (3) the rise of white-collar work throughout the second half of the 20th century; (4) the creation of jobs for secondary earners; and, (5) the increasing importance of attitudes, values and preferences in the lifestyle choices of modern societies.

In the United States, birth control allows women to make decisions about when and if to have children. In generations past, fertility meant survival. Children were needed to help with farming and businesses.
There was a stigma attached to childlessness. This stigma appears to be fading as more couples are choosing to remain childfree (Hakim, 2000b). Motherhood can now be a lifestyle preference. By not choosing motherhood, women have time that would have been devoted to children to devote to other aspects of life—career, education and/or leisure.

Legislation enacted in the United States from the 1960’s onward has opened the doors for equal opportunities for women and minorities. Women are now granted equal opportunities to compete with men in the labor market. Though gender stereotyping still remains, the days of women being steered solely into professions like teaching and nursing have faded. The traditional boundaries of work and home are becoming muddier—for men as well as for women (Evans, 2000). The blurring of these boundaries should allow for more opportunities for women in attaining jobs such as the superintendency that have been traditionally held by men.

The scenario created by the contraceptive revolution and the equal opportunity revolution have given women new opportunities. Based on the tenets of preference theory, women who enter into education today are making a choice. For many women, this choice provides an option to pursue a career that supports having a family by offering the mother a similar schedule as her children. Perhaps women who enter the field of education in the 21st century are interested only in positions like
teaching—positions that are more conducive to balancing their children's school and extracurricular schedules. Administrative positions may require more time and responsibility; therefore, the administrative positions may not be as attractive. Additionally, women who seek to be administrators now have more options than being a principal or superintendent; for women who are interested in management and organizational leadership, more lucrative positions are often found in the private sector (Glass, 2000). Private companies may offer greater benefits like higher salaries, job-sharing and flextime. This expansion of choices may influence women's movement, or lack of movement, into the superintendency.

Preference theory contends that decisions about work may be more related to lifestyle choices than ever before. Employment in the past has been mainly about financial gain (Hakim, 2000b). In the 21st century, financial gain may become less important as workers seek a more balanced approach to home and career. In addition to single women who have consistently worked to support themselves, there is now a minority of married women who act as primary earners and are financially independent, continuing their careers and vocations irrespective of their husbands' careers and vocations. However, preference theory espouses that the majority of women (the adaptive group) seek a more balanced approach between family and the labor market. Many choose to work
close to home and readily eject promotion if it imposes burdensome additional responsibilities, requires substantial travel or relocation to another area. Women considered part of the adaptive group (those preferring a balance of work and home) choose to give equal or greater priority to their children and families, so at times conflict is created when trying to balance the expectations of the workplace with the expectations and responsibilities of home. Preference theory contends that public/employer policies can certainly help these women with flexible options conducive to having family responsibilities. A survey by Glass (2000) reported women often are not interested in the superintendency for personal reasons like the long hours the job demands and lack of mobility. Other studies (Tallerico & Burstyn, 1996) indicate that unless local school boards change the perception of the superintendency, many qualified women will not apply.

While there continue to be gender and ethnic discrimination (Blount, 1998), society is not the same as it was. Women and minorities have more opportunities than ever before. All groups regardless of gender or ethnicity have more opportunities to choose their own values and lifestyles. The new parameters established by modern society must be explored and examined while seeking to discover the reason(s) women are choosing not to pursue the superintendency. “It is no longer acceptable for research studies and statistical surveys to collect extensive data on
behavior without also collecting adequate data on motivations, values, preferences, and life goals” (Hakim 2000b, p.286). With a wider variation of opportunities, women who hold the credentials and are qualified to become a superintendent may decide that these qualifications alone indicate a measure of success and that the responsibilities of the superintendency do not coincide with their lifestyle preference. Climbing to the top of the public school system education hierarchy may inhibit the time needed to pursue other interests and therefore, may not be an attractive option.

Acknowledging Differences

In the United States, there is a general acceptance that women are different than men in their ways of thinking, knowing, and acting. “Feminist theory is at its best when it reflects the lived experiences of women, when it bridges the gap between mind and body, reason and emotion, thinking and feeling” (Jagger, 1983, p.x). Many researchers (Gilligan, 1982; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Wilkerson & Kitzinger, 1995) have employed the feminist perspective to frame and understand the experiences of women. Much educational leadership research has asserted that there are benefits to using feminist theory when studying gender equity issues in education (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995; Gardinier, et al., 2000; Grogan, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1987). By looking through the feminist lens, the boundaries established by the dominant
culture are challenged and new realities are proposed (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995). Embedded cultural values affect behaviors and beliefs. It is important that this dominant culture not silence the voices of women. “Women learn from other women's voices and experiences” (Gardinier, et al., 2000, p.29).

Challenging feminism

Historically, women have been under-represented in the highest positions of government, education, and religion. Research suggests that while gender bias still exists, women may themselves be a part of the problem (Antonucci, 1980; Chesler, 2001; Hakim, 2000b). Murphy (2002) describes the address given by Madeline Albright, the first female secretary of the state in United States history, to an audience at a summit on Women in Leadership. When asked about how men viewed her appointment, she shared that she was more concerned about other women. Albright offered that women have a penchant for projecting their own self-doubts on others—something men do not do—holds many women back. “In many ways, clearly men are part of our problem,” Albright said. “But so are other women” (p. 12E).

While feminist research has focused on helping women find their voice and on acknowledging and valuing the differences in men and women, it has not taken into account that women are not homogeneous in their preferences. Feminism underlies women’s diversity without accepting that
this diversity produces conflicting interests among women. Even liberal feminists who take the existing organizational society as a given, and seek to integrate women into that society (Hoy & Miskel, 1996), do not allow for the idea that some women may not wish to be integrated. A flaw of feminist theory is that it has assumed women operate as one collective group; current researchers such as Chesler (2001) and Hakim (2000b) are challenging this assumption.

Bell (1995) suggests that some women “de-feminize” as they move into administration. Chesler (2001) believes that women are their own worst enemies and suggests that women are in direct competition with each other and that this conflict is not in the best interest of the advancement of women collectively. This notion is especially interesting as position research (Edson, S., 1995; Gardinier, et al, 2000; Gupton & Schlick, 1996) suggests that having a mentor provides a distinct advantage when progressing up the educational leadership ladder. A study by Edson (1995) found that women who had mentors were more likely to achieve a position in educational administration than those without a mentor. Professional endorsements and personal and professional support were found to be very important. This finding is supported Tallerico's and Tingley's (2001) assertion that one way to increase the interest of women in pursuing the superintendency is through mentoring. If women are not supportive of
other women, a valuable pool of mentors is not being utilized and a potential pool of candidates may be lost.

*The success of patriarchy*

To understand why women are not interested in the superintendency, it is necessary to understand how gender roles and relationships are influenced by the success of patriarchy in the United States. Harding (1996) notes that the system of gender relations can give women and men different interests and concerns even when they are in similar situations. Society has advanced by offering more opportunities for women and minorities. However, little girls of today continue to grow up with the traditional fairy tales of beautiful princesses being rescued by handsome and very brave princes (Barry, 2002). This Cinderella Complex (Dowling, 1981) reinforces the notion of patriarchy. Rimm (1999) contends that while girls and boys may have equal opportunities in school and at home—that in order to rear girls to fill roles traditionally held by men, gender issues must be addressed.

Women in the United States continue to be influenced by a culture that was built around the man acting in the role of provider and the woman in the role as keeper of the home and family. Though the influence of this culture is slowly eroding, the effects of patriarchy likely will have influenced the women involved in this study. It should be noted that future research on women and the superintendency may look very
different. Over time, the generalizations about male and female workers have become harder to make (Murphy, 2002). Defined gender roles are becoming blurred as lifestyle preferences influence the choices both men and women make. The factors associated with whom should be a superintendent and the conditions of practice of the superintendency may be based on an andocentric view of the superintendency. However, attributing the success of a patriarchal society as the sole reason women are not superintendents is a disservice to women who have deliberately chosen other roles and ignores issues that are central to the reason that patriarchy is successful. As societal norms change, both work and lifestyle choices will change. Hakim (2000b) cautions that modern societies would be wise not to base future predictions of behaviors on historical models but to take into account the advancements modern society has provided.

Women as Learners

According to Hayes and Flannery (2000), learning takes place first at home, then in the community. The contextual situations unique to each woman shape and influence her learning. Hayes and Flannery (2000), state that, “Gendered identities often begin to develop before birth” (p.64). When parents know the gender of a baby, they begin to assign gender attributes and expectations that continue throughout childhood and adolescence. Typically; girls have been taught to be nurturers, caregivers,
peacemakers, sexual seducers, and model mothers and wives at any cost. In comparison boys are taught to be strong, competitive, to be providers, to keep many emotions buried and to be sexually assertive (Hayes & Flannery, 2000).

Gender is influential in learning. According to Hayes and Flannery (2000), gendered expectations communicated to women during childhood and adolescence continues to be reinforced and challenged in adult women’s lives. Traditional children's literature often portrays females as needing to be saved and males as the saviors. This negative portrayal continues throughout much of the literature taught as classics.

Hayes and Flannery (2000) state that a woman’s learning is shaped in part by her access to formal education. Their research notes that women have recently constituted the largest proportion and rapidly growing cohort of participants in many educational settings. However, there continues to be considerable variation in women’s participation. The presence of women faculty as mentors and learning facilitators can be important in supporting women’s learning.

Education Leadership Programs

Changing social norms and roles for women, combined with other social and economic factors, have led to a tremendous growth in the number of women in education programs (Hayes & Flannery, 2000). Nationwide data indicate that over 50% of graduate students enrolled in
educational administration programs are women (Glass et al., 2000). Grogan (1996) documents that despite an increase of women in educational programs leading to superintendency certification or licensure; the number of women superintendents remains small. Many individuals who complete educational leadership programs leading to superintendent licensure never become superintendents though the knowledge and skills they receive from these programs may influence their schools or school systems in efforts to improve education for children (Bjork, 2000).

Logan (1999) suggests that institutions of higher education could be partially to blame for the under-representation of women in positions that typically lead to the superintendency. University faculty has access to local school system hiring personnel as well as being able to influence the direction and placement of internships. If university faculty does not see men and women as equally potential candidates, women will be at a disadvantage (Logan, 1999). Young and McLeod (2001) suggest that it is not enough for students in educational administration programs to read about women in leadership, but that students should have an opportunity to interact with women leaders and administrators. University faculty often can facilitate these types of opportunities.

The percentage of women in educational administration faculty positions has increased; however, women continue to be under-
represented. McCarthy & Kuh (1997) report that women make up less than one-third of the faculty in educational administration programs. Women faculty can serve a critical function as role models and mentors for women students (Hayes & Flannery, 2000). With the small number of women in educational administration faculty positions, institutions of higher education unintentionally may be contributing to the low number of women pursuing the superintendency.

Women and the Superintendency

“The role of the school superintendent has evolved into one of the most complex leadership positions seen today” (Short & Scribner, 2000, p.1). Houston (2000) observes that the superintendency is more complicated than ever before. With responsibility centralized and authority dispersed, today’s superintendents often feel that the perils of the job are too much.

Under-representation

Women are under-represented in the superintendency. Female superintendents are a very small minority; by comparison, nearly 75% of all public school teachers and 60% of central office administrators are women (Vail, 1999). A comparison of female superintendents with male superintendents finds that females, on average, are older; a larger percentage of females are single; females have fewer years of experience as a superintendent; more females hold doctoral degrees; females spend longer as classroom teachers; more females belong to professional
organizations that focus on curriculum and instruction; and, female superintendents are decidedly more liberal in their political views (Brunner, 2000).

Different views

Women and men view the superintendency differently. Women superintendents tend to emphasize caring and fostering relationships as opposed to emphasizing power (Grogan, 1996). Male superintendents tend to view leadership as power over people in contrast to the view of leadership as power with people held by female superintendents (Brunner, 1998). Additionally, in contrast to men, women do not perceive power as a reward or as a motivator for being in positions of leadership (Clement, 1980).

Support and encouragement

For women administrative candidates, professional endorsements and personal and professional support are very important to their career paths (Young & McLeod, 2001). More women than men have reported that having a mentor influenced their decisions to attempt to move up the educational administration career ladder (Glass, et. al, 2000). A study by Gardinier, Enomoto and Grogan (2000) emphasized the importance of mentoring through interviews with fifty-five mentors and protégés in leadership positions in public schools.
Spousal support has also been found to be a critical factor for women to enter and succeed as a superintendent. Research by Ramsey (1997) found that women who were superintendents cited strong spousal support as necessary for undertaking the role. Women in leadership roles tend to continueshouldering the traditional gender roles associated with the home as well as the responsibilities of the position. Shakeshaft (1987) believes that women who work actually have two jobs—one at work, another at home. Spousal support is necessary to help alleviate this situation.

Women often have smaller professional networks than their male counterparts; therefore, the support of family, friends, and colleagues has added importance (Ramsey, 1997). Ramsey reports that problems in female superintendent's personal relationships can make some women curtail their career aspirations. Stereotypical gender roles are still in place. This fact may contribute to a lack of support from a male spouse or may contribute to guilt on the part of a woman with a family that must relocate. Many of the barriers women face in moving up the career ladder may be intrinsic; however, it is notable that intrinsic motivations are influenced by extrinsic events.

_Potential barriers to the superintendency_

Society appears to be more willing than ever to accept women in leadership (White, 1992); however, women report that there are often
barriers to their attainment of these positions. While there are more women in the superintendency than ever before, the number is still disproportionate to the number of women in the field (Blount, 1998; Grogan, 1996). Glass (2000) suggests seven reasons why women are under-represented in top district posts. The first reason is that women are not employed in positions that normally lead to the superintendency.

Glass reports that currently, nearly 75% of elementary classroom teachers are women. Only 25% of current superintendents taught at an elementary school. Nearly all superintendents previously worked in school administration – principal, assistant principal and/or department chair. Glass suggests that women have less entry points for a move into administration and therefore into the first step to the superintendency.

The second reason Glass (2000) suggests women are under-represented in the superintendency is that women are not gaining superintendent’s credentials in preparation programs. Nationally about 10% of women in doctoral programs opt to earn the superintendent’s credential along with their educational specialist or doctoral degree in the field of education.

Not being as interested in or as experienced with district-wide fiscal management as men is the third reason Glass (2000)suggests that women are deterred from the top district post. School boards see the superintendent’s management of fiscal resources as critical. Most women
in central office positions are in curriculum positions thereby limiting their exposure to issues of finance.

According to Glass (2000), women are hindered from pursuing the superintendency for personal reasons. Long hours at the job, including night and weekend meetings and school events, are often not appealing to younger women (or men) with families who prefer a better balance between work and family life. Also, consistent with gender socialization, women tend to take on more family responsibility. Glass et al. (2000) found that over 50% of the women responding to the 2000 American Association of School Administrators Survey on the American School Superintendency believed the nature of the superintendency to be unattractive. Furthermore, the report indicated that both men and women believed that mobility is a factor inhibiting women from attaining superintendency. In a study by Ramsey (1997), the majority of respondents said that they would not consider moving their family again in order to accept another superintendency.

While societal issues may influence these conditions of practice, the educational community should recognize these inhibitors. Chase and Bell (1994) found that while search consultants were generally helpful toward the hiring of women superintendents, they did not try to help qualified women find ways to meet challenges like mobility/place-boundness. To attract the most qualified candidates, local school boards may need to re-
examine the responsibilities and expectations related to the superintendency (Chase & Bell, 1994).

Reluctance on the part of school boards to hire women is the fifth reason Glass (2000) offers for the under-representation of women in the superintendency. Glass et al. (2000) reported that about 43% of men responding to the 2000 American Association of School Administrators Survey on the American School Superintendency believed that school boards tended to view women as incapable of managing a school district. School boards often are made up of men (Glass, 2000). Women seem to have less developed networking systems than men. Having an advocate to lobby for opportunities can improve options.

The sixth reason Glass (2000) purports that hinders women in moving into the superintendency is one of career choice. Historically, teaching and nursing have represented the careers of many women. Women may now be entering education for the purpose or love of teaching. Women interested in management may find more lucrative positions in private industry.

Entering too late is the seventh and final reason that Glass (2000) offers as a reason for the under-representation of women the superintendency. Historically, women have been the primary keepers of the family. Many women may opt not to go into administration until they and/or their children are older. Recognizing that motherhood may inhibit
women from moving into administration, Glass concludes women may spend longer as classroom teachers and may be older when and if they decide to pursue administrative positions.

Research supports that unless these barriers are addressed, the candidate pool for aspiring superintendents is likely to continue to dwindle (Glass, 2000; Houston, 2000).

Summary

In this chapter, a review of the literature indicated that expanded choices in the 21st century create a new scenario of opportunities for women. These expanded opportunities create complex situations requiring decisions to be made about how to balance home, family and leisure pursuits with the demands of work. The information on preference theory espoused that women who seek a balance of home and work may shun positions that do not allow them to achieve this balance. Also, as generalizations about male and female workers become harder to make, men may face similar balancing issues that women now face. Intrinsic motivation may become more of a factor for work-lifestyle choices—for both women and men.

This literature review also acknowledged the general acceptance that women are different than men in their ways of thinking, knowing, and acting. The participants in this study likely will have been somewhat
influenced by a society dominated by a patriarchal tone. As societal norms change, future research may look different.

The importance of educational leadership programs was reviewed as well as literature on women and the superintendency. While much has been written on barriers women face in attaining the superintendency, little research has focused on the factors influencing women’s decisions not to pursue the superintendency.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Qualitative research is primarily concerned with allowing participants to tell their own accounts. It offers richly detailed reports because the participants are allowed to use their own words to describe their attitudes, motivations, beliefs, views, perceptions, and feelings (Hakim, 2000a). It was for these reasons a qualitative approach was used in designing this study. A richer, more enlightened study emerged by allowing these women to tell their stories using their own words.

*Topic feasibility*

Based on the premise that the study topic must be feasible (Hakim, 2000a), I first sought to determine if there were North Carolina women who were not pursuing the superintendency. As part of an advanced research class project at North Carolina State University during the spring semester of 2002, a feasibility study was conducted to determine if North Carolina women were not pursuing the superintendency. Information from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2002) indicated that both a doctoral degree and a superintendent's certification were held by 264 females currently employed in the North Carolina public school system (Appendix A). A spreadsheet with the names and school addresses of these women also was obtained from the
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. To safeguard privacy, this spreadsheet was not included in the appendices.

A questionnaire to determine whether women in North Carolina were not choosing to pursue the superintendency was developed (Appendix C). After seeking and receiving an exemption from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at North Carolina State University (Appendix D), the questionnaire, along with a letter of explanation, was sent to each of the 264 women to confirm the accuracy of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s information; to check the candidate’s career goals (whether or not pursuing the superintendency); and to ask for their willingness to hear about and possibly participate in future research.

The questionnaire was designed to maximize convenience for the participants. It required minimal response time, was simple to answer and was self-addressed and stamped for return. Each questionnaire was coded so a higher response rate could be achieved. By the requested return date, 183 responses had been returned. Reminder postcards were sent to 81 women. After mailing the reminder postcards, an additional thirteen responses were received. A response rate of 74.24% was achieved with 196 questionnaires returned. Of these, 118 were planning not to pursue the superintendency; seventeen were undecided; eleven were currently superintendents; forty-three aspired to the superintendency; and, four were blank. Of the 118, a willingness to participate in future
research was indicated by 107 (Appendix E). Using this information, it was determined that the study topic was feasible and that an adequate pool of subjects was available.

Selection of subjects

“The logic and power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth understanding” (Patton, 2002, p.46). The purpose of a study defines the selection of subjects. The purpose of this research was to explore and examine the choices and circumstances of North Carolina women currently employed in the North Carolina Public School System who had earned a doctoral degree and a superintendent's certificate, yet who were not pursuing the superintendency. Using data from information collected during the topic feasibility study, the participants for this study were purposefully chosen based on the following criteria: intent not to pursue superintendency and a willingness to participate in additional research. It should be noted that gender, employment and educational credentials were qualifications that had been established during the feasibility study.

Ethical considerations

Permission to complete this study was requested from and granted by the Institutional Review Board at North Carolina State University (Appendix F).
Risk to participants

Lecompte and Preissle (1993) defined risk as “the possibility of any ill consequence of a research study—the chances of injury, damage, harm, or losses to anyone associated with an investigation” (p.106). This study did not involve any discernable risk to the participants.

Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is vital to any study (Glesne, 1999; Patton, 2002). Participants were assured throughout all communication with me that identifying information would be kept confidential. All data obtained from responses were coded to protect anonymity. The e-mail addresses given to me by the participants were secured and my files were password protected so that they were not accessible to others. When direct quotations were used, only numbers identified participants and all findings were reported without identifying characteristics. Information was stored in a secure location protected from all persons other than the research team. Upon completion of this study, all interviews were shredded.

Deception of human subjects

Deception was avoided by conducting interviews with fully informed participants.
**Potential benefit**

There was no direct financial or educational benefit to the participants. However, this study shared participants’ stories so others might grow and learn from their experiences. Additionally, the participants’ reflections may have facilitated heightened self-awareness and personal growth.

**Compensation**

To prevent potential bias on the part of the participants, there was no compensation other than my gratitude for participation in this study.

**Validity Issues**

Trustworthiness is essential to qualitative research (Glesne, 1999; Eisner & Peshkin, 1990). Glesne believes that the credibility of study findings and interpretations depends upon the careful attention to establishing trustworthiness. To augment the trustworthiness of this study, the roles of the researcher, as well as the collection and analysis of data, were considered. Additionally, the advice of more experienced qualitative researchers was sought throughout the study.

**Role of researcher**

“In qualitative research, the nature of the relationships depends on at least two factors: the quality of your interactions to support your research—or rapport—and the quality of your self-awareness of the potential effects of self on your research—or subjectivity” (Glesne, 1999
Bogden and Biklen (1998) acknowledge that it is helpful to establish rapport. As a female doctoral student who had no immediate plans to pursue the superintendency, I brought a passion and an insight for the research that an outsider would not have because I was a part of the topic. This unique insight enabled me to strongly identify and empathize with the study participants. It also created a common bond with these women. My gender and my background also helped to facilitate rapport.

My perspective while conducting this research was influenced by the culture in which I was reared, the roles I played, and my experiences. As a woman reared in the rural South, I have been strongly influenced by well-defined gender roles and expectations. As a wife, mother, daughter, student, community member and professional, I know the complexities of balancing the demands of home, community, and work.

The focus of this study was not to draw hostile attention to matters of inequity. Others before me and after me may have that job. Instead, this study sought to draw attention to the reasons behind women's decisions not to pursue the superintendency. It was impossible for me to divorce myself from the fact that I am female or from the culture in which I was reared; therefore, I sought to consciously monitor my subjectivity. “When you monitor your subjectivity, you increase your awareness of the ways it might distort, but you also increase your awareness of its virtuous capacity” (Glesne, 1999, p.109).
Data Collection and Analysis

Glesne (1999) encourages data analysis simultaneously with data collection. Data collection for this study followed the following steps: (a) electronic interviews sent to 107 participants; (b) analysis and coding as responses were returned; (c) reminders were sent; (d) if needed, follow-up for clarification of information; and (e) more analysis and coding.

Data for this study were collected electronically through what I termed an electronic interview. Witte, Amoroso, and Howard (2000) report that using the Internet for survey research is “an area that is marked by great potential but also little experience.” Electronic interviews offer a researcher many advantages (Mertler, 2002). Mann and Stewart (2000) note the advantage that electronic communication has in cost and time savings. There was no travel cost involved in this study and it took only a fraction of the time previously needed to travel to the actual location to visit with the participants to get the interviews; therefore, a much larger sample was able to be interviewed. The format of electronic interviews allowed participants time to reflect and the opportunity to compose their thoughts in their own words. Participants may have said things in an e-mail that they would not reveal in a personal one-on-one interview. Since participants composed and typed their thoughts, it was logical to assume that data was more accurate (Mann & Stewart, 2000). Transcription mistakes were avoided as participants themselves essentially become the
transcribers. Additionally, the time and the cost of transcription were avoided.

The first step in the collection of information was sending an e-mail containing a greeting, much like letters that accompany surveys and an attachment with the research questions (Appendix G) to the 107 respondents from the topic feasibility study who agreed to hear about future research. E-mail addresses for this proposed study sample were provided to me voluntarily by participants during the topic feasibility study. To provide and protect confidentiality, each participant received an individual transmission; an electronic group or list-serve was not created. The participants were assured in the e-mail that the attachment was virus-free. Anticipating problems with different platforms and the unease sometimes associated by opening attachments, the interview questions also were presented in the body of the e-mail.

The electronic interview contained both open-ended and demographic questions. Carbonaro and Bainbridge (2000) note that when using the worldwide web for research, the survey instrument must be as simple as possible. Therefore, the length of the electronic interview was limited to approximately one-hour. Mertler (2002) reported that while the use of web surveys is on the rise, not much is known about their effectiveness. This study may be able to contribute to that body of knowledge.
From the 107 e-mail addresses, eleven were faulty. Of the 96 interviews that were transmitted, a total of 53 responses were received. One interview could not be opened (even after several attempts), two declined because of time and one participant indicated that she had retired leaving 49 usable interviews. The method of electronic interviews allowed for a much larger sample, thereby strengthening the reported results. It would not have been feasible to travel to 49 different locations and conduct individual interviews.

Participants were given three weeks to complete the interview and e-mail it back. A running list of those responding was archived. From the original request, twenty-four responses were received.

During the time that participants had to complete the interview, North Carolina experienced an ice storm that left many homes without power for days and many school systems closed. Additionally, the deadline for returning interviews was immediately prior to the winter/Christmas holiday. Knowing that the weather and the upcoming holiday may have interfered with my response rate, an e-mail plea was sent out to those who had not responded (Appendix H).

By participant request, three interviews were conducted by phone. Five interviews were returned by fax. One interview was returned electronically stating that she had retired. Two declined by e-mail citing time factors. All others were returned through e-mail communication. As
 interviews were returned, they were printed and each interview was
randomly assigned a participant number for the purpose of reporting.
Then, the interviews were read, analyzed and placed in a folder that was
kept in a secure location. This process continued throughout the data
collection and analysis of all 49 interviews.

“Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and
read so that you can make sense of what you have learned” (Glesne 1999
p.130). Figuring out how things fit together—convergence—is the first
challenge (Patton, 2002). From the data collected and coded, like-minded
pieces needed to be clumped together. The next challenge according to
Patton is divergence. After analyzing for convergence, patterns or
categories must be defined. Divergence involves careful and thoughtful
examination of the data, including the cases that do not fit the dominant
pattern.

As interviews were returned and printed, they were read for the
purpose of developing a holistic picture. The responses were at times
lengthy because the research was qualitative in nature. The in-depth
nature of the responses contributed to the richness of detail and allowed
me to better understand the participants. The interviews were then read
line by line looking for emerging patterns and themes to help organize the
study framework. Scribbles in the margins of the interviews and multiple
colored highlighting accomplished this initial coding.
Next, charts were created to help track common elements. As interviews were analyzed, I monitored my subjectivity. Being careful to value the voices of the participants, quotes were used to report the experiences. At the end of the analysis, I attempted to portray my findings accurately and logically. To further ensure the trustworthiness of my findings, more experienced qualitative researchers reviewed my work.

During data collection and analysis, a reflection journal to log questions and to help frame interpretations was kept. Weekly reports of my work were completed for the chair of my dissertation committee. These reflections and reports served to keep the project focused as well as to guide the review of additional literature.

Summary

Glesne (1999) compared learning to do qualitative research with learning to paint. “Study the masters, learn the techniques and methods, practice them faithfully, and then adapt them to your own persuasions when you know enough to describe the work of those who have influenced you and the ways in which you are contributing to new perspectives (p.3).” Before beginning this study, I studied the masters and their techniques. While doing the study, I found other masters and sought their advice. I believe that the participants’ perceptions and insights are accurately reflected in the picture I have painted.
CHAPTER 4
Introduction of Findings

The major purpose of this study was to determine why women in North Carolina who were credentialed with both a doctoral degree and a superintendent’s certification were not pursuing the public school superintendency. The interviews of 49 women provided the data for this study. In keeping with the tenets of qualitative research, selected excerpts and quotes from the interviews were used to accurately illustrate the participants’ feelings and perceptions and to clearly define their choices and circumstances. Though defined themes emerged, many of the participant responses crossed categories. Remarks were isolated to highlight the commonalties among participants. To present the findings of these interviews, this chapter is organized as follows: (a) demographic information; (b) attaining a doctoral degree; (c) superintendent certification; (d) the superintendency; and (e) advice.

Demographic Information

All participants in this study were females who held both a doctorate in the field of education and superintendent certification. As a whole, the group could be described as predominately white, married, middle-aged women with children. However, to look only at the broad picture would not highlight the unique difference of each participant. Background experiences, values, attitudes and personal circumstances influenced the
choices these women made as evidenced in the way participants described themselves when answering the requests to tell about themselves, their career paths and their current jobs.

Using the information collected from the demographic section of the participant interviews, the following commonalties emerged: (a) the majority of the women participating in this study described themselves as white or Caucasian, with a minority describing themselves as African American, Native American, and/or multi-racial; (b) the majority of study participants were born from 1946-55; however, the range of birth was from 1940 through 1965; (c) most participants described themselves as married with less than one-fourth describing themselves as divorced, single or widowed; and (d) most of these women were mothers--some even independently added that they were “proud” grandmothers. Other information provided by the participants revealed that the participants were equally divided in their employment between school building administration and central office positions.

The demographics of these women showed numerous commonalties; however, it is the context in which these women have lived that shaped their individual choices and circumstances. There was almost no commonality in the career paths of these women except that all had once been teachers. Though all of the participants indicated they did not plan to pursue the superintendency, the reasons were varied. To honor their
individualism, the findings are saturated with quotations from the participants.

Attaining a Doctoral Degree

All of the women participating in this study had attained a doctoral degree—the highest degree offered by colleges and universities. Nationally, the number of women holding doctoral degrees has increased with almost 59% of doctoral degrees in education being earned by women (Hayes & Flannery, 2000). 48 participants responded to the request to list their degrees. Of the 48 responses, 44 participants listed a Doctor of Education degree and 4 listed a Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Earning a doctoral degree takes time, resources, effort and ability. An analysis of participant responses when asked what factors influenced their decision to attain a doctoral degree yielded the following major categories: (a) intrinsic motivation; (b) outside influences and; (c) being prepared. Individual circumstances created the context for these participants’ decisions. Quotations from the interviews are included to allow the participants’ stories to be told in their own words.

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation was a common theme among study participants. Many mentioned a love of education and a desire to achieve to their highest potential. These women felt that earning a doctoral degree was a worthwhile achievement. When viewed holistically, it was apparent that
the women in this study were high achievers who valued education.
Participant 11 provided a reflection of this prevalent mood in describing her reasons for pursuing a doctoral degree. “I have always loved education (the excitement of the first day of school, the smell of pencils and crayons, the thrill of reading a brand-new book). It just seems natural to go as far as you can.”

Many participants mentioned that attaining a doctoral degree was simply a personal goal. “I am completely self-motivated. I have wanted to obtain my doctorate all my life and simply did so. I am a person who loves mental challenges-in fact would probably shrivel up if I did not have them,” stated Participant 3.

Participant 27 also had a long-time dream of completing her doctoral degree.

I decided to work on my doctorate because it had been a goal for me for many years. It was one of those mountains I wanted to climb. I have always liked school so it was natural for me to continue my work.

Participant 17 reported that attaining a doctoral degree was a personal goal. She added, “I was the first person in my family to ever complete this degree.”

Several participants mentioned their families when describing their personal goal of attaining a doctoral degree. For example, Participant 16
stated, “It was a personal goal of mine. My family values education. My dad encouraged us to get as much education as possible. As I progressed through positions, I noticed that doctorates are taken more seriously. But the bottom-line, it was a personal goal of mine because I was taught learning was important.”

In spite of many challenges, Participant 25 was determined to fulfill her goal of attaining a doctoral degree.

It was something I had always wanted to do. Many of my family members have advanced degrees. When I went back...my former husband gave me hell...Many people questioned me about getting the degree...but it gives me great satisfaction and I truly enjoyed almost all of the process.

Childhood circumstances helped shape the goal of Participant 3 to attain a doctoral degree. She shared, “The factors that influenced me to obtain my doctorate are more internal than external. For me, it was to prove a point. There is an old African proverb that says, ‘It takes a whole village to raise a child.’ On the surface this is correct. But what happens when your village is not kind to you?” Participant 34 believed that based on her family situation her community had preconceived notions about what she would accomplish. She continued, “I was determined to beat the odds.”
Participant 24 set a goal when completing her master’s coursework. “When I was taking a research class at X, for my masters I had to critique a dissertation. I thought if the author of that dissertation was walking around being called Dr. —, so could I.”

Overwhelmingly the study participants were determined to attain the degree. The contextual situation for each participant was different, yet the end result was the same. Each earned the highest degree offered by a university.

*Outside influences*

Family, friends, and proximity to a university represented some of the external factors that influenced many participants to attain a doctoral degree. Though the reasons varied, many participants indicated the significant influence of other people and events. It should be noted that these factors were influences not coercive forces.

Participant 39 indicated that attaining a doctoral degree had always been a goal but she noted that because of work and family obligations, she did not pursue the degree until a university within driving distance started a doctoral program in educational administration. Several participants mentioned that their school systems worked together with universities to make it possible for them to further their education.

Participant 21 reported:
Our school system had a number of people who were interested in obtaining credentials for administrative positions so X University started a satellite program...for the educational specialist degree. After I completed that degree, I needed only a limited number of courses to complete a doctorate.

The expectations of family influenced a number of participants to attain their doctoral degree. Participant 9 reflected:

My grandfather always told me, ‘Get all the education you can because it is the one thing that no one can take away from you.’ I went to college...and did not stop until I completed my doctorate. I went fulltime for my undergraduate degree and went part-time for the other degrees/certifications.

Research on women entering educational administration has highlighted the importance of mentors by suggesting that having a mentor/advocate provides a distinct advantage when progressing up the educational leadership ladder (Edson, S., 1995; Gardinier, et al, 2000; Gupton & Schlick, 1996). The following quotes illustrate support for that research as mentors and/or others in administrative positions encouraged several participants to attain a doctoral degree.

Participant 35 was influenced by two women administrators who had doctoral degrees to pursue a doctoral degree. Additionally, she started the program to “...get the attention of the personnel director and principals. I
figured they could pass me over if I had equal qualifications, but a 
doctorate would give me the advantage.”

Participant 10 shared, “A former superintendent of mine encouraged 
me to continue my education.” Participant 31 was also encouraged by an 
administrator. She reflected, “I love learning. My principal urged (and 
supported) me to earn my administrator’s license. It was really fun to be 
in school-and one thing led to another and I was in a doctoral program....”
A combination of factors influenced several participants’ decisions to 
attain a doctoral degree. For example, Participant 7 stated, “My pursuit 
of a doctorate was an expectation of several influential people in my life 
including close family members, friends and at least one mentor.” This 
participant also mentioned that she had a good university close by.

Indicating a combination of outside influences factored into her 
attainment of a doctoral degree, Participant 22 explained:

When finishing up the Ed.S. at X University, one of my professors 
encouraged me to go on and work on the doctorate while I could still 
apply some of the hours toward it. I checked out the program (most 
of my course work is at University X because of proximity to my 
home), talked it over with my husband...

Participant 30 noted:

“...a new program at University X offered me the opportunity to 
pursue the degree while allowing me to work. My advanced
certificate was earned at X and the faculty invited me to apply for the doctoral program as well—that helped!”

The circumstances varied, but these participants felt that attaining a doctoral degree was a worthy accomplishment.

Being prepared

A desire to be prepared for whatever may happen was a common theme among participants. Attaining a doctoral degree afforded the extra leverage some participants felt they might someday need. Research indicates that more women than men hold doctoral degrees in education and that school boards increasingly expect candidates to hold this credential (Glass et al., 2000).

Participant 4 stated, “I knew that I would be working 10-12 years into the new century and I thought I might need a doctorate to be competitive.” Participant 41 shared, “My desire to always be prepared influenced my decision because you never know what may happen in life.”

Many participants were interested in creating options for career advancement. Participant 7 wanted to create as many options as possible.

I was required to take additional courses to add to my license-I decided to pursue the doctorate rather than just taking courses without counting them toward a degree. I also had a desire to pursue a doctorate to open the full range of possible options for career choices.
Participant 13 saw attaining a doctoral degree as necessary for being prepared for the competition inherent in climbing the career ladder. I began my doctorate during my teaching years. It was my intention to become a high school principal and perhaps later a superintendent, and at the time both were men’s clubs so I thought a doctorate might give me some employment leverage.

Participant 15 also mentioned, “...the need to obtain [the doctoral degree] as a bargaining chip in competing with men in my profession.”

A marked number of participants were influenced to attain a doctoral degree because of an interest in teaching at a university. Participant 26 reflected, “I anticipated that I would enjoy teaching at the college level as a new adventure.” Participant 30 realized that, “I was also interested in teaching at the university level and realized that a doctoral degree would be required.” Looking ahead to retirement, Participant 36 shared, “One of my professional goals was to teach in a university after retirement, so I knew this would be beneficial to this pursuit.” Participant 40 also was thinking ahead. “I wanted to teach at the college level and be in a position to have more career options after I retire from public education.”

Whether as a bargaining chip or as part of a master career plan, these participants expressed that a doctoral degree afforded them additional opportunities. The degree helped prepare them for future opportunities.
Effect on Personal Life

The price of acquiring a doctoral degree is not only monetary. When asked about the effects of attaining a doctoral degree on their personal lives, there was a continuum of responses ranging from very little to major, with the majority of participants responding that it took a significant toll on their lives. Giving up all leisure activities (e.g., time with friends, going on vacation, participating in church and family activities) was a common element reported by the majority of participants. The participant quotes below highlight the continuum of diversity of responses.

Little effect

Having little effect on her personal life, Participant 1 shared:

Pursuing a doctorate was one of the most positive experiences of my life. I was able to go fulltime.... At 35 it was a welcome change. My program was challenging and I made some wonderful friends. The experience has helped me with self-discipline and I experienced a real sense of accomplishment. My husband was my true advisor...

He and I thrived from the kinds of dialogue an academic program can engender.

Participant 34 also experienced little effect on her personal life. Pursuing her degree occurred when she was recently divorced with no children. Participant 34 explained:
“I think it was probably the time in my life when I was the most focused and the most fully integrated as an individual, as well as the most spiritual. All arrows seemed to be pointed in the right direction.”

Participant 5 worked on doctoral coursework at the same time as her husband. At the time, the couple had no children. She reminisced, “...he and I had lots of conversations...most often on the nuances of whatever course we were taking at the time. On weekends we had research parties that we usually capped off with special dinners in town.”

Though Participant 21 admitted there an effect on her personal life, she did feel much spousal support.

My husband was very supportive .... My husband would do things with the children so I could stay at home and do work or go to classes. I stayed up late at night after I had done other things at home (cook dinner, spend time with the children, etc.). I had very limited free time that was not spent with either my family, work or with my academic work.

These participant’s experiences draw attention to the importance of spousal support on success.

*Major effect*

On the other end of the continuum, Participant 20 shared, “...I thought I would end up in a ‘loony bin’...” Both Participants 10 and 16 responded,
“What personal life?” Though different in many ways, these women had in common the shared feeling that attaining a doctoral degree had a major impact on their time. Several participants felt their families had suffered whether directly or indirectly. Participant 12 shared:

My daughter told her kindergarten teacher (during a discussion of what parents do) that her mother ‘sat at the dining room table and studied.’ I had significantly less time for parenting for three years. I think my kids did fine but my marriage didn’t make it (probably wouldn’t have anyway).

Also reporting a significant impact on her personal life, Participant 6 reflected:

This was major! Because of the economy and our need for two incomes, I worked fulltime while getting the degree. I always felt torn between my wanting to complete my goal and being a good mother and wife. I attempted the ‘superwoman’ thing. Life was a constant balancing job. My husband often resented my efforts though he would praise my efforts and goal in public. His life changed where he had to deal with the kids more and that often became a struggle between us. I personally felt I had to maintain the delicate balance from before pursuing my goal and this new one.

Research on motivation supports that intrinsic motivation sustains while external motivation does not (Amabile, 1983; Deci, Koestner &
Ryan, 2001). For most of the participants, the rewards of attaining a doctoral degree were those of self worth and accomplishment. Whether the effects on their personal lives were minor or major, participants felt that attaining the degree was worthy.

Superintendent Certification

In contrast to nationwide data (Glass, 2000) that acknowledges only 10% of women in graduate education leadership programs earn the superintendent’s credential along with their educational specialist or doctorate in the field of education, 100% the participants in this study had the credential. An analysis of the interview question, “What factors influenced your decision to attain a superintendent’s certificate?” yielded two major categories: (1) it came with the degree and (2) creating options. Again, a number of responses indicated a combination of the two though slightly more women mentioned that certification was just a part of their program of study. It is worth noting that the majority of participants had a Doctor of Education degree received from North Carolina universities.

With the degree

Included in this category are women who received certification from North Carolina universities as well as women who moved to North Carolina and were granted the certification without any special request for it.
Participant 6 shared, “When I came to NC ... and my credentials were reviewed, I was granted the superintendent’s certificate without requesting it.” Participant 26 also moved to North Carolina and was granted the certification. “The superintendent’s certificate came as an automatic endorsement here in North Carolina when I submitted my transcripts for principal licensure.”

The majority of participants reported that they received the superintendent certification as part of a degree program. Participant 10 responded, “I already had the coursework as part of my doctoral program so I applied for the license with my degree.” Participant 31 shared, “Actually as I was pursuing my doctorate, the superintendent’s license ‘came with the package.’” Noting the importance of being prepared, Participant 18 reflected that the certification was “Part of the package for attaining my doctorate. It just was the natural thing to do. After all, ‘Chance favors the prepared mind’.” As illustrated by the above quotes from participant interviews, the degree was an aside consequence, not the purpose.

A number of participants mentioned that although the certificate came with the degree, they were pleased because it added additional options. Participant 22 stated, “I did not pursue a superintendent’s certificate—it just came because of the degrees, however, having the certificate did enable me to be prepared for assistant superintendent positions.”
Participant 4 expected the credential would come in handy. She responded, “It sort of came with the doctorate in education leadership... I knew I probably wanted to be an assistant superintendent one day.”

It was apparent that most participants did not set out to attain the superintendent’s credential. Participants were, however, happy to have it as the credential did create the potential for additional opportunities if the participants chose to seek those opportunities.

Creating options

Several participants added superintendent certification to create additional options and opportunities mentioning that they needed all the credentials possible to compete. Research supports the notion that women have more credentials than their male counterparts (Glass, et al, 2000). Believing that high qualifications were an asset, Participant 29 shared her reasons for seeking the certification.

Choice...I believed it possible that someday, I might consider superintendency or a position as an assistant superintendent. I wanted to be in a position to make a difference in education, not just job hop to raise my salary....my formal educational degrees and certificates enable me to have choices that I would not otherwise have. I also believe that women leaders must be viewed as being highly qualified – more so than men.
Seeking expanded choices, Participant 30 felt that the credential would offer flexibility with her career options.

The superintendent’s certificate offered me some flexibility with my career that I felt was essential. At the time of my doctoral work, I was not certain whether I wanted to pursue a superintendency or not, but it does seem to be a requirement for most of the positions directly under a superintendent.

Participant 23 echoed, “I decided to seek this certification in order for me to be able to seek a position as assistant or associate superintendent in the future if indeed this is a desire.”

Participant 5 shared, “...I know this is not very scientific, but it was a ‘why not?’ kind of thing. I was looking at 15 years more in my career and I thought that opening that door would be handy if opportunity came calling.”

Highlighting a desire for a broad range of options, Participant 21 stated:

I was mainly interested in becoming a principal, but the courses I as taking also could be used to obtain a superintendent’s certificate. I took courses that would give me a broad range of options for jobs when I finished my doctorate.

A few participants were encouraged to add the additional courses to earn the credential. Participant 27 shared, “My doctoral committee
wanted me to have a superintendent’s certificate. They wanted me to have every credential available.” Participant 25 also reported that her cohort that was strongly encouraged by their instructors to add certification. She added, “I never wanted to be a superintendent.”

Participant 34 shared that as part of an education specialist degree program, she was told by her instructors to be sure to take the extra two classes to add the superintendency to their certificates; she did.

A few participants shared that they acquired the certificate specifically in case they wanted to someday pursue the superintendency. Participant 28 reflected on her reasons for seeking the credential.

In case I ever did want to pursue a superintendent position in our school system. If I ever did pursue the position, it would be my last five years or so before retirement. As you well know, superintendents do not stay in the same position very long.

Participant 7 also got the credential in the event she wanted to pursue the position of superintendent. “I was interested in the option of pursuing a superintendent’s position if I chose to do so.”

Choice was a word mentioned repeatedly by participants. Having a choice of options to expand their opportunities seemed important to participants. Whether by coincidence or by planning, the majority of participants indicated satisfaction in having the credential.
The Superintendency

The women in this study held both a doctorate in the field of education and a superintendent’s license and all reported that they were not interested in the pursuit of the superintendency. The prevailing tone of the interviews was one of negativity toward the position of superintendent. Participants shared that their goals did not align with their perceptions of the superintendency. Even those participants who had thought about seeking the position cited that their aspiration had changed. Many cited that the superintendency created a dissonance between work and lifestyle pursuits and that they valued a more balanced role of home and work than the superintendency offered. Though the reasons were varied and the circumstances diverse, the following emerged as common factors participants were not interested in pursuing the superintendency: (a) lifestyle issues; (b) age; (c) politics; (d) too removed from children; and (e) not a career goal.

*Lifestyle issues*

There were a wide variety of issues related to lifestyle. The importance of family, the lack of desire to move, a desire for a more balanced approach to work and home were some of the issues mentioned by participants. A number of participants mentioned motherhood as a factor influencing their decision not to pursue the superintendency. Participant 17 shared. “I want time with my teenage daughter and not working 24 hours a day,
seven days a week. It appears that most successful superintendents have to divorce their families and friends to accomplish the expectations of the public.”


Like a number of others, Participant 31 cited a desire for time to pursue additional things as the reasons for not pursuing superintendency. “Personal choice—I want some personal time. I have worked very hard. I enjoy work, but I want to have time to read, to spend with my family, to sleep!” There was a prevailing feeling throughout the majority of the interviews that the participants placed more value on home than on work.

Many participants were unwilling to move. As evidenced in the review of literature, research supports that mobility is a factor that presents barrier for many women in seeking superintendency. Though their reasons varied, it was evident from participant responses that lack of mobility presents a marked deterrent for many of these women as well. Participant 30 reflected:

There are a few elements of the superintendency that are not appealing to me. The first and major issue is that of relocating. My husband has a position in another district that he has enjoyed. Any
decision to relocate my job would have a significant effect on his career, and neither of us would consider a major career change without lots of conversation with the other. Superintendents’ tenure in this state is so short that I would need to consider the overall effects on his job before accepting a position that limited his career possibilities.

Even knowing that she lived in a district that was not accepting of female leadership, Participant 32 was not willing to move. I live in a county of ‘good ole’ boys’ and a female superintendency would be highly unlikely if not downright impossible. At this time in my life, I do not desire to move to another location. My husband and I own a highly successful business and we are essentially non-mobile. Plus, I am very happy in my present position, feeling that I am truly making a difference.

Participant 20 mentioned relocation in combination with the constant scrutiny a superintendent is under as factors influencing her decision not to pursue the superintendency. I have worked in two types of school districts—large, urban/suburban districts and one a very small, suburban district. In each case the superintendent (1) lives in a fish bowl and (2) is “on 24/7.” This really doesn’t interest me! While I might possibly be interested in a small district that wasn’t full of ‘high
maintenance’ parents, I doubt such a situation exists! Also, to find such a position I would have to be mobile and while I have done that in the past, I’m really not interested in that currently.

Health, elder care, and time were among the other life-style issues mentioned by participants when addressing the factors influencing their pursuit of the superintendency. As evidenced in the literature, women tend to take on the responsibilities of the home. Many participants felt that there would not be enough time to devote home responsibilities and that in the frenzy to balance everything, their health and mental well-being would suffer.

Age

Several participants mentioned age as a factor influencing their decision not to seek the superintendency. However, age was always mentioned in combination with other reasons. Participant 18 responded, “Age, Roots—I do not want to move. I also do not want the political hassle.” Participant 26 also responded that, “Age and lack of desire for the job” affected her decision not to pursue the superintendency.

As a part of a combination of factors, age had an influence on Participant 36’s decision not to pursue the superintendency.

First and foremost, the overwhelming responsibility that comes with managing an entire school system. Had I been younger maybe I would have pursued the challenge. But I believe the combination
of working on my doctorate and serving as fulltime principal helped me to understand more clearly I was ready to slow down and ‘smell the roses’.

Politics

The politics of the position was a factor influencing many participants’ avoidance of the superintendency. Research by Glass et al. (2000) complements these study participants’ beliefs that the politics associated with the position of superintendent are a hindrance. This research reports that school board relationships, community pressure/special interest groups and board expectations are increasingly difficult factors for superintendents. Participants in this study indicated that the demands of the position outweighed the satisfaction. They were not interested in being out front and in the public spotlight. Participant 22 stated:

The superintendent is a very political position. I have watched the position change into a more political one during my years in education. The person is expected to respond to a Board with many agendas (very unlike trustees of community colleges or Boards of other agencies). They want to control certain aspects and sometimes want to make decisions that are not in the best interest of the system of children. Trying to keep a Board of 7-9 people working together and working toward the best interest of the
system is difficult especially when they are trying to respond to their voters. The job is all consuming – and every decision is wrong to someone. I did not need that position or title to feel good about what I do.

Very frank in her answer, Participant 24 shared, “[that the superintendency was] too political for me. I am not the type of individual that can kiss-up in order to get a job.” Participant 48 also had little tolerance for the politics of the job.

Politics, Politics, Politics...I am not one who has the patience with the ridiculous games required of current superintendents in their efforts to be effective. With many boards of education being comprised of lay people with minimal education, I have an extremely hard time with decisions based on personal agendas and ignorance of what is best for children. I am one who enjoys the work and will be your strongest supporter but am not interested in the credit or attention that superintendency brings.

Participant 4 also preferred shaping decisions from behind the scenes. I think the ‘junky-mess’ that superintendents have to endure has put me off. I do not like being the ‘point-woman.’ I would rather play behind the scenes and be a constructive influence that way than be constantly in the spotlight.
Having spent time in and around the operations of a school board and seeing firsthand how political it was, Participant 7 noted:

I had close personal contact with school board operations for over 10 years. I prefer the less political position of X primarily because I enjoy the direct contact with principals, teachers and schools and enjoy politics less than instruction and curriculum.

Clearly, politics deters many participants from the superintendent position. As evidenced from their anecdotes, participates avowed a strong aversion toward the politics associated with the superintendency.

Removed from children

The superintendency was perceived by many participants to be too far removed from children. There was a sense from participants’ interviews that the superintendency was more about management and less about children and education. Their lack of desire in pursuing the superintendency was not about being able to handle the managerial duties as much as a desire not to handle them. Participant 6 reflected:

Several times I was asked to seek the superintendent position and every time I thought about it I realized I liked working with teachers and instruction, directly. It was about kids and teachers and I liked it. I frankly did not want the responsibility. I did not want to ‘play’ negotiator. I believe I was still a teacher at heart and that perspective never left me when I went into administration. I
had a staff of over 350 teachers who believed in me as having the interest of instruction and learning in all that I did. I liked it.

Seeing the superintendency as too far removed from children and recognizing that she had a more focused interested, Participant 9 acknowledged:

I have never had any interest in being in a position that did not allow me to have hands-on daily contact with children. I also have no interest in anything other than X. Although I have been offered several other principalships, central office positions, and post-second education positions I have declined all offers because I am very happy in my present position and continue to feel challenged in the daily leadership responsibilities associated with my position.

Participant 29 mentioned that she had often thought about why she had not pursued the superintendency. It seemed to be a more subconscious decision than a concrete, conscious one. She shared:

I have not done so...and I often think about this decision. I will lay a piece of my soul out here...I like being close to children, hugging them, watching them grow, protecting their school environment, keeping it safe for them, working to make learning interesting...all these reasons and more. I have recognized that I am not a good bureaucrat. In the past several years, political leaders and communities have different values from ME. I value children
learning, and helping all children learn to become successful citizens and human beings. Education has become such a political plant for well-intentioned but ignorant initiatives that I felt I would be more effective remaining close to children.

The desire of women to be closer to children is somewhat consistent with research that notes with expanded opportunities in the private sector, women may be going into education not for administrative positions but rather to teach (Edson, 1995; Glass, 2000). Inconsistent somewhat with the reviewed research is that the findings of this study that supports that building administration seems to meet the need of women to be closer to children. The participants however did not believe that the position of superintendent allowed for enough contact with children. They viewed the superintendency as too removed from children and instruction.

*Not a career goal*

Though they acquired the credentials, some participants admitted, as did Participant 23, that, “I like working in the school setting with students. I have never had a desire to become a school superintendent because of the great demands of the job.” Other participants recognized that they would not enjoy the superintendency for a variety of reasons. Participant 43 recognized that the superintendency would not be a good match for her.
My key deterrent is my personality. I know I would want to make everyone happy, and I would worry about major problems until they were solved. I am a curriculum, ‘kid’ person, not a litigation person. I deal with far more personnel problems and general complaints, even as a principal, than I prefer. I just have no desire to spend my day dealing with district complaints, worrying about pending and current lawsuits, and cleaning up messes in schools that probably could have been prevented.

Never imagining herself in charge of a school system, Participant 25 confessed:

I have never really liked any of my superintendents or the way they have done their jobs and I could never imagine myself in such a role. I love seeing the children every day and working with a small staff where I feel I make a difference. I think a superintendent must have a drive and a need for power or control beyond what I have.

Several participants wrote that they were never interested in the superintendency. For example, Participant 1 noted, “I was never interested in being a superintendent. I was interested in being a Director of Exceptional Children, but now I am happier with the direction my career has taken.”
Barriers to the Superintendency

Deliberately framed to ask about barriers in general (not just barriers for females), participants were asked what barriers they thought kept potential candidates from pursuing the superintendency. It should be noted that some participants responded about all candidates, while others focused only on female candidates.

The findings of this study question revealed consistency with national findings on barriers (Chase & Bell, 1994, Glass, et. al 2000) that have been identified as deterring candidates from the superintendency. The common factors of politics, tenure, relocation, lack of balance between home and work were mentioned. Additionally, the participants recognized that in some places gender and race were issues affecting the attainment of the superintendency. Boards of education were seen as barriers. Many participants shared negative views about board politics. This finding is also consistent with national studies.

The participant responses regarding barriers deterring others from the superintendency were multifaceted and varied. Common themes emerged but the responses often weaved across one theme then through another. For example, tenure was mentioned in combination with politics and mobility. To account participants’ views accurately and to highlight the finding that there was no one factor acting as a deterrent to the
superintendency, quotes were loosely organized around the following categories: (a) politics; (b) gender issues; and (c) lifestyle issues.

**Politics**

The politics of the position was mentioned repeatedly as a negative factor. Participant 40 stated, “I think the biggest barrier involves the ‘politics’ that consume the position. Working with school boards, special interest groups, and other politicians, often demand more of your time.” Participant 34 believed that a combination of factors related to the politics of the job deterred potential candidates from superintendency. She stated, “Politics. Lack of stability in the job (average tenure is approximately five years). Local boards becoming involved in the day-to-day management of building level activities” as deterrents to pursuing the superintendency.

When speaking of both male and female candidates, Participant 30 shared that politics and tenure were discouraging to all candidates. For women, she believed that mobility and perceptions of school boards kept them from pursuing the superintendency.

If you are speaking of all candidates, I have to say that politics and brief tenure records are discouraging some candidates. A superintendent looks very much like the CEO of a large company from the outside, but there are few companies dealing with the laws, policies, and politics of public schools. It is a very complex position and one that is getting more difficult every year. For
women, I think there are several significant barriers. The first is the issue of transience. For women who have children particularly children who are still in school, there is a greater tendency for them to postpone significant job changes if they require moving. My only son is..., and I would not have considered upsetting his important years of junior high and high school for my own career. The second issue is that I truly believe that many BOE [Board of Education], consisting largely of men, are not comfortable with women in the superintendent’s chair. There is a perceived toughness for which many board members consider women inadequate. Finally, many women are perceived as being very narrow in their professional focus. Often they are not seen as being global enough in professional knowledge or even interest to administer an entire school system.

Though reluctant to admit it, Participant 9 felt that the gender issues might dissuade females from attaining the position. For all candidates, she felt politics and public relations would put off potential candidates.

I believe the politics and public relations would be major barriers. If a person was seriously considering pursuing a superintendency you would have to assume they were qualified in the major job tasks and that the daily responsibilities would not be deterrents. Of course a superintendent puts in long hours but so do principals!
I also suppose (although I hate to admit that I have seen this firsthand) that the ‘good ole boy’ network might be a barrier for some female applicants.

*Gender issues*

Interestingly, when asked what barriers affected others from pursuing the superintendency, the “good old boys club” was mentioned more often. It also should be noted that there was a feeling that many areas in North Carolina were not ready to accept a female superintendent. Participants acknowledged that the situation was changing but did feel that gender and at times race were issues to be considered. Participant 35 reflected:

> I do believe it is difficult for a woman to become a superintendent. I have only worked for one woman principal. She met with a lot of resistance from faculty members, both men and women. A black female assistant superintendent in our system has never advanced to superintendent, although I believe she would be successful in that position. X County has made some progress, but it is still pretty dominated by a ‘good old boys’ club’.

Participant 6 believed that there were fewer barriers for female candidates in contemporary society. She did, however, acknowledge that stereotypical behaviors still existed but suggested that as society changes, these behaviors may become less of an issue.
I think you mean potential *female* candidates, yes? On that assumption I think the barriers are less than ten years ago. Most boards of education are male so female applicants need to have a charismatic way in the interview process plus be able to back up your position better than a male would be expected to. There is definitely an ‘old boy’ feeling out there between Boards of Education and the superintendent. The first woman after a succession of men is often set up for failure, as they break the ice, for others. I also think geographic location is a consideration. Fortunately, times are changing and the opportunities are growing for women in this field. One thing to think about is the current exiting of males serving as volunteers on boards of education and leaving teaching, in general. It has the potential for major change.

Issues associated with traditional gender roles were mentioned repeatedly by participants. Believing that most women put home and family before career, Participant 8 shared:

For most women, I think the job of wife and mother outranks the career climbing motivation. We have a young principal in our system now who is forgoing her personal life (no boyfriend, no social life)... but will she have two great sons and two wonderful grandchildren like I have?
Participant 27 suggested that issues such as family responsibilities and lack of a networking system affect candidates. Her thoughts are consistent with national research (Edson, 1995; Glass, 2000).

Many barriers are out there for potential candidates. Family responsibilities are always there for individuals who are married with children. Some females do not have a network within the educational area and some school systems just will not consider a female for the superintendent’s job.

Perceptions associated with gender continue to influence the roles and expectations of women (Hakim, 2000b; Grogan 1999).

**Lifestyle issues**

A wide variety of issues related to lifestyle were mentioned as major deterrests for others seeking the superintendency as participants believed that the demands of the superintendency were many and the rewards few. The importance of family, the lack of desire to move, a desire for a more balanced approach to work and home were some of the issues mentioned by participants. “I think for many the ‘big bucks’ that accompany the job do not make up for the perception of life in the wash machine and spin dryer,” reflected Participant 5.

Recognizing that the superintendency is a position with high demands that leave little time for other pursuits, Participant 36 listed a multitude
of factors deterring candidates from the superintendency and described the position in terms of war.

The amount of time required of a superintendent...the never ending responsibility of balancing financial responsibilities...constant battling with political leaders for educational funding...constant battling with unhappy parents...managing inadequate space for classrooms when commissioners are not willing to adequately support public education...constant demands from legislators to raise test scores...The conditions/environment is usually a battlefield. The superintendent is a soldier always fighting an uphill battle just to maintain status-quo.

Repeatedly participants mentioned that relocation was a factor that deterred potential candidates from the position. Participant 17 thought that relocation would not be easy for people with families. She also felt that the superintendency left little time for family and friends.

Public expectations, long hours, family, friends and life in general. The short term of a superintendent in a district would require uprooting families and making moves that a lot of people don’t desire. In addition, it has become a political position in many districts rather than one of managing the education program. If someone isn’t political, they can forget their change of success.
The short tenure of the superintendency that in turn affects mobility is a deterrent that participants mentioned and this complements other research. Illustrating the point, Participant 4 stated:

The fact that the average tenure of a superintendent is less than four years is a huge barrier. I think ‘movement-wise’ being a superintendent is worse than being in the military. The wear and tear on the nerves of constant criticism and contention, as well as the moving has to be wearing on families and family life.

Recognizing that moving is difficult for people with families, Participant 19 noted, “You have to be able to apply for openings until you succeed and be willing to move wherever you land an assistant superintendency and then superintendency. That is not easy for someone with other family members to consider.”

Consistent with other research (Edson, 1995; Scherr, 1995; Grogan, 1996, Glass, 2000) the conditions of practice associated with the superintendency are deterring qualified candidates away from the superintendency.

Advice

What advice would you give a woman who wanted to pursue the superintendency? This question was posed to the study participants. Their advice generally fell into three categories: (a) know and be yourself; (b) be cautious; and (c) go for it.
**Know and be yourself**

Participants believed in the importance of self-awareness. Research suggests that some women “de-feminize” as they move into administration (Bell, 1995). These participants encouraged the opposite. They believed that women should be comfortable with who they are. Participant 4 shared, “My advice would be to be her own person while being aware of the political context in which she works. Don’t be afraid to wear her femininity but be an iron hand inside a velvet glove.”

Also believing in the importance of self-awareness, Participant 29 advised:

Know your ‘SELF’. Believe in your ‘SELF’. Be knowledgeable. A woman who wants to become a superintendent CAN more easily today than ten years ago. Be willing to move. Look for a ‘goodness of fit’ between personal goals and characteristics and a superintendent’s position.

Participant 34 encouraged, “Be yourself and don’t try to prove that you can do the job because you are a woman. Be accessible to your customers.”

A study by Brunner (1998, p.186) found that successful female superintendents offered as a strategy for success the notion that it was important to “act like a woman.” Being female can and should be seen as a strength.
Be cautious

Negative perceptions of the superintendency and the discipline it takes to balance the demands of work and home influenced the advice given by many participants. Participant 32 advised, “Of all the possible positions available in the field of education, I would think twice about the reasons behind wanting a superintendent's position with so many accompanying headaches and problems. Life is short; is it worth it?”

Concerns about family were evident in much of the advice given by participants. A few saw the superintendency as an either or position.

Feeling that the superintendency was an either or position, Participant 17 simply advised, “Decide what you want—family or career.” The traditional roles of gender framed much of the advice shared by Participant 38.

Don’t do it if you plan to have any type of family life or have young children. Employ someone to take care of the usual household duties that you normally complete. Establish time for your family and stick to it. Plan to eat out a lot. Schedule your annual physical and don’t forget that as we age, our bodies and minds change. Address the issue and don’t pretend that it doesn’t impact you. Don’t let the position rule your life. Employ good staff and remember that some of the people who were in the system when you came can and will be your most valuable asset if you place
confidence and trust in their skills and work. Don’t try to be perfect and prove yourself. Remember that the people who work for you have a life outside the school district. Don’t send them emails over the holidays and on weekends so that they are covered up the moment they walk into the office the next morning. It is discouraging. Learn to be politically correct but remember that the ultimate goal is educating children. Don’t let your desire for public favor change your goals. Most importantly, don’t bring in your “buddies” from outside the district until you give people already employed an opportunity to learn about you and your goals. They may be a greater asset and will help reduce a lot public criticism. Remember that just because you are a woman doesn’t mean that everything has to be perfect. This isn’t Martha Stewart’s show and life isn’t perfect. Plan on having a stiff chin because it is going to be punched no matter how hard you work.

Being able to separate the job from home was advice that was given by several participants. Participant 46 encouraged others to be self-reflective and to think about the impact of the job on the family unit.

Be sure you have the right personality to deal with the stressful issues at hand, and be sure your family is supportive of the time required to address the political and mandatory obligations of the position. We interviewed a female superintendent in X during our
class called The Superintendency. I just had to ask how she dealt with all the conflicts in the light of the fact that most females are nurturing peacekeepers by nature. She simply responded that she reminded herself each day that she did not love these people, and they were not part of her family. If you have to harden yourself each day to survive in a job, how worth it can it be to your mental well being or to your family each night?

As evidenced in the literature review and through the advice of the participants to other women, spousal support is critical for success. Several participants mentioned the necessity of spousal as well as family support. Participant 1 stated, “I would advise a woman wanting a superintendency to find a spouse whose job is very flexible. Or forget about a spouse.” Participant 46 encouraged, “Be sure to have a lot of family support.”

Evidenced by their accounts, many participants believed that the superintendency is a position that would require much thought before pursuing.

Go for it!

The importance of women acting as advocates for other women cannot be overemphasized (Edson, 1995). Advocates are supportive of other women and clearly believe that women are assets to school administration. Though not personally interested in the superintendency,
many participants like Participant 12 encouraged others to, “Go for it!” Participant 23 echoed, “Go for it!! Don’t allow the demands of the job to become overwhelming.”

Participant 6 advised, “If you think you want to try, go for it. Keep close contact with other female administrators across the country. Go to superintendent conferences. You need support. Don’t share too much information. Determine your power base and work it.” Participant 24 encouraged others to become advocates as well as to pursue the superintendency.

If that is a dream then go for it. Females can be very effective and make a difference no matter where they are. Be strong and don’t get emotional. No matter what field you are in, assist other females to get to your level also. Reach down and bring another female with you. Males have a great network. Females still struggle with sharing.

Having had mentors who were very influential in her career development, Participant 9 also felt that being an advocate was important.

I had a mentor—a professor in the doctoral program (now retired) that stood by me and made me feel as if I could do anything. I also had a superintendent at the time that I was pursuing my degree that called me weekly to check on my dissertation progress. I am
very appreciative of their support and I have tried to ‘pass it on’ by making it as easy as possible for teachers to obtain advanced degrees, pursue National Board Certification and participate in state-level projects. I strongly believe that as a female administrator I am obligated to help other females advance their careers.

A number of participants were fully supportive of others pursuing the superintendency. They believed that women should actively pursue the position and offered that mentors and advocates made a difference.

Summary of Findings

This study sought to discover the factors influencing women in North Carolina who held both a doctorate in the field of education and a superintendent’s certification not to pursue the superintendency. It was evident from the interviews that the participants in this study were articulate and confident of their abilities. As the findings are summarized, it is important to note that each personal circumstance was different. While collectively these women held both a doctorate in the field of education and a superintendent’s credential, their reasons to not pursue the superintendency varied. Each participant’s choices were shaped by her unique circumstances. There was no one cause or factor deterring participants from the superintendency though several issues repeatedly emerged. The belief that the negative demands of the superintendency
interfered with home and lifestyle issues kept many participants from pursuing the position.

Overwhelmingly, participants attained a doctoral degree for intrinsic reasons. Participants recognized that the doctoral degree equaled high achievement and felt that it was a worthy endeavor even if sacrifices had to be made. The participants had a desire to be the best they could be. Additionally, participants in discussing their decision to attain a doctoral degree mentioned outside influences and a need to be prepared. Many participants had thought ahead to retirement and mentioned that they wanted to be able to teach in a university.

The attainment of a superintendent’s credential came with the degree for most participants. It was a “nice extra.” For those who sought the certificate, it was more as insurance. Participants did not indicate a strong motivation in attaining the credential for pursuit of a position as superintendent.

The importance of motivation cannot be overlooked. Motivation can be defined as “a term to describe the forces internal to the individual that cause the person to behave in a goal directed manner” (Vasu, Stewart, & Garson, 1998, p.60). While intrinsically motivated to attain the highest degree offered by a university, the women in this study were not motivated to pursue the superintendency. Varied circumstances (lifestyle issues, age, need to be close to children, dislike of politics) influenced their
choice—yet in common they elected not to seek the top district position. The prevalent feeling in the interviews was that the superintendency was a position full of negatives. In the words of Participant 47, “...even the positives are in some way negative.”

A multitude of factors deterred the study participants from pursuing the North Carolina public school superintendency. Their choices were influenced by varied circumstances but in common they believed that the superintendency would not be a satisfying position.

The findings of this study indicate that there was no one factor influencing women with the credentials of a doctoral degree and a superintendent's certificate from pursuing the North Carolina public school superintendency; rather, a multitude of factors influenced the study participants' decisions not to seek the superintendency. Their choices were influenced by their circumstances—the contextual situations of each participant affected their decisions.
CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of the research, conclusions drawn from the results and general recommendations. Additionally, recommendations for future research are offered.

Summary

Women in North Carolina are under-represented in superintendent positions. With many women not interested in pursuing the North Carolina public school superintendency, and very little known about the reasons for this decision, it was the purpose of this study to explore why these women were not pursuing this position. This qualitative study of 49 women examined participants’ decisions to attain a doctoral degree as well as the effects of attaining this degree on their personal lives. The study found that the majority of women attained a doctoral degree mainly for personal reasons. Encouragement from outside sources and the need to be prepared were also mentioned as reasons for completing a doctoral degree. Many women had given thought to plans beyond their service in a school district and mentioned that having a doctoral degree would allow them to teach at a university.

Though the effects of attaining a doctoral degree on participants’ personal lives varied from very little to major, there was a sense of pride evident in the accomplishment. The tone of the responses was indicative
that the effects on their personal lives were worth the end accomplishment.

The study also sought to reveal the factors influencing these women to pursue superintendency certification. Most participants, however, received this credential as part of their program of study—as a coincidence not a conscious choice. It was not something they set out to accomplish. Most participants however did feel that the credential provided them with options. The study found that contrary to national trends, the study participants in North Carolina with a doctoral degree in education also held the superintendent’s credential.

By asking what factors the participants thought created barriers for others interested in the superintendency, this study collected information about the perceived barriers of the superintendency. Findings indicated that national research on the barriers women face in attaining the superintendency were remarkably similar to the factors mentioned by the North Carolina study participants. Participants in this study also were asked to share their advice to women who wanted to pursue superintendency. There was no consistent tone in the advice given. It ranged from “think twice” to “go for it!”

The findings of this study indicated that no one factor influenced women with the credentials of a doctoral degree in the field of education and a superintendent's certificate from not pursuing the North Carolina
public school superintendency. Rather, a multitude of factors influenced
the study participants' decisions not to seek the superintendency. The
contextual situations of participants affected their decisions.

Conclusions

Women educators in North Carolina were willing to support research
as evidenced by the high response rate of the topic feasibility study
conducted prior to this study and by the number of women who willingly
participated in this study. The large number of responses combined with
the richness of detail provided by the participants and the personal notes
of encouragement included with the participant interviews indicated that
a satisfactory job of creating empathy and trust with study participants
occurred. Using the information from the study, the following conclusions
were reached:

*Electronic communication has great potential utility for qualitative
research.*

Research (Mann & Stewart, 2000) cites concerns that when using
electronic research for qualitative research that observation is lost. This
fact may not, however, be negative. Electronic interviews provide a
medium that allow participants to share within the safety of the
communication. In this research study, participants shared very personal
and detailed information that they may not have been as comfortable
sharing face to face. Additionally, the use of electronic communication
allowed a greater number of participants to be interviewed. Travel costs were saved and participants were able to complete the interviews at their convenience. Transcription errors were avoided because the participants typed their own responses. Therefore, it is logical to contend that electronic interviews offer new possibilities for qualitative research.

*Contextual circumstances affect choices.*

The participants in the study were women in North Carolina employed in the public school system who, as a majority, were Caucasian, middle-aged, married and mothers. Yet, each participant had a unique set of circumstances that shaped her decisions not to pursue the superintendency. Two participants could have been from the same county, attended the same doctoral program, both married with children, yet the reasons each gave as factors influencing her decisions would be uniquely her own. These factors would have been shaped by the context in which the participant lived. Therefore, it is impossible to determine a fixed set of factors influencing the reasons women make the choices not to pursue the superintendency.

*Education is a valued achievement and institution.*

A doctoral degree is the highest degree offered by colleges and universities. Participants valued their own education as evidenced by the fact each had attained this degree. The participants overwhelmingly were motivated to earn a doctoral degree, even though many indicated
sacrifices were necessary to attain the degree. The participants in the study valued education and the choices and options it allowed.

Additionally, the participants in this study valued education as an institution. From their interviews, a sense that educating children was a worthwhile calling prevailed. Many mentioned that they felt they made a difference in the lives of children and in the educational community. The fact that many plan to teach at a university also supported the notion that they value education.

Women are under-represented in the North Carolina public school superintendency.

During the school year 2001-2002, women were under-represented in the North Carolina public school superintendency. The situation in the state was, and continues to be, consistent with the national picture with only a small percentage of women holding superintendents' positions. It was interesting that a majority of women in North Carolina who held a doctoral degree and a superintendent’s certificate were not interested in pursuing the superintendency. This finding is consistent with research by Scherr (1995) that indicated over half the women she interviewed who were qualified to pursue the superintendency were not interested in doing so. The low interest in the position may be a partial explanation for the small number of women in the position. If women do not apply, they
cannot be hired. Put another way, if the hiring pool is predominately male, women are under-represented from the start.

Universities should do more to educate potential candidates.

Universities must take a look at their education leadership programs. They should actively recruit highly qualified candidates and help create support networks for these candidates. It is not enough for students to acquire the superintendent’s credential as a part of a doctoral program without having the opportunity to understand the actual experience. Efforts must be made to understand how women’s decisions to pursue superintendency can be supported and facilitated.

Lifestyle choices affect decisions about work.

Consistent with other research (Edson, 1995; Glass 2000), lifestyle issues tremendously impacted the participants' decisions for not pursuing the public school superintendency. Balancing work and home is challenging. Participants valued their time and wanted to spend it in pursuits that they felt were worthy. Family, church and community responsibilities were important to the participants. Participants sought a more balanced approach to their lives. This conclusion supports the accuracy of preference theory in that women wanting both a career and home place a higher priority on home than career. Participant 11's response illustrated these feelings,
I've decided that the most important thing to me is my family. I want to spend as much time with them as possible. No job is worth sacrificing that present commodity. I am making a significant contribution in my current capacity, and I am extremely happy.

*Gender roles continue to influence the choices of women.*

Society is changing and the traditional roles of gender are blurring. However, in North Carolina communities there is, according to participants, a feeling of different expectations for men and women. Participants in this study were greatly influenced by traditional gender roles and these roles and expectations deterred a number of participants from pursuing the public school superintendency. The role of wife, mother and caretaker held more importance that the role of career.

The participants also thought that many boards of education and community members continued to have preconceived notions of women in the role of superintendent. These perceptions are consistent with other research (Scherr, 1995; Glass 2000).

*The issues surrounding mobility are deterents to pursuing the superintendency.*

Consistent with research that points to mobility as a deterrent (Edson, 1995; Glass 2000; Grogan, 1996), this study highlighted how aware participants are of the short tenure of the superintendency and how this affects candidates with families. Until policies provide help with this
issue, it will continue to keep qualified candidates from pursuing the superintendency.

*Perceptions of the superintendency influence the under-representation of women in the position.*

The participants in this study did not view the job of superintendent as rewarding. It was too political, too removed from children, too demanding. Unless perceptions of the superintendency change, it can be assumed that many women in North Carolina will continue to serve the education community in roles other than the superintendency.

*Intrinsic motivation is crucial.*

The participants in the study were highly motivated to attain a doctoral degree in the field of education. Personal motivation was the most frequently mentioned reason for participants' decision to attain a doctoral degree, though outside influences often affected participants' decisions. Many participants discussed the toll that earning a doctoral degree had on their personal lives; however, participants valued the degree and the empowerment that came with it. The participants felt the sacrifices they made (whether minor or major) to attain this degree were worthy—that the personal cost of the degree was paid off in the value of empowerment. Conversely, participants did not feel the same way about the superintendency. It would be logical to assume that if they felt
intrinsically motivated to attain the superintendency, they would find a way to meet that goal.

General Recommendations

Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, general recommendations are suggested to the following groups: (a) parents; (b) women; (c) superintendents; (d) school districts; (e) boards of education; (f) universities; and (g) professional associations.

Parents

Parents should make a conscious effort to avoid gender stereotyping. By avoiding the traditional male/female roles still prevalent in the United States, society will shift hence creating more opportunities for both genders. Both girls and boys should be exposed to a range of opportunities and experiences.

Parents also should be role models. Children and adolescents learn about the world from watching others behaviors. They should be conscious of how their perceptions of the roles of men and women are portrayed to their children. Parents should stop and think about what their children hear them say about careers, education, and homemaking responsibilities.

Women

Women should be conscious of their diversity and should be supportive of other women’s choices and decisions. Women leaders should take seriously the responsibility of mentoring other women.
Superintendents

Mentorship is important. Superintendents, especially female superintendents, should take an active role in recruiting highly qualified candidates. Superintendents also can be proactive in showcasing the more positive aspects of their job.

School districts

The recommendation for school districts is two-fold. First, school districts must assess the current status of educating females. Efforts should be made to make classrooms places of learning for both boys and girls. Schools should be conscious of unintended gender stereotyping.

Second, to encourage qualified candidates, school districts should review their policies and encourage high quality candidates from their own hiring pool to further their education. Prospective leaders already exist in school districts. What is needed is the removal of obstacles in the paths of these emerging leaders (Tallerico & Tingley, 2002). Paid internships to apprentice and sabbaticals to prevent burnout may be options to consider.

Boards of education

Boards of education need to develop a greater awareness of issues faced by women educators. They need training in issues related to the possible deterrents to the superintendency so that they might be
proactively avoided. Boards that are more enlightened make better choices.

Boards also should be more aware of the factors deterring qualified candidates from pursuing the superintendency. They may wish to examine their hiring practices and rationale. Boards of education should seek to raise their awareness of gender related issues.

Universities

Universities should strengthen their program to meet the needs of women learners. Universities should not only hire women faculty in educational leadership programs, but they should also bring in successful women leaders to participate in seminars, lectures, focused group discussions at all levels of the education program—undergraduate and graduate.

Schools of education should work closely with school districts, placement offices and professional associations to actively recruit qualified personnel into administration. Internship programs should provide female students with opportunities to interact with female superintendents. Educational administration programs at the graduate level need to reflect the particular needs of women leaders in North Carolina. Additionally, universities should contribute to the body of research on women in educational leadership by conducting and publishing studies in this area.
Professional associations

Professional associations should reexamine their commitment to the advancement of women. Issues affecting females in educational leadership positions should be included in conferences. Associations should be conscious in their planning as to include sessions on the issues affecting highly qualified candidates from avoiding the superintendency.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study as well as the interpretations of this author, the following research is recommended:

(1) A replication of this study in five to ten years to document what changes occurred.

(2) A comparative study of males in North Carolina who hold both doctoral degrees and superintendent’s certification to determine the similarities and differences with their female counterparts.

(3) An examination of Educational Leadership Programs in North Carolina Universities to see what is being done to encourage women to enter into the superintendency.
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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

*Information from NCDPI*

## People Currently Employed, Holding Superintendent's Certificate

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<th>Gender Analysis:</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
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### Degree Analysis:

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<tr>
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### Gender & Degree Analysis:

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<td>264</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
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<td>Advanced/6th Yr</td>
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<td>Male</td>
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**Note:** Variance in totals due to data not on file.

## Five Year Analysis of Employed Superintendents

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*NOTE: One vacant position.*

### Gender Analysis:

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*Note: Gender data not on file for one individual who began employment in 1999-2000*

### Degree Analysis:

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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Appendix B

Interview Questions

Patton (2002) suggests that to force the interviewer to be clear about what is being asked, types of questions should be distinguished between the following: experience and behavior questions; opinion and value questions; feeling questions; knowledge questions; sensory questions; and, background/demographic questions.

1) Please tell me about yourself. (background)

2) What factors influenced your decision to attain a doctoral degree? (behavior)

3) Describe the effects of pursuing your doctoral degree on your personal life. (experience)

4) What factors influenced your decision to attain a superintendent’s certificate? (behavior)

5) Tell me about your career path (please include any breaks in employment). (experience)

6) Describe your current job. (background)

7) What factors influenced your decision not to pursue the superintendency? (behavior)

8) What barriers do you believe deter potential candidates from pursuing the superintendency? (opinion and values)

9) What advice would you give a woman who wants to become a superintendent? (opinion and value)

10) Any additional information that you wish to share...

Demographic Questions (background)

1) In what year were you born?

2) What degrees do you hold? Please include degree, college/university and year of graduation.

3) What is your race/ethnicity?

4) What is your current marital status?

5) How many (if any) children do you have?

6) What are the ages of these children?
Appendix C

Questionnaire

Self-addressed, stamped folded cards included with the initial letter.

Initial Questions

1. I am currently employed in the NC Public Schools in a position other than superintendent.
   Yes      No

2. I hold a doctoral degree.
   Yes      No

3. I hold a superintendent's certificate.
   Yes      No

4. I plan to pursue the superintendency
   Yes      No

If willing to participate in future research, please print your e-mail address

________________________________________

Phone ________________


Appendix D

IRB Exemption

From: Debra A. Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: May 22, 2002

Project Title: NC Women Not Pursuing the Superintendency

IRB#: 133-02-5

Dear Ms. Faulconer:

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101.b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: M1263; the IRB Number is: 01XM.

2. Review de novo of this proposal is necessary if any significant alterations/additions are made.

Please provide a copy of this letter to your faculty sponsor. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Debra Paxton
NCSU IRR

Office of Research and Graduate Studies
Sponsored Programs and Regulatory Compliance
Campus Box 7514
1 Leazer Hall
Raleigh, NC 27695-7514
919.515.7200
919.515.7721 (fax)
Appendix E

Data from Topic Feasibility Study

Table 1

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<th>STATEMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. I hold a doctoral degree.</td>
<td>Yes 191, No 1, Blank 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I hold a superintendent's certificate.</td>
<td>Yes 192, No 0, Blank 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I plan to pursue the superintendency.</td>
<td>Yes 43, No 118, Blank 7, Undecided 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 107 of the 118 not planning to pursue the superintendency agreed to be interviewed.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENT Responding</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60.21%</td>
<td>Women not pursuing the superintendency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.94%</td>
<td>Women planning to pursue the superintendency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.67%</td>
<td>Women undecided about pursuing the superintendency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.61%</td>
<td>Women currently serving as a superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>No information given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 196 of 264 questionnaires were returned for a return response rate of 74.24%
Appendix F
North Carolina State University is a land-grant university and a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

From: Debra A. Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: November 18, 2002

Project Title: Choices and Circumstances: NC Women not Pursuing the Superintendency
IRB #: 291-02-11

Dear Ms. Faulconer:

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101.b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429; the IRB Number is: IRB00000330

2. Review de novo of this proposal is necessary if any significant alterations/additions are made.

Please provide a copy of this letter to your faculty sponsor. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Debra Paxton
NCSU IRB

Office of Research and Graduate Studies
Sponsored Programs and Regulatory Compliance
Campus Box 7514
1 Leazer Hall
Raleigh, NC 27695-7514
919.515.7200
919.515.7721 (fax)
Appendix G

E-Mail to participants

Dear Fellow Female Educator:
Thanks you so much for agreeing to help me with the completion of my doctoral studies! I know that you remember how I feel right now—anxious and eager. I am excited about this study and appreciate your help in completing my research. Unfortunately, I did not meet my intended goal of having interviews completed by the end of September. As a woman who has completed a doctoral degree, I can imagine that you understand about “best laid plans.” My new goal is to have all interviews completed by Friday, December 20, 2002. Looks like the holidays will be spent analyzing research!

On the questionnaire you completed, you indicated that you hold both a doctoral degree and a superintendent’s certificate and are not planning to pursue the superintendency. I am interested in the choices and circumstances surrounding that decision.

Anticipating the problems associated with using different platforms and hoping to prevent the spread of viruses, I am pasting the interview questions into the body of this e-mail. Using your mouse, please highlight the interview questions and paste them into a desktop file. Please contact me at 919-807-3831 or by e-mail if you are unsure of how to do this. By pasting the questions into a desktop file, you will be able to complete them at your convenience. Once completed, you have several options for sending back the completed questions. You can (1) copy the completed questions by using the copy function key and paste them into an e-mail back to me, (2) fax them to me at 919-807-3826; (3) save the completed questions in a Word file and attach them to an e-mail to me. If you save as an attachment, please call the document survey.doc. I would like to have all interviews completed by Friday, December 20, 2002. Please be reminded that all information will be kept strictly confidential and information collected will be reported in summary form. If you would like a copy of the research, my dissertation will be in an electronic database at NCSU. I will be happy to end you the link just let me know.

I truly appreciate your willingness to help me. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Again, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail me if I can be of assistance. Also, if you have additional questions or want to verify anything, you may reach my advisor at NCSU, Dr. Ken Brinson, at 919-513-4327 or at ken_brinson@ncsu.edu

Sincerely
Johna Faulconer
Doctoral Student
Home 919-934-8118
Work 919-807-3831
johnastarr@aol.com

Please highlight the two sections below, cut and paste into a desktop file. After completion, please return using one of the following options: (1) copy the completed questions by using the copy function key and paste them into an e-mail back to me; (2) fax them to me at 919-807-3826; (3) save the completed questions in a Word file and attach them to an e-mail to me. If you save as an attachment, please call the document survey.doc.

To help you plan, the pilot of this survey took about an hour.
After pasting into a desktop file, you may begin typing below each question.

**Part I: Open-ended Response**
Please answer the following questions by giving as much detail as possible. The depth of your responses will greatly affect my research.

Please tell me about yourself.

What factors influenced your decision to attain a doctoral degree?

Describe the effects of pursuing your doctoral degree on your personal life.

What factors influenced your decision to attain a superintendent's certificate?

Tell me about your career path (please include any breaks in your employment.)

Describe your current job.

What factors have influenced your decision not to pursue the superintendency?

What barriers do you believe deter potential candidates from pursuing superintendency?

What advice would you give to a woman who wants to become a superintendent?

Any additional information that you wish to share-

**Part II: Demographic Questions**

In what year were you born?

What degrees do you hold? Please include degree, college or university attended and year of graduation.

What is your race/ethnicity?

What is your current marital status?

How many children do you have?

What are the ages of these children?

Please return completed survey by fax 919-807-3826 or e-mail [johnastarr@aol.com](mailto:johnastarr@aol.com)

Thanks so much!