WOMEN AND THE SUPERINTENDENCY

RESULTS OF A 23 YEAR LONGITUDINAL STUDY

GLENYS HILL, TEENA MCDONALD, MARY LYNNE DERRINGTON, SHANNON CALDERONE
# Newly Assigned Superintendents

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total New</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Out of State</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Superintendent Job</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interim</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-District Promotions</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unfilled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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* Based on incomplete data.
### Female Superintendents by District Size

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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>#</td>
<td>%&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 500</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7839%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>500–1,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,001–3,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3,001–5,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5,001–10,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10,001–20,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td><strong>26%</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>27%</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td><strong>26%</strong></td>
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</table>

1 This represents the % of all women superintendents.

2 This percentage is based on all 295 districts. It is higher than the 2014 national average of 20%, which is based on the AASA Superintendent Salary and Benefit Survey.
Looking back a year……

Glenys Hill
Teena McDonald
Kelly Ward

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Spring 2016

THE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PIPELINE: ARE women leaning in or backing out?
PIPELINE STUDY

- Interviewed 39 women at various career stages
- Entry—mid-pipeline--seated superintendents
- Semi-structured interviews
- Sheryl Sandberg “are women leaning in or leaning out”…. 
FINDINGS

IDEAL WORKER NORMS

“Ideal worker norms and ideal mother norms collided …. for (some) women in the study.“
FINDINGS

GENDER & LEADERSHIP

“Many capable women exercise their leadership in non-traditional leadership roles” rather than seeking high level positions…due to what they perceive as pipeline obstacles (the benefits don’t outweigh the risks, the job’s not attractive…) or the myths that surround the job.
“Gender continues to be problematic for moving up in administrative roles.”
“Many have opted out – at least until some point in time when it is more opportune for their family”. This may mean they have permanently lost the opportunity and time to reach the superintendency.
CONCLUSIONS

There is a need to change the conversations about ideal worker norms in such a way that women are given permission to “lean in” to top leadership positions and at the same time “lean in” to their roles as wives and mothers.
CONCLUSIONS

• Mentorship continues to play a key role in helping women decide and transition to the role.

• There is a need to examine mentorship practices, workplace norms and to “redefine” culture at the top.

• There is a need to change the way women are recruited for leadership positions.
1993  DR. MARY LYNNE DERRINGTON & DR. GENE SHARRATT

Factors that influence women’s decisions to apply for the superintendency
RESULTS 1993

• Barriers perceived as institutionalized and rooted in societal discrimination practices
• Sex role stereotyping and sex discriminations
• Lack of role models/mentors to guide women into the superintendency.
2006 ADMINISTERED FOR THE SECOND TIME

Derrington & Sharratt
RESULTS 2007

• Barriers to securing the superintendency are often self-imposed
• Decisions to avoid superintendency because of family responsibilities including inability to relocate for family reasons
• Family obligations and motherhood adversely impact decision to apply
• Women not successful in offsetting increasing responsibilities in the workplace with decreasing responsibilities at home
• Women carry a greater share of home and family responsibilities
2016-Nearly 10 years later

Hill, McDonald, Derrington, Calderone
GUIDING QUESTIONS 2016

- Why do women continue to be underrepresented in the position of school superintendent?
- What barriers exist that preclude women from attaining the superintendency?
- Has the female perception of barriers changed since 2007 when this survey was last administered? Since 1993?
- Has the female perception of barriers changed since 1993 when this survey was first administered?
ESSENTIALLY THE SAME QUESTIONS WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS

FEMALE SUPERINTENDENT APPLICANT QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues Affecting Your Decision to Apply for Superintendent Opening</th>
<th>Influences 5=Extensive, 1= None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Opportunity to follow successful leader.</td>
<td>5  4  3  2  1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Good reputation of district.</td>
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<td>3. Stable, visionary, proactive board.</td>
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<td>4. Good reputation of teaching staff.</td>
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<td>5. History of support for levies, bonds.</td>
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<td>6. Supportive special interest groups.</td>
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<td>7. Professional growth available.</td>
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<td>8. History of labor peace.</td>
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<td>9. Modernized facilities.</td>
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<td>10. Stable financial outlook for district.</td>
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<td>11. Projected enrollment growth.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Board/community relations are good.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Availability of female support groups within area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Good curriculum/instructional program. (Differentiated instruction; student interventions; strong student assessment scores)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Lack of controversy within the district.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Attractive geographical area to live.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Good administrative team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Good match between district needs, your skills and abilities.</td>
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SURVEY RECIPIENTS

- **2006** female job listing service members (140)
- **2016** female WASA members
  - 133 out of 540
  - 42 seated superintendents
  - 91 non-seated superintendents
  - 25% return rate
NEW: COMPARATIVE DATA
SUPERINTENDENTS AND NON–SUPERINTENDENTS

ISSUES AFFECTING WOMEN’S DECISIONS TO APPLY FOR SUPERINTENDENT OPENINGS

- Current superintendents (42)
  1. Good match between district needs and your skills and abilities
  2. District's potential for success is good
  3. Attractive geographical area to live
  4. Good administrative team
  5. Stable, visionary, proactive board

- Not superintendents (91)
  1. Good match between district needs and your skills and abilities
  2. Stable, visionary, proactive board
  3. Board/community relations are good
  4. Stable financial outlook for district
  5. District's potential for success is good
NEW-COMMENTS FROM SUPERINTENDENT AND NON-SUPERINTENDENT RESPONDENTS

Seated superintendent
“The beautiful diversity that represents students from all over the globe! The district is small enough to have a cohesive, coherent district in service to all students."

Non-superintendent
“Finally, here are the frank reasons that affect my decision to see the role of superintendent: people working in education isolate individuals who are not "certified", have not "taught", AND have not been "principal". There is no room for innovation of this position if the system cannot recognize anyone other than "their own."

Non-superintendent
“Administration's willingness to engage in crucial conversations "
MORE COMPARATIVE DATA:
THE **TOP FIVE** ISSUES THAT MOST INFLUENCE WOMEN’S DECISIONS TO SEEK A SUPERINTENDENT’S POSITION

**superintendent**
- District's potential for success is good
- Good administrative team
- Good match between district needs and your skills and abilities
- Good match between district needs and your skills and abilities
- Attractive geographical area to live

**Non-superintendent**
- Stable financial outlook for district
- Good match between district needs and your skills and abilities
- Stable, visionary, proactive board
- Board/community relations are good
- History of support for levies and bonds

**Comments:**
- The "good old boys" network helps in the placement of males, but not females (supt)
- The "good old boys" network helps in the placement of males, but not females (non-supt)
- Barriers to females securing a superintendency are often self-imposed. (supt)
- Barriers to females securing a superintendency are often self-imposed. (non supt)
"AS A WOMAN WITH SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN, IT IS LESS ACCEPTABLE THEN IT MAY BE FOR A MAN TO MOVE MY KIDS AND PUT IN THE HOURS NEEDED FOR THE JOB OF SUPERINTENDENT."
NON-SUPT.

"The community we chose to apply for a superintendent position is one that fits our lifestyle to a tee. When looking for work in a very rural district a candidate should know ahead of time if they can be happy in that environment."
Supt.
2016: THERE IS MAJOR AGREEMENT ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE:

1. Female role models are available to help guide other females into administrative positions.
2. Females are offered a wide variety of professional classes and seminars to help prepare them for the superintendency.
3. Females are encouraged to pursue a superintendent opening by other female administrators.
4. School boards are generally well informed about the qualifications of female superintendent candidates.
5. Females are encouraged to pursue the superintendency by their male
NEW RESULTS SINCE 2007
INTERNAL BARRIERS AFFECTING YOUR DECISION TO APPLY FOR
AND/OR KEEP THE SUPERINTENDENT POSITION

Superintendent:
1. Position/pay not worth the stress
2. Job responsibilities not appealing
3. Unwilling to move because of spouse/partner job
4. Raising children
5. Too late in my career

Non-Superintendent:
1. Position/pay not worth the stress
2. Job responsibilities not appealing
3. Unwilling to move because of spouse/partner job
4. Too late in my career
5. Raising children
“The attitude of school board members towards having a female superintendent. Conservative, rural communities may not support females in leadership roles.”

“Applied after the very controversial, sudden departure of superintendent. Many of the factors above certainly mattered, but it was the appearance of an unexpected opportunity that caused me to apply.”

“None of the issues listed most affect my decision. Most Superintendents that I have worked closely with are more concerned with political implications of the narrowest of decisions rather than actual values-based leadership, consistency of data driven decision-making, and acting on behalf of students and staff within their care. Those that do have and use those qualities do not appear to be long-lived in the position. As a result, the Superintendency is not attractive.”
GOOD OLD BOYS NETWORK

the Good Old Boys network is still considered #1 prime time problem today—as it was in 2007.
GOOD MATCH BETWEEN DISTRICT NEEDS AND YOUR SKILLS AND ABILITIES
STABLE FINANCIAL OUTLOOK; LEVY PASSAGE; BUDGET STATUS

Significant concern in 2007 (economic downturn)

Concern in 2016 among non-superintendents

McCleary?

Other???
STALE VISIONARY BOARD

Ranked #2 in 2007;
Today ranked #3 non-superintendents and #4 with seated superintendents
GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Ranked high in 2016 with seated superintendents
SELF IMPOSED BARRIERS

Emerged as a major reason in 2007 administration

Still ranks high but job stress and undesirability of position rank higher in 2016
POSITIONAL AUTONOMY

In 2007 administration this was #2 indicator of What is

Has essentially disappeared in 2016
NEED FOR WOMEN TO BE ENCOURAGED BY WOMEN AND BY MEN & HAVE FEMALE MODELS TO EMULATE

High ranking in both 2007 and 2016—this is what should be
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Respondents in 2007 and today report professional development opportunities are plentiful.
SCHOOL BOARDS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

In 2016 this showed up as “what is” for non superintendents and as “what should be” for superintendents.
OVERALL TOP FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN’S DECISION TO APPLY FOR A SUPERINTENDENCY

• women seek a stable district, with a focus on instruction, and peaceful board and constituent relationships.

  Top factors:
  good reputation of district
  Stable proactive board
  Good reputation of teaching staff and good curriculum/instruction

• the following rated highly: Labor peace, stable financial outlook, good administrative team good board community relations, and a stable visionary proactive board (60%).

• Add to this list that highly also rated was the ability to implement new programs.

• It is interesting that attractive geographical area rated highly.

• Pondering the above, it appears no one would be interested in a “turn-around” district at the bottom of the achievement heap. Stability and an already “good” situation is desirable along with the opportunity to innovate. (Now some will ask, “isn’t this true for men too?”) Certainly may be and an opportunity to do another survey (of men asking about desirable characteristics).
TURN AROUND DISTRICT

- Not much interest
- Stability and an already “good” situation is desirable along with the opportunity to innovate.
- “isn’t this true for men too?” Certainly may be and an opportunity to do another survey (of men asking about desirable characteristics).
WHAT'S NEXT?

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU ON NEXT RESEARCH STEPS…
CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

WASA Second annual women's conference
Continue research efforts 2017
Additional next steps--
????????Your thoughts??????