

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN  
IN THE SUPERINTENDENCY: A CASE STUDY

by

Cherri Sue Barker

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for Degree

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APPROVED BY:

CONSTANCE S. PEARSON, Ed.D., Chair

Date

DAVID S. BENDERS, Ph.D., Committee

Date

STEVEN JENKINS, Ed.D., Committee

Date

SCOTT WATSON, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Advanced Programs

Date

## ABSTRACT

Cherri Sue Barker. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE SUPERINTENDENCY: A CASE STUDY, School of Education, Liberty University, October, 2012.

The general purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how personal attitudes, values and beliefs of individual board members, and the culture of the community affect hiring decisions for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas as it relates to the underrepresentation of women in this position. Local school boards are responsible for selecting and hiring the superintendent of schools. Although most educators are women, women continue to be underrepresented in the superintendency. The research design of the study utilized a qualitative multi-site, multi-subject case study of 15 former school board members in eight rural West Texas school districts. The social-role theory and the patriarchal theory formed the theoretical framework for the study. Data was collected from semi-structured interviews, historical documents, and a social-role egalitarian scale survey. Data analysis was conducted within each case and cross cases to identify repeating ideas and major themes in relation to the theoretical framework and review of literature. The findings of this study revealed school board members chose superintendent candidates based upon personal chemistry and gut feelings. The results showed school board members in West Texas believed women have the ability, the skills, and the qualities to serve as a superintendent of schools, but women applicants were few and often non-existent.

Descriptors: egalitarian, glass ceiling, good ole boys, patriarchy, rural, social roles, values, West Texas

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## **List of Abbreviations**

Academically Acceptable (AA)

American Education Standards Association (AERA)

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

Association of American School Administrators (AASA)

California School Board Association (CSBA)

Educational Services Center (ESC)

Former School Board Members (FSBM)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Independent School District (ISD)

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)

National School Board Association (NSBA)

Organizational & Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (OLEI)

Science Research Associates Opinion for Men & Women (SRA)

Sex Role Egalitarian Scale (SRES)

State Board for Education Certification (SBEC)

Synergistic Leadership Theory (SLT)

Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)

Texas Education Agency (TEA)

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)

Texas PK-16 Public Education Information Resources (TPEIR)

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS)

United States Census Bureau (USCB)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

University of Interscholastic League (UIL)

Women School District Administrators (WASDA)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the framework for the research, gives the reader a general understanding of the study, provides a foundation for the problem that necessitates the research, outlines an overview the context of literature in which the research is founded, identifies the importance of the research for a specific audience, and briefly introduces the research via the research questions. The introduction contains several subsections: the background of the study, the situation of the researcher, the problem statement, the significance of the study, the research questions, the research plan, the delimitations of the study, and a list of the definitions of terms used within the study.

### **Background**

In schools across the United States, women represent the largest majority of school personnel in positions such as teachers, secretaries, aides, counselors, and custodians. According to the most recent data from the United States Census Bureau (USCB), 82% of elementary and middle school teachers in the United States and 75% of public school employees were women in 2010 (USCB, 2012). Women comprise about 50% of the assistant principal and principal positions across the nation according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2011). In Texas, women represent approximately 60% of all principals and assistant principals (TPEIR, 2011). Women represented the majority of teachers, campus administrators, and central office personnel, but only 24.1% of superintendents were women in 2010 (Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young, Ellersen, & American Association of School Administrators, 2011). Women received 46% of Texas superintendent certifications between 2006–2010, but only 20% were hired as superintendents (SBEC, 2011; TPEIR, 2011).

In the late eighteenth century, Mary Wollenworth, one of the first feminist pioneers, advocated for the rights of women and equality in education (Guttek, 2005). Almost 100 years later, as a result of the civil rights and women's liberation movements of the 1960s, women have seen significant progress in equal educational access and job opportunities in all fields of the workforce (Violanti & Jurezak, 2010). Ninety years ago women gained the right to vote, yet they have not reached equal status with men in other areas of the labor force. In 2010, women comprised approximately 46.7% of America's workforce and held 3.6 % of Fortune 500 CEO roles and 3.6 % of Fortune 1000 roles (Catalyst, 2012).

Obviously a "glass ceiling" still exists. This glass ceiling, the term used to denote an invisible barrier based on discrimination that prevents women and minorities from attaining the top leadership positions within an organization (Bjork, 2000; Derrington & Sharratt, 2009a; Glass, 2000; Kim & Brunner, 2008; Yousry, 2006), has been penetrated by some women who have gained positions as CEO's and elected officials. Some argue in fields of law, engineering, and academia women cannot break through this invisible barricade (Paulson, 2009). Rather than a glass ceiling, Eagly and Carli (2007) described a maze of walls, with a labyrinth of obstacles and challenges, which blocks the path on a woman's leadership journey. A labyrinth presents continual twists and turns that often are unseen. Women either shatter the glass or maneuver through the maze to reach the top executive office in most professional fields. Although the number of women superintendents has increased over the past decade (Kowalski et al., 2011), the employment numbers remain disproportionate compared to the number of men in this position (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Derrington & Sharratt, 2009a; Hess & Meeks, 2002; Katz,

2004; Sampson & Davenport, 2010; Sanchez & Thornton, 2009; Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan & Ballenger, 2007; Stufft & Coyne, 2009). Women continue to identify the glass ceiling within school leadership as a hindrance for obtaining the superintendent position (Glass, 2000).

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS, 2010), the number of women employed as managers, executives, or administrators nearly doubled from 1983 to 2002. Women hold more than 40% of all managerial positions in the United States but do not sit in the top executive seat (Catalyst, 2012). In 2010 women accounted for the majority of all workers in the financial industry, in education, and in health services (USBLS, 2010). Women are working outside the home in record numbers, but the highest leadership positions continue to evade them in many professions (Cook & Glass, 2011; Eagly, 2007; Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007; Vinkenburg, van Egen, Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011; Violanti & Jurezak, 2011).

The highest authority within a school district lies at the superintendent level. “The superintendency is the name given to the executive level position at the top of the educational hierarchy in the United States” (Grogan, 2005, p.24). The chief executive is responsible for all aspects of the district’s operations: financial budget, curriculum and instruction, discipline, personnel, transportation, food services, facilities, and community involvement. The superintendent plays a multi-faceted role which requires knowledge and skills not only in organizational theory but in public relations, educational law, and motivational theory (Bjork, 2009). Even though women continue to acquire the certifications necessary for the position, continue to acquire more advanced degrees and complete educational administration programs, fill more central office and school

principal positions, and are “in the pipeline” for the superintendency (Katz, 2004; Pew, 2008; SBEC, 2011; USBLS, 2010), they are still not being hired as superintendents. This position has been held predominately by men since its creation in the late 1800s (Blount, 1998), and superintendents are still disproportionately white and male (Hess, 2002).

Data reveals that the number of women in the position of superintendent has increased since the 1970s when only 2% of superintendents were women (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Glass (1992) reported in 1982, the percentage of women superintendents was 1.2% and in 1992 the percentage rose to 6.6%; in 2000 the percentage had risen to 13.2 % (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000); and in 2010, the number of women superintendents increased to 24.1%, the highest number ever reported (Kowalski et al., 2011). However, their presence is still significantly lower than that of men. The percentages of women in this leadership position are not “proportionate with their percentages in the teaching workforce” (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010, p. 2). Women comprised 77% of teachers in 2010 in Texas (SBEC, 2011). From 2006-2012, the number of women principals increased and the number of men declined. In 2006 women represented 57% of principals. In 2010 the numbers increased to 60%. Since the general career path for the superintendency is the teacher-principal path (Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Glass, 2000; Kowalski et al., 2011), it could be assumed there would be more women superintendents than men, not fewer. Although the number of women in the superintendency continues to increase, at the current rate, it will take another 20 years before the number of women superintendents equals that of men (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009b).

Blount (1998) provided a detailed account of the history of women in education and the development of the office of superintendent from 1873—1995. She showed how “teaching became women’s work and school administration men’s” (p.2). Most superintendents are hired from within the ranks of teachers (Banks & Banks, 1995; Blount, 1998; Hamidullah, Wilkins, & Meier, 2009; Katz, 2004; & Tallerico, 1999), but “the odds for a male teacher becoming a superintendent are one in forty and the odds for a woman teacher becoming a superintendent are one in 1,667” (Skrla, 1999, p. 3). Since women comprise three-fourths of the educational workforce, then “where are all the women superintendents?” (Glass, 2000, p.28).

What makes the national phenomenon of the lack of women superintendents puzzling is, unlike the other professions, women are the dominant gender in the educational profession in virtually all positions except the superintendency (Glass, 2000; USBLS, 2010). The Texas PK-16 Public Education Information Resource (TPEIR, 2011) reported, other than assistant and deputy superintendents, athletic directors, and athletic trainers, women outnumbered men in all educational positions, including business managers, department heads, directors of instruction, and tax assessors. The top leadership positions of the schools are held by men; the majority of school personnel are women (NCES, 2011; TPEIR, 2011).

Many barriers, both internal and external, have been identified for women aspiring to the superintendency (Blanchard, 2009; Blount, 1998; Brunner, 1999; Eagly, 2007; Glass, 2000; Skrla, 2000; Tallerico, 2000b). Family responsibilities, lack of mobility, and lack of self-efficacy are examples of individual constraints or obstacles—internal barriers and self-imposed limits—that negatively affect potential women



superintendents candidates (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009b; Hite, Randall & Merrill, 1994; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; VanTuyle & Watkins, 2009). One explanation has been women lack the motivation, the self-confidence, and the desire to compete which results in fewer women superintendents (Bass, 1990).

External barriers restrict women's opportunities of advancement to the top position in schools due to the nature of the social system. These obstacles, where the individual has no control, have been recognized as sex-role stereotyping, lack of mentorship, the "good ole boy" network, and the selection process (Glass, 2001; Peters, 2008). Some women make personal choices not to seek advancement as the top CEO of the school district, but other women seek this position in spite of the barriers (Grogan, 1996; Grogan, 2005; Kim & Brunner, 2008).

One of the main responsibilities of the local school board is to hire the chief executive for the school district (Campbell, 1994). Generally, each state board of education sets specific requirements for superintendent certification. The Texas Education Code requires a valid superintendent certificate for the position. Local school districts may request applicants hold a doctoral degree, but this degree is not a federal or state mandate for the position. The selection process for the superintendent varies according to the school district, but the general process of advertising, interviewing, and selecting a superintendent is much the same across the nation. Some school boards use search consultants, "head-hunters," to assist in the hiring process of a superintendent (Tallerico, 2000b), but small, rural school boards often conduct the search process independently without the aid of a consulting firm (Glass, 2002; Kowalski et al., 2011). Working as a single unit, the school board creates a profile of characteristics necessary

for a successful leader based upon the needs of the district then chooses the superintendent they believe will best serve the vision of the district (Tallerico, 2000a). Since school boards and search consultants are not obligated to report to state agencies or to the public the names, qualifications, or numbers of applicants received in a superintendent job search, data on how many women actually apply for superintendent positions does not exist. No reliable method of collecting and reporting data has been developed to track gender equity in school administration (Stephens, 2009). There is a need for more studies similar to the one sponsored by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) which reported data on applicant qualifications and demographics. In this survey school board presidents reported 85% of the applicant pool for superintendent positions included women, although only 18% of these searches resulted in hiring a woman (Glass, 2002).

Substantive data concerning the selection process does not exist (Glass, 2000), but statistics do reveal women are gaining the certifications and the advanced degrees to fulfill the qualifications for the superintendency. In 2011, females were expected to comprise the majority of college students at 11.2 million compared to 8.5 million males according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2011). Since the mid-1980s, more females than males have earned associate, bachelor, and master degrees. Of the 1,601,000 bachelor degrees conferred in 2008-2009, the greatest number for both sexes was in the fields of business (348,000); social sciences (169,000); health services (120,000); and education (120,000). The greatest number of master degrees was conferred in the field of education (179,000). From 2006 to 2009, the number of females earning doctoral degrees exceeded the number of males. Between 1998 and 2008, the

number of males earning doctoral degrees rose only 28% compared to the number of females earning doctoral degrees at 87%. Of the bachelor degrees conferred in 2008-2009, education degrees ranked 4<sup>th</sup> and at the doctoral level, education ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, next to health sciences. In 2007-2008, females earned 67.1% of the number of doctoral degrees conferred in the field of education nationwide. Although no gender-specific data on the number of superintendent certificates nationwide exists, these recent statistics reveal that women are gaining advanced degrees in the field of education.

The educational trends in Texas correspond to national statistics. Women of all ethnicities, Hispanic, Asian, African American, and White, have earned more associate, bachelor, master degrees, and doctoral degrees compared to men of the same ethnicity (THECB, 2011). In 2010, THECB reported that White women compared to White men earned 52% of all doctoral degrees (901 of 1748); African American women compared to African American men earned 61% (107 of 174); and Hispanic women compared to Hispanic men earned 63% (107 of 270). Women received 47% of the 3,813 doctoral degrees awarded in 2010 and 57% of all degrees at all levels. The Texas State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC, 2011) reported women earned two-thirds of all principal certifications from 2006–2010. An in-depth study of statistical information on the number of women employed in education and the number of women who have earned master degrees, principal certificates, superintendent certificates, and doctoral degrees should reveal that women are gaining the academic preparation and degrees needed to be superintendent and are “in the pipeline” for the superintendency; therefore, the assumption could be made that women are interested in acquiring superintendent positions.

Dissertations and expert studies, conducted primarily through a feminist qualitative lens, continue to suggest women do indeed aspire to the superintendency (Barrios, 2004; Blanchard, 2009; Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Duwe, 2010; Edgehouse, 2008; Efthimia, 1997; Galloway, 2006; Gorree-Burns, 1999; Grogan, 1996; Lopez, 2008; Miller, 2009; Montz, 2004; Sampson & Davenport, 2010; Sharratt & Derrington, 1993; Tallerico, 2000b; Wickman, 2007). No national data shows how many women, state by state, possess superintendent certifications (Glass, 2000) or how many apply for the position. In Texas women earned approximately 46% of the superintendent certifications from 2006–2010 (SBEC, 2011), but they do not hold the same percentage of the superintendent positions.

Most of the research that exists on women and the superintendency consists of studies describing individual experiences related to the superintendency. Grogan & Brunner (2007) conducted a descriptive, short-response, survey study of 1,195 women superintendents and women assistant/associate/deputy superintendents. These professionals identified three of the major limitations on women's advancement as "school board members' perceptions women are not good managers, school board members' perceptions women are unqualified to handle budget and finances, and school boards failure to actively recruit women" (p.92). In this study, the largest data collection of women school leaders up to this time, women remarked they were first seen as women, then as administrators. "It is either a male superintendent which is synonymous with the idea of 'superintendent' in many people's minds, or it is the opposite, it is a 'woman' superintendent" (Grogan, 1996, p. 30). The women surveyed also claimed that the good-ole-boy network still existed and was hard to crack. In a survey of female

superintendents, Christie, Jackson, and Babo (2008) reported the women surveyed expressed the sentiment “It is still a man’s world” (p. 3). The man in the gray flannel suit is seen as the typical school district superintendent (Grogan, 1996).

Volumes of literature on theories of leadership styles, approaches, skills, and qualities have been written, but no clear, exact definition of leadership exists. Experts study and explore theories of leadership in order to understand what qualities make successful leaders and to explain effective leadership. In the past several decades, the theories of transformational and transactional leadership have been embraced to illustrate current thought on effective and successful leadership (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007; Bass, 1990). Research continues to identify traits and characteristics that make a successful school leader, and leadership continues to be defined in masculine terms (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). A good leader still produces “the image of a ‘strong man’ in the minds of most people” (Kruger, 2008, p. 164). Competitiveness, independence, and rationality are traits that connote leadership generally linked to men, where women are considered team-builders, communicative, and understanding (Eagly & Carli, 2007). An existing controversy continues on whether female and male leadership styles differ or whether it is just a matter of perception (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). Some experts conclude women do lead differently than men (Austin, 2008; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Rosener, 1990). If differences do exist between men and women leadership styles, with the past decade of reform initiatives and the new information-based society, the collaborative, communicative style of women would provide the ideal leadership qualities necessary for success in a superintendent’s position.

According to feminists, leadership theories have been written by men, for men, and viewed through masculine terms (Blount, 1998; Carli & Eagly, 2001; Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Johannesen & Schmidt, 2001; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell & Ristikari, 2011). Skrla (2000) asserted most research on the superintendency has been conducted through an androcentric lens, which places the male and the masculine point of view in the center of the world and forms the social and cultural realities of leadership and power based upon a male norm (Clifford, 2002). Grogan (1996) claimed, “The absence of women in the superintendency suggests that women are being seen through traditional theoretical lenses and are being measured against ideals that have historically served men best” (p.23). Until the past several decades, women have been excluded from leadership theory (Banks & Banks, 1995). Most studies of the 1980s and 1990s on leadership and the superintendency have relied primarily on White, male samples with no mention of gender or ethnicity (Tallerico, 1999). Women researchers have contributed heavily to the theoretical research of the superintendency within the last decade, but “the discourse on the superintendency continues to be dominated by white males” (Bjork, 2000, p. 10). If leadership theories are based upon how men approach leadership, then women may be at a disadvantage when compared to leadership seen through the male perspective.

Most of the research studies on women and the superintendency focus on the voices and the views of women themselves as they aspire to the top position of schools and are conducted ‘by’ women and ‘on’ women to describe women’s experiences (Blanchard, 2009; Blount, 1998; Bjork, 2000; Brunner, 1999; Eagly, 1984; Eagly, 2007; Goree-Burns, 1999; Grogan, 2005; Ortiz, 1999; Skrla, 2000; Tallerico, 2000). According

to feminist theory, patriarchy is “the root cause not only of sexism, but also of racism, ethnic prejudice, colonialism, economic classism, and naturism” (Clifford, 2002, p.19). This age-old paternal rule has existed across all societies throughout history (Goldberg, 1999). Based upon the idea that men are the dominant sex, feminists see patriarchal rule as the reason women have not broken the glass ceiling into leadership positions. By placing power in the hands of men, women are denied opportunities that would give women power over men (Jaffe, 2010).

Eagly (1987) suggested social expectations of men and women in the family, society, and the workplace explain the lack of women in top leadership positions. She presented a social-role theory to explain the discrepancies in women and men leadership styles. The social-role theory, derived from a social constructivism worldview, states people construct their perceived reality from culturally transmitted knowledge and social relationships (Mitcham & Ryder, 2006). Eagly (2007) concluded social role expectations continue to affect women and leadership.

The position of the public school superintendency continues to be dominated by White, Protestant males (Blount, 1998; Glass et al., 2000; Kowalski et al., 2011; Tyack, 1976). The United States Department of Labor described the public school superintendency “as the most male dominated of any executive position within the nation” (Bjork, 2000, p. 8). This discrepancy has been researched and questioned extensively within the past several decades (Bass, 2002; Blount, 1998; Brunner, 1999; Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Sharratt & Derrington, 1993; Glass, 2000; Grogan, 2005; Peters, 2008; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). Studies have examined various aspects of the superintendency and the underrepresentation of women, including leadership traits

(Brunner & Grogan, 2007), gender bias (Carli & Eagly, 2001), career paths (Tallerico, 2000b), mentoring (Katz, 2004), and a plethora of other topics (Irby, Brown, Duffy, & Trautman, 2002; Skrla, 1999; Katz, 2004). In study after study women continue to describe both internal and external barriers; but one external barrier—the selection process itself and those who do the hiring—has received little attention in scholarly studies (Glass, 2001; Richard & Kruse, 2008).

Women have studied women in leadership; men have studied men in leadership; but there is limited research on why school board members choose a school leader and how the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the individual school board member influence the hiring process (Tallerico, 2000b). When school boards hire a superintendent, they are hiring a leader for the school district. Each individual board member has a vote that results in a majority decision. My study explored how the selection process affects the underrepresentation of women in rural West Texas by seeking to understand how personal attitudes, values, expectations of leadership qualities, social role expectations, and community culture influence individual school board members during the selection process. This multi-site, multi-subject case study utilized the social-role theory (Eagly, 1984) and the theory of patriarchy as the theoretical framework for understanding this phenomenon.

### **Situation to Self**

The beliefs and the worldviews the researcher brings to the qualitative study shape the study (Creswell, 2007). The roles of a researcher are varied and each researcher chooses which interpretation to emphasize (Stake, 1995). As a researcher, I



had to examine my beliefs and assumptions and how they may influence the collection, the interpretation, and the analysis of the research study.

My interest in the lack of women superintendents began after my experience as a woman superintendent in a rural West Texas school district. The school board was comprised of three men and two women. When a male school board member told me, “We’ve had a woman superintendent and we will never have another one,” I found myself questioning the logic of this statement. Five years earlier, Ms. Woodward, superintendent for Lexington, South Carolina, had echoed my experience commenting, “You still hear people say, ‘They had a woman superintendent last time and it didn’t work’” (Richard, 2000, p. 4). Not until I left this position did I realize my experiences were not unique for a woman in this role, and reasons for my departure from the superintendency were similar to other women superintendents.

As a Christian, my belief in the Word of God and the salvation of Jesus Christ as the ultimate truth and absolute reality, guides my life, my experiences, and my purpose for all endeavors. Feminist theories and approaches dominate most research on women and the superintendency (Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Grogan, 2000; Skrla, 2000; Tallerico, 2000a). Although I do not adhere to the modern feminist philosophy, women’s “liberation,” or the sexual revolution, this study had a feminist approach since a feminist theory places gender within a patriarchal society as the center of the issue being studied (Creswell (2007). The following words of Kohm’s (2008) explain my conviction:

Feminists necessarily find their identity in gender and the deconstruction of its social construct, while Christians, including women who understand Christ’s revolutionary view of gender equality, must necessarily find their identity in Christ. (p. 360)

In my role as researcher, I must be aware my Christian belief system and my personal bias can influence interpretations and methods within the research study. Memoing and member checks provided methods to increase objectivity.

No personal or professional involvement exists with the participants or sites used in this study. Participants were chosen using purposeful criterion sampling. School district sites depended upon the participants who agreed to take part in the study.

### **Problem Statement**

School boards hire the superintendent to be the leader of the school district. Women are underrepresented in the superintendency across the nation, in the state of Texas, and in rural West Texas. The selection process continues to be identified as a barrier by women aspiring to the superintendency. In numerous qualitative studies, women continue to report school boards are reluctant to hire women and school boards do not see women as being capable of handling school district affairs (Lopez, 2008; Montz, 2004; Ortiz, 1999; Richard & Kruse, 2008; Sharratt & Derrington, 1993; Tallerico, 2000a). Very little research on school boards and the selection process exists (Glass, 2002).

In 2009-2010, in 1155 Texas school districts, men held 81% of the superintendent positions (TPEIR, 2011) compared to 76% nationwide (Kowalski et al., 2011). Districts served by the Regional Educational Service Centers 15 and 18 in rural West Texas reported 86% of the superintendents were men in 2011 (TPEIR, 2011). Women are gaining superintendent certifications and doctoral degrees; school board members continue to hire more men than women for the position of the superintendent; and women continue to be underrepresented in the superintendency in rural West Texas.

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of a case study is to deepen “understanding and explanation” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 173). The purpose for this study was to understand why there are more men than women hired as superintendents in rural West Texas; to investigate how attitudes, values, and beliefs of individual school board members influenced the selection process for the position of superintendent as it relates to the underrepresentation of women; and to examine how leadership qualities, the culture of the community and region, and attitudes of leadership and social roles for men and women affected the selection process for the superintendent.

Former school board members (FSBM) were generally defined as individual members of local school boards in rural West Texas who participated in the hiring process for the superintendent position. The underrepresentation of women refers to the lack of women superintendents in rural West Texas.

## **Significance of the Study**

Studies on the recruiting and hiring practices of school board members themselves is limited (Glass, 2002; Richard & Kruse, 2008). In research of the superintendency, a gap exists concerning how the hiring process of school board members affects the underrepresentation of women. Studies abound on women and the superintendency, but most of this research has been conducted through the perceptions of women themselves. My study provided a deeper understanding of the selection process of the superintendency through the eyes of the hiring agents.

As federal mandates, accountability, and the need to address student performance increase, the position of superintendent as a leader of the system is becoming more

challenging. As baby boomers begin to retire, experts predict a shortage of superintendent candidates to fill vacancies (Glass, 2001; Tallerico, 2003). The Texas State Board of Education (SBEC) reported a decline in the number of certified superintendents from 2006 – 2010 (SBEC, 2011). Women and minorities provide an untapped source of qualified candidates for this position. This study gives women who are seeking the superintendency an increased awareness about the selection process by school board members in small, rural, school districts and presents a deeper understanding on how individual values and social role expectations influence the underrepresentation of women in this position. Understanding the hiring process of school boards assists school boards, search consultants, practicing superintendents, and professional preparation programs increase the number of women and minorities in the position of superintendent (Glass et al., 2000).

The research on women and the superintendency has been done primarily through a feminist lens with a focus on the voices of women who have either attained or who are aspiring to the superintendency (Tallerico, 2000b). National school board associations and other studies have surveyed school board members concerning perceptions of women roles, leadership styles, qualities, and abilities, but these studies are generally quantitative in nature (Glass et al., 2000; Hess & Meeks, 2010; Kowalski et al., 2011). A gap remains in the literature concerning “how” and “why” school board members choose a particular candidate for this position. This study adds to the existing research on the hiring process for the superintendency by presenting voices of the hiring agents themselves, school board members, and how this process affects the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency.

## Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. *How do specific leadership qualifications and skills of potential candidates affect decisions of individual school board members in the selection process in rural West Texas school districts?*

When hiring a superintendent, school boards identify certain characteristics and traits desired in a prospective superintendent (Tallerico, 2000a). Since there is no exact definition of leadership, preference for leadership styles and leadership skills change with the needs and the goals of an institution (Posner, 2011). Examining how school board members view qualities they deem necessary for a successful leader can provide insight on why women are underrepresented in the superintendency in rural West Texas.

2. *How do personal beliefs and values of individual school board members affect the selection process for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?*

Personal values influence all the decisions a person makes and are instrumental in determining motives and purposes of human behavior (Priddy, 1999). This study investigated how the personal attitudes, values, and beliefs of individual board members affected decision-making in the selection process. In order to understand why school board members hire more men than women superintendents, a glimpse into the values and belief systems of the hiring agents can shed light on this phenomenon.

3. *How does the culture of the community and region affect the hiring decisions of individual board members in rural West Texas?*

Culture is a tradition of knowledge and practices shared by members of society (Zou, Tam, Morris, Lee, Lau, & Chiu, 2009). Local culture and a community's history play an important role in governing bodies like local school boards (Bennan, 2005). Historically, the area of West Texas is identified with a rugged, self-reliant regional pride (Ely, 2011). The residents of West Texas have a unique identity that separates them from the rest of the state and the nation. TPEIR (2011) reported urban and suburban districts in Texas, for example Austin and Houston, hire more women superintendents compared to the area of rural West Texas. Decisions by school boards are influenced by what the community needs and expects for its school system (Tallerico, 2000a). Examining the values and the culture of small, rural West Texas school districts provides a deeper understanding of qualities school board members look for in superintendent candidates.

*4. How do attitudes of leadership and social roles influence hiring men and women for the superintendency in rural West Texas?*

Men and women are assumed to have certain social roles and traits that are assigned specifically due to the sex of an individual, i.e. women are homemakers and men are bread winners (Eagly, 1984). Stereotypes refer to a set of characteristics assigned to a specific group of people which are often exaggerated and inaccurate (Banks & Banks, 1995). Exploring possibilities of social roles expectations of men compared to women as leaders gives a deeper understanding of how these roles affect the selection process.

*5. How and why do school board members hire more men than women for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?*

Research and statistics show women comprised approximately 24.1% of the superintendents nationwide in 2010 (Kowalski et al., 2011). In Texas, there were 229 women serving as superintendent of schools compared to 913 men superintendents (TPEIR, 2011). In the sparsely populated area of West Texas there were 11 women superintendents, comprising 14.2%, out of a total of 77 superintendents (TPEIR, 2011). A vast amount of literature exists on women and the superintendency, but why school boards hire more men than women for this position is not known.

In her book on the history of women in the superintendency, Blount (1998) acknowledged gaps in the studies of the public school superintendency and concluded with two questions about women's access to the superintendency: "How does the method of selecting a superintendent affect the hiring of racial/ethnic minorities and women?" and "Have religious and or political views influenced superintendent selection?" (p. 201). This study investigates these questions.

### **Research Plan**

This study was a qualitative multi-site, multi-subject case study. A case study is ideal for this study because it "seeks insight and greater understanding" (Stake, 1995, p. 16). According to Yin (2009), a case study is appropriate if it seeks to answer "how" and "why" and has a theoretical framework as a blueprint for the study. Similar to a scientific experiment, the multi-site, multi-subject case study desires to present an overall explanation using similar explanations from individual cases (Stake, 1995). This methodological approach placed me closer to the phenomenon itself in an attempt to identify how the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the school board members affect the hiring process for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas within and across

school districts of the region. The theoretical framework underlying was based upon the social-role theory (Eagly, 1987) and the theory of patriarchy.

In a case study more than one source of data gathering provides triangulation (Yin, 2009), a well-known strategy used in qualitative studies to increase credibility (Merriam, 2009). The three sources of data for this study included one-on-one interviews, historical documents, and a secure web-based survey. The multi-site, multi-subject case study approach allowed me to analyze within each individual case, across cases within each district, and finally, across both settings and cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The first phase of data gathering was the historical documents from each district represented by the participants. One-on-one interviews were conducted with participants from eight independent school districts. Following the in-depth interviews, participants completed a Likert-scale sex-role egalitarian scale survey online through Survey Monkey. Interviews were transcribed, coded for similarities and differences, and then compared to the surveys for corresponding themes.

An abundance of literature on women and the superintendency exists, but relatively few studies incorporate the views of school board members in the selection process and how their views relate to the underrepresentation of women in the position of superintendent. This study sought to understand how individual attitudes, values, and beliefs of school board members in rural West Texas affect the selection process of the superintendency. It examined social role attitudes of school board members in relation to the leadership qualities of men and women and how the culture of the community and region reflected the choice of a superintendent.



## **Delimitations**

The delimitations of this research study were defined by the boundaries of the case. The study occurred only in small rural school districts in West Texas. The area of West Texas covers a large amount of physical area and I traveled over 3,000 miles to gather data from participants. Conducting personal interviews outside this area was not feasible. Only former board members who had been involved in selecting a superintendent of schools participated in the study. FSBM were chosen for this study because current school board members may be hindered by the political nature of the position and may be reluctant to respond honestly and to answer personnel questions in an open manner (Glass, 2002).

Another delimitation of the study was in the hiring process. Often school boards utilize search consultants to find qualified candidates (Kowalski et al., 2011; Tallerico, 2000a). Since many small districts conduct the selection process independently, (Kowalski et al., 2011) the participants of this study included only those school boards who conducted the search without assistance from an outside consulting firm. This selection process may not be relative to all school boards in West Texas.

### **Definition of Terms:**

*Egalitarian:* An attitude that causes one to respond to another individual independently of the other individual's sex (King & King, 1993).

*Gatekeepers:* School board members, professional consultant firms, and individuals such as retired, interim or current superintendents, who determine, during the superintendent selection process, who is allowed to proceed through the screening and

interviewing process and who is eventually selected for the job (Tallerico, 2000a; Tallerico, 2000b).

*Glass ceiling:* A term that refers to an invisible barrier that hinders women and minorities in reaching the highest leadership positions in an organization based upon discriminatory practices (Yousry, 2006).

*Good 'ole boy system:* “White, upper (or upper middle) class men in their productive adult years with established informal networks through which instrumental favors are exchanged and barriers to inclusion are erected. They are unified through chauvinistic, class, and local traditions that afford them “insider” privileges” (Farr, 1988, p.264).

*Patriarchy:* Literally, patriarchy means the “rule of the father.” Feminist theory cites patriarchy as the social system that has given men domination over women throughout history (Jones, 2000).

*Rural:* According to the Texas Education agency, a school district is classified as rural if: (a) it has an enrollment of between 300 and the median district enrollment for the state and an enrollment growth rate over the past five years of less than 20 percent; or (b) an enrollment of less than 300 students (TEA, 2010).

*Social constructivism:* The worldview that states people construct reality and give it meaning through their social, political, legal and other interactions with other human beings (Ospina & Sorenson, 2006).

*Values:* The working definition for the term *values* for this study is identified as “the mental maps of the way you think things should be. They are your deepest

convictions, and they are the primary filter through which you view reality” (Mapes, 1996, para.6).

*West Texas*: West Texas is a geographical area of Texas that lies west of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian and includes the Chihuahuah Desert, the Guadalupe Mountains, and the Great Plains. The West Texas identity is known for its rugged, self-reliant regional pride (Eli, 2011).

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the United States, women comprise about 50% of the nation’s population and 48.4% of the nation’s workforce (Catalyst, 2011). Although women have made significant gains in the fight for individual rights in the workforce over the past 50 years, they continue to face barriers in their ascent to the top leadership positions of business, politics, and education (Blanchard, 2009; Violanti & Jureczak, 2011). Men comprise the majority of superintendents across the nation, and the glass ceiling still exists in the school superintendency (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009a; Stufft & Coyne, 2009; Van Tuyle & Watkins, 2009).

In the realm of education, women represent the majority of teachers, principals and central office positions, and possess a high percentage of advanced degrees and certifications for the superintendency, but they are not equally present in the position of superintendency (NCES, 2010; SBEC, 2011; THECB, 2011). Nationally, local school boards hired women as superintendent 24% of the time in 2010 (Kowalski et al., 2011). In Texas, 20% of superintendents were women and in rural West Texas 14% of school districts had women superintendents in 2011 (TPEIR, 2011). This chapter contains a review of the literature divided into six categories: the theoretical framework, which

includes a discussion of patriarchy and the social-role theory; a glimpse into West Texas culture; the history, demographics, responsibilities, and hiring process of school boards; the history, qualifications, and roles of the superintendency; examination of leadership theories and leadership stereotypes; a review of internal and external barriers facing women as they aspire to the position of superintendent; and the summary.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In a case study, theory development is essential before any data is collected (Yin, 2009). The blueprint for this multi-site, multi-subject case study was the social-role theory and patriarchal theory. These theories provided a lens that guided the data collection and shaped the generalizations and analysis found in the data (Yin, 2009).

#### **Theory of Patriarchy**

Patriarchy, a system that connects every aspect of social life, has endured throughout history (Jaffe, 2010). “The hierarchies of every society without exception are filled primarily by males” (Goldberg, 1999, p.58). This age-old hierarchy, according to feminist theorists, is the system that continually promotes the cycle of men’s domination over women (Jones, 2000).

**Background.** Literally meaning “the rule of the father” (Jones, 2000; Stuart, 1994), the term *patriarchy* means different things to different people. This hierarchical system has influenced the social, political, economic, and family institutions for thousands of years. Molded by patriarchy, the traditional subordinate role of women within the social society still echoes in the world of work (Jones, 2000).

Abraham, the first patriarch of Israel, fathered the three major religions of the world: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Hebrew and Christian doctrine shaped much of

modern Western civilization, and Abraham's patriarchy continues to influence our nation's institutions, laws, religions, and schools. Patriarchy, as a concept or as a theory, continues to be an underlying cultural distinction in all major cultures around the world, not just the Western world (Jaffe, 2010).

The early settlers of this nation brought with them expectations of women's roles from the religious convictions of Judaism and Christianity and from the Roman legal system which held marriage and family as the central unit of society (Derry, 2008). Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, described the man as being superior, responsible for governing the woman as the inferior (Clifford, 2002). Along with Plato and Quintilian, other Greco-Roman philosophers, Aristotle believed and taught women were not capable of intellectual thought and reaching truth (Gutek, 2005). In ancient Greece and Rome, and in the Jewish tradition, women held a very low social status, were denied citizenship, and were considered property of the husband or the father (Clifford, 2002). Grogan (1996) claimed laws and social customs have been devoted simply to control women.

The theory of patriarchy, the practice of patriarchy, and the effects of patriarchy continue within feminist discourse today. In 1861, Sir Henry Maine published his work *Ancient Law* and concluded all known societies were based upon the patriarchal theory of the Hebrew patriarchs of Scripture (Powell, 1885). According to Powell (1885), J. F. McLennan's published treatise criticized and discredited Maine's assertions, declaring Maine's theories false, citing tribal kinship and primitive marriage as proof patriarchy was not a universal truth.

Goldberg (1999) contended three universals exist:

1. in all societies men hold the higher positions than women

2. high status roles are dominated by men
3. men hold power and authority (p.54 )

He stated that there are no known societies that have been dominated by the matriarchal rule. Margaret Mead (as cited by Goldberg, 1989) concluded

all the claims so glibly made about societies ruled by women are nonsense. We have no reason to believe that they ever existed. Men have always been the leaders in public affairs and the final authorities at home. (p.19)

The question is not whether patriarchy exists but rather, “Why does every society’s socialization system associate dominance with the male?” (Goldberg, 1976, p. 689).

The nation’s culture and society have been heavily influenced by the Judeo-Christian perspective. In 1873, in one of the first challenges addressing sex discrimination, Myra Bradwell, a woman who was denied admittance into the bar association in Illinois, appealed an Illinois state court’s decision to the Supreme Court claiming protection under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment Privileges and Immunity Clause (Bradwell v. The State, 1872). Supreme Court Justice Bradley, concurring with the opinion of the Court, stated,

the civil law, as well as nature herself, has always recognized a wide difference in the respective spheres and destinies of man and woman. Man is, or should be, woman’s protector and defender. The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life . . . . The harmony, not to say identity, of interest and views which belong, or should belong, to the family institution is repugnant to the idea of a woman adopting a distinct and independent career from that of her husband . . . .

A woman had no legal existence separate from her husband, who was regarded as her head and representative in the social state . . . . One of these is that a married woman is incapable, without her husband's consent, of making contracts which shall be binding on her or him . . . this one circumstance which the Supreme Court of Illinois deemed important in rendering a married woman incompetent fully to perform the duties and trusts that belong to the office of an attorney and counselor . . . . The paramount destiny and mission of women are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator and the rules of civil society. (p.83, U.S. 141)

Men and women are different physiologically and genetically (Kruger, 2008).

Goldberg (1989) argued the domination of men is a result of the "neuroendocrinological differentiation of the sexes" (p.37). Goldberg explained, rather than social roles and cultural norms, medical evidence shows the central nervous system generates hormones responsible for the male's greater dominance tendency. He suggested the genetic make-up of the two sexes, rather than a conspired patriarchy, explained male dominance throughout history. He contended the levels of testosterone and the physiological make-up in men explains the stronger motivation and drive to seek dominance by pursuing whatever action is necessary to attain that dominance, whether it be "fighting physically, or speaking sternly, or kissing babies for political votes" (p.35). Modern science continues to confirm the differences in personality and behavior between men and women result from the differences in the brain structures and chemistry of the sexes (Kruger, 2008).

Social roles and societal expectations have shaped the world of women around the globe since the beginning of mankind. The liberties and opportunities for women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are greater than in any time in history, but there are still limits, barriers, and obstacles in their pursuit of leadership roles, including the school superintendency. Patriarchy, carried to America by the spiritual and legal convictions of its earliest settlers (Brunner & Grogan, 2007), still survives in various degrees and forms in American society.

**Values.** Values are abstract concepts difficult to define. Social scientists and psychologists convey different approaches and different definitions when utilizing the concept. “A value is the importance we attribute to oneself, another person thing or idea. A belief is part of a system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge and experience” (Saldana, 2009, p.89). Values tie personal perceptions and judgments, motives and actions together (Priddy, 1999, Chapter 6, para.7). The idea of what is right and what is wrong, defined by an understanding of what behavior is accepted and what behavior isn’t, comprise an individual’s and a society’s values.

In a study of personal values, Narasimhan, Bhaskar, and Prakhya (2010) analyzed the spiritual traditions of the Indian Vedas to determine how spiritual beliefs corresponded to personal values. They analyzed 698 employee questionnaires from business firms in India. The results showed the inner belief and practice of ancient Hindu text and spiritual truths resulted in the external application of such values. Values and beliefs intertwined affect attitudes; all interactions and relationships a person undertakes are guided by values.



Values influence every aspect of our lives as well as our judgments. Personal values, a part of a person's personality, help people make choices and play a significant role in a person's decision-making (Jalilvand, 2000; Moreno Perez, 2008). Values cannot be seen; "what is seen are the ways through which values manifest themselves (e.g., in opinions, attitudes, preferences, desires, fear, etc.)" (Posner, 2011, p. 536). Although basic human values are center to all societies, each society and each person internalizes and reacts to values differently.

Moreno Perez (2008) explained values are reflected in professional life as well as in personal life and asserted "in the selection process, companies tend to hire people who best fit their values" (p. 2177). As individuals, school board members in their decision-making, reflect not only their own personal values, but also those of the community they represent. The governance of the vision, the goals of a school district, and the significant issues are "based upon values, not facts" (Cassel, 2010). Although the final selection of a superintendent relies upon a consensus of all members on the school board, the values an individual board member brings to the table affect who gets hired as the superintendent.

The culture of a community revolves around shared values by those who interact socially and creates a sense of belonging within a group of people (Brennan, 2005). These values shape guidelines for rules of behavior and proper conduct expected among the members of the community (Brennan, 2005). The sense of identity and the local character in rural communities are reflected in long-standing traditions—Friday night football, county fairs, and Sunday school (Brennan, 2009). The concept of leadership expectations changes within the context of a cultural community (Jogulu, 2010). Social

norms define the roles of the leader, the school board member, and the superintendent and reinforce local culture.

### **Social-Role Theory**

The post-modern approach of the social construction of reality forms the foundation for the social-role theory (Kvale, 1996). The social constructionist sees knowledge as being conceived through relationships rooted in a cultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical context (Blustein, Palladino, Schuletheiss, & Flum, 2004). Constructs are imaginative lenses through which a person views and understands the world as a result of both history and culture (Creswell, 2007). Without these constructs, or frames, there is no way of knowing or experiencing (Jones, 2000). Leadership becomes a social construct that emerges over time through individual interactions and relationships, rather than a natural born state (Ospina & Sorenson, 2006). Leadership is a social process; therefore, the school superintendency has developed as a social construct (Skrla, 2000).

Based upon the social constructionist theory, in *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation*, Eagly (1987) presented a social-role interpretation on how “social roles account for sex differences in social behavior” (p.10). The social norms that apply to people of a particular category, or to a social position, constitute a social role, such as man/woman (Eagly, 1987, p. 14). The social-role theory views the expectations for men and women based upon sex differences that regulate behavior in an adult’s work and family life (Eagly & Wood, 1988).

Role expectations can be age-related, an “old person” or a “teenager,” but Eagly (1984) defined social role interpretations as “those shared expectations about appropriate conduct that apply to individuals solely on the basis of their socially identified sex” (p.

12). Role expectations describe desired qualities for each sex. These expectations can be related to the occupational roles identified by the division of labor between the sexes as well as the social status of the roles held by men and women. Men and women are held to different expectations; as a result, these expectations are reflected in social behaviors, social interactions, attitudes, and beliefs.

Eagly (1987) discussed the differences people see between men and women in terms of two personal attributes, communal and agentic. Communal attributes most commonly associated with women are emotional, sensitive, gentle, weak, feminine, vulnerable, nurturing, and selfless. Agentic terms are associated with men: assertive, controlling, aggressive, self-reliant, independent, self-confident, direct, tenacious, and masculine. Eagly (1987) stated, “A major assumption of the social-role theory is that the communal and agentic perceptions arise from the differing specific roles that women and men occupy in the family and society” (p.19). Women are seen in domestic roles while men are considered to be the breadwinners.

Social role norms for men and women influence all areas of a person’s life, including a person’s sense of self and personal behavior (Bass, 1990). Men and women have identified standards of conduct in various roles in which they serve: in the family, in the work force, in politics, and in other situations which influence their behavior (Diekmann & Schneider, 2010); thus, the social behavior of men and women is defined by the different roles each one is expected to occupy (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007).

Men continue to hold most leadership positions in politics, business, management, and education. Traditionally, intelligence, self-confidence, and other traits used to describe effective leaders have been associated with men. These ideas continue “to

influence views of women as leaders” (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. 66). According to Banks and Yeakey, (as cited in Tallerico, 2000a), “invisible forces within the educational and professional circles and the American society reflect long-standing traditions of Caucasian male leadership of American institutions” (p. 84). Individual assumptions of social roles that consider men as leaders and women as inferior have an impact on who is recruited and who is hired (Banks & Banks, 1995).

**Feminist theory.** The androcentric culture places the male and the masculine point of view as the center of the world, contributes to the oppression of women, and forms the basic premise of all feminist theory (Clifford, 2002). Feminist research focuses on issues by emphasizing the male advantage of power exercised over women (Jones, 2000). The examination of women aspiring to the superintendency primarily reports the voices of women through the feminist theoretical lens and the social construct of gender and patriarchy.

Many of the feminist theorists use the term *patriarchy* to explain the cause of women’s suppression and to refer to male power and male-dominated societies (Jaffe, 2010). Feminists seek reasons to why the male gender continues to dominate the female gender and “to explore political and social practices in order to bring about reform” (Grogan, 1996, p.33). The approaches and methods of feminism vary according to agendas: liberal feminists, radical feminists, postmodern feminists, poststructuralist feminists, Christian feminists, socialist feminists, ecofeminists, cultural feminists, and Marxist feminists (Clifford, 2002). Socialist feminists combine capitalism and patriarchy as the underlying cause of all societal oppression. Radical feminists view patriarchy as a sexual system that provides men power and control through biological rather than

economic factors (Einstein, 1999). In general, the feminist movement seeks to change the existing social systems they view responsible for the continued oppression of women (Grogan, 1996; Jones, 2000), and considers patriarchy the primary factor and the underlying force for the domination of men over women (Jaffe, 2010).

Most studies on women in the superintendency describe the experiences of women seeking this position or the views of those who have served in the position. Few studies approach the phenomenon of the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency through the views of school board members involved in the selection process (Hess & Meeks, 2010).

**Gender.** *Gender* refers to “culturally constructed systems of meaning that identify various things—persons, ideas, gods, institutions—according to the binary categories of ‘women/men’ or ‘feminine/ masculine’” (Jones, 2000, p.8) rather than physiological sex differences. Gender stereotypes apply to those expectations that classify individuals based upon their socially identified gender and affects family, occupation, sports, and behavior. Typical role expectations, such as women are more communal than men and men more aggressive than women, continue to be defined by gender roles (Carli & Eagly, 2001).

Literature continues to associate aggression, dominance, and competitiveness as masculine; while the terms nurturing, communal, and emotional are seen as feminine traits (Diekmann & Schneider, 2010; Eagly, 1984). The “think leader, think male” view continues to be a global phenomenon in all areas of upper level management (McEldowney, Bobrowski, & Gramberg, 2009; Schein, 2001; Wood, 2008). Grogan (2007) explained, “Gender role expectations result in women being viewed as “women

first and administrators second” because a woman is labeled as a “woman superintendent”, but a man is just known as a “superintendent” (p.107). Social role perceptions for a woman administrator affect her role as a leader when she is expected to behave like a woman before she can be a leader.

Since male and female behaviors are socially constructed, the experiences and expectations of gender roles provide an explanation for sex differences in social behaviors according to Eagly and Wood (1988). Eagly and Steffen (1986) conducted several experiments with randomly selected college students to determine how perceptions of gender stereotypes and social roles of certain activities are related to typical male or female characteristics. The participants, 161 women and 159 men, rated a fictitious person for various aspects of social roles and gender-stereotypical attributes based upon descriptions of occupational roles. The basic assumptions of the study suggested women hold lower levels of status, are less likely to hold positions of authority, are less likely to be employed in the work force, and are more likely to be homemakers. This study confirmed a previous one conducted by Eagly (1984) showing women were considered more communal and men more agentic. Eagly concluded the stereotypes of domestic and employee roles support the gender stereotype of social-role theory.

In an historical and current labor force report from a national survey on men and women, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS, 2010) confirmed social-role expectations exist. The report revealed even if both husband and wife work outside the home, women spend over twice as much time doing housework and preparing meals compared to the men who spend more time doing yard work and watching television, which are typical social expectations.

Women are at a disadvantage when it comes to leadership if social roles place them in the kitchen rather than in the office. Gender roles define women as more emotional while the male gender role portrays heroism. Men open doors for women and women care. Men are expected to be more aggressive, tougher, and more assertive than women (Eagly, 1987). Assertiveness is as an undesirable quality in women; therefore, an assertive woman is considered outside the social-role expectation.

The social-role theory asserts women and men have certain expected behaviors and different roles at home and in the work place (Eagly & Wood, 1988). Gender-specific roles transfer to attitudes that influence beliefs of what men and women should be (Diekmann & Schneider, 2010). “Women are presumed to be less competent and less worthy to hold leadership positions than men, and men are presumed to be more competent and legitimate as leaders than women are” (Carli & Eagly, 2001, p. 631). When school board members question a woman’s ability to manage the budget, her capability as a strong disciplinarian, or her skill for effective personnel leadership, the influence of social role expectations emerge (Tallerico, 2000a, p.93).

This study utilized the theory of patriarchy and social role constructs to gather insight on why school board members hire more men than women superintendents in rural West Texas school districts. Investigating how individual school board members view patriarchal values and attitudes of social roles of men compared to women may help explain how school boards choose a candidate for the superintendency.

## **Review of the Literature**

### **West Texas Culture**

Local culture plays an important role in the life and behavior of a community. Cultural constructs are “imaginative lenses through which the world, ourselves, our relationships, and even our faith come into view and receive shape and significance” (Jones, 2000, p.33). Banks & Banks (1995) defined culture as “the shared knowledge, consciousness, skills, values, expressive forms, social institutions, and behavior that enable survival as a people” (p. 271). In social settings, the values, attitudes, and beliefs of a community link people together. Local government, school systems, and other organizations are created to meet the needs of the community based upon the traditions and the accepted behavior and ways of life (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2002). The lifeline of the rural community resides in its history and traditions. As locally elected public officers, school board members reflect the character and the personality of the community. The unique culture and shared values of rural West Texas can be assumed to have an impact on the hiring of the school superintendent.

The state of Texas has a rich history of independence and survival. In fact, it is the only state in the nation that was once its own independent nation. The region of West Texas has flourished through the production of oil, farms, and ranch lands. The settlers of this area fought Native Americans and joined the Confederacy during the Civil War. West Texas has a mythological history associated with cowboys, cattle drives, and desert survival.

According to Ely (2011), West Texas begins west of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian with aridity being its most defining characteristic. The dry, parched land of the region



demanded a fight for survival. Segregation existed in the area not for African-Americans, but rather for the *Tejanos*, or Mexican-Americans, from the late 1800s until after the Civil War. The heritage and culture of the Mexican-Americans are a major part of West Texas. The frontier period of West Texas created a “spirit forged by a ‘common danger’ and a feeling of common interest and unity among the people” that still exists today (Ely, p.34). The rugged spirit of self-reliance, bravery, loyalty, and a strong work ethic defines West Texan identity. Desolate and isolated, dirt devils and wide-open spaces, buzzards and rattlesnakes, cacti and mesquite, and hot and dry defines the region. The physical characteristics of the area contribute to the culture of rugged individualism, and traditionalism has been a part of Texas life since its earliest settlements (Ely, 2011).

The term *rural* often refers to just a state of mind, a general outlook of life, rather than an absolute location (UT, 2008). Often the view of rural communities is a place where the good life can be found. Rural living is perceived as a stress free place to play and live a relaxing life style (Nachitgal, 1980). The traditional roles, cultural practices, and patriarchal norms based upon an agricultural lifestyle typically have been resistant to political and social change in rural communities (Tickamyer & Henderson, 2003).

The United State government identifies *rural* based upon population size and/or density. Rural areas are places with less than 2,500 residents and open country residents (Brown & Swanson, 2003). Texas has 445 school districts classified as *rural* according to size, growth rates, and proximity to urban areas. According to TEA (2010), a district is classified as *rural* if the district has either: (a) an enrollment of between 300 and the median district enrollment for the state and an enrollment rate over the past five years of less than 20 percent, or (b) an enrollment of less than 300 students.

Another method of identifying small rural districts is established by the University of the Interscholastic League (UIL), which governs the extracurricular activities of school districts in Texas and is an organization independent of the state education agency. According to the UIL guidelines, a district is categorized as conference 1A if the enrollment of the high school is 199 or less.

Generally, most women superintendents serve in rural districts (Burstyn & Tallerico, 1996; Dana, & Bourisaw, 2006; Glass et al., 2000; Hite et al., 1994; Kowalski et al., 2011). In large urban areas men hold approximately 72% of these positions, but in the school districts of rural West Texas, men hold 86% of the superintendent positions (TPEIR, 2011).

The culture and tradition of a region is affected by religion, values, attitudes, beliefs, and politics (Bass, 1990). People's perceptions of reality, institutions, and social roles are influenced by the shared group identity. West Texas has a distinct shared culture that is different from the other regions within the state of Texas and other parts of the nation. Examining the culture of the community sheds light on how social norms and behaviors influence the decision of elected school board members and the leadership of the school district (EPA, 2002).

### **School Boards**

Local school boards have been in charge of governing the public education of children since the early beginnings of the nation. Most local school board members are laypersons directly elected by popular vote in the local community (Land, 2002). As a governing political body, school boards are ultimately responsible for success and failure of the educational system at the local level. School boards serve as the hiring agency for

the position of superintendent and have been identified as the gatekeepers to the position of the superintendent (Tallerico, 2000a).

**Background.** The idea of citizens overseeing the local governance of schools is a cornerstone of American democracy (California School Board Association (CSBA), 2007). The local school board had its beginnings in 1789 when the nation's first law was passed authorizing local communities to elect committees to oversee the schools (Blount, 1998). These committees, today known as local school boards, served as the model for the present school governance system (Land, 2002). Until the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, local school boards were solely responsible for managing all aspects of the public education within the local district, including making financial and personnel decisions (Kowalski et al., 2011). Today, they are residents who have been asked by their community to provide direction and guidance to the local school district (Cassel, 2010). In a survey for the National School Board Association, Hess and Meeks (2010) reported only 5.5 % out of 900 board members surveyed were appointed to the position. These lay members are elected by public popular opinion in most communities (Radar, 2009).

With the population boom and industrialization in the late 1800s, the role of the school board shifted from managing to policy-making, patterned after corporate boards. Not until the mid-1800s was the position of school district superintendent created (Bjork, 2009). During this early phase, the superintendent served primarily as a “teacher-scholar” in a supervisory role. After the Great Depression in the 1930s, school boards began placing more control into the hands of the superintendent (Glass et al., 2000) with a focus on scientific management: authoritative, impersonal and task-oriented (Kowalski

et al., 2011). The superintendent went from the teacher-manager to the professional chief executive officer under the governance of the local school board.

**Roles and responsibilities.** The school board typically maintains local control of the school district's needs, oversees general governance of the district, concentrates on policy making for the district, and communicates to the community the district's successes. The make-up of a school board resembles a corporate board of directors with a superintendent as manager (Land, 2002). The school board sets the vision of education for the district, adopts an annual budget, and establishes goals for student performance (TASB, 2012). The local school board, as an extension of the state government, has a legislative responsibility to ensure that state and federal laws are followed (Kowalski et al., 2011) and serves as the guardian of the public trust (TASB, 2012). School boards, by guiding and establishing policy, are the true "leaders" of the local school system (Campbell, 1994).

Within a community, the school district is often the largest employer, especially in small districts (CSBA, 2007). This body oversees the taxpayers' financial investment in the local schools. As representatives chosen to represent the interests of school children, the local school board serves the needs of all students within the district. Even though individual members have unique concerns, ideas, values, and personalities, the authority of the school board lies with the decisions made as a single unit, a team based on consensus decision-making (Hess & Meeks, 2010). As elected officials accountable to the public, the school board ideally reflects the values and the vision of the community in which they serve.

As a result of the school reform movement within the past decade, student academic achievement has emerged as a priority for school boards. The emphasis on the superintendent as a teacher-scholar and the importance of instructional leadership has become a major focus for school districts once again (Bjork, 2009). School boards cited instructional leadership as one of the main expectations for superintendents (Glass et al., 2000; Kowalski et al., 2011).

**Demographics.** Historically, school board members were generally white, middle-aged, predominately male Protestants (Tyack, 1976). School board composition has slowly begun to be more representative of the entire community concerning gender and ethnic minority representation (Glass, 2000). The study by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) conducted by Hess and Meeks (2010) showed larger districts had more minority members than rural districts. Across the nation 12.3 % of the school board members were African-American and 3.1% were Hispanic. In small districts, men comprised two-thirds of the board members. The NSBA survey revealed nationally 56% of school boards were men (Hess & Meeks, 2010), but only 5.8% of school boards were comprised of all male members (Kowalski et al., 2011). In general, school board members continue to be white, Protestant, middle-class men (Bjork, 2000; Glass et al., 2000; Hess & Meeks, 2010; Kowalski et al., 2011).

Every 10 years the Association of American School Administrators (AASA) conducts a study of the state of the superintendency. This extensive study began in 1920 (Kowalski et al., 2011) and continues to be one of the largest comprehensive studies of the superintendency in the nation. The findings from these past studies provide details on school boards not published elsewhere. School districts with women superintendents

reported more women members serving on the school board and revealed larger districts had more women-majority boards (Kowalski et al., 2011). Tallerico (1999) found that female-majority boards hired more women superintendents than did male-majority boards. Larger districts were most likely to hire superintendent search consultants while school boards in smaller districts continued to act independently in the superintendent search process (Glass, et al., 2000; Kowalski et al., 2011).

In most school districts across the nation, school board members are elected laymen who require no specific qualifications or training for the position (Richard & Kruse, 2008). The position often carries high social status, respect, and esteem from community members (Mountford, 2004). As an elected position, “the very political nature of the school board affects the selection of a superintendent” (Glass, 2002, p.1). Most school board members continue to be moderate or conservative rather than liberal (Hess, 2002). Kowalski et al. (2011) reported 85% of superintendents claimed a moderate or conservative philosophy. Moderates constituted the majority of superintendents with twice as many conservatives as liberals. Most school boards, consisting of five or seven members (Glass et al., 2000) are often well-educated, successful, and tied to local community power (Hess & Meeks, 2010; Land, 2002). As elected public officials, members generally reflect the values of their communities (Banks & Banks, 1995). West Texas has a strong Republican conservative base and is predominately Protestant (Texas Almanac, 2011).

Since most school board members receive no monetary compensation for service, the motivation and personal reasons for seeking a seat on the school board vary. Most members spend anywhere from 7 to 40 hours a month on school-related business (Hess &

Meeks, 2010). The main reason for service is cited as wanting to help schools “be the best they can be” (Hess & Meeks, p.22). Some members seek the position for a personal interest—they hold a grudge or want to correct a specific problem (Mountford, 2004). Other motivations for being a school board member include fulfilling one’s civic duty, being recruited by others, and serving their own ego for power and prestige (Hess & Meeks, 2010; Mountford, 2004).

**Values.** Deckman (2001) conducted a study comparing conservative Christian Right and non-Christian Right school board candidates about decisions to run for the local school board. She found similarities in motivating factors between both groups, although the Christian Right candidates were more likely to indicate their decision to run for office stemmed for a chance to “apply their religious beliefs” to educational policy (Deckman, 2001, p. 349). The initial random sampling from the entire national list of school districts provided the generalizability of survey results. The second phase of the study divided districts into three groups: small, medium, and large according to student enrollment. The final phase of sampling yielded 671 usable responses of school board candidates. Both groups considered themselves to be members of a church. The results revealed that Christian Right candidates were less likely to be women and were more likely to be in rural school districts. Both groups identified the main motivating factor for running for the school board as “making the community a better place to live” (p. 357). More than 75% of the traditional right cited “restoring traditional values” to public schools as an important factor in their decision to run for school board (p.357). Although the study was conducted over a decade ago, religious values and beliefs continue to

influence the decision-making of local school board members especially in rural communities.

Historically the church served as the backbone of rural communities and still retains an important role in the culture of the area. Those who live in rural areas are generally more religious and more conservative than those who live in the cities (Glenna, 2003). Religious beliefs and church membership connect the people in small communities and have an effect on social and educational institutions. School board members, as citizens of the community, provide direction for the school district based upon the values and needs of the community (Cassel, 2010).

### **Selection Process**

The selection of the superintendent is one of the most important decisions a school board makes (Ortiz, 1999). A local school board tries to find the potential superintendent who fits the vision and the culture of the district. The board determines what qualifications the district needs in a superintendent. Generally, the board creates a timeline and procedures for the selecting and hiring process, with a start date, the salary range, and board's preferences. Most superintendent searches include: advertising for the position, preliminary screening of applicants, narrowing the field of candidates, interviews of semifinalists, selection of the finalist, and hiring (Tallerico, 2000a).

A candidate's work history, personal and professional references, education, and experience are essential factors in the screening and selection process, but other components have an impact as well. Ortiz (1999) maintained "judgment, personality, character, open-mindedness, physical and mental health, poise, intelligence, sense of humor, voice, cultural background, and other personal attributes" influence the hiring



process (p. 91). Personality and character, as well as background and health, play major roles in the choice on who to hire as a superintendent. The unwritten rules of the selection process for the superintendent leave women and other minorities at a disadvantage (Eagly, 2007).

Tallerico (2000b) analyzed superintendent vacancy announcements and found school boards advertise for candidates whose qualifications typify excellent leadership skills. Typical traits include shared decision-making, student-centeredness, organizational skills, legal knowledge, and financial expertise. These qualifications, along with the gender and ethnic demographics of the school, have an effect on who gets hired as the superintendent.

Since personality is one of the major factors influencing the selection of a superintendent, school board members place emphasis on how comfortable they feel with the candidate. The intangible “personal chemistry” that exists between an applicant and the school board is a critical key during the interviewing process (Tallerico, 2000b, p.35). “It’s what we like, what we see, what we hear, how we feel about the person. No matter anything else” (Tallerico, 2000a, p. 103). Since people like people who are like themselves (Glenn, Hickey, & Sherman, 2009), the values and the personalities of the individual school board members will influence who gets hired as the superintendent.

According to school board respondents, one of the most important qualities for a superintendent to possess is the ability to communicate (Kowalski et al., 2011). Tallerico asserted “the good-ole boy network” and “making the right fit” (Tallerico, 2000a, p. 103) impacts how superintendents and board members communicate. Since the majority of school board members across the nation are men (Glass et al., 2000; Hess & Meeks,

2010; Kowalski et al., 2011) and personal characteristics include having a sense of humor, or being an avid golfer, hunter or sports fan, communicating with school board members may be easier for men applicants. The recruitment practice in itself often favors men applicants (Tallerico, 2000b) and places women at a disadvantage if they did not share the same interests (Eagly, 2007).

In his essay on the history of superintendents, Tyack (1976) described the historical selection of superintendents as an “old boys” network with recruitment occurring through older male administrators and professors. The majority of school boards tend to hire those who share their values and culture (Glass et al., 2001). Typically, superintendents match the characteristics of school board members: white, middle-aged, predominantly male, Protestant, and upper class. Glass asserted, “Being Protestant and an active church member has often been an important unofficial requirement for selection as superintendent, especially in small or medium-sized communities” (p. 266). A qualitative study in three Western states conducted by Hite et al. (1994) revealed these qualifications continue to affect the hiring process. The study examined perceived barriers of 40 certified women administrators in rural school districts. Interviews revealed these women believed the religious affiliation of the applicant and the members of the school board influenced hiring decisions.

In an exploratory study of 15 women superintendents, Garn & Brown (2008) found that the women interviewed believed gender bias created a major challenge to their path to the superintendent position and to their performance even after gaining the position. Gender bias occurs when school board members question the woman’s ability to exert strong student discipline, manage the budget, or exert strong personnel leadership

(Tallerico, 2000a). Society sees assertiveness, aggression, competitiveness, and rationality as masculine traits associated with the superintendent position (Blanchard, 2009). Women are not seen as being tough enough to deal with discipline and employee management (Hite et al., 1994). In rural communities, a woman's role tends to be defined by the traditional role expectations of homemaker, child-rearer, and part-time employee (Eagly, 1984). In a study identifying career paths of women superintendents, Skrobarcek and Stark (2002) found that 76% of women superintendents studied were located in town/rural areas. The mail questionnaire represented 71 respondents, 16 women superintendents from urban/suburban districts and 54 from towns/rural districts. The authors concluded the opportunity for women to reach the superintendent was greater in rural areas than in larger cities.

In 1996 Sheppard (1997) replicated a study from a 1978 study of superintendents and school board presidents for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Two different instruments, Women School District Administrators (WASDA) and the Science Research Associates Opinion for Men and Women (SRA), were administered to 530 superintendents and 530 school board presidents to determine attitudes of women as school district administrators. The data revealed although acceptance for women administrators improved from 1978 to 1996 by both superintendents and school board presidents, school board presidents' were less likely to accept women administrators than were superintendents. School board presidents expressed concern about women possessing the ability to evaluate educational situations and the necessary skills to lead a district successfully. Many school board presidents did not believe women were aggressive and competitive enough to be a superintendent. On

the SRA survey, women continued to be viewed as sensitive, jealous, emotional, timid, warm, and friendly compared to men who were seen as competitive, aggressive, self-confident, and narrow-minded. Sheppard (1997) found “male school board presidents still see women allowing their emotions to influence their administrative behavior and the possibility of pregnancy as factors in employing women” (p. 45). The data showed school board presidents did not view women as having the traits—assertiveness, self-confidence, and authority—necessary for the position of superintendent. Sheppard determined the influential individuals who were engaged in the hiring process still had attitudes which did not fully support women. Although the 1996 study showed women were more accepted in the superintendency than in 1978, school board members still have reservations about women leading effectively and still question the leadership ability of women as superintendents (Brunner & Grogan, 2007).

A study sponsored by the AASA in 2000 revealed school boards tend to view women as incapable of managing a school district (Glass et al., 2000). Fiscal management was rated more important than instructional leadership, and board members reported they did not view women superintendents as capable of handling district finances; but in the AASA study in 2010, both men and women respondents rated the importance of managing fiscal resources by the school board as having a minor influence on getting hired as superintendent (Kowalski et al., 2011). Hess and Meeks (2010) reported school board members’ ranked financial management as one of the three most important considerations when evaluating a superintendent.

After researching factors school boards used in superintendent selection, Bell (1988) claimed,

the tradition of male leadership in schools, and the predominantly male membership of school boards, the most persuasive characteristic a candidate for superintendent could possess seems to be maleness . . . . Maleness signifies to board members who are hiring a superintendent: shared language and experience, predictability, connection with the power structure, and leadership that satisfies stereotyped preferences. (p.50)

Skrla (2000) asserted the social construction of the superintendent, a social construct of maleness, was incompatible with the social construct of femaleness.

School board members “bring to the selection process their own opinions and experiences about what leaders should be and the skills they should possess” (Blanchard, 2009). Research studies show the selection process is identified as one of the major external barriers for women in acquiring the position of superintendent (Duwe, 2010; Montz, 2004; Tallerico, 2000b; Wickham, 2007). Few studies exist on how school board members approach the hiring of a superintendent. This lack of research on the selection process could be the reluctance of school board members to discuss personnel issues as well as a lack of interest and a lack of time (Glass, 2002).

Banks and Banks (1995) stated over 15 years ago, “In terms of advanced training, degrees held, number of years in the profession, and total numbers in the pool from which administrators are drawn, there is no justification for the small number of women educational leaders” (p.77). Today, school boards in rural West Texas still hire more men than women for the top position in the district even though women continue to receive the necessary credentials.

## **The Superintendency**

When Ella Young became the first woman superintendent of the Chicago school system in 1909, she declared, “Women are destined to rule the school of every city” (as cited in Blount, 1998, p. 1). A century later, the superintendency is still considered a man’s work. “The superintendency has been and remains a masculine role,” reported Kowalski et al. (2011, p. 17). In rural West Texas, the majority of superintendent positions continues to be filled by men.

**Background.** In 1647, the Puritans established the first public schools under the Ole Deluder Satan Law. The early colonists believed children should be able to read and decipher Scripture to fight the wiles of the devil. Tied to religious training, the first education system in the nation was for white, male children taught by white, literate men (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Prior to the late 1700s all teachers were male. The words of Paul “permit not a woman to teach” were enforced (Blanchard, 2009, p.14). Tyack (1976) explained educational leadership was seen as “a calling,” and the first superintendents were described in terms of “Christian character,” “Puritan stock,” and “New England tradition” (p.259). Rather than being identified by academic and professional training, these first school leaders were considered certified by church membership and social service. The first common schools were fueled as social institutions chiefly to encourage Christian character and a republican American society (Tyack, 1976).

During the colonial period, men were the schoolmasters. Women were considered less intelligent with no need of formal education (Blount, 1998). As the nation grew, the need for more teachers to educate the growing population grew as well.

Women, who once were prohibited from teaching, became a cheaper and more abundant source of educators. Soon, teaching became “women’s true profession” (Blount, 1998, p. 17). Teaching children became the woman’s work and administering the daily operations of the school became the man’s work (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). The role of the superintendent had evolved from cleric to master teacher to manager to chief executive officer (Skrla, 2000, p.297).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the focus of the superintendent leadership moved from the Protestant message to one of science and business (Tyack, 1976). The era between the 1900s to the 1930s refers to the Golden Age for women in school administration (Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Tyack, 1976). Women gained the right to vote in 1919 and finally had a voice in the political process (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). As a result, women were being elected as county school superintendents. Blount (1998) asserted men, fearing the power women were gaining, determined to change the selection process from an elected position to an appointed position. The number of women in the superintendency declined, and from 1910 to 1950, women only held between 9% and 11% of all superintendent positions. Grogan (1996) described the superintendent of the 1950s and 1960s as “The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit” (p.12). During World War II, women filled non-traditional occupations and positions due to the void left by men fighting in the war. After men returned from the war, women were “pushed back to domesticity, back into the role of raising children, and back to being housewives” (Hyndman, 2009, p.109). By 1970, women held only 3% of the superintendent positions (Blount, 1998). Not until after the civil rights movement of the 1960s did women once

again challenge the status quo and returned back to the universities, back to the labor force, and back to school leadership positions.

**Qualifications and roles.** Today the role of the superintendent encompasses finance, curriculum, personnel management, transportation, maintenance, public relations, and political savvy. Since its inception in the mid-1800s, the superintendency has undergone a number of conceptual changes (Kowalski & Bjork, 2005):

(a) teacher-scholar (1850s to 1900s), (b) organizational manager (early 1900s to 1930), (c) democratic leader (1930 to mid-1950's), (d) applied social scientist (mid-1950s to 1970s), and (e) communicator (mid-1970s to present) (p. 79).

In the first period, men were the schoolmasters and served as supervisors, monitoring women teachers and supervising instruction (Blount, 1998). Even though these first superintendents were viewed as intellectual leaders, they lacked formal preparation as administrators (Bjork, 2009). At the turn of the century, the theory of scientific management swept the school systems. The superintendent became a business executive responsible for budget, personnel management, and all operations of the district as well as the instructional leader. During this era university programs emerged with formalized training in educational management (Kowalski et al., 2011). The superintendency became task-oriented and impersonal. After the Great Depression of the 1930s, financial resources were scarce. The superintendent emerged as a political strategist, a statesman, and a democratic leader, who was expected to rally support for the institution of education from politicians, employees, and taxpayers (Bjork, 2009). During the fourth stage of the superintendency, the focus turned to scientific theory in order to meet the needs of the multicultural, democratic society that emerged following World



War II. Supplied by corporate grants like the Kellogg Foundation, university professors began research in the fields of psychology, sociology, and economics (Bjork, 2009).

Tyjack (1976) claimed “This new science in education, led to the discoveries of intelligence tests, the exponents of social efficiency in curriculum construction, and the evaluation of teachers and methods of teaching” (p. 278).

The final role of the superintendent has been the evolution of the superintendent as a communicator (Kowalski & Bjork, 2005). The emergence of the information age changed the expectations of communication for the superintendent from managing and directing to communicating and maintaining positive relationships through collaboration. Superintendent effectiveness now involves team building and relational communication, rather than the impersonal, top-down directives desired during the scientific management era.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the superintendent wears many hats including manager, politician, social scientist, and communicator (Kowalski & Bjork, 2005). Though the qualifications for superintendent may vary from state to state, basic requirements are generally the same. In Texas, obtaining a standard certificate for superintendent requires a valid teaching certificate, at least two years as a classroom teacher, a master’s degree, a principal certificate, the successful completion of a superintendent program, and a passing score on a state exam for superintendency certification (TEA, 2012). Some districts may require a doctoral degree, but this is a local decision rather than a state requirement.

Most superintendents come from the career ranks of teachers. Although there are some who have been hired from outside the educational realm, those numbers are few.

Men and women vary on their career paths to the superintendency. Men typically travel the path of teacher, coach, assistant principal, high school principal, and superintendent. Women generally serve as teachers, then assistant principal, elementary principal or central office personnel, and then superintendent. Women spend longer in the classroom than do their male counterparts (Kowalski et al., 2011). According to Brunner and Grogan (2007), women superintendents served as club sponsors and supervised a variety of extracurricular activities, compared to 66% of men superintendents who served as coaches.

### **Leadership Theories**

There is no universally accepted definition of leadership (Banks & Banks, 1995). “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (Burns, 1978, p. 83). Leadership theories revolve around traits, characteristics, and qualities displayed by individuals who influence others and have power or authority over others. What is leadership? What is good leadership? What is bad leadership? These questions dominate textbooks and university studies.

Historically, leadership theories have been written by men for men (Eagly, 2007). “Of the approximately seventy-five years worth of extant scholarship relevant to the superintendency, most studies have either relied primarily on white, male samples, or have made no mention of the gender, racial, or ethnic backgrounds of their subjects” (Tallerico, 1999, p.29). Most leadership studies are written from a man’s perspective and have not focused on the woman’s perspective (Katz, 2006). The characteristics that identify effective leaders are traditionally associated with men (Banks & Banks, 1995) and most traditional research studies on leadership are comprised of predominately male

respondents (Eagly, 1984). Within the past several decades, a feminist perspective emerged recognizing the need to incorporate leadership studies in reference to women (Blount, 1998; Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Glass, 2000; Grogan, 1996; Skrla, 2000).

Prior to the 1900s, the “Great Man Theory” viewed leaders as being born with natural qualities of leadership. This “Great Man Theory” of the early 20th century has been laid to rest and is no longer considered a functioning explanation of leadership (Eagly, 2007). After World War II, several models were created according to the task and interpersonal dimension of leadership. Macgregor’s Theory X and Theory Y (Gutek, 2005) focused on motivational power while the Michigan Leadership theory discussed “product-oriented” versus “employee-oriented” leadership styles (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). The theories of management in the 1950s had an enormous impact on the position of the superintendency as school boards began implementing product and management methods to direct the school systems (Blount, 1998). An ideal leader of a school district was associated with “financial skills and bureaucratic control” (Grogan, 1996, p. 13).

Scientific studies on leadership did not begin until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Banks & Banks, 1995). As scientific research began explaining human behavior, different approaches replaced the premise that people were born leaders, as asserted by the great man theory. In the 1980s and 1990s experts began viewing leadership as something that could be taught and learned and began analyzing what traits made successful leaders. Leadership can be described in relation to personal characteristics, situational responses, organizational theories, and a myriad of combined attributes. If leadership can be taught, what influence does leadership style have on the outcome of the success of the leaders? Wren (1995) explained, “the end of leadership is the achievement of mutual goals which

are intended to enhance one's group or organization or society," but there is no universal theory of what leadership is (p. xi).

In 2001, a group of scholars from various professions in social sciences, education, and business met to create a unified theory of leadership. These experts began an in-depth analysis of the "economic, social, political, and cultural forces" that define leadership (Goethals & Sorenson, 2006, p. 239). Leadership is a complex process that involves various aspects of individual and societal interactions and, as a concept, remains elusive. This group summarized the general theory of leadership saying, "Leadership is an influence process, both visible and invisible, in a society inherited, constructed, and perceived as the interaction of persons in human (and inhuman) conditions of inequality—an interaction measured by ethical and moral values and by the degree of realization of intended, comprehensive, and durable change" (Goethals & Sorenson, 2006, p. 239).

As theory moved from the study of the traits of leaders, to the actions and attitudes of leaders, from measurements of leadership effectiveness to the focus on the relationships between leader and follower, the leader was no longer viewed as the sole actor. To lead, a leader needs followers, so leadership cannot be separated from the needs and motivation of followers (Burns, 1978). Burns identified two forms of leadership he labeled transformational and transactional. Transformational leaders are described as being proactive, modeling love, identifying and developing new talent, and being driven by values, morals and ethics. Transactional leaders, on the other hand, are preoccupied with power and politics, the bottom line of production, and rewards based upon performance (Covey, 1990). The contemporary view of good leadership cites

teamwork, collaboration, the ability to empower and engage others, and the development of relationships as ideal leadership qualities. These qualities describe a transformational leader compared to the transactional leader who “exchanges privileges for desirable outcomes much the way a Marine drill sergeant would trade a weekend pass for a clean barracks” (Hackman & Johnson, 2009, p. 103). For this study, the terms of transformational and transactional forms of leadership were utilized to define school board members’ perceptions of leadership.

**Transactional vs. transformational.** Transactional and transformational leadership styles were first conceptualized by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and later developed by Bernard Bass in 1985 (Wren, 1995). According to Burns (1978) leadership involves a leader motivating followers towards certain goals. Transformational leadership has a transforming effect on both follower and leader and is based upon the engagement of both parties in a motivating relationship (Wren, 1995). Transformational leadership motivates followers by appealing to follower emotions and intellect through leadership role modeling and individual mentoring and support (Bass, 1990). The leader-follower interaction in transactional leadership entails a relationship based on rewards or punishments for followers who in turn give loyalty and compliance to the leader.

Research from the 1990s showed leadership trends moving from the top-down hierarchal authoritarian style to a more caring, collaborative style (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Bass and Avolio measured 150 male and 79 female managers on transformational leadership qualities. Respondents included 582 men and 219 women subordinates of the managers. On the average, women were considered more effective, more inspirational, and more proactive. The researchers

concluded women display more qualities in line with transformational leadership due to “the tendencies of women to be more nurturing, interested in others, and more socially sensitive” (p. 556). Kruger (2008) suggested women’s transformational leadership style can be seen as a piece of the glass ceiling. She asserted women’s effectiveness and overall job satisfaction with employees can be a hindrance or a threat to managerial hierarchies which results in a reluctance to hire them for leadership positions.

A study on school board perceptions of leadership was conducted by Irby et al. (2002) utilizing a synergistic leadership theory (SLT) framework and an adapted Organizational and Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (OLEI). The researchers surveyed 61 search consultants in the state of Texas on their perceptions of what school board members value in a superintendent applicant. The instrument contained ten leadership behaviors identified by the SLT model. The most important management trait named by participants was that of communicator. According to the search consultants, school boards considered being people-oriented the most important interpersonal trait for a superintendent candidate to possess. Promoting community, building faculty cooperation, and possessing well-defined goals were other major traits identified as important to school boards. The least important traits according to the study were power sharing and using rotating leadership.

In his dissertation, Sabatino (2010) conducted a qualitative study to determine what school boards want in leadership characteristics of a superintendent. The grounded theory study occurred in Ventura County, California. Using a snowball technique, he identified 14 school board members for the study. Using the five standards of the Interstate School leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) as a guide for the research and

a transformational/transactional leadership model, the interviews were classified according to emerging themes and coded according to the ISLLC standards and a transactional and transformation skills framework. His results indicated school board members were seeking a superintendent who had interpersonal and collaboration skills. Sabatino's analysis also showed school board members preferred a leader who possessed more transactional skills compared to transformational skills as identified in his framework. The transformational skills involving empowerment and consensus-building were not ranked as high as the transactional skills of problem-solving and management. Even though transformational skills are emphasized as ideal leadership skills, and women are generally considered more transformational than men (Bass, 1990), Sabatino's results reflected school board members did not prefer these skills in a superintendent.

In a similar study, Ramirez and Guzman (2003) noted school boards preferred candidates who possessed more transactional than transformational leadership styles. Using ISLLC standards of leadership, Ramirez and Guzman interviewed 88 school board members involved in a superintendent search and compared those comments to the standards of the ISLLC. Even though theory promotes transformational leadership characteristics as being the most effective and successful style of leaders, these two studies reveal school boards desire the more traditional transactional model of leadership.

Leadership theories and interpretations of leadership behavior vary. Many experts (Avolio & Yammarino, 2007; Bass, 1990; Posner, 2011) believe transformational leadership is more effective in an organization. Research shows women are considered more transformational in their leadership style than men, and followers prefer traditional feminine characteristics of showing concern and being helpful (Christie et al., 2008;

Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Egen, 2003; Vinkenburg et al., 2011). According to the contemporary views of successful leaders, women would have an advantage over men when considering transformational leadership, but some researchers show that school boards prefer transactional leadership (Ramariz & Guzman, 2003; Sabatino, 2010).

**Leadership stereotypes.** The term stereotype refers to a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people (Eagly, 1984). Banks & Banks (1995) explained that stereotyping exists when “exaggerated and inaccurate characteristics of a group are ascribed to an individual” (p. 492). In his book *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippman defined the term as “the pictures in our heads” about other groups of people (as cited by Eagly, 1984, p.2). Often people have strange ideas about different groups; for example, Italians are “impulsive and passionate” and Americans are “intelligent and materialistic” (Eagly, 1984, p. 2).

Beliefs about men’s and women’s leadership traits can be based upon stereotypical notions. Wood (2008) contends stereotypes of leadership qualities for women have created barriers that influence women’s advancement in leadership roles. Competitive, self-confident, and dominant are traditional leadership traits defined as masculine terms. Stereotypical feminine attributes include kind, helpful, and warm. A case study of three former superintendents in Texas revealed women still face the challenges of functioning in a male-constructed role (Skrla, 2000). Eagly (2007), referring to the advantages and disadvantages of female leadership, claimed although women’s leadership styles have been identified as being effective in non-traditional roles, they are at a disadvantage when the leadership is characterized as a male role.



Controversy continues among scholars on whether a major difference in female and male leadership styles exists or whether differences are just a matter of perception (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). Some social scientists assert there are no major differences in the style of men and women leaders (Eagly & Johannesen, 2001; Shakeshaft et al., 2007). Other studies show men and women have different leadership styles (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007; Prime, Carter & Welbourne, 2009; Veinckenburg et al., 2011). Women are considered more democratic, participatory, motivating, and engaging compared to the traditional style of men who are seen as more autocratic, directive, and authoritarian (Austin, 2008; Eagly, 2007). Women are regarded as being more enabling and empowering than men who use a top-down, controlling style of leadership (Konnert & Augustine, 1995). Women are seen as sensitive, jealous, and emotional while men who are viewed as competitive, self-confident, and aggressive. The perception women “take care” and men “take charge” is a typical opinion in our society (Prime & Carter, 2009, p. 26).

Psychologists have observed every society has beliefs about the roles that women and men should play (Prime & Carter, 2009). Men are considered to display a “command and control” style of leadership while women are viewed as more “collegial and collaborative” (Rosener, 1990). Some studies assume men, being masculine, will be more task-oriented while women, being feminine, will exhibit greater interpersonal behavior; but in real life situations, these differences are not evident (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). Agentic characteristics, ascribed more strongly to men than women, describe primarily an assertive, controlling, and confident tendency—aggressive,

ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, daring, self-confident, and competitive.

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) claimed,

in employment settings, agentic behaviors might include speaking assertively, competing for attention, influencing others, initiating activity directed to assigned tasks, and making problem-focused suggestions. Communal characteristics, which are ascribed more strongly to women than men, describe primarily a concern with the welfare of other people—affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturing, and gentle. In employment settings, communal behaviors might include speaking tentatively, not drawing attention to oneself, accepting others' direction, supporting and soothing others, and contributing to the solution of relational and interpersonal problems. (p.783)

In rural communities, the notion that “little girls are sugar and spice and everything nice” and “little boys are snakes and snails and puppy-dog tails” still has a strong impact on the views of women as leaders (Hite et al., 1994, p. 6).

A nationwide survey taken in 2008 by the Pew Research Center revealed interesting attitudes concerning men and women leaders. Of the 2,250 adults who participated in the study, 69% said men and women make equally good leaders (Pew, 2008). Respondents rated women better than men on 5 of 8 leadership traits measured. Women out-performed men in the areas of honesty, intelligence, and compassion but were also ranked more emotional and more manipulative. Over half of those participating said America was just not ready to have a woman in the top political offices. Since the superintendent is the top executive officer of the school district, this opinion can be transferred to the area of women as superintendents as well.

In the AASA study of school superintendents, Glass et al. (2000) claimed women superintendents were rated higher than men superintendents in the leadership role. According to these experts, women are more democratic and have more instructional knowledge than men. Students and faculty have higher morale and are more productive with women at the helm. Successful women superintendents have shown a woman can get the job done (Bjork, 2000; Brunner, 1997; Dobie & Hummel, 2001; Grogan, 2005; Skrla, 2000), but school boards still continue to hire more men.

### **Barriers for Women**

Numerous studies have been conducted on the barriers women face in the rise to the superintendency (Brunner, 1999; Duwe, 2010; Edgehouse, 2008; Galloway, 2006; Lopez, 2008; Montz, 2004; Van Tuyle & Watkins, 2009). According to a Pew Report (2008), the general public cited gender discrimination, resistance to change, and the “good old boys” as reasons for lack of women in the highest levels of leadership. The survey of 2,250 adults revealed “Americans believe women have the right stuff to be political leaders” (Pew Center, 2008, p. 1), but women are not represented in the top ranks of leadership. In the educational ranks, men continue to hold 75% of the superintendent positions (Kowalski et al., 2011). The glass ceiling may have a few cracks but still has not been shattered. Studies on aspiring women superintendents and those who have reached this position identify both internal and external barriers which result in a lack of women superintendents (Barrios, 2004; Blanchard, 2009; Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Duwe, 2010; Edgehouse, 2008; Efthimia, 1997, Galloway, 2006; Gorree-Burns, 1999; Grogan, 1996; Lopez, 2008; Miller, 2009; Montz, 2004; Sampson & Davenport, 2010; Sharratt & Derrington, 1993; Tallerico, 2000b; Wickman, 2007).

**Internal barriers.** Women seeking the superintendency are often faced with self-imposed barriers. These barriers include lack of self-esteem, lack of mobility, family responsibilities, and internalization of sex roles (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009b; Konnert & Augustine, 1995; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). Sharratt and Derrington (1993) administered a survey to women in Washington State which indicated gender-typing and sex discrimination was considered the main barriers for women aspiring to the superintendency. When the same survey was given in 2007, the results revealed women considered family responsibilities as one of the top barriers in the attainment of the superintendency. For many women, the choice not to pursue the superintendency is a personal choice and an internal decision that limits professional advancement.

In her dissertation study of perceived barriers for female superintendents, Wickham (2007) reported the lack of the ability to relocate as the most prominent barrier to the position of superintendent for women surveyed. The exclusion of the “good ole boys” network ranked as the second top barrier. In the nonexperimental-descriptive research design, data was gathered from 112 female superintendents in the state of California to determine perceived barriers and perceived successful strategies for female superintendents. Although family demands and responsibilities were identified as significant, this barrier was not seen as the most important. Studies continue to show lack of self-esteem, conflict between home and career duties, and the reluctance to relocate as internal barriers that hinder women in the pursuit of the superintendency (Duwe, 2010; Lopez, 2008; Wickham, 2007).

**External barriers.** Many of the external barriers for women aspiring to the superintendency are considered long-standing fixtures of the educational system (Hite et

al., 1994). External barriers include a lack of role models and lack of mentoring (Blanchard, 2009). Since most superintendents are men, the opportunity to engage in professional relationships with other women superintendents creates a void for women. Formal and informal guidance and support systems in the form of mentors are not available for women (Sharratt & Derrington, 1993). Another barrier facing women continues to be identified as the “good old boys” (Konnert & Augustine, 1995, p.34). Since women are not a privileged part of this group, they are denied access to information about possible job openings and unable to share strategies that increase visibility (Glass et al., 2000). Women lack the professional ties and the informal network used by men to advance each other’s career (Miller, 2009).

One of the major external barriers for women in acquiring the position of superintendent is in the selection process (Glass, 2000; Kim & Brunner, 2008; Tallerico, 2000b). School board members do not perceive women as strong managers, consider women unqualified to handle budgeting, and perceive women as allowing emotions to influence their decision-making (Blanchard, 2009). In the AASA study conducted in 2000, women superintendents continued to cite discriminatory practices as one of the major hindrance for women in the hiring process (Glass et al., 2000). School boards see women as being too emotional and too dependent to be effective school leaders (Hite et al., 1994).

Christie et al. (2008) conducted a national quantitative survey on the recruitment and hiring of women superintendents with brief narratives of 433 women superintendents. Sixty-three per cent of the participants stated relocation and lack of mobility were not factors in obtaining the position of superintendent. Concerning

external barriers, women superintendents recorded comments: “We live in a society where the makeup of the current school board prefers a male superintendent over a female,” and “The board is male dominated, the town government is male dominated, and women are still thought of as “surprising” when they are leaders” (p.2). A number of participants cited the “good ole boy” system as a contributing factor to lack of women in the ranks of the superintendency.

How many women actually apply for the superintendency is unknown, but the continual increase in the numbers of women gaining superintendent certification indicates women do aspire to the position (TPEIR, 2011). When school board members begin the selection process, they identify certain qualifications, skills, and traits a candidate needs to make a successful fit for the school district. The school board is responsible for interviewing, choosing, and hiring a superintendent. Women are hired approximately 25% of the time nationwide, but in West Texas, the percentage is much lower. The selection process continues to be one of the major external barriers for women who aspire to the superintendent position.

### **Summary**

Since one of the major external barriers facing women in the climb to the superintendency has been identified as the hiring process, this study contributes to the literature by examining the views and voices of those who are ultimately responsible for selecting a superintendent. Most of the literature on women and the superintendency focus on the experiences of women aspiring to the superintendency or on women who have been successful in attaining the superintendency. Few studies explore the role of school board members in the hiring process. This phenomenon needs to be investigated

further in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issue as it relates to women attaining the position of superintendent.

The phenomenon concerning the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency is complex and does not occur in isolation. Social norms and expectations that have existed in societies and cultures since the beginning of written communications show women have always been considered subservient to men. These influences are evident in modern societies even though women have gained more independence, more individual civil rights, and more advanced education during the past century. The percentage of women in leadership roles in all areas of business, politics, law, and other fields is marginal compared to men who hold these positions. The superintendency is unique, however, because women represent the largest percentage of employees in the educational field—except the top position, the superintendent.

Women have made substantial gains in overcoming barriers in educational opportunities and have an increased presence in the labor force, but they have yet to acquire equal representation in the top executive position in the school system, the superintendency. Nationally and in rural West Texas the top leadership office of the school systems continues to evade women. In 1909 Ella Young (Blount, 1998) predicted women would rule the schools. Bass (2002) predicted by 2034 women will be the majority of shareholders, directors, and leaders in many organizations, and patterns of leadership behavior will change because “women tend to be more transformational than their male counterparts, do more networking, are more focused on relationships and are more concerned than men about social justice, equity, and fairness” (p. 381). Women

have waited over 100 years to represent the majority of the leaders in the schools. They have come a long way, but they still have a long way to go.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

Previous research has shown one of the major external barriers facing women aspiring to the superintendency is the selection process (Tallerico, 2000b). This qualitative multi-site, multi-subject case study examined how individual school board member's attitudes, beliefs, and values affected the selection process for the superintendency and the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency in rural West Texas. The study was conducted through the theoretical lens of the social-role theory and the theory of patriarchy.

The ultimate decision for appointing a superintendent for the school district lies in the hands of the local school board. Statistics reveal a significantly higher number of men compared to women holding the position of superintendent (Glass, 1992; Glass et al., 2000; Katz, 2004; Kowalski et al., 2011; Pascopella, 2008; TPEIR, 2011; Wickham, 2007). Few studies have been conducted on school boards and the selection process (Glass, 2002; Ramirez & Guzman, 2003; Sabatino, 2010) which creates a significant gap in understanding the lack of women in this position. This study addressed this gap in literature by listening to the voices of former school board members (FSBM) as they related their experiences in the selection process for superintendent. This chapter



includes the research questions which guide the study, the design of the study, a description of the setting and the participants, the procedures, the role of the researcher, and methods of data analysis.

### **Design**

The qualitative multi-site, multi-subject case study was chosen as the research design for this study to investigate how and why school board members hire more men compared to women for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas. A qualitative study begins with assumptions concerning a social problem (Creswell, 2007) and “a plan for getting from here to there” (Yin, 2009, p. 26). According to Saldana (2009), qualitative inquiry “provides richer opportunities for gathering and assessing, in language-based meanings, what the participant values, believes, thinks, and feels about social life” (p. 92). This research method allowed insight into the selection process by hearing the voices of FSBM who participated in this phenomenon.

The use of a multi-case study provides replication if two or more cases support the same theory (Yin, 2009, p. 56). Fifteen FSBM agreed to be interviewed and shared their experiences in hiring a superintendent for their school district. This research approach provided analysis within each case (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and supplied cross-case analysis which multiplied the data set by the number of single cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The study of individual cases and cross cases permitted observation of any existing patterns within the theoretical framework and the review of literature which is appropriate if the researcher seeks to answer how and why (Yin, 2009).

A case study is beneficial when the researcher seeks to understand a real-life phenomenon not limited to one method of data collection or data analysis strategy (Yin,

2009). Three sources of data were gathered for this study: (a) semi-structured interviews to provide an understanding of personal experiences related to this activity, (b) a web based survey to gather demographic data and the attitudes toward the role of men and women, and (c) historical documents from each school district represented by the participants. These three methods of data collection provided triangulation and an opportunity to analyze emerging themes across individual cases and cross cases.

Utilizing semi-structured interviews, a sex-role egalitarian survey, and historical documents, the study examined how the selection process and the underrepresentation of women in rural West Texas is influenced by (a) individual school board members' personal attitudes, values, and beliefs, (b) by leadership qualities and skills of men as compared to women, (c) by the culture of the community and the region, and (d) by social role expectations for men and women. FSBM from small, rural West Texas school districts were interviewed in a one-on-one setting. A Sex-Role Egalitarian Scale (SRES) survey was administered via an on-line secure Survey Monkey site to gather insight into participants' social-role attitudes. Historical documents from school districts were analyzed for student demographics, budget, and academic performance. FSBM were utilized as participants to discuss the phenomenon of the selection process because they are not bound by the federal and state laws or voter accountability.

The physical sites were small, rural school districts in West Texas which historically have lower percentages of women superintendents compared to men at both state and national levels. Although each site had its distinct culture, all the sites were similar in size and regional location. The multi-site study provided an opportunity to form general explanations by looking at similarities among cases and across cases.

A theoretical framework is essential for replication between cases and in cross-case analysis. The study was framed through the patriarchal theory and Eagly's (1984) social-role theory in an attempt to understand how personal attitudes, values, and beliefs of school board members and the superintendent selection process affects the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency in rural West Texas. Yin (2009) explained the multiple-case design is considered more compelling and robust because it entails "replication" logic (p. 54). Each individual case became a part of the whole study and the final focus of the summary report. Conducting 15 individual case studies allowed either "a literal reproduction (prediction of similar results) or "a theoretical replication" (prediction contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons)" (p. 54). The themes of each case were considered as the information needing replication by other individual cases. The case inquiries included one, two, or three school board members from eight school districts. Each case was compared within its own subgroup and then analyzed as a whole group for replication.

A major difference between the case study and other methods of research is the role of theory development during the design phase (Yin, 2009, p. 35). The focus of this study was to "explore, describe, and explain the phenomenon" (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005, p. 44) of the selection process of the superintendent by listening to FSBM as hiring agents. Explaining existing theory supported the research approach and provided credibility to the study. The theoretical framework worked as a "blueprint" for possible explanations on how and why the studied phenomenon occurs. By weaving the social-role theory and the theory of patriarchy with the interview data, the historical documents of the school district, and the SRES survey, the study examined how the personal values,

attitudes of perceived roles of men and women and leadership qualities, and West Texas culture affected school board members' selection process of a superintendent candidate and how it relates to the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency.

This study employed six methods identified by Merriam (2009) to increase the rigor and the trustworthiness of the qualitative research: triangulation of three data sources (semi-structured interviews, historical documents, and surveys), the researcher's role, an audit trail, and member checking. These methods were utilized to increase credibility and to strengthen the findings and the conclusions of the study. The transferability of the study was provided in rich, thick description of the setting, the participants, and the findings (Merriam, 2009).

A case is defined as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context as the unit of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The boundaries of a case study were necessary in order for the study to remain reasonable in scope (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This case study was "bounded" by the sampling, the location of participants, the experience of participants as hiring agents, and the physical area (Stake, 1995). The case involved the selection of only rural school districts and participants in the region of West Texas served by ESCs 15 and 18. The system was the institution of the school board and the school district.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following questions:

#### **Research Question One**

How do specific leadership qualifications and skills of potential candidates affect decisions of individual school board members in the selection process in rural West Texas school districts?

### **Research Question Two**

How do personal beliefs and values of individual school board members affect the selection process for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?

### **Research Question Three**

How does the culture of the community and region affect the hiring decisions of individual board members in rural West Texas?

### **Research Question Four**

How do attitudes of leadership and social roles influence hiring men and women for the superintendency in rural West Texas?

### **Research Question Five**

How and why do school board members hire more men than women for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?

### **Setting**

Texas is comprised of approximately 1,142 public school districts and charter schools (TEA, 2012). This study occurred in eight rural school districts in West Texas which lie within the regional Educational Service Centers (ESC) 15 and 18. Under the direction of the TEA, 20 ESCs provide program support to regional school districts in all areas of daily operations, including finance, curriculum, technology, professional

development, and other services. In the area of West Texas, combined ESCs 15 and 18 cover over 72,000 square miles, provide services to 82 school districts in 37 counties, and include 48 identified rural districts. Over 3,000 miles were traveled to gather data from the participants who represented FSBM within this area.

Texas school districts are classified according to student enrollment. For the purpose of this study, only small 1A rural districts with student enrollments less than 600 were chosen. The choice for the selection of 1A schools in West Texas occurred for several reasons. Studies have shown more women serve in small rural districts than in larger districts, but this is not occurring in rural West Texas (Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Christie et al., 2008). These districts were also chosen for the study due to the traditional, independent culture of this area. The background and historical context of the populations of West Texas provide relevant insight into social role and patriarchal theories, the theoretical frameworks underlying this study.

The site visit for the interview stage of the study was determined by the participant. Since the interview process relies upon trust and mutual respect between the interviewee and the interviewer (Seidman, 1998), allowing participants to choose a safe environment for the interview contributed to the individuals' comfort and security. The interviews were conducted in the offices of eight of the participants and the private homes of the remaining seven. In order to protect both school districts and participants, pseudonyms were assigned to districts and FSBM. The school districts were labeled Cotton Patch ISD, Desert ISD, Grand ISD, Highland ISD, Key ISD, Love ISD, Mountain ISD, and Park ISD. Table 1 shows the pseudonyms used for the participants and the districts they represented.

Table 1

*School Districts and Participants*

| District     | Participant 1 | Participant 2 | Participant 3 |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Cotton Patch | Rose          | Henry         | Pete          |
| Desert       | Kay           |               |               |
| Grand        | Mary          | Jane          |               |
| Highland     | Billy         | Faith         | Grace         |
| Mountain     | Joe           | Sue           |               |
| Key          | Sam           | Tom           |               |
| Love         | Roy           |               |               |
| Park         | Sally         |               |               |

**Participants**

The local school boards of trustees are elected by registered voters in 95% of school districts across the nation (Kowalski et al., 2011). This position can be a prestigious and an influential position within a community surrounded by political and social agendas (Mountford, 2004). An active school board member may be hesitate or be unwilling to participate openly in a study that seeks the personal experiences of the board member. The political nature of the position and the accountability for federal and state laws may hinder participation of acting school board members in a study which concerns personnel opinions and legal restrictions. School board members often are reluctant to discuss personnel issues and typically have a low return rate of participation in surveys (Glass, 2002). Current school board members may be unwilling to discuss what they

may perceive as reflecting gender discrimination either individually or as a representative of the school board; therefore, the study necessitated the sampling of FSBM.

Yin (2009) stated in a multiple-case design, the number of cases, or the sample size, should be determined by the number of case replications the researcher desires. Stake (1995) emphasized balance, variety, and the opportunity to learn are the primary factors of importance in choosing a sampling size. In a multiple-case design, two or three cases do not provide the interaction necessary to highlight the phenomenon of interest 15 or 30 cases do (Stake, 2006). In order to provide a higher possibility of replication, 15 participants were chosen for this study through a purposeful criterion sampling.

Creating a list of essential attributes for the purposeful sampling allowed the identification of information-rich cases that reflected the purpose of the study—to understand and to gain insight (Merriam, 2009). Criterion sampling provided an examination of a small number of cases from each district, a comparison of individual responses, and representation of the culture of the school and community as seen through the participant's eyes. The criteria for participants were (a) former school board members who had served in a rural West Texas school districts, (b) former school board members who participated in the selection process for the superintendent, (c) school boards who conducted the selection process independently without the assistance of professional search consultants, and (d) former school board members who had served on the school board within the last seven years. Fifteen FSBM from eight small rural West Texas school districts agreed to participate in the study. Age, ethnicity, gender, or lengths of term on the school board were not qualifying criteria for participants.



## Procedures

Procedures for this study followed all university requirements and guidelines beginning with the dissertation proposal process, through the committee search and establishment of the chair and supporting members, throughout the proposal development and proposal defense, and culminated in the submission and approval in the initial Application to Use Human Research Subjects (Expedited Review) by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University. Required appendices were included in the Expedited Review application: the Interview Script, the SRES online survey, the Informed Consent Form, Participant Recruitment Script, and a Debriefing letter to explain the SRES survey results (see Appendices A, B, C, D, & E). A Change in Protocol request was submitted to the IRB after conducting the initial pilot interview, to address the Section Part 2: *Process of Obtaining Informed Consent Form: Deception* which had not been included in the original IRB application. King and King (1993) suggested researchers using the SRES instrument not reveal the name and nature of the survey prior to administration to participants. After completing the online survey participants were sent by email, postal mail, or in person a summary report of the survey results explaining the intent and the meaning of the instrument. The university IRB accepted and approved the Change in Protocol for the deception clause and the debriefing statement provided to participants (see Appendix E).

In order to assure anonymity and/or confidentiality of subject data, names, characteristics, comments, and other information of participants, data was kept in strict confidence. Secure methods were utilized for data coding including locked file cabinets for hard-copy data storage, a password protected computer file storage, and the usage of

pseudonyms for participants and the school districts represented. Participants' identity for completing the online survey was protected with a security coded password. The survey and interview process were considered minimal risk data and were collected in such a way as to increase the participants' anonymity. Names were never used in any reports. Any data shared with others utilized the coding system to help protect the identity of participants. Data will be destroyed after three years according to the IRB guidelines.

Since poorly designed questions are a weakness of the interview for data gathering purposes (Yin, 2009), after receiving approval from the IRB a pilot study was conducted with a volunteer former school board member. This individual was chosen for convenience, access, and geographic proximity. The pilot study provided the opportunity to refine the data collection content and procedures (Yin, p.92). The feedback from the pilot participant revealed several weaknesses in the interview process relating to clarity and purpose. The pilot study gave the researcher the opportunity to reflect on interview techniques and to make necessary revisions (Seidman, 1998).

The study was a multi-site, multi-subject case study with 15 participants representing eight school districts in rural West Texas. Following IRB approval, an email was distributed to central office personnel in 28 of the 48 rural school districts throughout ESCs 15 and 18. A list of school board members from 2005-2011 was requested through local school board policy which provides the names of school board members as public information under the Texas Open Records Information Act.

After receiving the list of school board members from 28 school districts, a process of elimination yielded 16 ineligible districts according to the sampling criterion.

These districts had either not changed school board members or had not hired a superintendent within the past seven years. Of the qualified participants contacted, 10 men and 5 women FSBM declined to take part in the research. Using local telephone directories, 12 individuals who agreed to participate in the study were located from six school districts. After the initial interviews began, three of the men withdrew from the study leaving only nine participants. In order to provide an adequate sampling size for replication (Yin, 2009), permission was granted by the dissertation chair to include six FSBM who had known me prior to the study in a professional setting from two school districts where I had been employed. The final sampling consisted of 15 FSBM.

Preliminary contact with participants was by telephone contact using the participant recruitment script (Appendix D). This initial conversation introduced the researcher, explained the purpose and procedures of the research study, provided an explanation of how the contact was chosen for the study, and requested participation in the study. If the individual agreed to participate, the time and location of the formal interview was scheduled at this time. A pre-interview meeting was not possible due to the enormous distances between school districts. Before the interview process began, the participant signed a copy of the official informed consent form (see Appendix C) with the researcher's signature. The contents of the consent form were discussed at length, and the participant was given the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any issues. The participant was given directions on how to access and complete the web-based survey prior to and at the close of the interview session.

## **Personal Biography**

Rather than seeking to explain cause and effect, qualitative studies attempt to understand happenings through the direct interpretation and personal experience of the researcher (Stake, 1995). The researcher must identify the interest in the research topic and recognize how this personal interest could distort how they view the research especially when the interview process is involved (Seidman, 1998). The researcher can play several roles (Stake, 1995). In this study, I played the role of an interpreter, presenting new knowledge to increase the understanding of others and as an advocate, trying to persuade others to agree with my assertions.

To enhance the integrity of the study, I must clarify my biases and my assumptions about the research study I conducted (Merriam, 2009). I have served as an administrator and teacher in public schools in the state of Texas for 25 years. I have been a small campus principal for 11 years and was a superintendent/principal of a small, rural school district for one year. My bachelor's degree in social sciences provided a heavy background in sociology and psychology and gave me a foundation for viewing the data collection and analysis through a sociological lens. My educational leadership experience and training enhanced my understanding of the leadership theories presented in the study.

I have personally encountered what I believed to be barriers and a glass ceiling facing women aspiring to the position of the superintendency (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Although many women report being hindered by family responsibilities, lack of mobility, or a husband's career, these restraints were not influences in my pursuit of the superintendency. After obtaining my superintendent certification, I applied for numerous

superintendent positions around the state and participated in a number of interviews in small, rural districts in West Texas composed of primarily male board members. The focus of these interviews concerned finance and student discipline, two areas where board members consider women ineffective (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). My personal impressions from these interviews substantiated these findings. I felt that I had been interviewed mainly as a token female.

Since my personal experiences with school board members could hinder how I viewed the data and interpreted the results, I had to identify any bias or preconceived attitudes that existed concerning the study and the process throughout the data collection and analysis phases. Researcher bias was reduced by logging reflections of personal attitudes, thoughts, and impressions during the data collection, data analysis, and reporting (Saldana, 2009). These analytic memos were recorded by title and date in a hard-bound, paper notebook throughout the study allowing me to catch those “ah-ah” moments and to challenge my own assumptions (Saldana, 2009). Participants in the study were given a hard copy of the interview transcriptions, the SRES survey summary, the written participant profile, and the portions of the participant quotes used within the manuscript via email, postal mail, or in person to assure accuracy and to clarify any possible misconceptions.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection is asking, watching, and reviewing (Merriam, 2009). For the purposes of this multi-site, multi-subject case study, three methods of data collection were utilized: semi-structured interviews, historical documents, and an online survey. In all stages of the study, participants and school districts were coded using pseudonyms in

order to “mask the identities of the interviewed subject” (Kvale, 1996, p.172), to disguise the participant’s location (Seidman, 1998), and to provide a mnemonic device during the coding and analysis phase.

## **Interviews**

In this qualitative study, a semi-structured interview was the major source employed to gather information on the experiences of the participants and the meanings of those experiences. According to Kvale (1996), “An *inter view*, is literally an inter change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (p.2). Through the process of conversation and human interaction, social sciences, psychology, and other disciplines use the interview as a tool to obtain knowledge about human behavior (Kvale, 1996). In this case study the interview was used to get a description and an explanation of the superintendent selection process by FSBM (Stake, 1995). Having the participants reconstruct their experiences with the selection process (Seidman, 1998) provided a method for understanding how the attitudes and values of individual school board members affect why school board members hire more men than women for the superintendent position.

One weakness of the interview process is poor recall by the researcher (Yin, 2009). Audio recordings allowed for verbatim transcription of the interviews, and reduced the possibility of errors and the loss of details. The interview process of 15 participants produced over 600 pages of transcribed material. Due to the vast amount of audio data, a professional transcriber was hired for transcription for the essence of time. A non-disclosure agreement was submitted with the IRB application and was signed by both parties before the interview process began (see Appendix G). The

transcriber provided the study with professional procedures and confidentiality (Kvale, 1996). Transcripts were transmitted through secure password protected encryption through an online drop box. After the receiving the transcriptions, the original recordings were compared to confirm accuracy, and corrections were made in regional jargon, local accents, or statements labeled inaudible by the transcribers. The original transcriptions were delivered to participants by email, by postal service, or by hand for member checking before data analysis began. Two participants requested minor corrections in their interview transcriptions.

Interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes depending upon the contributions of the participants. An interview protocol containing 16 questions was developed and followed for each individual interview. The interview was divided into general categories to guide the conversation and to provide specific questions for each participant: (a) You, (b) General, (c) Leadership, and (d) Values. The interview questions were designed to provide insight into the personality of the participant, to explore how attitudes, value, and beliefs motivated the participants, and how individual views of leadership qualities and social roles affected the hiring process. Though some influence on the scope of the questions came from a review of previous studies, the questions have not been previously administered in any other study to my knowledge. Interview questions are presented in Table 2 and Appendix A.

Table 2

*Interview Questions*

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Questions

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. What was your major motivation or interest for serving as a board member?
3. What do you feel are the major challenges for school boards, school districts, and

- superintendents?
4. Can you describe the process the local school board used when seeking a superintendent?
  5. What qualities do you believe strong leaders need to possess in order to be effective?
  6. How do those qualities differ for men compared to women?
  7. Which do you believe is the most important leadership skill/quality for a superintendent to possess? Why?
  8. How do the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the community affect your personal choice of an applicant?
  9. How would you describe your personal values and beliefs system? How did your values affect your choice of a superintendent?
  10. How does your religious or spiritual system view the role of women in your life and in society?
  11. How do the personal values and beliefs of the superintendent candidate influence your decision in the hiring process?
  12. How do you feel the “personal chemistry” between the applicant and the school board affects the hiring of a superintendent?
  13. Do you believe a woman can possess the skills necessary to be an effective superintendent? Why or why not?
  14. Have you ever hired a woman superintendent? Why or why not?
  15. In your opinion, why are there so few women superintendents in rural West Texas?
  16. As a former board member, what advice would you give an applicant who was interviewing with you and your board for the position of superintendent?
- 

The how and why found in Questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were the main focus of the study (Yin, 2009). These questions were explanatory rather than exploratory, and favored the case study approach. Grogan (1996) explained in a valid research design, the researcher should “take a good look at who the participants are and see them in context as clearly as possible” (p. 42). The participants were encouraged to talk about themselves and their interests in being school board members in Questions 1, 2, 3, 15, and 16 to show the individual participants their experiences and stories were important (Seidman, 1998).

Question 2 related to the underlying motivation of the participant for serving as a member. An examination of the motives of school board members is important to help



more fully understand their role in the hiring process (Mountford, 2004). Larger districts often employ search consultants to assist in the search process (Tallerico, 2000a) where smaller districts generally act independently (Kowalski et al., 2011). Since there is not one method used by school boards in the selection process, Questions 3 and 4 related to the roles and responsibilities of the school board and the hiring process itself (Kowalski et al., 2011). Limited research exists on the process and the procedures rural school districts in West Texas follow in selecting a superintendent. Examining these procedures among the represented school districts added to the limited literature on the selection process in rural school districts.

Questions 5, 6, and 7 were designed to allow participants the opportunity to share perceptions of leadership and desired qualities for successful leaders. Each school district has its own unique issues. Superintendents reported the three primary reasons they felt they were selected for the position of superintendent included personal characteristics, the potential to be a change agent, and the ability to be an instructional leader (Kowalski et al., 2011). Some school boards prefer a transactional style of leadership rather than a transformational style for the superintendency (Ramirez & Guzman, 2003; Sabatino, 2010). Relating these theories to Questions 5,6, 7, 12, and 13 offered insight on how the participants felt concerning leadership of men compared to women. Since men cited personal characteristics as one of the major factors for being hired as a superintendent (Kowalski et al., 2011), Question 12 opened the discussion of what personal chemistry meant to FSBMs and how it affected their choice of a superintendent.

Values guide a person's life and influence the decisions a person makes (Moreno Perez, 2008). Questions 8, 9, 10, and 11 directed the discussion to personal values, beliefs, and attitudes of social roles for men and women. These questions were designed to investigate the influences individual and community expectations had on the selection process.

### **Historical Documents**

Historical data provided another source of data for the study. This data was collected from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website and the school district's website on the demographics of the school district where the participants served as board members. District documents included (a) district enrollment, (b) student demographics, (c) personnel data, (d) Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAKS) state accountability data, (f) financial budget, and (g) superintendent salary. The examination of these historical presented an overview of the performance and culture of the school district and the community.

### **Surveys**

A third source of data collection utilized for triangulation was an online survey. Using Survey Monkey, the on-line survey software, demographic data of the participants was gathered on age, occupation, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, political affiliation, annual household income, and the number of years served as a school board member. In addition to demographics, the online survey incorporated King and King's (1993) Sex-Role Egalitarian Scale (SRES) Form BB (see Appendix B). Access and the right to use the scale was purchased from Sigma Assessment Inc. (see Appendix H) after providing written assurance the survey would be used for educational research. After

receiving permission from the authors of the instrument, the Form BB was modified with questions from Form KK. In order to maintain the reliability of the survey, all the questions reflected the same role and same direction corresponding to the original Form BB numbering. Since the original SRES instrument was developed in 1993, the creator of the SRES was contacted by email to determine if the instrument still reflected its original intent. According to King (L. King, personal communication, April 16, 2012), even in today's culture and society, the instrument remains a reliable measurement of its intended purpose.

The SRES was created as an instrument to measure gender-related constructs (King & King, 1993, p. 2). Reliability for the instrument was determined by applying coefficients of homogeneity (internal consistency), stability (test-retest), and equivalence (alternative forms). Several full versions of the survey were created with 95 attitudinal questions and then shorter versions were constructed with 25 similar statements. Generalizability of the shorter versions was computed using analysis of variance, mean squares for each domain measure, and calculated for estimate of variance components, generalizability coefficients, and error. Validity of the SRES was established by comparing to other gender-role measures including the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS). Both surveys yielded similar correlational values providing for convergent and discriminate validity. King and King (1993) define sex-role egalitarianism as

an attitude that causes one to respond to another individual independently of the other individual's sex. One who possesses this attitude believes that the sex of an individual should not influence the perception of an individual's abilities or the determination of an individual's rights, obligations, and opportunities.

Consequently, a sex-role egalitarian does not discriminate against or relate differentially to another on the basis of the other's sex. (p. 16)

The instrument Form BB contains 25 questions measuring attitudes toward the equality of men and women. The Likert-type scale includes five divisions of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (DA), and strongly disagree (SD). As suggested by the authors, an explanation was not provided to the participants prior to administration concerning the intent of the survey (King & King, 1993, p. 5). Survey questions are shown in Appendix B.

The survey is divided into five domains with an equal representation of five items for each domain:

Marital Roles (Questions 4, 14, 16, 19, 23): address beliefs about men and women in the spousal roles.

Parental Roles (Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 20): address beliefs about maternal and paternal roles.

Employment Roles (Questions 2, 12, 15, 22, 25): address beliefs about men and women in their workplace roles.

Social-Interpersonal (Questions 10,11,17,18, 21): address beliefs about men and women in a variety of social relationships.

Educational Roles (Questions 1, 3, 9, 13, 24): address beliefs about educational alternatives available to men and women. (King & King, 1993)

Each item received a score of 1 to 5, with 1 assigned to the response that is least egalitarian and 5 assigned to the response that is most egalitarian. A total score was computed as the sum of the 25 item responses (possible range = 25 - 125). The higher

the summative score reflected the greater the endorsement of sex-role egalitarian attitudes (King & King, 1993).

The online survey software utilized the Professional Pro package which offered SSL encryption to increase privacy and protection against any data being intercepted during transmission. Precautions should be taken to assure data cannot be decoded and individual responses cannot be tracked back to an individual respondent (University of Connecticut, 2009). The survey was formatted to allow participants to skip questions if they chose by providing a response of “No opinion.” At the end of the survey, the participants were provided the opportunity to discard the data and given an option to discard specific responses. The survey was designed to take approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Participants were emailed a link and a password to access the survey through the Survey Monkey’s secure encrypted system. Survey results were identified using participants’ assigned pseudonyms to increase anonymity.

### **Data Analysis**

*Analyze* means to break down into parts or elements (Kvale, 1996). In a qualitative case study, analysis involves searching for patterns among the data collected (Yin, 2009). In this study, the parts of each individual case were identified and a cross-case analysis was utilized to compare the cases and develop interpretations and assumptions common to all the cases relative to the theoretical framework and constructs provided in the review of literature.

Coding involves arranging ideas and developing classifications or categories. Linking the data to an idea is an interpretive act involving the process of coding (Saldana, 2009). Rather than following one expert researcher’s method of coding, several methods

(Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldana, 2009; Stake, 2006; & Yin, 2009) were merged in order to provide me, a novice researcher, the opportunity to make sense of the enormous amount of data collected through the interviews, historical documents, and on-line surveys.

First, the interview transcriptions were separated into “chunks” as described by Miles and Huberman (1994). All 15 interview transcriptions were printed in their entirety and cut into strips. This process of chunking allowed me to locate, pull out, and cluster segments of the data related to the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the themes discussed in the review of literature: (a) school board demographics, (b) the selection process, (c) leadership qualities, (d) values, (e) West Texas, (f) social roles, (g) personal chemistry and the good-ole boy system, and (h) miscellaneous. These strips were placed into color labeled folders and titled with each theme.

An adaption of Stake’s (2006) worksheets was developed with columns coded according to school district and participant pseudonyms. The initial coding utilized the participants’ exact words, or *in vivo* coding (Saldana, 2009), and was entered onto the worksheet from the labeled folders. After all the strips had been entered, another worksheet was created to identify repeating ideas and recurring patterns. Recurring ideas were entered into rows, checked for how many times the terms or similar terms were used to describe the idea, and labeled with the name of the participant who used the term. I returned to the original transcriptions to assure verbatim phrases or explanations of the participant were used. Participants’ descriptions of each theme specific to the research questions, theoretical framework, and the review of literature were compared to the other cases for the number of times the idea occurred. This process helped identify repeating

ideas which used similar words and phrases to express the same idea. Following Saldana's advice (2009) for novice researchers, anything relevant or striking was coded that expressed these ideas.

The final phase of coding involved triangulation from the three sources of data collection: semi-structured interviews, the SRES survey, and district historical documents. Historical documents provided a written description of the school district in terms of size, student demographics, financial status, and state accountability. This data was compared to the interview data related to the values and the culture of the community as described by the participant. Tables were created to determine similarities and differences among the school districts and portrayed the overall general characteristics of the school districts for the final reporting phase.

The demographical data from the survey results was incorporated to enhance the description of each participant's experiences, and a table was constructed to compare each participant and district. Individual scores were charted and coded according to responses and correlated to the themes and patterns of the interview data to determine how each participant scored on the egalitarian scale. The aggregate score for each statement was recorded and compared within each district and cross districts. The results of the SRES revealed attitudes of participants in relation to the theoretical framework. Special focus was placed on the responses related to employment, education, and family items and correlated to interview data under social roles, patriarchy, and leadership.

### **Trustworthiness**

Necessary components of a qualitative study include credibility and dependability. The trustworthiness of this study was validated through triangulation,

member checks, the researcher's role, an audit check, and a rich, thick description of the findings. Utilizing a log, or memoing, throughout the research process allows others to "authenticate the findings of the study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 222). The procedures, analysis, and interpretations were recorded in a hard copy binder by the researcher.

### **Data Triangulation**

To assure the right information and interpretations have been obtained, three data sources were utilized for triangulation (Stake, 2006). Each important finding within the case study needed to have "confirmation and assurance that key meanings are not being overlooked" (Stake, 2006, p.33). Triangulation provided collaboration of evidence from different sources, shed light on the emerging themes within the study, and served to make conclusions more convincing and accurate.

**Member checks.** Participant checks were used throughout the study to allow input into the accuracy of interpretations of the data and the conclusions. Known as "*writ large*" this is one of the most critical techniques for establishing credibility (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). Participants were given the opportunity to review the verbatim interview transcription and clarify or embellish on any statements they made. They received survey results with an explanation of the purpose of the survey and a guide for the interpretation, and given the opportunity to change any responses. Saldana (2009) encouraged member checks to clarify ideas, gather new insights, and provide trustworthiness by discussing the emerging data with the participants themselves. A written draft of the descriptive conclusions of the participant was provided to each individual for review, clarification, and interpretation. Allowing participants the opportunity to review the draft case report corroborated the essential facts and evidence of the case report (Yin, 2009). The



participants were given the opportunity to offer their perspective on the emerging data themes and to identify any misunderstandings the researcher may have had (Stake, 1995). The complete written findings of study were emailed or delivered by postal mail to participants to allow them the opportunity to review the interpretation of their comments.

**Audit trail.** A chain of evidence, or an audit trail, was maintained throughout the study describing in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how the data was analyzed. A hard-covered notebook was utilized to record each step of the study beginning with the pilot study and recruitment of participants, throughout the data collection and the descriptions of the findings, to assist in explaining how I arrived at the results (Merriam, 2009). The chain of evidence, similar to a criminal investigation, traces the collection of the facts of the case and the procedures used to present the final report (Yin, 2009). All notes and journaling were dated and entered chronologically to allow the path of the study to be traced. The underlying issue of the audit trail, according to Miles & Hubermann (1994), is “whether the process of the study is consistent and reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods” (p.278). A final compilation of all notes and entries in the hard copy journal was transferred to a word document for storage on a password protected computer.

**Rich thick description.** Merriam (2009) advocates using sufficient descriptive data to make transferability possible. Studying each individual case, and then comparing it to other cases gives others the opportunity to transfer, or generalize, the findings to other situations. The “rich, thick description refers to a description of the setting and participants of the study, as well as a detailed description of the findings” (p.227). The

detailed description of the study is presented in Chapter Four of the dissertation manuscript.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Yin (2009) stated a case study involves phenomenon in real-life context; therefore, the researcher must exercise “special care and sensitivity” to the rights and confidentiality of all participants within the study (p. 73). Through all stages of the research process, I employed sensitivity to the ethical considerations which guide scholarly research (Creswell, 2007).

Interview data, collected using voice audio recordings, required informed consent approval. Participants’ signed, dated, and received a copy of the consent form with contact numbers if they had questions or concerns about the study. The participants received a copy of the interview transcription, were given the choice to withdraw interview data, and given the opportunity to clarify, or omit, any statements that may have caused discomfort or misinterpretation. Participants received a copy of the SRES results with an explanation of the scoring, their individual score on the survey, and an opportunity to withdraw their responses.

The survey and interview process involved minimal risk and data was collected in to provide for the participant’s anonymity. To avoid any possible identification of participants or school district personnel, school districts and participants were assigned pseudonyms for confidentiality throughout the data collection, data analysis, and final reporting stages. Records and data were retained in a locked cabinet and a written assurance of confidentiality was provided.

In order to maintain the integrity of the research, ethical standards of scholarly research and a Christian worldview guided the study. I embrace the truth and the Holy Scriptures as my worldview. Therefore, all my work and endeavors seek to bring glory to His kingdom in word and deed. I strive to adhere to His principles of truth as well as follow the guidelines set forth by the American Educational Standards Association's (AERA) and Liberty University's research procedures.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings of the data collected from one-on-one interviews, the SRES surveys on social role attitudes, and school districts demographics where the participants served as school board members. The sections include school districts' demographics, profiles of the participants, the selection process, leadership qualities, values, West Texas, social roles and patriarchy, personal chemistry and the good 'ole boy system, and miscellaneous information. Findings are discussed according to the themes generated by the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the review of literature.

### **School District's Profiles**

Profiles of each school district provided an overview of the school and the community. Eight independent school districts (ISD) were represented in this study by 15 participants. Each ISD is serviced by regional ESCs 15 and 18 within the area of West Texas. Together, these ESC's cover over 72,000 square miles. In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, the districts were assigned pseudonyms: Cotton Patch ISD, Desert ISD, Grand ISD, Highland ISD, Key ISD, Love ISD, Mountain ISD, and Park ISD. The school district demographics provided insight into the district's culture.

Two of the school districts had less than 100 students enrolled, three districts had from 100-300 students, and three districts had an enrollment from 300-500. All of the districts were predominately Hispanic or White. Park ISD reported 73.3% White and

Highland ISD reported 85.7% Hispanic, while the other districts were more proportionately distributed between the two ethnicities. No other ethnicities were reported on the Texas Academic Excellence Indicator (AEIS) due to small numbers. Other than Park ISD, all the districts have a high economically disadvantaged and at-risk student population according to the TEA’s qualifying standards for these sub-groups.

According to the state’s accountability system, six districts were rated *Academically Acceptable*, one reached *Recognized*, and one was labeled *Academically Unacceptable* (TEA, 2011). TEA’s rating system is based upon a number of factors including the state’s student assessment performance, the Annual Drop-out Rate, the College Readiness Indicator, and the performance of student ethnicity and economically disadvantaged sub-groups. Table 3 provides for the school district’s demographics.

Table 3

*School District Demographics*

| District     | Rating | Student # | At-Risk % | Eco-Dis % | Hispanic % | White % |
|--------------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Cotton Patch | AA     | 70        | 47.1      | 77.1      | 48.6       | 51.4    |
| Desert       | AA     | 148       | 45.3      | 72.3      | 52.0       | 44.6    |
| Grand        | R      | 258       | 30.3      | 49.3      | 33.6       | 63.9    |
| Highland     | AA     | 377       | 63.1      | 63.4      | 85.7       | 12.2    |
| Key          | AA     | 105       | 41.9      | 66.7      | 69.5       | 30.5    |
| Love         | AA     | 47        | 53.2      | 57.4      | 51.1       | 42.6    |
| Mountain     | AU     | 311       | 52.4      | 48.6      | 46.9       | 49.8    |
| Park         | AA     | 450       | 21.6      | 25.1      | 21.8       | 73.3    |

*Note.* TEA Academic Indicator System utilizes ratings of AU: Academically Unacceptable; AA: Academically Acceptable, R: Recognized; and E: Exemplary.

These school districts cover eight counties within the vast area known as West Texas. The populations of the communities vary from 35 to 1,504. The primary economic activities of the area include farming, ranching, tourism and oil (Ely, 2011; Texas Almanac, 2011). Several of the communities are unincorporated and several serve as county seats for the surrounding towns. Each community has a rich history that dates back to the 1880s. A number of the participants in this study trace their ancestral lines to these early settlers. Table 4 provides a summary of the local community’s demographics.

Table 4

*Community Characteristics*

| District                  | Population # | Hispanic % | White % | Eco. Activity |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------|---------|---------------|
| Cotton Patch <sup>a</sup> | 48           | 15.6       | 84.4    | F             |
| Desert                    | 273          | 27.8       | 68.5    | F             |
| Grand <sup>a</sup>        | 115          | <.5        | 99.0    | F             |
| Highland                  | 1981         | 68.7       | 33.3    | R/T           |
| Key <sup>a</sup>          | 278          | 49.3       | 50.4    | R/O           |
| Love                      | 134          | 58.2       | 41.8    | R             |
| Mountain                  | 1201         | 74.9       | 50.4    | R/T           |
| Park                      | 504          | 19.2       | 80.8    | R/F           |

*Note.* Demographic data was gathered from Texas Demographics (2012) and Texas Almanac (2011). The economic activity is labeled F for farming, R for ranching o for Oil, and T for tourism.

<sup>a</sup>refers to unincorporated communities.

## Participant Profiles

The participants in this qualitative, multi-site multi-case study represented eight rural school districts in West Texas. Demographics were gathered from the SRES surveys and interviews. All of the participants were over 40 years of age. Six of the participants hold a bachelor's degree and three of those have a master's degree. The remaining nine participants have a high school diploma and/or some college. Two of the participants are Hispanic/Mexican American and 13 are White. Eleven of the participants are employed and work 40 or more hours a week and three are retired. Seven Independents, four Democrats, and four Republicans are represented in the study. Fourteen profess the Christian faith—eight Protestants and six Catholics—while one indicated a belief a Higher Power. Five participants served as a school board member for 3-5 years, four served 5-10 years, three 10-15 years, and three served 15 or more years.

Participants provided an array of experiences: law enforcement, retired school teachers, county officials, social workers, business managers, supervisors, farmers, ranchers, and retirees. Of the 15 participants, eight were women and seven were men. The participants do not reflect the gender demographics of the school boards on which they served. Collectively, the participants hired over 40 superintendents. Table 5 describes the characteristics of the participants.

Table 5

### *Participant Demographics*

| Participant | Years on Board | Age   | Religious Identity | Political Party | Ethnicity | Annual Income |
|-------------|----------------|-------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|
| Billy       | 3-5            | 50-59 | Catholic           | Democrat        | White     | \$50-79,000   |

|       |       |          |            |             |          |             |
|-------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Faith | 3-5   | 50-59    | Other      | Democrat    | Hispanic | \$50-79,000 |
| Grace | 10-15 | 50-59    | Catholic   | Democrat    | Hispanic | \$75-99,000 |
| Henry | 15+   | 60-older | Catholic   | Independent | White    | \$50-79,000 |
| Jane  | 5-10  | 50-59    | Catholic   | Republican  | White    | \$50-79,000 |
| Joe   | 5-10  | 50-59    | Protestant | Independent | White    | \$50-79,000 |
| Kay   | 3-5   | 40-49    | Protestant | Independent | White    | \$50-79,000 |
| Mary  | 3-5   | 40-49    | Protestant | Republican  | White    | \$75-99,000 |
| Pete  | 5-10  | 60-older | Catholic   | Republican  | White    | \$20-39,000 |
| Rose  | 3-5   | 60-older | Catholic   | Republican  | White    | \$50-79,000 |
| Roy   | 15+   | 60-older | Protestant | Democrat    | White    | \$50-79,000 |
| Sally | 3-5   | 50-59    | Protestant | Independent | White    | \$50-79,000 |
| Sam   | 10-15 | 50-59    | Protestant | Independent | White    | \$50-79,000 |
| Sue   | 15+   | 50-59    | Protestant | Democrat    | White    | \$150,000-+ |
| Tom   | 10-15 | 50-59    | Protestant | Independent | White    | \$50-79,000 |

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*Note:* Demographic data was gathered from the on-line King and King (1993) SRES survey.

## **Rose**

Rose was raised in the rural community a few miles from Cotton Patch ISD where she went to school, graduated, and married her husband, a native of Cotton Patch. She worked for an established company until she retired. Her husband had been a board member for nearly 35 years when she was elected to the position. She served three years and hired two superintendents. She served with a five member board comprised of three men and two women. The present school board has four women and one man.



When asked her motivation for serving, Rose said she wanted to help keep the school open in order to provide children a place to go where they could have a chance in life. She feels like the biggest challenge facing their school is having everyone working together as a team and working as a community. She explained in a small community, the school was a big part of her life and she hopes to serve on the board again someday.

### **Henry**

Henry was born and raised in the house where we conducted his interview. He describes himself as “a very traditional type person with very conservative community attitudes.” His ancestors settled the community in the early 1890s for the rich farmland and the healthy climate (Texas Online Almanac, 2011). Henry stated his ethnic group was “a clannish people with some weird ideas.” Until the 1980s the community was composed entirely of the original families of the early settlers.

Henry served as school board president on Cotton Patch ISD for approximately 20 years of the 38 years he was a school board member. He hired eight superintendents during that time. The board has historically been of the same ethnic and religious persuasion of the community. The first non-White, Hispanic member was elected to the board about seven years ago. Many of the board members are related in some manner. Both Henry and his wife were members of the school board at the same time for three years. Until recently, the school board was composed of men, but in the last decade, women have served as members, and presently make up the majority. Cotton Patch ISD had one woman superintendent for a short time who was hired by a three women majority school board. Communication, money, and members with a personal agenda are the biggest challenges Henry feels facing school boards. The major reason Henry served on

the school board all those years was an effort to keep the school and the character of the community intact. It was a rewarding experience and he enjoyed “seeing the kids make it who can’t succeed anywhere else. We helped them all.” He often has students from years past thank him when they see him for giving them the opportunity for an education at Cotton Patch ISD.

### **Pete**

Pete was born and raised in the rural farm community of Cotton Patch. After high school graduation he worked on the farm until he was drafted into the U.S. Army. After he returned home, he married, relocated in a near-by town, and became a carpenter project superintendent. He retired after 40 years of working in this supervisory role and returned to Cotton Patch.

During his eight year tenure, all the school board members were Caucasian and of the local ethnic descent. The school board was dominantly male during this time. He was related to several of the other board members. He said when he ran for the school board no one else in the community was available who wanted the job. He became a school board member because, “I felt I was giving something back for what I have gotten from here.” He cited student motivation, due to the lack of discipline and parental involvement, as the biggest challenge that schools and educators face today. Pete has hired four superintendents and an interim twice.

### **Billy**

Billy was born in Oklahoma where his family was involved in rural farming and in public education. He attended various public schools throughout the southwest as a child and went to high school in New Jersey. Although he did not receive a college

degree, he studied music at the University of Texas. He became involved in the computer field where he built a successful career. He is married with one son who recently graduated. He now serves in a very prominent position in the community.

Billy's motivation to serve on the school board was a combination of being a parent with a child in the district and having a concern over the financial situation occurring within the school district at that time. He felt his entrepreneurial business skills could contribute in guiding the district. Billy has a unique and interesting concept concerning the challenges of public school which he labels "capitol absurdities." He feels there is a portion of our society who wants to see public education fail, and the policies of accountability and choice are designed to promulgate that failure. The ideas of exemplary schools, where highly certified teachers pass a test of minimum standards and who can teach a high percentage of students to pass a test of minimum standards, is absurd. He believes these policies—these capitol absurdities—verge on the edge of being criminal considering the state's latest budget cuts and defunding of education.

Billy served on the school board for five years with six Hispanic members. At the time, he was the only Anglo member. The board had two or three women members at all times. At one point, there were five women and two men. The current board has four men and two women serving. Billy participated in the hiring of two superintendents and two interims during his term as board member.

### **Faith**

Faith was born and raised in Highland and has lived in the community all her life. She graduated from Highland ISD high school and says everybody knows everybody in town. She is the oldest of four siblings and the first one in her family to gain her master's

degree. She is married with two children and has worked for the State of Texas for 25 years. After her retirement she is considering returning to school and working on her doctorate degree in clinical psychology.

Faith's motivation for serving on the board was to be a part of the decision-making for the school and to enact needed change. She served for six years as a board member. The district had three superintendents and two interims during that time. Her board had two or three women and was predominately Hispanic. The biggest challenge she believes facing the school is the lack of parental involvement. She feels in this predominately Hispanic community parents seldom get involved with the school because they feel intimidated by the expertise of school personnel. She said she knows it is very difficult, but the school needs to get parents involved. Faith participated in hiring two superintendents and two interims.

### **Grace**

Grace was born and raised in a town in Mexico and attended private schools in the United States. She received a bachelor's degree with a major in history and psychology from a local university. She married a Highland native, has two sons, and has lived in the community since she was 18. She has worked with Child Protective Services for 29 years and is preparing for retirement soon.

Grace was a school board member for 12 years and the president of the board for six years. The board was primarily Hispanic during those years and always had two or three women members. Historically, this had not been the case. Grace's husband, who served on the board for a number of years throughout the 1980s and 1990s, was often the only Hispanic on an all- male board. She decided to run for the school board when she

realized she wanted to commit to the community and to work on changes in the school system she believed needed to take place. After getting on the board Grace realized things were not so easy in the public school system. “Dealing with the mandates from Austin and working with people’s tax money is a whole new ballgame. Board members have to learn how to be political and how to play the game.” She participated in hiring three superintendents and an interim superintendent.

Grace feels the biggest challenge for school boards and educators is getting kids educated. She believes every child deserves an education, but the problems for teachers in the classroom with the different levels of needs and learning abilities make it tough. Her own children were considered gifted and talented, but in her job as an advocate for disadvantaged children, she understands the needs at both ends of the spectrum. As a board member, she was very frustrated trying to accomplish the goals of educating the children.

## **Joe**

Joe was born in the small hospital that once existed in Mountain. He was raised in the community, graduated from high school, attended a Texas university where he earned his bachelor’s in kinesiology, returned to the community, and is raising his two children here. His mother was in education and his wife is employed with the school district. He has been in wildlife management, ranching, and law enforcement.

Joe said he did not have an agenda when he got on the school board like some members “who wanted to fire the superintendent, or a coach, or a teacher.” He stated he went in with an open mind to support the school, to grow the school, and to provide a good foundation for the kids of the community. He served six years as a school board

member for Mountain ISD and hired four superintendents. Joe thinks the biggest challenges for schools, superintendents, and school boards are all the changes in policies, finance, and curriculum. The changing direction of the country and the different agendas of presidents make it difficult for schools.

## **Sue**

Sue's background is in education. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education and a master's in counseling. She taught school for nine years, was a middle school counselor for three, and then went into business with her husband. Sue was raised in the eastern portion of the United States, but she married a man who was born in the little hospital that once served the community. She has one son and has lived in Mountain for 21 years. Sue commented her first role in life is as a mother, then a wife. She is a business person and involved in the church, Boy Scouts, and the Mountain Chamber of Commerce.

Sue was recruited originally to fill an expired term on the school board and ended up serving for 15 years. She feels there are many issues facing public schools—change, mandates, testing, money—as well as local issues like misinformation and communication.

One of the major problems in a small district is often everyone knows everything that is happening before school board members do. As a school board member you hear about a problem at the bank, or the post office, or on Facebook which makes it difficult before you know all sides of the issue.

Historically, the school board at Mountain ISD has been composed of a majority of men with one or two women and remains an all White board. Sue was involved in hiring three superintendents while she served as a board member.

### **Sam**

Sam has been in ranching and the oil field business most of his adult life. He attended a junior college before going to work in the oil field and now works in a nearby town in equipment sales. He has lived in the same house in Key for 25 years. He has one son who attended Key ISD.

Sam, originally appointed to fill a vacancy, served on the school board seven years. He said he enjoyed being on the board because he could “help people understand the board is about the whole school, not just one person or one student.” When he was appointed, the board had a woman president and continues to have at least two women members. As a board member he participated in hiring two superintendents.

### **Tom**

Tom has lived in the Key community for 25 years. He has worked on ranches with cattle and horses since he graduated from high school. He has two children who attended and graduated from Key ISD. His wife is a college graduate and works as a district director for the federal government.

Tom’s motivation for being on the board was to be involved in the school because “many of the board members had their own agendas and didn’t always make the best decisions for all the students.” He wanted to help provide an education for the students and advocated for vocational programs to help students who had no plans for going to college. Tom served on the school board for 14 years and served as president for seven

of those years. The ethnicity of the board varied from a White to a Hispanic majority and always had two or three women as members. As a school board member, Tom hired three superintendents.

### **Mary**

Mary has been in childcare for 27 years and owns and operates a childcare center in a town about 15 miles from Grand ISD. She is the mother of three children, two who graduated and one who is in junior high. She was raised in the area and attended Grande ISD since her fourth grade year. Her children, her nieces, and her nephews still attend the school.

Her main motivation for serving on the board was the desire to bring stability and school spirit back to the school. She believed school pride had been lost due to the high turnover in the administration over the years. She was on the school board for 2 ½ years and hired one superintendent. She feels the main challenges for schools today are the mandates from the education agency and the government, and implementing these policies without the funding to do it.

### **Jane**

Jane retired after 34 years of teaching grades kindergarten through fifth. Jane retired with her masters in elementary education. She was born and raised in a community about 15 miles from Grand ISD. She had two children who attended Grand ISD. When a group of people tried to consolidate the school she decided to run for the school board and fight the consolidation. When she was elected to the school board she was the only woman serving. She served on the school board for six years and hired four superintendents.



Jane believes the biggest challenge facing school is finance and trying to make sure that everyone is doing their best quality job. She believes the board and superintendent should work as a team of eight to address the problems facing the district.

### **Sally**

Sally is the only participant who represents Park ISD in this study. She works as a business manager in an educational institution in a nearby community. She has worked in various school districts in different departments for 32 years. She has two children who graduated from Park ISD.

Sally was on the school board at Park ISD for four years. She served with one other woman and five men on an all White board and went through four superintendents. She wanted to be on the board, “so I could help those kids who didn’t have a voice. My priority was to see that kids were all treated the same no matter who their parents were.” The major challenge for education Sally believes “boils down to finance.”

### **Roy**

Roy was born in Love and graduated from high school there. He graduated from a Texas university with a degree in ranch management and returned to Love where he raised his two sons. He now has a granddaughter attending Love ISD. He has been in ranching all his life.

Roy said being a school board member at Love ISD was “almost part of the family lineage.” He ran for the school board because his father was ready to get off the board and told him it was his turn. His grandfather had been on the board and three other members had fathers and grandfathers who served on the board. Roy served as a member for 23 years and only hired four superintendents because “we had the same

superintendent for 19 years.” Since that time, there has been a regular turnover. During those years, there were several women and several Hispanics represented, but the school board was, and continues to be, predominately White men.

Roy enjoyed being on the board because he believed he was helping provide kids an education. “I am always proud when I go to graduation ceremonies and see all the children who have come so far.” The biggest challenge for rural districts, according to Roy, is finding the money to keep up with all the federal and state mandates. Roy is the only school board member from Love ISD represented in this study.

### **Kay**

Kay moved to Texas from the Eastern United States when she was 19 years old. She attended a vocational training program and is now self-employed. She has three grown children who attended Desert ISD and two grandchildren enrolled in the district.

Kay became a member of Desert ISD’s school board “to make sure they were doing the things that needed to be done for the kids of the school.” She participated in the selection process for two superintendents during her 5½ year tenure. The school board had two women when she was elected and four when she resigned, but now has only one woman member serving. The board usually had two or three Hispanic members and the remainder was White. Kay is only participant from Desert ISD in this study.

In the following sections the overall themes gathered from the interviews and the SRES surveys are discussed in relation to the research questions, the review of literature and the theoretical framework. By using the exact words of the participants, the phenomenon of the selection process of the superintendency is described by the FSBM.

## **The Selection Process**

### **Research Question Five**

*How and why do school board members hire more men than women for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?*

The fifth research question represents the main purpose and focus of this study. It was presented as the first question during the interview process as well as the first question in the discussion of the findings, and again as the last question in the discussion of the findings. Posing this question at the beginning of the interview allowed participants to explain a process of which they were familiar and created a level of comfort with the interview process. As the first question of the findings, this question focuses on “how” school board members hire more men than women for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts.

At the beginning of the interview participants were asked to describe the process they used when selecting a superintendent for the school district. All 15 participants were involved in the selection of a superintendent when the school board conducted the process independently, but several had used professional search firms in the past. The selection process for each district followed the same basic procedures: determining what type of leader was needed for the school district, advertising the open position, receiving and screening the resumes, contacting references and doing employment checks, calling special meetings to select prospective candidates for interviews, narrowing down the candidates for interviews, conducting interviews, and hiring. Roy told me there was “no harder job for a school board member than hiring a superintendent.”

## **Initial Search**

Participants from six of the districts reported using a retired, current, or interim superintendent to do the initial posting, screening, and reference inquiries. This person, in the role of a gatekeeper, provided the school board with a list of potential candidates and served as an advisor. According to Henry, “There is camaraderie between all the superintendents and they can get on the phone and find out some things that we would never be able to find out.” Roy said, “We usually used former superintendents to help in the selection process because they knew what the district needed. The board was comfortable with them so it was really not a random selection of candidates.” Several FSBM stated that the school board looked at every application submitted and all participants reported they choose as a group who to interview.

## **Narrowing It Down**

The school board members would narrow the applications down to those they thought “would be the best one for the community and for the school” according to Faith. The number of candidates called for initial interviews varied from two to eight or nine. The majority of the participants reported they called candidates back for a second or a third interview but Tom, Kay, and Roy said they usually decided on a superintendent based upon the first interview. Every board had a list of questions to ask each candidate during the interview. Park ISD had ten questions and Mountain ISD had 21 questions for the interview process. Although Sam said the interview process took about 45 minutes, the majority of participants reported interviews generally lasted between one and two hours.

## **Qualifications**

The number of applicants for the districts varied from 10 to 45 depending on the time of the year the search was conducted. When previewing resumes, participants explained they looked at the experience of the person, the education and qualifications, the places the individual had been, and how long he or she stayed in previous districts. Billy usually “looked for experience, not so much personality, because some people just perform well in an interview.” Only four of the participants reported members of the board made visits to districts where the candidates had previously been.

### **Women Applicants**

Kay, Tom, Sam, and Sally reported their district had never hired a woman superintendent. For the latest search at Mountain ISD, the school board hired a professional firm to assist them in the selection process and the top three finalists were women according to Sue. In the past fifteen years Highland ISD had two women superintendents. Roy shared although the board had interviewed a few women, Love ISD had only one woman superintendent, and “it was a disaster.” Jane recalled Grand ISD once having a woman superintendent who she felt “just let us keep going down and resulted in a change in superintendents about every year.” Most of the participants said they did not have any women applicants during the search process. Billy commented “the number of women who apply is very low” which was substantiated by Tom who shared in three searches put together there were only four or five women who applied. Sally, Kay, and Mary reported their school boards did not receive any women applicants during their searches.

## **Final Decision**

When the participants were asked how they finally decided on an individual to hire as the superintendent, Billy explained, “There is always a value of mystery involving most candidates. You just keep rolling the dice until you eventually get some semblance of stability.” Four of the participants related the interview process to a good sales pitch. Pete described it as “seeing the hot air coming off of them,” and Mary described some of the candidates as “a salesperson or a politician, who is writing a check he can’t cash.” Grace compared hiring a superintendent to buying a pair of shoes, “It’s like buying a pair of shoes. You like them. They look good, but you don’t know if they fit and are comfortable until you wear them.”

In making that final choice, nine FSBM explained they went on instinct or their gut feeling. “You just have to go with your gut and hope your gut is telling you the right thing,” Mary said. Sue reiterated this sentiment, “A lot of it is just gut. It just comes down to gut.” “It is almost instinct—it is just a feeling,” according to Pete. Faith explained, “When you see it, you know it.” Roy said, “Most of the time after the school board hashes it all out and the dust settles, there’s one who stands out—it all comes back to kids—which guy is going to do the best job for the district.” Others shared the school board had only a couple of hours to determine if the individual was a “good fit” for the school and the community. Joe concluded, “Finally, after all the discussion, you have to come together as a group, not one person, and decide what direction you want to go.”

## Leadership Qualities

### Research Question One

*How do specific leadership qualifications and skills of potential candidates affect decisions of individual school board members in the selection process in rural West Texas school districts?*

Participants were asked to discuss qualities they believed were necessary for a leader of any organization, club, nation, or business, to be successful and which quality they felt was the most important for a superintendent to possess. Each participant acknowledged there is not one skill or one quality that makes a good leader, but rather a number of characteristics put together. Billy referred to a story his dad relayed to him as a child about a character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. "An important quality of leadership is just knowing when to go to the other side of the bridge." If leadership came down to one quality, Joe summed it up by saying, "Common sense. A leader has to have common sense." Grace emphasized the concept of passion as being the most important quality of any leader and stated, "If you have made it to the superintendent spot, you are already a leader. The extra is the commitment—you have to have a passion for education—and love your job."

### Communication

Four of the participants identified communication skills as the single most important attribute of a successful leader, while ten mentioned it as being a very important skill. "Communicating also means listening. You have to be able and willing to listen to what others have to say. People need to know what is going on and they have to know and trust the facts," Sue explained. Mary added, "being able to communicate

means you can talk to different types of people—students, teachers, farmers, and engineers—and keep an open door for everyone.”

### **Honesty and Integrity**

Honesty and integrity were listed by four participants as being the single most important quality of a successful leader. Rose commented a person needs to have good values and have good ethics in order to gain trust from other people. Roy relayed honesty in board-superintendent relations was absolutely necessary. “He’d better tell the board the truth—whether it’s ugly or not.” Faith commented, “We don’t expect perfection; we just expect honesty.”

### **People-skills**

Mary and Grace were the only two participants who ranked people-skills as being the most important leadership quality, although nine of the participants mentioned it as being very important for a leader. Grace related the skill to being a politician, “A superintendent has to know how to play the game and get along with everyone.” Roy said, “A good superintendent has to be hands-on and be able to build and keep relationships going.”

### **Strength**

Next to communication, the most referenced quality necessary for a leader related to being strong, firm, and fair. Pete described this strength as “being steadfast in knowing what they want to do while still being considerate of others.” Jane suggested a good superintendent had to be able to get things done, not in a forceful way, but in a direct way. Roy expressed the need for being strong and having authority skills while both Grace and Pete used the term “wishy-washy”—“he can’t be wishy-washy.” Joe



said, “A superintendent has to use common sense. He can’t just be a dictator.” Sally emphasized she did not want a “people-pleaser.” She thinks a superintendent should be able to do the right thing and stick with the rules. Sam commented, “A good leader can’t be like an ostrich with his head in the sand and let everyone run over him. If there is a problem, don’t threaten them, just correct it. He has to be strong but patient.”

### **Working with Faculty**

Using various terms and descriptions, the majority of participants identified the ability to work with faculty and employees as a major quality of a good superintendent. Billy referred to it as “consensus building” and “enabling the faculty to do their job.” Sam said a superintendent has to “have trust in people to do their job.” Sally felt a good superintendent “empowers staff.” Mary remarked, “A successful superintendent respects others, emphasizes the positive, and makes everybody feel like their input is important.” Rose expressed, “Compassion and understanding for the teachers and the students is needed to run a school.” Faith stated, “A good superintendent has a vision for the school and works with everyone to get there,” and Tom described it as “keeping employees unified around the school’s goals.”

### **Community**

All the participants emphasized the need for the superintendent to be active in the community and interact with the people of the community, in the local organizations, and in the churches. According to Roy, “They have to be involved with what goes on, whether it is school-related or not.” Understanding and respecting the traditions of the community and being a part of the community is an essential quality for a superintendent.

Rose said, “It is important that the superintendent really wants to be here.” Billy stated, “If they aren’t a part of the community, then what are they there for?”

Both Grace and Jane mentioned the economically conservative views of the communities they served. Most of the people in these communities are hard-working and logical. Jane noted, “These farmers do not want you [the school] to go into debt. They are the ones who keep the school going. They worry about crops and money. It is hard to get a bond passed.” Grace voiced a similar sentiment, “Everybody works hard and everybody wants what’s best for the school. The community will not go overboard and to extremes for expensive stuff we do not need. Everyone knew the school needed a facelift and the bond was supported for the renovations. If we had tried to add frills and thrills, it would have been voted down.”

### **Other Qualities**

Other qualities and terms used to describe a successful leader and superintendent included dedication, commitment, innovation, ingenuity, tactfulness, loyalty, and confidence. Several participants referred to “being a hard worker” and “having a good work ethic.” Kay identified it as “going above and beyond.” Henry said the person needed to be a “go-getter.” Sam was the only FSBM who identified experience as being the most important quality for a superintendent, and Kay was the only one who labeled financial management as the major skill necessary to be a good superintendent. Although several mentioned knowledge as important, Jane was the only participant who labeled “having or knowing where to go get it” as the most important ability for a superintendent. Tom and Sue were the only two participants who talked about the superintendent needing to be an instructional leader. Although Kay referenced “getting along with the board and

the Team of Eight,” none of the other participants mentioned board relations as being a major quality for a superintendent.

## **Values**

### **Research Question Two**

*How do personal beliefs and values of individual school board members affect the selection process for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?*

Participants were asked to describe their personal values, their belief system, and how they formed their values. Most of the participants, with the exception of Joe, faltered, stumbled, and were momentarily taken off guard with this questioning. When Joe was asked to describe his personal values and his personal beliefs he responded,

First of all, you need to know our Lord Jesus Christ. It makes no difference how you do it, or the direction you go, as long as you know it, and you worship Him, and that is number one in your life. First things first—nothing else. And then, from that point, you can have yourself, your family, and you go on with your job.... my family does business that way. We raise our children that way.

Billy expressed his thoughts by commenting,

Values, that’s a tall question. I am stumbling over this because we have so many different ways, different languages—in just a community like this—to look at different ways of describing values. So I think of values of being very core, but ya know, it’s very hard to express them in a way others would perceive them the way you do.

He continued to say his parents taught him values come from the divine. “There is God, there is family, and there is work.” Pete described his values by saying he believed we should follow the second Great Commandment, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

The demographic portion of the SRES survey revealed 14 of the 15 participants identified Christianity as their religious affiliation, eight Protestants and six Catholics. During the interviews, seven of the participants shared how their belief in God, the church, or hearing the Word guided their value system. Henry said his values came from the training he received in school, in the church, and from the people in the community. Eight of the participants credited their parents for giving them their values; one mentioned learning right from wrong from her grandparents; and one participant, after a difficult childhood, said she gained her values from her husband. Tom explained he learned respect, politeness, and manners from “his upbringing.” Roy said they had expectations for behavior, and you just did it because “that was the way it was done!”

Honesty and integrity were identified by eight of the participants as the most desirable values a person can possess. “You don’t cheat, lie, or steal,” both Faith and Mary explained. Next to honesty, respect for others including commitment to community, was noted by six participants as being an important personal value. “You have to treat people the way you want to be treated,” Pete explained. Henry emphasized having good values included “reaching out and being there for other people.” He explained how he had grown up during a drought period when no one had any money and neighbors helped neighbors when it was needed. The third most frequent response

describing personal values was hard work. “Nothing is free. You have to work hard to get what you want,” Grace remarked.

Participants were asked how their personal values affected their choice of superintendent. Joe was the only one who commented he would be reluctant to hire someone outside his Christian faith. All the participants remarked it was important for a candidate to display similar values they had mentioned as being important. Faith explained during the interview, a candidate would answer the questions according to how they believe, so if a school board member listened, he or she could tell what the candidate valued. Rose commented, “Actions speak louder than words” so she would look to see what the candidate had done. Billy described the process he used during interviews, “I tried to draw out specific details about how they participated in the community, about their family, and their religion to help me understand their values.” All the candidates shared how important the basic democratic values of honesty, family, good neighbors, respect, trust, fairness, and hard work are as qualities in a candidate.

## **West Texas**

### **Research Question Three**

*How does the culture of the community and region affect the hiring decisions of individual board members in rural West Texas?*

As part of the discussion on values, participants were asked to describe the values and attitudes of the community and how the community attitudes affected their choice of a superintendent. The common themes expressed by the participants generally focused on family, community, and church. A number of the participants referred to the aspects

of the location of the community and the type of personality necessary to exist in the area of West Texas.

Jane explained in order to survive in West Texas a person must be adaptable. “You have to be able to adjust and change. For instance, the weather—it may be raining in the morning, snowing at noon, and hot in the afternoon.” She talked about being able to live in the dry heat and how her son, on his tour in Iraq, had no problem surviving, but the people from the Eastern and the Northern portion of the states could not function in that climate. “The heat affects the way you live, the things you do, and the way you think.” She said when she interviewed a candidate who was not from West Texas, she would always ask, “Have you ever been in West Texas?”

We interviewed a man from Houston. He said he had never been out here. I asked him if his wife could live in the heat and in the weather of the West. He said, “Oh sure.” I told him it was not the same. He came out for one week, left, and never came back. He didn’t realize West Texas is totally different than Houston. The weather and the atmosphere, if you are not used to the dry heat, you can’t survive. You just don’t make it; they don’t understand.

“Rugged,” “isolated,” and “remote” were used by Sue, Sam, Joe, and Billy to describe the area of their school district. When screening applicants, Grace mentioned they looked at where the candidate was living at the time.

We looked at people who were more rural because we knew it was a big thing to come out to Highland. We really wanted to emphasize we are three hours away from the closest city—from Wal-Mart or a Sam’s or the Mall. It is hard living out here.

In describing the values of the community Joe, Rose, and Jane referred to their community as being “tight-knit.” They said people “worked together,” “pulled together,” and “put out their hands for you in a crisis situation.” Faith remarked the community valued the “sense of belonging.” Others spoke of the community as being like a family. Both Sue and Jane stated how the community wanted the same goals for their children. Jane said their values were based upon basic Southern values where everyone wanted the children to grow up to be productive Americans. “Everyone wants their children to do whatever they choose to do, but to do it correctly. Those children are what pull the community together in a rural school.” Sue commented, “The isolation and what is right for kids is what draws the community together. We want to give them the foundation of what it means to be a small, community family.”

Joe, Sue, and Roy referred to their community as being “people of faith,” “Christian,” and “church going.” Other values associated with these eight communities were hard-working, conservative, friendly, and proud.

### **Social Roles and Patriarchy**

#### **Research Question Four**

*How do attitudes of leadership and social roles influence hiring men and women for the superintendency in rural West Texas?*

In addition to gathering data from the SRES (King & King, 1993) survey, during the one-on-one interviews, I asked participants to describe how they viewed the social roles of men and women in their lives and in society. I referred to leadership qualities, and asked the participants if they believed a woman could possess the leadership qualities to be a superintendent, and how they felt men and women differ in leadership positions.

## **Patriarchy**

Henry was the only participant who made a biblical reference to the roles of men and women during the interview.

I will go back to our belief in what the Lord set up. There is a father, and a mother, and a family. Between the father and the mother there should be a partnership, but there still has to be one who makes the decision. The responsibility has to stop somewhere. It ought to stop with the father, but that is a delicate balance.

The only direct reference to the framework of patriarchy was Question #14 in the SRES Survey “The husband should be head of the household.” Six of the participants either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” the husband should be considered the head of the family. Billy made an indirect reference to patriarchy when he shared a story about his wife.

I grew up during this whole culture of trying to provide equal access. Civil rights was a big issue. When we got married, my wife didn’t want to change her name so she is still Ms. X. She was of the generation where you challenged those kinds of norms—which is all right with me. I tease her, “You aren’t going to take my name because I am ‘the man’—instead you are going to take your father’s last name.”

All of the eight women interviewed worked outside the home and have, or have had, successful careers in various occupations. All of the men are married and reported their wives are or were in the work force. Sam’s wife works as a pumper, a position dominated by men in the West Texas oil field. Pete, Henry, and Roy said, “Today it takes two incomes for a family to survive.” On the SRES survey, three participants



responded with “No Opinion” to Question 19 referring to the control of the husband’s and wife’s earnings. Twelve did not believe the husband should control the couple’s earnings.

### **Social Roles**

Sue described women’s role in society as “being the nurturer’s.” She stated women were natural teachers and organizers, “We naturally put everybody in their places and make sure they are where they’re supposed to be.” Pete commented,

Basically, the role of a man is to lead, and I think it will take generations to overcome that. There are still some young women who do not hold a job. Their role is homemaking. I think this role still carries over somewhat in a more modern society, but it is not steadfast. The women can’t go out and make a living. At one time [Mrs. Pete] made more money than I did, but it didn’t bother me.

Faith discussed her childhood in relation to roles:

In my life the roles of a female were traditional. I would call it oppressive. I am from a Hispanic family, and women are supposed to behave a certain way and do certain things. Women take care of their husbands. I remember watching my mom when I was a little girl and thinking to myself, “I am never going to do that.” When I was growing up I wanted to be a mechanic. I thought it was awesome to work on cars with my dad. I just loved it. It was bonding, and I hated to be in the kitchen. But my dad told me, “No, girls can’t be mechanics.” So I told myself I’d do something else. All these opportunities have always been

given to men traditionally. That is changing—more women are pilots, doctors, astronauts—and the women’s roles are changing.

Grace, a mother of two boys, said she always knew she did not want to be a “home mama.” Even though she had two sons, she always wanted to work. In the interviews, 14 of the participants expressed the belief a woman could do anything she wanted to do. “She flapped her wings and she flew. So let women be women, and let them grow as big and tall as they can be,” Joe declared.

### **Stereotypes**

Both Roy and Joe said they did not want to stereotype women. Joe commented, “I have never been one to categorize women. I don’t think the woman should be isolated into one specific place. I can’t say that a woman should be at home, cleaning the house, or doing this or doing that.” Roy explained,

I would not stereotype a woman’s place as being in the home. I don’t believe that. Women do too many things for that. Women are equal. Some of my neighbors wouldn’t let their daughters ride horses or work cattle. I’ve taught all my granddaughters to ride a horse, use a shovel, and do whatever they needed to do. I had one granddaughter who could bring the cows in by herself when she was four years old.

Sally commented society sees men as being less emotional than women. “We think men can make better decisions. They’re more clear-headed. We put our men up on that pedestal and think they can do a better job than a woman.”

On the SRES survey, the Employment and Education Domains revealed the highest mean score, and the highest egalitarian attitude, of all the domains. Participants’

mean score for Employment Domain was 20.2 with 10 of 15 rated in the highly egalitarian range 20-25. The Educational Domain was 19.6 with 9 of 15 scoring within the range of 20-25. Table 6 represented the total scores of participants within each domain.

Table 6

*SRES Survey Results*

| Participant | Domain |     |     |     |    | Total Score |
|-------------|--------|-----|-----|-----|----|-------------|
|             | Mar    | Par | Emp | Soc | Ed |             |
| Billy       | 17     | 18  | 20  | 18  | 19 | 92          |
| Faith       | 25     | 25  | 23  | 25  | 23 | 121         |
| Grace       | 23     | 20  | 24  | 21  | 22 | 110         |
| Henry       | 16     | 15  | 19  | 13  | 18 | 81          |
| Jane        | 23     | 21  | 25  | 23  | 23 | 115         |
| Joe         | 14     | 14  | 21  | 20  | 19 | 88          |
| Kay         | 23     | 23  | 23  | 24  | 21 | 114         |
| Mary        | 25     | 25  | 25  | 24  | 24 | 123         |
| Pete        | 20     | 18  | 23  | 20  | 24 | 105         |
| Rose        | 16     | 17  | 17  | 18  | 22 | 90          |
| Roy         | 21     | 22  | 24  | 19  | 21 | 107         |
| Sally       | 21     | 25  | 25  | 25  | 24 | 120         |
| Sam         | 16     | 18  | 15  | 21  | 18 | 88          |
| Sue         | 18     | 20  | 21  | 20  | 18 | 97          |

|     |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Tom | 16 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 87 |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|

*Note.* Total Score (possible range = 25 - 125). Domain abbreviations: Marital = Mar; Parental = Par; Employment = Emp; Social = Soc; Education = Ed.

### **Women as Leaders**

When asked if a woman could possess the skills necessary to be a successful superintendent, 14 of 15 FSBM stated women are just as capable as men to lead a school district. Eight of the participants said women are only limited by physical strength when compared to men. Sally expressed, “I personally think women could do a better job because women are more detail-oriented.” Rose felt men were more qualified to be superintendent than were women. She explained, “In a small traditional school it is just something that has always been. A man has always been the superintendent. It doesn’t have to be, but I think nowadays a woman has to prove herself more than a man.” On the SRES all the participants agreed/strongly agreed women should have the same chances to be leaders at work. Two of the participants, one man and one woman, agreed a woman should not be the President of the United States.

The main difference participants voiced about men’s and women’s leadership styles concerned nurturing. Tom described it as “the female touch.” Sally said, “Women think about things more. They think about people’s feelings and how they care about someone.” Sue expressed she believed women were natural teachers and role models, not just in a school district, but in their work and volunteer activities. “We are nurturing and we care for others.” Kay commented about the motherly instinct.

Women in general have more of a nurturing side to them and that goes back to the people skills. Women have better people skills because they are the nurturers of

the world. They just have more of what it takes to make you feel good about yourself. Men just don't have that type of compassion.

Mary stated, "We consider men to be better at finance or decision-making but that's just our perception—men just gravitate to those things." Pete summed up his feelings by saying, "A woman needs to be just as hard-nosed as a man; and a man as nurturing as a woman to be effective. It will take generations to overcome our ideas that men are the leaders."

### **Personal Chemistry and the Good Ole Boys**

#### **Research Question Five**

*How and/or why do school board members hire more men than women for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?*

The fifth question poses how and why school board member hire more men than women as superintendent. The "how" was presented at the beginning of the discussion of the findings. An attempt to address the "why" portion of this question is presented below.

#### **Personal Chemistry**

When asked to describe personal chemistry, the participants' replies were similar. Joe, Faith, Pete, Sue, and Roy mentioned the initial contact, when they walk into the room, and how the candidate presents himself, including the way they shake your hand and sit in the chair. Both Sally and Sam said they noticed their appearance, because how they were dressed showed if they wanted to be there or not. Sally added, "If he brings his wife, I look at how he treats her. That will tell you how he will treat the teachers." Nine of the participants mentioned body language and eye contact. Grace said, "I have to see

their eyes. I have to see the sparkle, the enthusiasm, if they light up, and really want the opportunity.” Roy told about a candidate who would not look him in the eyes.

It bothered me from the very first minute he sat down. I didn’t like him, but the board overruled me. I was not going to fight the board, and I voted with them. We were not going to go into it with a split deal. This guy would never look at me. He didn’t look at anybody. I was right.

Sue described personal chemistry as being the right fit. “You can sense it, and it is either there, or it’s not.” Jane, Sam, and Rose related the same sentiment, “is he going to fit into your world”, “you know when you like someone,” and “if he doesn’t fit with your people.” Both Faith and Grace referred to “connecting with you.” Others talked about having a good feeling, being comfortable, and the warmness of the person as being personal chemistry. Mary, on the other hand, commented,

I think sometimes we misconstrue personal chemistry with a person when it really is just a person’s ability to sell themselves and confidence in themselves. I don’t know if it’s actually personal chemistry. It’s more a person’s ability to work somebody, and if he can snowball you.

Tom also mentioned how he had been disappointed more than once by a candidate who turned out to be a totally different person than the one who was hired. “It was just a pretty good sales pitch to get the job.”

### **Good Ole Boys**

Participants were asked if the “good ole boy” system exists and to describe it. Thirteen of the 15 participants replied the system still exists. Pete commented, “That good ole boy system is there to keep everybody else out. You scratch my back, and I will

scratch yours. It is for benefit. And it exists.” Faith described it saying, “Hey, he’s my buddy. He has my back and I have his. He comes over for Sunday supper, we go hunting together, and my kid dates his kid. He’s my buddy; I have his back.”

Roy said it was “like slapping each on the back and telling jokes.” Grace felt the system is there and means “men advocate for men and men support men. That is just the way it is.” Mary expressed how the good ole boy system works in West Texas, “I think farming has a lot to do with it. All these farmers get out and work their fingers to the bone farming this land. They all hang out in the coffee shop together; they all meet up at the gin; and they just have that bonding.” She described a discussion among the board members about one applicant.

One of the biggest arguments against him was he was not enough of a good old boy. They named names—this person, this person, and this person—all names from the community who wouldn’t receive him well because he was from a large district, very well spoken, very well-educated, and very matter-of-fact. We didn’t hire him. They wanted a superintendent where they can go walk into his office and be on the same level with him.

Sally shared her feelings about the good ole boy system as one of two women on the school board.

In West Texas, you are sitting on a board with a bunch of ranchers, or farmers, or construction people. They are loyal and have bold personalities. The first thing they said to us when we got on the board was “Well, I guess there will be no more cussing at this table; we have to clean up our act, no more dirty jokes!” Like we were foreign pieces—objects of some sort. It was a constant head-butting

competition. It was a power war, and it was difficult. It's just different the way men look at women on the board. When it came down to making decisions, we weren't the ones they were going to look to for those decisions. One particular board member and I had problems. I asked for a closed session meeting and read a letter to the whole board asking him for an apology. I said, "I am not going to play the good ole' boy game—I am not going drinking and shooting with the superintendent and the A.D." After all that, all the man could say is, "who told you I was drinking with the A.D.?" The good ole boy system is rampant, whether it's the school board or the superintendent.

Both Joe and Sue related how they felt the system affected the applicants for superintendents when the school board used other superintendents to help with the search. Sue stated,

One year we used a retired superintendent, and the one who was leaving helped us once. That's why we went through three superintendents—a lot of complacency—because we stayed with the good ol' boy. We were in a rut. One person we interviewed was basically in the position he was in because he'd been moved up to keep him from causing any more trouble. This last search we hired a professional firm. It was a huge issue because we didn't hire a local person for the superintendent. If we had maintained the good ol' boy mentality, we would have done it. We weren't willing to go there, because we needed to move beyond the good ol' boy mentality because it is really harmful."

Women rose as the top three finalists in this search and as a result, Mountain ISD hired its first woman superintendent.



Jane expressed she doesn't think the good old boy system exists anymore. "We are moving away from that. It used to be people got a job because of who you knew, not what you knew. It's not that way anymore."

### **Miscellaneous Comments**

At the closing of each interview, I asked the participants to share why they felt there were so few women superintendents in rural West Texas and what advice as a FSBM they would give to a candidate applying for a job as a superintendent in rural West Texas. When participants were asked why they thought there were so few women superintendents in West Texas, three reasons predominated: (a) the area of West Texas itself, (b) family obligations, and (c) discrimination.

#### **No Women**

Both Tom and Sam said women were probably just not interested or willing in coming out to their area. Tom said, "If a woman has the skills and capabilities, why bother coming here?" Jane felt family obligation was one of the big reasons. "You have to keep that family going. At 5:00 p.m. you have to make supper and then do the laundry. A woman has to juggle her home, her husband, the children—and a man doesn't have to do that." Mary expressed how school boards expected a superintendent to be at all the school functions, and women with children just don't have the time to do it all. "Women in general are more of the caregivers for the children at home. They tend not to take on roles with so much responsibility because they choose to give to their children."

Both Pete and Henry used the term *prejudice* to describe the lack of women superintendents in West Texas. Henry said, "I told you I was a chauvinist, and I think it is because it is traditional and prejudiced." Pete explained women have more

opportunities now, but he thinks “there’s a prejudice there.” According to Rose, in a small rural community, “Men have always been the superintendents and women have to prove themselves more.” Kay expressed it by saying,

It depends if you get a board with women on it or if it’s a ‘good ole boy’ board. They may not ever think about hiring a woman and may not think she knows what she’s doing. You still have those who are chauvinist, and think a woman should be seen, not heard. If you have a board with more men on it, you are more likely to end up with a man than a woman.

Sally commented, “In West Texas, it just isn’t going to happen. After being on the board, I see it now. I mean, these men have a hard time listening to that man superintendent tell them what to do.”

### **Advice to Candidates**

Collectively the participants in this study have hired over 40 superintendents.

Their wisdom and advice for superintendent candidates are shared in Table 7.

Table 7

#### *Advice to Superintendent Candidates*

| Participant | Statement   |
|-------------|---|
| Billy       | Stay focused on local priorities and values, even to the point of challenging state and federal definitions of your career. |
| Faith       | Project confidence.   |
| Grace       | Look them in the eyes.  |
| Henry       | Don’t hide anything and be comfortable in communicating with them.  |

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| Jane  | Do your homework and know what the district and the people are like.                                     |
| Joe   | Make sure you are going to be happy before you even go to the interview.                                 |
| Kay   | Be truthful and honest.  |
| Mary  | Be you. Don't go in there with a salesman pitch.   |
| Pete  | Be natural. Don't try to sell me.  |
| Rose  | Do your research on what the people are like, what the community is like, and what their traditions are. |
| Roy   | Shake hands with everybody. Look them straight in the eye and be just as honest as you can be.           |
| Sally | Dress appropriately.   |
| Sam   | Get to know the people before you make any decision.   |
| Sue   | Know the district you are talking to. Communicate with them but don't talk too much and too long.        |
| Tom   | Don't try and sell something you ain't got.  |

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### **Summary**

The findings of this study describe the selection process for the position of superintendent and how it affects the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency in rural West Texas through the voices of former school board members. The social role theory and the theory of patriarchy formed the framework for the study. The methodology for the study was a qualitative, multi-site multi-case study. The data collected for the study included one-on-one interviews, examination of historical

documents, and a sex-role egalitarian scale survey. The data was analyzed by chunking verbatim transcriptions and coding repeating ideas and patterns in relation to the common themes of (a) district demographics, (b) the selection process, (c) leadership qualities, (d) values, (e) West Texas, (f) social roles and patriarchy, (g) personal chemistry and the good ole boy system, and (h) miscellaneous information.

Prior to the interview, other than a brief explanation of the study, the participants had no knowledge of the content of the interview questions. As a researcher, I did not coach; I listened. Words such as “communicator,” “the right fit,” consensus builder,” “honest,” “gut feeling,” “people-person” were original descriptions participants shared when they described their experiences as FSBM in the selection process for a superintendent. The findings of this study are similar to other expert studies discussed in the review of literature.

The theoretical framework of social roles expectations and patriarchy were not validated by the participants in this study. An unanticipated explanation of personal chemistry and the good ole boy system were shown to be the most significant influences in the selection of a superintendent, which may or may not be an indirect effect of the theoretical framework. In the following chapter, the results of the study are discussed, conclusions drawn, and recommendations for future studies are made.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to examine why local school board members hire more men than women for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas. The study consisted of a review of relevant literature related to school boards, the superintendency, leadership, barriers for women, West Texas culture, social roles, and patriarchy. A qualitative, case study approach was used to gather and analyze data presented through the voices of the participants in the findings in Chapter Four. This chapter contains a summary of the study, a discussion of findings, limitations of the study with recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

### **Summary of the Findings**

Research and literature concerning women and the school superintendency abounds; however, studies on school boards and the selection process are limited. This study was guided by five research questions presented in Chapter One and again in Chapter Three. These research questions are:

1. How do specific leadership qualifications and skills of potential candidates affect decisions of individual school board members in the selection process in rural West Texas school districts?
2. How do personal beliefs and values of individual school board members affect the selection process for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?
3. How does the culture of the community and region affect the hiring decisions of individual board members in rural West Texas?
4. How do attitudes of leadership and social roles influence hiring men and

women for the superintendency in rural West Texas?

5. How and why do school board members hire more men than women for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?

These questions were examined using one-on-one interviews, historical documents, and a sex-role egalitarian scale survey with 15 former school board members from eight school districts in West Texas. The rich descriptive narrative provided valuable insight into how values, beliefs, and attitudes of school board members affect the selection process and the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency in rural West Texas.

### **Discussion of Findings and Implications of the Study**

#### **District and Board Demographics**

District demographics were gathered from the Texas Education Agency's annual report on school districts. The districts were predominately Hispanic and Caucasian, often close to being a 50-50 split between the two groups. All districts, except Park ISD, had a high economically disadvantaged student population, 50% or more, which is typical of most rural school across the nation (Jensen, McLaughlin, & Slack, 2003). Except in Cotton Patch ISD and Grand ISD, economically disadvantaged students scored lower on the state assessment exams compared to those who were not economically disadvantaged (TEA, 2011). The poverty rate of students, poor academic achievement, federal and state mandates, and inadequate funding influence what qualifications school board members seek when hiring for the position of superintendent.

Six of the school districts received an *Academically Acceptable* rating (AA), or a C on a numeric grading scale, on the 2011 state accountability rating system known as the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) (TEA, 2011). Grand ISD achieved a

*Recommended* rating, or a B, and Mountain ISD was labeled *Academically Unacceptable* (AU), which translates to a D. In addition to student performance on the state exam, the AEIS includes 10 other performance indicators to rate a district's performance. In this study, the lowest performing district paid the highest superintendent salary compared to the other districts.

The demographics of the participants in this study did not represent the typical school board members across the nation. Nationally, school boards are predominately men. Over half of the FSBM who participated in this study were women. All of the FSBM served on boards with at least one woman, most with two, and several with three, which is consistent with the typical school board. Across the nation men comprise nearly two-thirds of school boards in small districts (Hess & Meeks, 2010). Since school boards with one or more women members are more likely to consider hiring a woman superintendent (Tallerico, 2000), as the number of women on the school boards increases, we can anticipate women who apply for the superintendent position will have a better chance of being hired (Marietti & Stout, 1994).

School board members have been, and still are, predominately White, middle-class, and Protestant men (Blount, 1999; Glass, 2000; Hess & Meeks, 2010; Tyack, 1976). The FSBM in this study had served on school boards reflective of the national norm. Only two participants were Hispanic, and they served on a majority Hispanic school board representing the majority Hispanic ethnicity of the community. Consistent with national findings, most of the FSBM earn an average middle-class income and are employed in some capacity in the work force.

All of the FSBM, except one, called themselves Christian. Seven professed Catholicism, and the other six cited Protestantism as their faith. Loyalty to church and family were important values described in this study. Participants did not voice opinions that a candidate must be a member of any specific denomination since a board member cannot legally ask a candidate about religious persuasions. Sue, Roy, and Billy mentioned how a person's values and beliefs emerge in an interview. Several expressed how important helping each other in times of need and sharing a common identity was to the community. In rural communities the school is a major source of social activity. Involvement in community activities, as well as school functions, is expected for a superintendent in West Texas. In small communities the superintendent is a highly visible position. The church attended, how often he or she attends, as well as the type of car he or she drives is important (Glenna, 2003). The superintendent is expected to be an ethical and moral leader as well as an educational leader in small, rural communities (Jenkins, 2007).

In a NSBA study, 63.2% of school board members were between 40-59 years old (Hess & Meeks, 2010). Eleven of the FSBM represented in this study were between 40-59 which similar to the national demographics of board members. Kowaski et al. (2011) reported in districts with less than 300 students, only 8% of school board members served 10 or more years, but Hess & Meeks (2010) found that 46% served 2-5 years, 31.8% served 5-10 years, and 22.2% served ten years or more. In this study, six of the participants served 3-5 years, three served 5-10 years, three served 10-15 years, and three sat on the school board for over 15 years. Once elected in rural school districts, members



often go unopposed in elections which may explain the long tenure. Ten of the FSBM were native to the district or married to a native.

### **The Selection Process**

Hiring a superintendent as the educational leader and chief executive officer for the district is one of the most important responsibilities of the local school board.

According to participants in the study, this duty is also the toughest. The steps followed by the FSBM were typical for any superintendent selection process. As Tallerico (2000) reported, these procedures include preparing for the search, advertising for the position, screening of the applicants, narrowing the field to potential candidates, interviewing candidates, selecting a lone finalist, and hiring.

Although the school boards did not employ a professional search firm, FSBM reported the majority of the school boards used the present, an interim, or a retired superintendent for the initial process which included reviewing applications. These individuals became the gatekeepers for the school board, similar to the role of a search consultant. The primary function of these individuals was to advertise the position, screen the initial applications, check references, and determine if individuals met the school boards' criteria, before narrowing the pool down for interviews.

Six of the FSBM stated they were not aware of receiving applications from women for the superintendent position. Since the application pool had already been narrowed by a gatekeeper, these statements could not be confirmed. Several recalled interviewing a woman during their search. Six of the participants had hired a woman at some point. Billy explained his experience with hiring women, "Well, we had a woman once and then gave a couple of guys a chance. They failed miserably, so we went back to

the women.” Sue shared the school board hired a professional firm in her latest superintendent search resulting in the top three finalists being women. They hired one of them.

One of the major barriers for women seeking the position of superintendent has been identified as the good ole’ boy network. According to Brunner and Grogan (2007) the network that exists among men professionals in education has an impact on who gets a superintendent position. Since women are not a privileged part of this group, they are denied access to information about possible job openings and are unable to share strategies that increase visibility (Glass et al., 2000). The majority of FSBM in this study, both women and men, believe this system exists although two participants, one man and one woman, stated the system is not as effective as it has been in the past.

The good ole boy system was described by participants as men helping other men for benefit. Sue explained she felt the district went through three superintendents because they used the present superintendent and a retired superintendent for advice. They were stuck in the good ole boy syndrome because the men were friends of each other and seemed to follow each other around.

An indirect reference was made to this network by Roy and Henry when describing the selection process. As Roy explained, “We usually used former superintendents to help in the selection process ...they knew what the district needed ...the board was comfortable with them ...it was really not a random selection of candidates.” Henry shared, “There is camaraderie between all the superintendents...they can get on the phone ...find out some things that we would never be able to find out.” Gatekeepers hold an important key in the application and search process, but women

must apply to get the job. The chances of a man being hired for the position are likely when the majority of applicants are men.

### **Leadership Qualities**

Many theorists describe effective leadership in terms of leader-follower relationships. Burns (1978) termed *transformational* to portray a leader who inspires and motivates others to achieve a common purpose. Rather than managing or trying to control a person's actions, transformational leaders give a sense of belonging and a sense of control by recognizing personal needs and wants, and elevating the person through respect (Kotter, 1990).

The desired leadership qualities described by FSBM in this study are descriptive of the transformational leader. The board members used terms such as nurturing, caring, collaborative, and enabling to express what they wanted in a superintendent. Research studies show that women display more transformational characteristics when compared to men who are generally more top-down managers (Christie et al., 2008). Women tend to involve others in decision-making and are more socially sensitive to others (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Although Glass (2000) reported school boards in small districts rated managing the district as the most important expectation for a superintendent, the FSBM in this study believed a successful leader of a school district is one who communicates and works with people, not one who manages things, and listed communication, strength, and people skills as the major qualities they seek in a superintendent.

Traditional, financial expertise was an important desired skill in a superintendent, and studies have shown school board members question a woman's ability to manage the budget of a school district (Grogan & Brunner, 2007; Tallerico, 2000b). Sally was the

only participant who identified finance as the most important skill for a superintendent to possess. Similar to the findings of Kowalski et al. (2011), most of the FSBM did not identify financial expertise as being a major qualification when they selected a superintendent. According to the FSBM in this study, lack of fiscal knowledge should not be a disadvantage for women seeking the superintendent position in these districts.

Only one woman in the study stated she believed men make better superintendents. Other FSBM asserted women have the ability to do or be anything they choose. Sue, Sally, and Faith shared they felt women would be better than men in this position because of their natural ability to care for others, to listen, and to organize. All seven of the men, as well as the women, stated women have the capability, the intelligence, and the skills to serve as a school superintendent.

The data from the SRES survey revealed the same attitudes toward women as leaders as expressed in the semi-structured interviews. Only three of the FSBM were not ready for a woman to be president of the United States. Twelve of the participants responded that women could handle pressures as well as men, and all the FSBM agreed women should have the same chances to be leaders at work. The high mean scores for women's roles in education and employment expressed highly egalitarian attitudes in these categories. These results correspond to the survey conducted by Pew (2008) indicating people do believe women have the skills to be good leaders.

As demands for accountability and student achievement increase, the demand for effective school leaders will increase as well. According to Glass et al. (2001) women superintendents were rated higher in instructional leadership and effectiveness. If school board members are seeking a transformational leader as these FSBM revealed, then

women have an advantage over men. The qualities women possess and their leadership style should be an asset, not a hindrance, for gaining a superintendent position, according to the results of my study.

### **Values and West Texas**

Personal values, the culture of the community, and the values of the community had an enormous effect on how the FSBM in the study perceived candidates in the hiring process for the superintendent. Traditional American values like honesty, respect, and citizenship were priorities for the FSBM. All but one of the FSBM called themselves Christian. Christian virtues—what is right and what is wrong—can be assumed to have an influence on the personal values of these school board members. People like people who are similar to them (Moreno Perez, 2008), and these individuals look for a leader who values “God, self and family,” according to Billy.

Every community has its own unique culture, values, and personality. Although each of these groups in the study has its own identity, one shared characteristic is the physical, geographical area known as West Texas. Some are comprised of farmers, some of ranchers, and some of oil field workers. The communities represented in this study are family-oriented. Community culture and values were a major factor to the FSBM when hiring a superintendent. The repeating theme of “fitting into the community” was echoed by each of the FSBM. The geographical location and the physical characteristics of the area of the school district sites had a substantial impact on the selection process.

FSBM said they were very careful to make sure the candidate understood the isolation and the extreme weather conditions of the region. None of the school district sites have an operating 4-way traffic light and shopping malls are often 150 miles away. The

location of these districts affects not only women candidates who may not be accustomed to living without the conveniences of larger urban areas, but also men candidates, whose wives and families have to live in the community. Not all people can adapt and survive in the area of West Texas. The nature of the region may have an impact on the limited number of women applicants for the superintendent position.

An important factor in the selection of a candidate is the candidate's respect and willingness to preserve the district's culture (Sabatino, 2010). Being involved in community activities, respecting and understanding community traditions, and interacting with the community were major considerations for the FSBM when selecting a superintendent. Local politics surrounding religious affiliations, ethnic groups, and social influences contribute to success and failure of the school district. The superintendent, as visible and important leader in a rural community, "lives in a fish bowl" (Jenkins, 2007). FSBM voiced the need for a superintendent to understand and to respond to the unique identity of the community. Fitting into the community involves matching both socioeconomic status, appearance, and intellectual expression (Tallerico, 2000a). Determining if a candidate will accept and respect the way of life in the community was an important factor in the selection process.

### **Personal Chemistry**

Men have reported the main reason they felt they were hired as superintendent was for their personal characteristics (Kowalski et al., 2011). According to some experts, personal chemistry plays an important role in selecting a superintendent (Ortiz, 1999; Tallerico, 2000b). Definitions of personal chemistry among the FSBM varied from having a sense of humor to the person's appearance.

The FSBM described making the final decision on which candidate to hire based upon how well they related to the person. Faith explained personal chemistry meant having “commonalities” with the other person. Similar to the findings cited by Tallericco (2000b), the FSBM relied on individual instincts and gut feelings in their selection of a superintendent. A candidate needed to connect with the whole school board within a short amount of time during the interview to be chosen to lead the district. According to this study, the individual’s personality and the ability to interact with the board, the faculty, and the community, was a stronger determinant than experience, knowledge, or qualifications in being selected as the superintendent.

Personal chemistry, based upon gut feeling, was the single most important factor cited by FSBM in deciding which candidate to hire as superintendent. The school boards represented in this study were predominately comprised of male board members. Women candidates may find it more difficult than men candidates to connect with a school board with mostly men. Since people like people who are like themselves (Glenn, Hickey, & Sherman, 2009), a woman may be at a disadvantage convincing school board members she is the “right fit” for the job in a short one hour interview.

### **Social Roles and Patriarchy**

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the theory that social role expectations of rural school board members in West Texas influenced the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency. Most feminist theory views discrimination based upon gender roles as the primary reason women have not advanced into more leadership positions. These social roles have existed in all cultures, in all

societies, across all time. My study revealed if social roles exist in the selection process for superintendents, the negative influence of gender expectations are diminishing.

The SRES (King & King, 1993) survey was developed to measure attitudes toward men and women in five categories. It does not classify an individual as traditional or egalitarian but rather how tolerant an individual is to nontraditional sex roles. High scores on the scale reflect less discrimination and more tolerance of role behaviors. The women in the study ranked more highly egalitarian on the scale than did the men; nonetheless, the men revealed moderate to high egalitarian scores.

Discussions by the FSBM showed women are no longer considered just homemakers. As Roy explained, the average family today can no longer exist on one income. The number of women in the workforce continues to rise steadily (Catalyst, 2012), and the enrollment of women in the universities out numbers that of men (NCES, 2011). With growing economic power, women's influence is being felt in all facets of society, including politics and business. This study illustrates how social role expectations are shifting, even in rural areas which are the most resistant to social change (Brown, Swanson, & Barton, 2003).

Recently, a nonscientific list of characteristics of the incoming 2012 class of college freshmen collected by Beloit College (2012) read "For most of their lives [these young people], maintaining relations between the U.S. and the rest of the world has been a woman's job in the State Department." In a current Associate Press article related to these findings, Ramde (2012) stated, "Women have always piloted war planes and space shuttles. The students are accustomed to seeing women in positions of leadership" ("Listen to Radios," para. 5). Women are no longer seen as only homemakers. Attitudes



toward the roles of women have changed in the past 40 years and will continue to evolve as younger generations are exposed to women leaders at home, in school, and in society. Social role expectations, as reflected in this study, are no longer a major hindrance to women as they climb the educational hierarchy to the position of superintendency. Similar to the report by Pew (2010) the FSBM in this study believed women are capable of being successful in the leadership role of superintendent.

The influence of patriarchy, as shown in this study, is also dwindling in relation to women's subordinate position to men. Patriarchy has been described as the hierarchy which permits men to dominate and control women (Clifford, 2002). In all societies men have always held higher status, power, and authority than women (Goldberg, 1999). Historically the proper place for women in traditional American society is evident in the Supreme Court 1872 opinion ". . . the destiny . . . of women [is] to fulfill . . . offices of wife and mother" (Bradwell v. The State, 1872). Since the office of the superintendent has been traditionally occupied by men, the patriarchal system has been seen as a major hindrance in women seeking a position in what was considered to be a man's role.

During interviews no direct reference was made concerning the man ruling in the home; however, the SRES survey contained one statement signifying traditional patriarchal roles. Only six of the 15 FSBM agreed or strongly agreed "the husband should be the head of the family." The explanation for the varied responses on this question lies beyond the scope of this study, whether it is strong Christian teachings, the demise of the influence of the Church, the increase of women working outside the home, or the moral decay of society. Over half of the FSBM disagreed the husband should be the head of the home. As women become a major economic influence in society and in

the home, shared-decision making is becoming the norm. On the survey, the participants responded the husband should not have absolute control of the finances or the social activities of the family and should not determine the educational or professional career of the wife. Household chores and attending to children have become shared responsibilities according to the participants. The social role expectations as described by Eagly (1983) no longer limit a woman to the kitchen. The social roles of men and women will continue to evolve as more and more women take their place in the work force and in leadership roles in all facets of society.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study**

The study contained a number of limitations. Since the study was restricted to fifteen FSBM in small rural school districts, the limited sampling may hinder generalizations that apply to broader populations.

Another limitation of the study was the assumption participants responded to the interview questions and the survey openly, honestly, and frankly. King and King (1993), noted if the SRES survey instrument was completed in an uncontrolled testing site, there would be the possibility the responses “may be discussed or influenced by persons other than the targeted respondent” (p. 6). Participants may have obtained opinions of others to complete the on-line SRES survey. The honesty of the FSBM during the interview process cannot be determined. These participants may have felt a need to tell me, as a woman, what they thought I wanted to hear during the interview. As a researcher, I must rely on the individual’s integrity on the survey and during the interview, and trust that each of the FSBM was being true to the values and spiritual convictions he or she claimed.

One significant limitation to this study was the lack of concrete data revealing the number of women applicants for superintendent positions. Only three FSBM reported looking at each application the school board received during the process, but all the FSBM stated there were few, if any, women who had applied. Even though the number of women applicants cannot be verified, it can be assumed that the percentage was low, if there were any.

In a recent superintendent search conducted by El Paso Socorro ISD, the professional search firm provided the public with the ethnicity, gender, and experience of the applicant pool for the superintendent search (OA Online, 2012). The results indicated out of 83 applications, only 18 were women. The number of women applicants appears to be low, not only in small rural districts, but in large metropolitan districts as well. Until a system of reporting is developed, assumptions that women face discrimination in the selection process cannot be verified. If women do not apply for the positions, women cannot be hired. A need exists for a reliable method of gathering data on the gender, ethnicity, and demographics of superintendent applicants such as the information provided by ProAct Search (OA Online, 2012) in the Socorro ISD superintendent search. This data would be invaluable for research studies, school boards, university preparation programs, education agencies, and minority superintendent applicants.

An additional limitation of the study was my own lack of experience with the interview process. As a novice interviewer, I entered the interview process with the assumption participants had the same understanding and knowledge base as I did. During my doctoral path, I had reflected on my epistemological and axiological beliefs to

formulate a complete philosophical worldview. In my naiveté, I made underlying assumptions other people would have the ability to identify, clarify, and describe their own value system. This assumption may have limited the overall descriptive nature of participant responses. Also, my lack of experience in listening, questioning, and probing may have resulted in missed opportunities to participant responses.

This multi-site, multi-case qualitative study examined how and why former school board members in rural West Texas hired more men than women for the position of superintendent. Through one-on-one interviews and the voices of individual FSBM, the study attempted to understand how personal attitudes, values, and beliefs relating to leadership qualities of men and women, social role expectations of men and women, and community values affected the selection process for the superintendency. The study provided valuable insight into school board members and the selection process, an area in which limited research exists. Based upon the results of this study, recommendations for further study are presented.

First, this study was conducted by a woman superintendent about women superintendents. One of the limitations of the interview process is the honesty of those being interviewed. There is a possibility FSBM expressed their feelings about women as superintendents based upon what they perceived the researcher wanted to hear. There is further need for similar studies within the same geographical area of rural West Texas, to be conducted by both women and men researchers, to determine if the findings and assertions are relevant.

Second, replication of the study in various geographical areas within the state and across the nation would allow for comparison among attitudes and values of other school

board members. Qualitative research provides a rich, descriptive understanding into the motivations and the experiences of individuals compared to quantitative statistics that provide only numbers. Since there are few studies on the selection process for the superintendent, more studies of this nature need to be conducted, not only with former school board members in larger districts and in other regions but with current school board members as well. Researchers, university professors, and professional consultant firms need to create a safe environment where school board members can share how the internal, often mysterious, process of hiring a superintendent occurs. Research on the superintendency is abundant, but an important missing link on the number of women superintendents lies in the lack of studies on school board members. Until an understanding of how school board members, individually and collectively, determine the right fit for the school district, women and other minorities cannot overcome the hurdles for the top leadership position of the district.

Third, continued research with women who hold superintendent certifications but who have not obtained a superintendent position is needed. Many women have the qualifications for this position. Until the applicant pool for the selection process is comprised of as many women as men candidates, women will not be equally represented in this position.

Fourth, similar to Tallericco's (2000b) recommendations, more research needs to be conducted on the gatekeepers to the superintendency. An understanding of how professionally search firms and other gatekeepers, such as retired, interim, and outgoing superintendents, affect the selection process of superintendents is needed. Gaining

deeper insights into the selection process can assist women in gaining entrance into the superintendency.

Finally, social role expectations and patriarchal rule have undergone major changes since the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Women today are not seen just as homemakers, but as major influences in the work force, in business, and in politics. Continued research, such as the Pew (2010) study on leadership, needs to be conducted on younger generations and social role expectations compared to the Baby Boomer generation. These studies will assist university programs in preparing young women to take their place as the leaders of educational institutions.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how and why school board members in rural West Texas hire more men than women for the position of superintendent. The study reviewed literature associated with the local school board, the superintendency, leadership qualities and stereotypes, personal values, and West Texas culture. The theoretical framework was based on the social-role theory and the theory of patriarchy. The methodology involved a qualitative, multi-site multi-case study which included data gathered from historical documents, one-on-one interviews, and the administration of a SRES survey.

The results of this study reveal former school board members believe women can be as effective, if not more effective, as men as the superintendent of schools. FSBM identified transformational leadership qualities and skills which have been associated with women leadership styles as the preferred characteristics of a superintendent. Major factors relating to who gets hired as superintendent include individual board member's

personal values and how the community will accept the candidate. Similar to Tallerico's (2000a) findings on the unwritten rules of assessing the superintendency, school board members in rural West Texas (a) rely on the advice often associated with the good ole boys of retired, interim, or current superintendents even when they don't use professional search consultants, (b) depend on personal characteristics, personality, or personal chemistry in determining the right fit, and (c) decide on which candidate to hire based upon gut feelings and instinct.

Several assertions are presented as a result of this study. First, women aspiring to the superintendency would not be hindered by preconceived social roles or stereotypes in these West Texas districts. Leadership expectations and social role expectations are changing rapidly as more women enter the work force. Even in the traditional, rural West Texas region, FSBM acknowledged women are as capable as men are as a superintendent. Social roles no longer pose limitations on women who aspire to the highest levels of leadership in politics, education, or business. The age-old hierarchy of patriarchy is losing its influence in the home and in a global society.

Next, a system of promotion and recommendations still exists in the selection process for superintendents based upon a good ole boy club. Even when a school board does not hire a professional consultant firm, school boards often rely heavily on the expertise and recommendations of past superintendents, usually men, to guide them through the process. The good ole boy system can influence the application pool if those individuals prefer to endorse other men for the position.

Women aspiring to the position of superintendent are limited by various internal barriers. Family obligations and lack of mobility may hinder their ability to apply and be

hired for the superintendent of small, rural school districts in West Texas. In this study which covered the selection process of over 40 superintendents, women candidates were few, and often non-existent. Three of the eight districts represented by the study have hired women superintendents within the past seven years.

I assert when women determine to pursue the opportunities provided to them as professionals, there will be more women in positions of superintendent. The only barriers that restrict women today are the barriers they place upon themselves. Ella Young (as cited by Blount, 1998) declared women were destined to rule the schools. Because this has not happened, does not mean that it will not happen. Bass (2002) predicted that by 2034 women with their transformational leadership style will hold the majority of leadership positions. With the increase of women in university preparation programs and doctoral programs, and with more women in campus administration, the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be known as *The Century of the Woman*.



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## APPENDIX / APPENDICIES

### APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. What was your major motivation or interest for serving as a board member?
3. What do you feel are the major challenges for school boards, school districts and superintendents?
4. Can you describe the process the local school board used when seeking a superintendent?
5. What qualities do you believe strong leaders need to possess in order to be effective?
6. How do those qualities differ for men compared to women?
7. Which do you believe is the most important leadership skill/quality for a superintendent to possess? Why?
8. How do the attitudes, values and beliefs of the community affect your personal choice of an applicant?
9. How would you describe your personal values and beliefs system? How did your values affect your choice of a superintendent?
10. How does your religious or spiritual system view the role of women in your life and in society?
11. How do the personal values and beliefs of the superintendent candidate influence your decision in the hiring process?
12. How do you feel the “personal chemistry” between the applicant and the school board affects the hiring of a superintendent?
13. Do you believe a woman can possess the skills necessary to be an effective superintendent? Why or why not?
14. Have you ever hired a woman superintendent? Why or why not?
15. In your opinion, why are there so few women superintendents in rural West Texas?
16. As a former board member, what advice would you give an applicant who was interviewing with you and your board for the position of superintendent?

**APPENDIX B: SURVEY VIA SURVEY MONKEY**

Enrollment of the district in which you served: \_\_\_\_\_

Demographics: Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Highest education achieved:

High School Diploma \_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_  
4 year college Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_  
Masters Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_  
Doctorate Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Years served on school board:

1 Year \_\_\_\_\_ 5-10 years \_\_\_\_\_  
1-2 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-15 years \_\_\_\_\_  
3-5 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15 or more years \_\_\_\_\_

Political Affiliation

\_\_\_\_\_ Republican \_\_\_\_\_ Democrat  
\_\_\_\_\_ Independent \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Ethnicity:

Caucasian \_\_\_\_\_  
Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_  
African American \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Religious affiliation:

Protestant \_\_\_\_\_ Denomination \_\_\_\_\_  
Catholic \_\_\_\_\_  
Jewish \_\_\_\_\_  
Muslim \_\_\_\_\_  
Hindu \_\_\_\_\_  
Atheist \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_



*SRES Form BB Survey Questions*

|     | Belief Statement  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1.  | Family and consumer science courses should be as acceptable for male students as for female.            |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 2.  | Women should have the same chances as men to be leaders at work.  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 3.  | More men should major in elementary education.  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 4.  | When both husband and wife work outside the home housework should be equally shared.                    |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 5.  | Fathers are not as able to care for their sick children as mothers are.                                 |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 6.  | The family home will run better if the father, rather than the mother, sets the rules for the children. |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 7.  | It should be the mother's responsibility, not the father's, to plan the children's activities.          |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 8.  | Children should seek the advice of the father not their mother when buying a car.                       |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 9.  | A major in fine arts, such as drama and dance, can be just as rewarding for a man as it is for a woman. |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 10. | It is worse for a woman to get drunk than for a man.  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 11. | A person should be more polite to a woman than a man.   |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 12. | A woman should not be President of the United States.   |                |       |         |          |                   |

|     |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 13. | It is more important for men than for women to receive a college education.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14. | The husband should be the head of the family.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15. | A male nurse cannot be as effective as a female nurse.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16. | Important career-related decisions should be left to the husband.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17. | A man should be more educated than the woman he dates.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18. | Women are more likely than men to gossip about people they know.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19. | Both the husband's and wife's earnings should be controlled by the husband.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20. | It is more appropriate for a mother, rather than the father, to change their baby's diapers.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21. | When two people are dating, it is best if they base their social life around the man's friends.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22. | Women can handle pressures from their jobs as well as men can.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23. | It should be the wife's responsibility to fit her life to her husband's more than a husband's responsibility to fit his life to his wife's. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24. | Industrial training schools should admit more qualified females.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25. | Men and women are equally qualified for law enforcement.  |  |  |  |  |  |

(King & King, 1993)

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## **APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM**

### **Title of the Study:**

School Board Members and the Underrepresentation of Women in the Superintendency:  
A Case Study

### **Principal Investigator:**

Cherri S. Barker  
Liberty University  
School of Education

You are being invited to volunteer for a research study I am conducting in rural West Texas school districts. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

This study is being conducted by: Cherri S. Barker  
Liberty University School of Education

### **Background Information**

The purpose of the research is to understand how and why school board members select a superintendent and how individual values and beliefs, attitudes of social roles of men and women, the culture of the community, and leadership qualities of candidates affect the hiring process. I am interested in hearing about your personal experiences and beliefs on these topics.

The following research questions will guide the study:

- How do specific leadership qualifications and skills of potential candidates' affect decisions of individual school board members in the selection process in rural West Texas school districts?
- How do personal beliefs and values of individual school board members affect the selection process for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?
- How does the culture of the community and region affect the hiring decisions of individual board members in rural West Texas?
- How do attitudes of leadership and social roles influence hiring men and women for the superintendent in rural West Texas?
- How and why do school board members hire more men than women for the position of superintendent in rural West Texas school districts?

### **Procedures**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

- Participate in a one-on-one interview scheduled at your convenience. The interview will take about 1-2 hours depending on how in-depth you respond to the questions. I will follow an interview guide that has 16 open-ended questions.

- Allow the use of an audio recording during the interview to provide for accurate transcription. No one will hear this audio recording except the researcher and a professional transcriber.
- Agree to a follow-up meeting for clarification if needed.
- Complete a questionnaire with 25 questions concerning how your perceptions of individual attitudes, values, and beliefs affected the selection process for the position of superintendent. The survey will take approximately 10 or 15 minutes and must be completed online so you will need internet access.
- Review the draft of the interview in order to clarify interpretations made by the researcher, and correct any errors that may exist.

**Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

**The study has the following risks:**

- The risks are minimal; however, sharing personal perceptions may cause negative emotions or anxious feelings. If at any time during the study you determine that you are not comfortable participating, you may choose to withdraw at any point.

**The benefits of participation are:**

- As a participant, you will provide useful information on the qualities and skills required for the position of superintendent within school districts.
- You will contribute to the existing body of research on educational leadership and the hiring process of school board members for the superintendent of schools.
- A copy of the study will be sent to each participant.

**Compensation**

- There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:**

- The records of this study will be kept private at all times.
- In published reports no information will be included that will make it possible to identify the research participant.
- Research records will be stored securely with password protection.
- All journals, forms, and recordings will be kept in a locked file cabinet during the study.
- Paper data will be shredded and audio data will be erased upon the final approval of the dissertation committee.
- If you withdraw from the study after it has begun, your information will be destroyed immediately.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

- Participation in this study is voluntary.
- Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University.
- If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question and may withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Whom Should I Contact If I Have Questions?**

- You may ask any questions about the research at any time.

The researchers conducting this survey are Cherri S. Barker and Dr. Constance Pearson. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact me or my advisor at:

Cherri S. Barker at 325 745-4593      Email: [cherrisuebarker@verizon.net](mailto:cherrisuebarker@verizon.net)

Dr. Constance Pearson at:  
 1971 University Boulevard  
 Lynchburg, VA. 24502  
 Ph #: 434 592-4278                                  Email: [cspearson@liberty.edu](mailto:cspearson@liberty.edu)

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the

Institutional Review Board  
 Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair  
 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582  
 Lynchburg, VA 24502    or  
 Email : [fgarzon@liberty.edu](mailto:fgarzon@liberty.edu)

*You will receive a copy of this form for your records.*

**STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT**

I have read and understood the above information and had an opportunity to ask any questions about my participation in this research. I voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

I further agree to allow the interview portion of this research to be voice recorded for later transcription.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 Name of Participant (please print)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT SCRIPT  
VIA TELEPHONE/EMAIL**

**CHERRI S. BARKER**

407 Cactus Lane  
Winters, TX 79567

[cherrisuebarker@verizon.net](mailto:cherrisuebarker@verizon.net)

C: (325) 206-2168  
H: (325) 754-4593

---

Hello:

May I speak with *Participant Name*.

My name is Cherri Barker and I am currently a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. As a doctoral student, I am researching school boards and the selection process as it relates the underrepresentation of women in the superintendency in rural West Texas.

I am seeking two or three former school board member from School District Name and other surrounding school districts who have participated in the selection process for the superintendent in rural district of West Texas. The study will involve an hour interview and an on-line survey that will take about 20 minutes to complete.

Do you think you might be interested? The study will involve a personal interview at a site of your choice and a brief 15 or 20 minute survey on the internet. If so, could we set up a day and a time when you be able to meet with me at a location which is convenient for you? I would like to meet with you personally and discuss the study further to explain in-depth what the study is about and to answer any questions you may have.

*(If preliminary contact is made by email):*

Please let me know in response to this email whether or not you would be interested in participating in my study. You can respond by email or call me at the phone numbers provided in the heading of this email. If you choose to respond by email, please let me know what dates and times would be convenient for you to meet with me in person to discuss the study further and to answer any questions you may have.

If not, do you any former board members of School District Name that might consider assisting me in my study?

I would like to assure you that all information and personal identity will be protected according to Liberty University's research requirements. If at any time you decide you do not want to participant in the study you can withdraw from the study with no further commitment.

I look forward to meeting with you.

Cherri S. Barker

## APPENDIX E: DEBRIEFING EMAIL FOR SRES SURVEY

CHERRI S. BARKER

407 Cactus Lane  
Winters, TX 79567

[csbarker@liberty.edu](mailto:csbarker@liberty.edu)

Cell: (325) 206-2168  
Home: (325) 754-4593

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Dear *Participant*:

I want to thank you for participating in the online survey for my dissertation study. Attached you will find the score of the Sex-Role Egalitarian Scale (SRES) survey you took on Survey Monkey on DATE. Below is an explanation of the survey, its purpose, and a guide to interpreting the results.

This survey was created by Dr. Lynda King and Dr. Daniel King in 1993 to measure attitudes toward the equality of men and women.

The SRES was not developed as a clinical instrument, and there are no set cut-off scores that serve to classify persons as “very traditional,” “moderately egalitarian,” or “highly egalitarian”. “Egalitarian” means that men and women are considered equal in the areas surveyed. The primary goal of the SRES is to reliably measure individual differences so that meaningful answers to scientific questions may be obtained.

To reduce the chances of a response bias, Dr. King and Dr. King suggest that researchers, such as myself, do not state that the test is a “sex-role equality measure.” For this reason, I did not explain the purpose or the intent of the survey before you took it.

Your survey results will remain anonymous. There is no identifiable information that will connect your survey to you personally. Please be assured that confidentiality and ethical procedures as required for scholarly research will be followed.

If for any reason, after reviewing the survey results, you determine that you do not want me to use your individual survey as part of my study you may withdraw your answers. You will have seven (7) days after receiving this email to withdraw your survey results.

To withdraw your survey from my study, simply respond to this email asking to have your results removed or print this email, check the box below and mail it to me at the address above.

If you have any questions on the meaning of your results, you may contact me by the telephone number, email address, or mailing address listed above. You may also contact my faculty researcher if you prefer at:

Dr. Constance Pearson  
1971 University Boulevard  
Lynchburg, VA. 24502

Ph #: 434 592-4278  
Email: [cspearson@liberty.edu](mailto:cspearson@liberty.edu)

After reviewing my results of the SRES survey, I am requesting that my survey be withdrawn from your research study.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **EXPLANATION OF SCORING THE SRES**

[attached to the individual summary report]

SRES contains items that require judgments about both women assuming nontraditional roles (*Sample Item: "Women are just as capable as men to run a business"*) and men assuming nontraditional roles (*Sample Item: "A husband should leave the care of young babies to his wife"*). There are five areas of attitudes included in the survey:

***Marital Roles:*** The items address beliefs about men and women in their spousal roles.

***Parental Roles:*** The items address beliefs about maternal and paternal roles.

***Employment Roles:*** The items address beliefs about men and women in their workplace roles.

***Social-Interpersonal-Heterosexual Roles:*** The items address beliefs about men and women in a variety of social relationships.

***Educational Roles:*** The items address beliefs about educational alternatives available to men and women

The responses ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Item scores are assigned such that a score of 5 represents the most egalitarian position and a score of 1 represents the least egalitarian position. "

A total score is computed as the sum of the 25 item responses; the higher the summative score, the greater the endorsement of sex-role egalitarian attitudes.



APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



The Graduate School at Liberty University

April 30, 2012

Cherri Barker

IRB Approval 1328.043012: School Board Members and the Underrepresentation of Women in the Superintendency: A Case Study

Dear Cherri,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fernando Garzon".

**Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.**  
*IRB Chair, Associate Professor*  
**Center for Counseling & Family Studies**

(434) 592-5054



## APPENDIX G: NON-DISCLOSURE/ CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT



### NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (Capital Typing, Inc.): CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

This Non-Disclosure Agreement (the "Agreement") is entered into on this **6<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2012** between **Cherri Barker** herein referred to as Disclosing Party, and **Capital Typing, Inc.**, located at 29 Plantation Park Drive, Suite 804, Bluffton, South Carolina, 29910, herein referred to as Receiving Party, for the purpose of preventing the unauthorized disclosure of Confidential Information as defined below. The parties agree to enter into a confidential relationship with respect to the disclosure of certain proprietary and confidential information ("Confidential Information").

**1. Definition of Confidential Information.** For purposes of this Agreement, "Confidential Information" shall include all information or material that has or could have commercial value or other utility in the business in which Disclosing Party or Disclosing Party's clients or affiliates are engaged, including but not limited to the following: information concerning secret processes, components, inventions, creations, systems, designs, materials, software, improvements, ideas, specifications, or arts relating to products and services, as well as financial projections, financing plans, inquiry lists, customer lists, and other business information related to present and prospective business activities of the company. All information, and all documents, audio files, records, notebooks, drawings, photographs, and any repositories or representations of such information are hereinafter referred to as Confidential Information.

**2. Exclusions from Confidential Information.** Receiving Party's obligations under this Agreement do not extend to information that is: (a) publicly known at the time of disclosure or subsequently becomes publicly known through no fault of the Receiving Party; (b) discovered or created by the Receiving Party before disclosure by Disclosing Party; (c) learned by the Receiving Party through legitimate means other than from the Disclosing Party or Disclosing Party's representatives.

**3. Obligations of Receiving Party.** Receiving Party shall hold and maintain the Confidential Information in strictest confidence for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Disclosing Party. Receiving Party shall carefully restrict access to Confidential Information to employees, contractors and third parties as is reasonably required and shall require those persons to sign nondisclosure restrictions at least as protective as those in this Agreement. Receiving Party shall not, without prior written approval of Disclosing Party, use for Receiving Party's own benefit, publish, copy, or otherwise disclose to others, or permit the use by others for their benefit or to the detriment of Disclosing Party, any Confidential Information. Receiving Party shall return to Disclosing Party any and all records, notes, and other written, printed, or tangible materials in its possession pertaining to Confidential Information immediately if Disclosing Party requests it in writing.

**4. Time Periods.** The nondisclosure provisions of this Agreement shall survive the termination of this Agreement and Receiving Party's duty to hold Confidential Information in confidence shall remain in effect until the Confidential Information no longer qualifies as a trade secret or until Disclosing Party sends Receiving Party written notice releasing Receiving Party from this Agreement, whichever occurs first.

**5. Relationships.** Nothing contained in this Agreement shall be deemed to constitute either party a partner, joint venturer or employee of the other party for any purpose.

David Jonas  
.....  
Name of Receiving Party

*David Jonas*  
.....  
Signature of Receiving Party:

February 6, 2012  
.....  
Date:

.....  
Name of Disclosing Party

.....  
Signature of Disclosing Party:

.....  
Date:



## APPENDIX H: SIGMA SRES CONTRACT

PTR899

SIGMA ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS, INC.  
P.O. BOX 510727, PORTLAND, MICHIGAN 48101-0727

### PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE COPYRIGHT MATERIALS

RESEARCHER: Cheri Barker

INSTITUTION: Liberty University

DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership

ADDRESS: 1871 University Blvd., Lynchburg, VA 24502

PHONE NUMBER: 326-754-4593

EMAIL ADDRESS: cbarker@liberty.edu

SIGMA Assessment Systems, Inc./Research Psychological Press, Inc. (hereinafter the "Publishers") on this date, December 19, 2011, hereby authorizes Cheri Barker, under the supervision of Dr. Constance Pearson, to reproduce the material identified below as the Work subject to all of the terms, conditions, and limitations of this Agreement.

A. The Work: The Work means:

NAME: Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale (SRES)

AUTHOR(S): Lynda A. King, Ph.D. & Daniel W. King, Ph.D.

SPECIFIC FORM OF THE TEST OR THE WORK: SS or KK

PARTICULAR SCALES OR PARTICULAR WORK USED: entire assessment

B. Description of Research: The Researcher agrees to use the Work for the following purpose and no other:

"Although most educators are women, women continue to be underrepresented in the superintendentcy. The research design of this study will utilize a qualitative collective case study of fifteen former school board members in rural West Texas school districts. Data will be collected from semi-structured interviews, archival records and a web-based survey."

C. Conditions:

- i. Authorized Use: Permission to reproduce the Work for research use is only applicable to the specific research study described in this Agreement and is only valid for the number of administrations specified in the section entitled Completion of Study.
- ii. Prohibited Uses: This Agreement does not provide the Researcher with the right to adapt, revise or otherwise reproduce, publish, or distribute any copies of the Work (neither separately nor as part of a larger publication such as in articles, books, research bulletins, or dissertations, neither in print, nor electronically, nor by any other means), except as specifically permitted by sections entitled Authorized Use and Reproduced by Permission. Furthermore, the Researcher shall not directly or indirectly allow others to utilize the Work without the express permission of the Publishers.