ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

Nicholas G. Carter

The Graduate School
Morehead State University
March 26, 2018
Abstract of Capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education At Morehead State University

By

Nicholas G. Carter
Irvington, Kentucky

Committee Chair: Dr. Michael W. Kessinger, Assistant Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

March 26, 2018

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ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS TOWARD THE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS OF SUPERINTENDENTS

The research about the principal and superintendent relationship is limited at best. Much research exists about the impact each position has on student achievement; however, very little is available about what constitutes a positive and productive relationship. To address this issue, the intent of the research study is to determine the perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents and to consider whether superintendent years of experience has an effect on those perceptions. The literature review provides an abundance of research about each role and how it impacts student achievement. However, research about the two roles and how they interact to impact school effectiveness was very limited. Within the research study, I hypothesized that the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership were independent of the years of experience of the leadership skills of their superintendent as perceived by principals.

KEYWORDS: Trust, Support, Expectations, Leadership
PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS TOWARD THE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS OF SUPERINTENDENTS

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the Carter/Carman family. Their support has enabled me to live my dreams. All things are possible through Christ.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank some people who have been involved in this journey with me. My Doctoral Committee: Dr. Michael Kessinger, Dr. Shane Shope, and Dr. Janet Meeks, will forever have my utmost respect and appreciation. Thank you for investing your time in my journey.

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Last but not least, my parents (Alberta and Fred) and brother (Keith) whose sacrifices and support opened up opportunities for me to advance to this point in my career and life. My good fortune professionally and personally are a direct result of the sacrifices you made for me.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Public educators in the 21st century face increasing pressure by society to improve student learning. Improving graduation rates and preparing all students to meet college and career ready benchmarks are challenging goals expected of educators. Closing the achievement gap, minimizing excellence gaps for gifted and talented children, teaching soft skills, and assisting students in poverty with basic needs are also expectations society places on educators. This increased scrutiny has forced superintendents and principals to examine their roles in education and how their work affects student achievement. “No longer is it enough for school leaders to keep things running smoothly” (Archer, 2004, p. S3). The expectations for superintendents and principals have become much more encompassing and complex. “Principals don’t teach students, but they do affect student achievement” (Archer, p. S3). A Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning study suggests that the critical parts of a principal’s job are “fostering shared beliefs, monitoring the effectiveness of school practices, and involving teachers in implementing policy” (Archer, p. S4).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and current Every School Succeeds Act (ESSA) eras of public education have contributed greatly to the increased accountability pressures placed on public school superintendents. Never in history has the superintendent position been more important and held more responsibility for the overall success of schools than currently. District level leadership is vitally important
to the success of students, teachers, and principals (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Increasing student achievement in the 21st century is recognized as the most challenging task by public school superintendents (Byrd, Drews, & Johnson, 2006). Superintendents are not alone in the increasing demands in the era of public school accountability.

The principal’s role has transformed over the years from a building manager leadership role to transformational and servant leadership roles expected to improve teaching and learning at all costs. As a result, principals have found themselves on the frontline of public ridicule if their students fail to achieve learning results at the expected rate of federal and state government. Klocko and Wells (2015) point out that “several legislative acts have changed the course of the daily lives of building principals” (p. 1). Frequently, these acts by legislators were unfunded to a degree creating even higher demands on principals to achieve more with fewer resources. The 21st century school principal is expected to perform at a level of proficiency or greater across all content areas.

Many school superintendents and principals have turned to the principles of servant leadership in an effort to effectively lead through the obstacles. According to Letizia (2014), “a servant leader leads by serving, by making the wellbeing of his or her follower’s first priority” (p. 175). Dwindling resources at the district and school levels are causing higher levels of stress for school superintendents and principals. “Servant leaders cultivate a shared vision for their followers and try their best to help each follower achieve this vision” (Letizia, p. 183). Unfortunately, the increased
pressure of school leadership has made it very difficult for school superintendents and principals to follow the principles of servant leadership.

**Statement of the Problem**

Multiple studies (Andero, 2000; Bird, Dunaway, Hancock, & Wang, 2013; King, 2002; Peterson & Cosner, 2005; Soehner & Ryan, 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2006) conclude that the superintendent and principal positions have changed drastically over time. Individuals working in these positions find themselves working long hours in pressured filled situations. As a result, job satisfaction levels are lower for principals, and a critical shortage of candidates exists for superintendents to consider.

While teachers have a direct impact on student learning, school and district administrators are vitally important to developing and maintaining a culture of support where teachers and students can thrive. Superintendents and principals navigating through the challenges of school and district leadership optimally must focus on how to do so together if either wishes to fully impact student learning. Cudeiro (2005) clarifies that “superintendents can have a positive impact on student learning, primarily through the promotion, support and development of principals as instructional leaders” (p. 16). Developing strong relationships between superintendents and principals requires effort, patience, and time. The superintendent and principal must work together to build trust and a common vision for learning for students.
The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Kentucky principals toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. A descriptive quantitative design study was implemented with the intention of determining the perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. School principals employed in the state of Kentucky in 2017 were contacted and recruited to participate in the study. An anonymous survey with informed consent included was sent to all Kentucky principals by email in September 2017. Only those principals and superintendents that were beyond their initial year in their respective positions were asked to respond.

**Significance of the Problems**

**Principal job satisfaction and shortage.** Recruiting and retaining quality principals is a great concern in public education. The unlimited challenges are causing many to either not enter the principalship or to leave it. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) explain:

*The principalship has thus been expanded to include significant responsibilities for the instructional leadership of schools, ensuring that all children achieve to meet high standards, and that the needs of children with disabilities are met. The managerial tasks of the principals have also been expanding, as regulations, reporting requirements, and e-mail access to the principal have increased. Principals are charged with maintaining safe school environments and are spending more time coping with student behavior problems. Finally, principals are expected to respond to accountability*
measures imposed by external constituents by acting as agents of change.

(p. 43-44)

Principals in the 21st century are facing higher levels of stress than ever before, and that is helping to cause lower job satisfaction and an increasing shortage problem. Vermont’s Legislative Research Shop (as cited in DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003) reported that one in five principals retired or resigned in 2001. As a result of the increasing expectations of the position, fewer individuals are willing to enter the principalship or even work to earn certification. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran conducted a research study about the view of the principalship through current principals in Virginia and found that 84% of the principals surveyed reported a workweek of over 50 hours, making the position unattractive. Surveyed principals did not feel their salary matched the growing expectations of the position or that the new principal support systems were adequate (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran). Problems identified by principals in the study revolve around instructional leadership, organizational management, communication and professionalism, and professional development (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran).

The changing role of the principal in the increased accountability era of education has become too large for one person to manage without strong support systems in place. According to DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003):

It should be recognized that the expectations that have grown up around the principal’s role—expectations from teachers, coaches, advisers, parents,
superintendents, and school board members—have continued to grow even as policy makers have expanded the responsibilities of the role. (p. 59).

News articles by Steinberg, Tirozzi, and Ferrandino (as cited in Pounder, Galvin, & Shepherd, 2003) reported:

That 20 percent of Vermont principals had retired or resigned in the past year, 15 percent of Washington State principals had left their jobs at the end of last school year, noticeably small applicant pools were reported in Kentucky and Texas, and temporary principals were being assigned in New York City and Los Angeles schools. (p. 133)

Principals are simply overwhelmed with the sheer complexity and large demands placed upon them with limited resources and authority to lead. Higher expectations regarding communication and increasing professional responsibilities contribute to principals being overwhelmed (Drake & Roe, 1999). In addition, principals are still faced with traditional responsibilities such as ensuring a safe learning environment, maintaining discipline, and managing the budget (Murphy, 1994; Whitaker, 1998). An effective and successful 21st century principal is required to cultivate strong relationships and forge ahead in their quest to improve student achievement regardless of circumstances presented.

**Superintendent and principal partnering for success.** Principals and superintendents partnering to improve student achievement is vitally important in school districts. Individuals occupying either position are subjected to intense scrutiny, expected to lead at a high level while managing numerous responsibilities,
and held accountable for student learning results. Successfully leading from the principal or superintendent position requires excellent communication and listening skills, patience, flexibility, and perseverance. Key differences in the positions revolve around the size of the learning community being served and who evaluates each position. The superintendent is the ultimate evaluator of a principal, and a principal serves his or her school’s learning community. A superintendent leads an entire learning community and is evaluated by a board of elected members causing a higher level of politics to play a role in decision making.

Working together to improve student learning is not always an easy task for superintendents and principals. While both positions have similar expectations, the two have different challenges as well. The beginning of the superintendent and principal partnership is critically important to the overall success of the two. Groundwork must be laid early in the partnership with clear communication about expectations and unlimited support for the success of each other.

Spanneut and Ford (2008) found that “superintendents encourage and support their principals through targeted dialogue in a variety of areas, including shared leadership, teachers as leaders, and accountability for results, to investigate how to achieve changes in the way they define authority and power” (p. 31). If the time is invested in doing this, a mutually beneficial partnership is possible and student achievement will be positively affected. Superintendents and principals who focus on instructional leadership together understand that operating schools with instructional
leadership as the main focus provides enormous opportunities for students to achieve high levels of success (Spanneut & Ford).

The stakes have never been higher in public education in the 21st century due to many factors such as teacher shortages and staffing problems (Ingersoll, 2003), principal shortages (Principal shortages, 1999), increasing numbers of students living in poverty (Miller, Pavlakis, Lac, & Hoffman, 2014), frequent legislative acts (Klocko & Wells, 2015), and the increase of students from differing cultural backgrounds (Muthukrishna & Schluter, 2011). Fostering successful and mutually beneficial partnerships between superintendents and principals is essential for public education to move forward and best prepare students for the challenges awaiting them in the 21st century.

The results of this research study may impact university level superintendent and principal preparation programs and professional learning for current superintendents and principals. Aspiring school superintendents and principals must receive adequate leadership training centered on the importance of this relationship to achieve success. The two positions are connected to student achievement, and positive relationships between the two will provide stability and improve conditions for teaching and learning. Superintendents and principals face barriers on a daily basis to teaching and learning. Together, the two must remain committed to the common goal of helping all students maximize academic success.
Background of the Problem

The role superintendents and principals have on achievement has changed drastically over the years. Superintendents have continued to have the expectations of serving as an instructional leader placed upon them while increasing their role in politics and collaboration. Principals have experienced increased expectations over the years, which has changed their role in achievement as well. Principals are expected to lead instructionally as well as maintain school building management. In addition, principals have increasingly been expected to implement unfunded or underfunded legislative mandates with declining budgets. The changing roles of superintendents and principals have increased expectations and placed great importance on the leadership behaviors of both.

**Changing role of the superintendent and achievement.** The role of superintendents has expanded over the years with additional responsibilities and expectations making it nearly impossible for an individual to effectively lead a school district alone. Waters and Marzano (2006) found that “effective superintendents focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented districts” (p. 3). Superintendents face the challenge of collaborative goal-setting, setting non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction, aligning the Board in an effort to support district goals, monitoring goals for achievement and instruction, and using resources to support achievement and instruction goals (Waters & Marzano). Meeting the stated responsibilities require superintendents to invest a large amount of time in planning and communication. Superintendents face challenging and complex tasks in their efforts to raise student
achievement, managing the resources of a school district, and providing leadership to principals.

Roles and responsibilities for superintendents have evolved over the past century. “Once considered to be the instructional leader and teacher of teachers, more recently the discourse on the work of superintendents has shifted to politics and collaboration focused on excellence and educational” (Bredeson & Kose, 2007, p. 2). Bredeson and Kose point out that superintendents in a 2003 study reported allocating a greater amount of their time involved in curriculum and instruction along with data analysis, compared to a much lower number reported the same in 1994.

While the job of superintendents has changed drastically over the years with added pressure and increasing responsibilities, the fact remains that the superintendent holds all the power in leading change across the school district. Bird et al. (2013) suggest:

The intersection of what needs to be done and who is going to do it varies from school to school but in every case, the superintendency is the only job title with the positional authority to orchestrate the intentional meshing of actors and script toward future improvement. (p. 37)

Leading school improvement throughout an entire school district requires superintendents to possess and practice specific skills. Bird et al. (2013) found that “superintendent self-report levels of leader authenticity are positively related to school district use of school improvement practices” (p. 50). The research findings connect school improvement practices with four of Waters and Marzano’s (2006)
school district practices that relate with student achievement (Bird et al.).

Superintendents who practice authentic leadership engage in a goal setting process, set non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction, monitor the achievement and instructional goals, and utilize district resources to support achievement and instructional goals (Bird et al.). Effective superintendents collaboratively lead by example inspiring others to support the mission and vision of the school district.

**Changing role of the principal and achievement.** Twenty-first century principals have experienced the increased stress and challenges associated with their changing role. Over the years, individuals serving in the principalship have implemented legislative mandates with little to no training while managing a shrinking budget for resources. The sheer complexity of a principal’s job during the school day, leading students and staff in the 21st century, is large enough to cause heightened stress levels. “Like doctors, psychologists, and teachers, principals face daily tasks that are incredibly complex with multiple, interlocking social, managerial and cognitive features. From diagnosing and addressing faculty conflict or social anxiety to a literacy problem, their work involves intricate analysis” (Peterson & Cosner, 2005, p. 30). Today’s principal faces enormous daily challenges and struggles to successfully complete tasks in a timely manner. Peterson and Cosner (2005) noted:

> Principals face a high level of uncertainty each workday. Many report developing elaborate to-do lists only to be confronted with problems, issues, and immediate concerns that move such lists to the background. While the
wors
t challenges brought on by brevity, variety, fragmentation, and so forth
can be improved, they do not go away. Even the most seasoned and effective
principals face these work realities; it is the nature of the role. (p. 30)
Principal
da
t
Principals are required to provide direct and indirect leadership from the front
and behind in the 21st century. According to Stuart (1999):
Leading from the front at the district or school level creates a vision and
coherence that can and must be shared. It establishes authority and
accountability. It establishes the role of guide, facilitator, and change leader
when opportunities and needs for change arise. Leading from behind creates
confidence in the leader’s responsibility to know his or her community well.
(p. 64)
An effective principal in the 21st century has evolved from the building
manager to an instructional leader who is required to lead in a variety of ways while
managing numerous daily challenges.
Successful principals understand the importance of improving student learning
and find ways to manage the other challenges associated with the position. “A school
administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by
facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision
of learning that is shared and supported by the school community” (Fullan, 2001, p.
50). The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) adopted Education
Leadership Standards (2008) that supported the “development, articulation,
implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported
by all stakeholders” as a standard for successful educational leaders (p. 14). Strong principal leadership is essential to the improvement of student learning within a school. According to Soehner and Ryan (2011), “leadership and achievement continue to be critical coexisting variables within a diverse educational landscape that ignites intense debate and interest in those concerned” (p. 275).

Good principals have a heart for leadership and truly wish to see all students learn at high levels. Leadership behaviors exhibited by the principal have an indirect, but vital impact on student achievement at the school level (Soehner & Ryan, 2011). Nettles and Herrington (2007) identified principal leadership behaviors as “making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities, and giving praise for effective teaching” (p. 725). Effective principals are fiercely dedicated to teaching and learning, setting challenging and clear goals and monitoring the attainment of those goals. Soehner and Ryan (2011) noted:

An effective principal is an active principal, active in the sense that he or she has a reading of the school’s pulse via school environments not only regarding the academia business but the moral tone of the school for both students and staff. (p. 282)

Effective principals leading schools are vitally important to the improvement of student achievement. Principals who successfully support teaching and learning have an indirect impact on student learning.
Unfortunately, not all principals are equipped to meet the ever-increasing demands of the 21st century principalship. These principals either lack the intrinsic motivation to do whatever it takes to effectively lead or are not properly supported through their superintendent to develop the skills to effectively lead. Either situation is not optimal and can potentially have detrimental effects on student learning. “Many of us have seen what can happen to a school led by an ineffective principal: the institution falls apart, teachers give up, and students are lost to other schools” (Carpenter & Laseter, 1999, para. 1).

Ineffective principals emerge for reasons such as the job is very difficult, they are ordinary people, they have poor role models, and they have been hired for reasons other than stellar leadership ability (Carpenter & Laseter, 1999). In addition, many of these ineffective principals have received poor training, do not handle power very well, are not adequately supervised, and they do not find it important to receive feedback from subordinates (Carpenter & Laseter). These challenges create conditions in which many principals enter positions with very little chance for success. Principals are leaving the position at an alarming rate in the 21st century for reasons such as low salary, social environment, and social isolation (Wood, Finch, & Mirecki, 2013). Constant changes in leadership lead to instability in schools, which directly affects student learning in a negative way.

**Local Context**

The research study took place with principals employed at schools located in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The majority of the principals serving in Kentucky
work in rural settings with many students living in poverty. Student diversity in the state is relatively low compared to the national average. Schools located in Mayfield Independent, Paducah Independent, Covington Independent, Fayette County, Jefferson County, Fulton Independent, Paris Independent, Bowling Green Independent, Newport Independent, Christian County, Danville Independent, Owensboro Independent, Frankfort Independent, Southgate Independent, Elizabethtown Independent, Hardin County, Bardstown Independent, and Shelby County had diversity rates higher than the national average as of the 2016-17 school year (Public school review, 2017).

**Research Questions**

This research study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the leadership behaviors of Kentucky’s superintendents as perceived by their principals?

2. Do the years of experience for a Kentucky superintendent influence the 4 leadership constructs as perceived by their principals?

The research explored regarding the perceptions principals have toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents is very limited. A review of the literature confirmed this, but also showed that an abundance of research exists about each role, how it has changed over time, effects on student achievement, and the growing principal shortage in public education.
Hypothesis

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. It was hypothesized that the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership were independent of the years of experience of the leadership skills of their superintendent as perceived by principals. This was accomplished by testing five hypotheses:

Ho1: There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of trust compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Ho2: There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of support compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Ho3: There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of expectation compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Ho4: There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of leadership compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Ho5: There is no significance difference in the overall perception of the leadership skills behavior compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Definition of Terms

The following definition of terms will provide the reader with clarity and understanding about how each was used throughout the capstone.

Trust: “Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 24). Trust was determined in this capstone by the
Superintendent Understanding of Principals’ Educational Responsibilities (Roelle, 2010) instrument, which was adapted from the Leadership Practices Inventory Observer (Kouzes & Posner).

**Support:** “Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 24). Support was determined in this capstone by the Superintendent Understanding of Principals’ Educational Responsibilities (Roelle, 2010) instrument, which was adapted from the Leadership Practices Inventory Observer (Kouzes & Posner).

**Expectations:** “Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 24). Expectations was determined in this capstone by the Superintendent Understanding of Principals’ Educational Responsibilities (Roelle, 2010) instrument, which was adapted from the Leadership Practices Inventory Observer (Kouzes & Posner).

**Leadership:** “Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 24). Leadership was determined in this capstone by the Superintendent Understanding of Principals’ Educational Responsibilities (Roelle, 2010) instrument, which was adapted from the Leadership Practices Inventory Observer (Kouzes & Posner).
Summary

In the introduction, the researcher shared research and his thoughts on the increasing pressure and challenges in which principals and superintendents are exposed in the 21st century. As a result of increasing accountability measures and other pressures, the relationship between individuals holding these positions have never been more important. The superintendent and principal relationship should be a trusting partnership that is goal oriented towards the improvement of students’ learning at all costs. Research (Soehner & Ryan, 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2006) indicates that superintendents and principals have indirect effects on student learning through the teachers in their schools. Effective leadership practices create environments where teachers can fully engage students and maximize learning. Trusting partnerships between principals and superintendents have the potential to create optimal environments for servant leadership principles to be exercised and greatly improve teacher satisfaction and retention. School superintendents and principals who utilize servant leadership principles to cultivate strong and supportive relationships with their teachers are able to indirectly foster greater learning opportunities for students. “The transformational power of the servant leader and the effect that he/she has on a group of employees and colleagues to lift an organization from mediocrity to greatness is astounding” (Shaw & Newton, 2014, p. 101).

Specific servant leadership research indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between teachers’ perceived servant leadership qualities of their principal and their job satisfaction and intention to return to the same school the
following year (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Training superintendents and principals how to develop and maintain positive relationships is vitally important to the overall improvement of teaching and learning. Therefore, knowing and understanding the leadership behaviors of superintendents perceived to be highly effective by their principals has the potential to positively impact student learning.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

A review of the literature on the perceptions of principals toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents was limited. A key finding in the literature not previously realized was the significant role superintendents have in establishing and maintaining positive relationships with principals. Superintendents who establish positive relationships through the promotion, development, and support of principals are able to improve student learning (Cudeiro, 2005). Understanding the greater responsibility superintendents possess in the relationship provided guidance in the locating of questions aimed at determining the level of perceived superintendent support by principals in the research study. While the review of literature was limited, there were factors cited influencing the superintendent and principal relationship. In addition, supports for superintendents to put in place to strengthen their leadership as perceived by principals were found in the literature.

Many factors exist that influence the superintendent and principal relationship. Collaborative goal-setting, aligning resources to best serve students, and establishing defined autonomy for the principal to work with their own talents to accomplish the mission of the school district are three factors that have an influence. In addition, building trust through support, exerting leadership with a purpose, and having high expectations for all are vital factors that influence the relationship. Overall, effective
communication between the superintendent and principal is the essential element of a highly productive and positive relationship between the two.

**Factors Influencing the Superintendent and Principal Relationship**

Developing and maintaining positive and trusting relationships among superintendents and principals requires a willingness from both parties to communicate. “Foundational to any other aspect of the relationship is the creation of a trusting relationship between the superintendent and the principal” (Bjork, 1999, p. 83). The superintendent ultimately is responsible for setting the wheels in motion at the beginning of the relationship for a long, positive, and effective partnership. The study conducted by Waters and Marzano (2006) showed that a significant correlation existed between average student achievement and district leadership practices like collaborative goal setting, setting non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction, and monitoring goals for achievement and instruction. The study (Waters & Marzano) also pointed out a significant correlation with practices like using resources to support achievement and instruction goals and establishing defined autonomy between superintendents and principals. The research driven leadership practices identified by Waters and Marzano rely upon the effective use of communication by the superintendent. Effective superintendents “ensure that building-level administrators throughout the district are heavily involved in the goal-setting process since these are the individuals who, for all practical purposes, will implement articulated goals in schools” (p. 11).
Principals play a key role in the development of strong and impactful relationships with superintendents. “Effective superintendents ensure that the collaborative goal-setting process results in non-negotiable goals in at least two areas: student achievement and classroom instruction” (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 12). Principals have the responsibility of supporting these goals implicitly and explicitly in an effort to develop and improve principal leadership (Waters & Marzano).

Goal setting is a valuable part of the relationship building process between superintendents and principals. “The adults no longer are expected to go it alone, cherishing isolation and autonomy above collaboration and interdisciplinary curriculum” (Boris-Schacter, 1999, p. 1-2). Goals that are developed collaboratively with the intention of positively affecting student achievement have high potential for success and strengthen relationships. Monitoring and supporting those goals are vital to the overall potential positive impact. Instructional goals are developed and utilized to drive instruction forward and improve student learning (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Aligning school district resources to provide the best opportunities for students and professional learning for teachers and principals is a key practice for effective superintendents to utilize when building relationships with principals.

Effective communication between the principal and superintendent regarding professional development opportunities must be meaningful (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Superintendents who practice the stated methods of communication with principals establish defined autonomy. Waters and Marzano defined the phrase “defined autonomy” as “the expectation and support to lead within the boundaries
defined by the district goals” (p. 13). Principals working in positive relationships with their superintendents are more likely to have defined autonomy, which research (Waters & Marzano) demonstrates has a positive effect on student achievement.

With any relationship, the ability of both parties to effectively communicate with each other plays an important role. The superintendent and principal relationship is complex, and communication is essential to setting and monitoring goals with sufficient resources. Building trust between the two is critical to the development of defined autonomy which empowers principals to implement and meet district goals in their own way. Establishing trust between the two positions requires each to do their part. According to Rottenborn (1999):

For the superintendent to trust the principal, he or she must believe a number of things about the principal. Superintendents must feel that principals will support them, not try to undermine their authority, undercut them, or ‘make them look bad.’ If the superintendent cannot feel this way, a productive relationship will likely be impossible. From their perspective, principals must be convinced that the superintendent will be candid with them, will stand behind them, and simply, will respect them as the building leader. (p. 53-54)

Developing trust between superintendents and principals is essential to forming a positive and productive relationship.

The environment of schools consistently evolve over time due to changing conditions. Jones (1999) noted:
New requirements for graduates entering higher education and the workplace, a plethora of state and federal mandates, reduced local control, an increasing diversity and number of students with special learning needs, greater parent involvement, and increased fiscal constraints, to name a few examples, mean that the environment of schools is constantly changing in both perception and in deed. (p. 8-9)

The superintendent and principal’s relationship begins the first time the two individuals meet where assumptions about one another are made. “A change in organizational leadership is a ‘golden moment’ that provides unique opportunity for the school district to pause and take stock of itself” (Jones, 1999, p. 11). Spending time sharing thoughts on teaching and learning, discussing expectations, and mutually agreeing upon goals are relationship building blocks. Superintendents must initiate and maintain the necessary work required to establish strong, trusting, and positive relationships with principals. To demonstrate his or her willingness to build productive relationships, superintendents must be willing to guide meetings in a manner that encourages principals to explore innovation in teaching and learning and remain aware of concerns moving forward (Jones).

The type of relationship established between superintendents and principals affect their quality of life as well. Both positions are important and dependent upon the other. “There is no recipe for establishing and maintaining a positive, productive relationship between principal and superintendent” (Shivers, 1999, p. 44). However, factors exist that directly affect the quality of the relationship.
Trust is the first factor that directly affects superintendent and principal relationships. According to Shivers (1999), “with mutual trust, the relationship will be as productive as talent and circumstances allow; without trust, wariness and distrust fester and contaminate virtually every aspect of the relationship” (p. 44).

Loyalty and trust are important elements of trust building between superintendents and principals (Shivers, 1999). “Loyalty and support include stating misgivings about a proposal privately and then, once a decision has been made, voicing support (or saying nothing) publicly” (Shivers, p. 45).

The general metaphor of the district is another factor influencing the relationship between principals and superintendents. “The superintendent is responsible for framing and communicating the purpose of the district” (Shivers, 1999, p. 45). No matter the situation, the superintendent and principal must work in harmony with each other to promote learning for all.

Self-confidence is the third factor that impacts the relationship between superintendents and principals. Shivers (1999) states “each administrator must have the confidence, the capacity, and the willingness to deflect credit for success and to embrace responsibility for failure” (p. 45). Individuals holding either position must display confidence in their abilities in order to advance the relationship.

An additional factor affecting the relationship between superintendents and principals is the level of competence each possesses and how each perceives that level of competence in the other. Successful school districts have superintendents and principals working as partners using each other’s strengths to positively affect
teaching and learning. “When one can call on the expertise of the other with confidence, both become sharper in their jobs” (Shivers, 1999, p. 46).

Age and aspirations of principals and superintendents are another factor Shivers (1999) explains as affecting relationships. Shivers explains “the age and aspirations of both parties affect the length of their relationship and the depth of their relationship” (p. 46).

District size is a determining factor affecting relationships between the two as well. Superintendents working in smaller districts are able to allocate more time for their principals (Shivers, 1999). “In large districts, face-to-face, informal encounters are usually less common; consequently, regularly scheduled, formal meetings are more important to the nurture of principal-superintendent relations” (Shivers, p. 47).

The size of the district being served plays a large part in determining how much time is spent working together and building a positive relationship.

Differences in gender, ethnicity, race, class, and religion are also factors influencing superintendent and principal relationships (Shivers, 1999). Individuals with different backgrounds or from other cultures can experience discriminatory practices from others, and this can affect the types of relationships superintendents and principals develop.

The superintendency and principalship are complex, challenging, and very stressful positions that different factors influence. Individuals working in these positions are asked to complete a wide range of tasks and fill many roles within the
learning community. Working together in harmony is essential to the school and district’s effectiveness and their own satisfaction.

**Supports for Principals Strengthening Relationships**

Relationships between superintendents and principals can become very strained if proper supports are not in place. Over the years, inadequate support programs for new school principals have left many struggling to successfully lead teaching and learning in schools. As a result, many superintendents are forced to utilize strong language in evaluations and corrective action plans in an attempt to remedy difficult situations. “Another familiar side to the superintendent-principal relationship concerns supervision and evaluation” (Naso, 1999, p. 20). One can argue that this dynamic serves as a major detriment to the development of positive and trusting relationships between principals and superintendents.

New principal induction programs have been in place for many years, and some are more effective than others. In reality, new school principals need intense coaching during the early part of their tenures to ensure success. However, providing intense coaching to every new principal in a state is not cost efficient. A Washington state study (Lochmiller, 2014) found that providing a mentor to every new school principal hired in the state of Washington would result in an estimated cost between $153,000 and $845,000 annually. Since bearing these kinds of costs is not feasible, Lochmiller proposed providing coaching to support all new principals in high poverty schools, and the costs would be $143,975.
Superintendents are challenged with the task of providing new administrators effective professional coaching opportunities in spite of financial restraints in order to develop strong trusting relationships in the beginning. Augustine-Shaw (2015) explains:

New principals are faced with significant role-and-responsibility transitions and high expectations for performance by many stakeholder groups. Supporting this transition and building confidence in the multifaceted decisions encountered by first-year principals must be a primary goal of mentoring-and-induction programs. (p. 29)

Some school districts are participating in programs like the one created by the Building Leader Mentoring and Induction Task Force in Kansas to ensure new principals obtain support. The Kansas model (Augustine-Shaw, 2015) provided school level mentoring and networking opportunities for new principals aimed at ensuring successful transitions of leadership.

Superintendents who realize the vital importance of providing new principals exceptional professional learning opportunities like the ones mentioned or the School University Research Network (SURN) Principal Academy in Virginia are focused on building positive relationships that will impact student learning. The SURN Principal Academy is a two-year program for new principals in Virginia that provides professional learning, mentoring, and coaching for new principals (Hindman, Rozzelle, Ball, & Fahey, 2015). The principles of the academy are based off of the

Frequent and regular communication contributes heavily to a feeling of trust between the two positions. “Small-group meetings generally allow more interchange between the assistant superintendent and the individual principals. This facilitates the process of the assistant superintendent gaining a better understanding of each principal’s opinions and thoughts” (Yingst, 1999, p. 29). Opening up lines of communication between superintendents and principals allows each to better understand the other’s needs in the relationship. Yingst points out:

> Communication is further enhanced by individual or one-on-one communication. This communication takes the form of formal regularly scheduled conferences to discuss individual goals as well as school and district issues. These meetings can do much to lead the principal if the participants are able to be open and honest about the issues at hand. (p. 29)

An investment of time must take place by the individuals occupying these positions to openly and honestly discuss goals and needs. Doing this will allow proper supports to be put in place, and positive relationships will be established.

**Effects of Positive Relationships on Student Achievement**

Instructional leaders working together with the success of students in mind are critically important to school districts reaching their goals (Stuart, 1999). Strong superintendent and principal relationships centered on support provides school districts with the potential to positively affect student achievement. Research about
the impact of district level supports and, in particular, partnerships with principals on student achievement have been limited until recent years. A recent study conducted by Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, and Newton (as cited in Mombourquette & Bedard, 2014) found that learning focused partnerships with school principals, central office-principal partnerships, and central office support for these partnerships were key elements of school district transformation.

Principals partnering with central office positions is a direct indicator of the type of relationship established with their superintendents. “Increasingly, principals and superintendents acknowledge a need to pool their information and ideas, and to trust each other’s judgment, in order to survive” (Schwinden, 1999, p. 36). Superintendents and principals who engage in collaboration open doors of partnership opportunity, which has the potential to advance student achievement.

In Mombourquette and Bedard’s study (2014), they found that “collaboration between school and school district leaders in the development of goals and priorities also led to what could be construed as a ‘shared sense of purpose’ within the districts” (p. 65). Principals desire to be a part of the team and wish to have a voice at the table when goals are developed and decisions are made. “For principals, flexibility also meant their voices being heard in the ongoing conversation about maximising student learning and how to best achieve it” (Mombourquette & Bedard, 2014, p. 66). Districts in the Mombourquette and Bedard study increased their use of student data to make collaborative instructional decisions with principals, and the evidence gathered indicated increased student achievement.
Another study conducted by Bedard and Mombourquette (2015) found that “district office staff facilitated the principals’ use of evidence and this promoted the evidence skill base of district staff as well” (p. 239). Strong relationships between superintendents and principals are the necessary links in the chain of cooperation and collaboration between district office staff and principals.

Teacher perceptions of the superintendent and principal relationship have the potential to positively or negatively impact student learning in a school. A case study (Glascock & Taylor, 2001) explores the effects of hierarchical independence and influence utilized by two school principals and the student learning results for each in their schools. Hierarchical influence is described by Hoy and Miskel (as cited in Glascock & Taylor) “as the ability of the principal to gain positive benefits for the school from the superintendent” (p. 2). Exercising hierarchical influence can be very difficult for principals due to the balancing they must keep in mind between serving the differing needs of superintendents and teachers.

Teachers have frequent opportunities to observe their principal’s use of hierarchical independence and influence daily (Glascock & Taylor, 2001). In the study, Glascock and Taylor explore teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s hierarchical independence and influence and their perceptions of school climate. The results of the school called Greenbriar in the study indicate that teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s hierarchical independence and influence were low. Very little was known about their principal’s relationship with the superintendent, and the common goal of the school was to maintain order and smooth operations (Glascock & Taylor).
The second school in the study was called Waterfall, and the results of the study were very different. “Waterfall teachers view their principal’s relationship with the superintendent as dynamic, personal, and professional” (Glascock & Taylor, 2001, p. 17). The principal’s relationship with the superintendent was thought to be one of the primary reasons for the school’s success and positive school culture (Glascock & Taylor). Positive principal and superintendent relationships communicate a message of unity and are an essential element for improved student achievement.

Leading school achievement is no easy task. As a result of the challenges and difficult decisions, superintendents and principals often have very strained relationships. Positive and strong relationships between superintendents and principals do affect student learning gains (Cudeiro, 2005). A study conducted by Cudeiro found that “superintendents can have a positive impact on student learning, primarily through the promotion, support, and development of principals as instructional leaders” (p. 16).

Promoting principals’ roles as instructional leaders is critically important for the relationship and sets clear expectations for what is a priority for the district. Cudeiro (2005) states “the superintendents held principals accountable for being instructional leaders” (p. 16). Supporting principals is also essential for superintendents wishing to build positive relations and affect teaching and learning. The study (Cudeiro) found that:
The assistant superintendents or deputies visited schools and met with principals often to discuss the progress each school was making in meeting student achievement goals, to problem solve obstacles that prevented principals from exercising their instructional leadership and to monitor the implementation of promising instructional practices. (p. 17)

Developing principals is another key part of the superintendent and principal relationship. According to Cudeiro (2005), “even effective principals do not have all of the expertise necessary to ensure every student is achieving at a high level” (p. 18). Encouraging principals to see themselves as continuous learners is imperative for superintendents to develop principals’ instructional leadership skills. Not surprisingly, superintendents observed in Cudeiro’s study led districts with advancing student achievement.

**Exemplary Leadership Practices**

Leadership practices can be practiced by everyone in society if desired. One of the most common misconceptions is that some in our society are leaders and some are not. Everyone has the potential to exert leadership in their daily lives. Kouzes and Posner (2017) believe that “when making extraordinary things happen in organizations, leaders engage in what we call The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership” (p. 12). These leadership practices are model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Modeling the way is a critically important leadership practice to exhibit. “Exemplary leaders know that if they want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they
must be models of the behavior they expect of others” (Kouzes & Posner, p. 14).

Inspiring a shared vision is an essential leadership practice. Kouzes and Posner point out that “you can’t command commitment; you have to inspire it” (p. 15).

Challenge the process is another exemplary leadership practice. Strong leaders seek out new opportunities to experiment and improve the work of their respective organizations. “Not one person achieved a personal best by keeping things the same” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 16). Expectations for greatness remain high for leaders who challenge the process. Enabling others to act is a leadership practice that builds trust. According to Kouzes and Posner, “Achieving greatness requires a team effort. It requires solid trust and enduring relationships” (p. 17). Encourage the heart is an exemplary leadership practice that requires showing support for those being led. Demonstrating appreciation for the contributions of people and developing a celebratory culture within the organization are highly supportive and truly encourages the heart (Kouzes & Posner).

Conclusions

The review of literature on the perceptions of principals toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents points out the impact that trust, support, expectations, and leadership has on the relationship. Shivers (1999) describes seven factors affecting the relationship between superintendents and principals in his work. He also points out a special factor that he encountered while working with a superintendent called close friendship. According to Shivers, “when the superintendent and principal are life-long friends, their friendship becomes the most important factor to be
considered in their professional relationship” (p. 48). By reviewing specific literature relating to superintendent and principal relationships, the researcher developed a clear idea of the type of survey questions to investigate the perceptions of principals toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This study examined the perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents. The research project used a descriptive quantitative research methods approach to determine the perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents. Current principals in the state of Kentucky who have worked with their superintendent for a minimum of one year were recruited to participate in the study. Quantitative statistical results from an anonymous survey were utilized to determine these perceptions. “Survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2014, p. 13).

Research Design

A descriptive research design was utilized to examine the perceptions of Kentucky principals toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents. Leadership behaviors of superintendents were analyzed to determine the perceptions of Kentucky principals. The descriptive design allowed an investigator to report the perceptions of the responding principals regarding the leadership skills of their superintendent (Creswell, 2014). An online survey provided quantitative data related to the scholarly researched constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership that contribute to the perceptions Kentucky principals have toward superintendent leadership behaviors. The research design served this investigation well by allowing the variables of the
study to determine what perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents.

**Subjects and sampling.** This study focused on the perception of principals about the leadership behaviors exhibited by their superintendents. Superintendents’ willingness to model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart influences their ability to develop trust, provide support, set high expectations, and exert leadership with principals. Rising expectations for Kentucky principals in recent years have increased stress and barriers principals face on a daily basis. Therefore, the leadership behaviors of Kentucky superintendents is vitally important to the overall success of their principals.

Superintendents in the state of Kentucky were contacted via email requesting permission to contact district principals two weeks prior to the study beginning. A copy of an email sent to all Kentucky superintendents requesting permission to survey their principals is provided in Appendix A. A follow up email was sent one week later providing another opportunity for superintendents to provide permission. All superintendents granted permission for the research study to take place in their school district either by responding or not responding to the email.

The participants for this study consisted of principals employed in Kentucky during the fall semester of 2017. In 2016, there were 1,252 school principals working in 173 school districts in the state of Kentucky. The participants were identified and contacted via email utilizing the state’s principal group distribution list with an explanation of the study and an online link to the survey which contained an informed
consent form. A copy of the email sent to all Kentucky principals is located in Appendix B.

Principals were contacted via email three weeks later with the online link to the survey and informed consent form inviting participation. Another invitation to participate was sent to principals three weeks after the first reminder.

Eligible participants were those individuals that had worked at least one year as a principal under the current superintendent. This would ensure that the individual had sufficient time to establish a working relationship with the superintendent. Strict confidentiality terms were assured to all research study participants, and permission for the study was granted by Morehead State University’s Institutional Review Board.

**Instrumentation.** The purpose of this research was to determine Kentucky principals’ perceptions of the leadership behaviors exhibited by their superintendents. The specific research questions for the capstone were:

1. What are the leadership behaviors of Kentucky’s superintendents as perceived by their principals?
2. Do the years of experience for a Kentucky superintendent influence the 4 leadership constructs as perceived by their principals?

Four research hypotheses addressed research question two. Those hypotheses were:

Ho1: There is no significance difference in the perceptions as related to the construct of trust compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.
Ho2: There is no significance difference in the perceptions as related to the construct of support compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Ho3: There is no significance difference in the perceptions as related to the construct of expectation compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Ho4: There is no significance difference in the perceptions as related to the construct of leadership compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Ho5: There is no significance difference in the overall perception of the leadership skills behavior compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

The research data were obtained by participants’ responding to questions from a survey modified by Roelle (2010), which he adapted from the Leadership Practices Inventory originally developed by Kouzes and Posner (2003). The survey consisted of 30 statements centered on Kouzes and Posner’s (2017) leadership practices of model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, encourage the heart, and enable others to act. Respondents were provided a rating scale for each statement that spanned from almost never to almost always. Each respondent was asked to choose the choice that best applies to each statement. A copy of the survey utilized is contained in Appendix C. Quantitative statistical data from the research participants were grouped into the constructs of trust (enable others to act), support (encourage the
heart), expectations (challenge the process), and leadership (inspire a shared vision and model the way).

Kouzes and Posner (2017) found that the Leadership Practices Inventory was valid and reliable. Posner used Cronbach’s alpha to demonstrate a coefficient range from .84 to .92 for each of the categories and good internal reliability at level .70 and above (Roelle, 2010). “Validity was tested and confirmed using face validity as well as factor analysis of each item (Roelle, p. 60).

Posner (2017) tested internal validity by designing an impact scale with a variety of items and found that each had a significant correlation with the five practices of exemplary leadership (Roelle, 2010). A variety of characteristics were used to determine if there were significant variances among the impact of the five practices and demographics. The variables of age, country location, education, ethnicity, gender, function, hierarchical level, industry, length of time with their organization, and organization size were used for each of the practices, and no significant differences were found.

**Procedures**

The Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) modified by Roelle (2010) was used to survey perception data from practicing school principals in Kentucky regarding their beliefs toward the leadership behaviors of their district’s superintendent. The survey was made available to principals online through Google Forms. A link was embedded in the email sent to all principals in Kentucky which contained an introduction and description of the study along with a request for the
principal’s participation in the survey. The criteria for a participant’s inclusion in the survey was to have served at a minimum of one year as a Kentucky principal with the same superintendent. The survey responses were utilized to describe the perceptions of Kentucky principals toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents according to Kouzes and Posner’s (2017) leadership practices.

Variables

This study examined four constructs to acquire a full understanding of the perceptions of Kentucky principals toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents. Those constructs were trust (enable others to act), support (encourage the heart), expectations (challenge the process), and leadership (inspire a shared vision and model the way). School principals responded to the survey statements that related to each of the constructs in the online survey.

Independent variables. The independent variables in this study were the demographical data of the principals, schools, and districts. Principals provided information on their background, experience in education, gender, race, and age in the modified survey. Information was provided regarding the school and district size, student population, and the number of years worked as a principal with their current superintendent.

Intervening variables. The intervening variables of this study were the leadership behaviors of superintendents as perceived by the research participants. The research study participants evaluated their superintendent on the degree in which trust, support, expectations, and leadership behaviors were exhibited.
**Trust.** Establishing trust for leaders is vitally important to their ability to effectively lead. High performing leaders develop and nurture environments where change is possible by maintaining trust with all stakeholders. The six survey items related to trust were:

1. Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.
2. Actively listens to diverse points of view.
3. Treats others with dignity and respect.
4. Supports the decisions that people make on their own.
5. Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.
6. Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.

**Support.** Providing unlimited support to the people in an organization is an effective practice in which leaders engage. This type of leader continually supports people and encourages high performing behaviors. Establishing personal relationships with people in the organization by displaying care, compassion, dedication, and understanding increases support levels. The six survey items examined the perception of support:

1. Praises people for a job well done.
2. Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.
3. Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.

4. Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.

5. Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments

6. Gives members of the team a lot of appreciation and support for their contributions.

**Expectations.** Leaders place high expectations on themselves and others. As a result, they do not fear taking chances and even failing at times in an effort to motivate and inspire positive change within organizations. The construct of expectations was measured through the following six survey items:

1. Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.

2. Challenges people to try new and innovative ways to do their work.

3. Searches outside formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.

4. Asks “What can we learn?” when things don’t go as expected.

5. Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.

6. Experiments and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.
Leadership. Practicing strong leadership characteristics is essential for the success of leaders. Leaders must lead by example by modeling what they expect others to do while remaining fiercely committed to their values. Leaders must also be able to motivate and inspire others to meet organizational goals and strive for greatness. Twelve survey items provided an indication of the leadership behavior of the superintendent:

1. Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.
2. Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.
3. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.
4. Spends time and energy making certain that the people that he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.
5. Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.
6. Follows through on promises and commitments that he/she makes.
7. Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting a common vision.
8. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people’s performance.
9. Paints the “big picture” of what we aspire to accomplish.
10. Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.
11. Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose for our work.
12. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.

**Dependent variables.** The dependent variables in this research study were the leadership behaviors of superintendents as perceived by Kentucky principals. A descriptive analysis was utilized to summarize the perceptions Kentucky principals had toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents.

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic data obtained from the responding principals. In addition, information related to the years of experience of the superintendent was used for further analysis.

The research study participants completed a Likert-type scale confidential survey with statements developed and organized around the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership. Responses to each of the statements were assigned a point value for calculation purposes of mean and standard deviation. Individual means and standard deviations were calculated for each statement along with each overall construct category.

To examine the second research question, five hypotheses were tested using a one-way ANOVA at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses tested were:

**Ho1:** There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of trust compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

**Ho2:** There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of support compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.
Ho3: There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of expectation compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Ho4: There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of leadership compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Ho5: There is no significance difference in the overall perception of the leadership skills behavior compared to the years of experience of the superintendent.

Post-hoc analysis were completed using Tukey HSD for those ANOVA that reported results that would support the rejection of the null hypothesis. This allowed for the comparison of various pairings for the years of experience to determine which pair(s) contributed to the significance F-ratio.
Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of Kentucky principals regarding the leadership behaviors of superintendents. This chapter provides the results of the research data collected from current Kentucky principals employed in those positions during the 2017-18 school year for a minimum of one year with their current superintendent. Data were collected using a statewide Kentucky principal listserv maintained by the Kentucky Department of Education. Research study participants responded to questions from a survey modified by Roelle (2010), which was adapted from the Leadership Practices Inventory originally developed by Kouzes and Posner (2003). The survey consisted of 30 statements centered on Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices of model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, encourage the heart, and enable others to act.

The research questions for the study were:

1. What are the leadership behaviors of Kentucky’s superintendents as perceived by their principals?
2. Do the years of experience for a Kentucky superintendent influence the 4 leadership constructs as perceived by their principals?

Participants

Of the 224 participants, 51.7% were male and 46.4% were female. The largest age group was between the ages of 40-49, with 51.7% of the total participants. Sixty-one percent of the participants had served 2 to 5 years as a principal and 49.1% of the
participants reported that their superintendent had served in that capacity for 2-5 years. Forty-nine percent of the participants reported that their superintendent had served 2 to 5 years in the role and 41.1% reported there being 4 to 8 schools in their district. Most of the participants worked as principals in traditional elementary schools (39.7%), middle schools (17.4%), and high schools (28.1%). The majority of participants were principals serving in rural school districts making over half the respondents at 67.4%. (See Table 1)

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Principals (n=224)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 +</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Years as Principal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 +</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.07%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

**Demographic Characteristics of Principals (n=224)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years Current Superintendent Served</th>
<th>Number of Principals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Schools in District</th>
<th>Number of Principals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18+</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Number of Principals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Level Assignment</th>
<th>Number of Principals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Setting</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career and Technical Center</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool &amp; Kindergarten</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Survey Responses**

Principals responded on a 10-point Likert-type scale survey (1 = Almost Never and 10 = Almost Always) questioning them about the level of frequency their superintendent exhibits leadership behaviors with each of the survey statements. The mean scores for each statement suggest a moderate to strong frequency of leadership behaviors exhibited by superintendents within the survey statements.

The majority of principals appear to agree on the moderate to strong level of leadership behaviors being exhibited frequently on many of the survey statements by their superintendents as indicated by the high means and standard deviation. Specifically, ‘Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others’ had a mean of 8.054 and a standard deviation of 2.155, which suggests that many of the principals felt their superintendent sets a personal example for what is expected.

The survey statement ‘Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people’s performance’ had different results with a mean of 6.183 (SD 3.040). This value suggests that not as many principals perceived their superintendent sought feedback about how their actions affected other people.

The survey data provided new information on the perceptions of principals toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. The overall responses to the following statements were high compared to the other mean and standard deviation values of the other items in the survey. ‘Treats others with dignity and respect’, mean score 8.027 (SD 2.609) and a 70.54% rate of “strong.” ‘Praises people for a job well done’, mean score 7.732 (SD 2.429) and a 66.52% rate of “strong.” ‘Sets a personal
example of what he/she expects of others’, mean score of 8.054 (SD 2.155) and a
68.16% rate of “strong.” ‘Talks about future trends that will influence how our work
gets done’, mean score 7.933 (SD 2.209) and a 67.86% rate of “strong.” ‘Speaks with
genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work’, had a mean
score 7.969 (SD 2.461) with a 68.16% rate of “strong.”

Analysis of Survey Constructs

Principals responded to the survey items that questioned them about the level
of frequency their superintendent exhibits leadership behaviors with each of the
survey statements. The survey statements were assigned to the constructs of trust,
support, expectations, and leadership. As presented in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5, the mean
score, standard deviation, and the percent of a rating of 8 to 10 for each statement
suggests a high frequency of leadership behaviors being exhibited by superintendents
within the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership.

Trust. Respondents to the survey rated their superintendent on 6 statements
that fell under the construct of trust. The statement, ‘Treats others with dignity and
respect’ received the highest rating with a mean of 8.027 (SD = 2.609). Slightly over
70% of the respondents gave their superintendent a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on this item.
For the statement, ‘Actively listens to diverse points of view’ respondents gave the
lowest rating with a mean of 7.161 (SD = 2.764). Of the 223 respondents on this
statement, 124 (55.61%) gave the superintendent a rating of 8, 9, or 10. Overall, the
construct of trust had a mean rating of 7.510 (SD = 2.625) with 54.91% of the
respondents assigning a rating of 8, 9, or 10 to their superintendent.
Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of Trust (n=224)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>High Occurrence (%)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops cooperative relationships among the people that he/she works with.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.696 (2.546)</td>
<td>143 (63.84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively listens to diverse points of views.</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7.161 (2.764)</td>
<td>124 (55.61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treats others with dignity and respect.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>8.027 (2.609)</td>
<td>158 (70.54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports the decision that people make on their own.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.375 (2.587)</td>
<td>132 (58.93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.469 (2.612)</td>
<td>141 (62.95%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7.327 (2.567)</td>
<td>127 (56.95%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Trust</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.510 (2.625)</td>
<td>123 (54.91%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Number of respondents who gave a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on the statement.

**Support.** Respondents to the survey rated their superintendent on 6 statements that fell under the construct of support. The statement, ‘*Praises people for a job well done*’ received the highest rating with a mean of 7.732 (SD = 2.429).

Almost 67% of the respondents gave their superintendent a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on this item. For the statement, ‘*Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects*’, respondents gave the lowest rating with a mean of 6.848 (SD = 2.589). Of the 224 respondents on this statement, 108
(48.21%) gave the superintendent a rating of 8, 9, or 10. Overall, the concept of support had a mean rating of 7.313 (SD = 2.615) with 48.66% of the respondents assigning a rating of 8, 9, or 10 to their superintendent.

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of Support (n=224)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>High Occurrence (%)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praises people for a job well done.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.732 (2.429)</td>
<td>149 (66.52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.313 (2.702)</td>
<td>131 (58.48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>6.848 (2.589)</td>
<td>108 (48.21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.576 (2.575)</td>
<td>146 (65.18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.179 (2.584)</td>
<td>124 (55.36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives members of the team a lot of appreciation and support for their contributions.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.228 (2.738)</td>
<td>130 (58.04%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Support</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.313 (2.615)</td>
<td>109 (48.66%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Number of respondents who gave a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on the statement.

Expectations. Respondents to the survey rated their superintendent on 6 statements that fell under the construct of expectations. The statement, ‘Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve
what we do’ received the highest rating with a mean of 7.632 (SD = 2.440). Just under 61% of the respondents gave their superintendent a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on this item. For the statement, ‘Asks “What can we learn?” when things don’t go as expected’, respondents gave the lowest rating with a mean of 7.027 (SD = 2.788). Of the 223 respondents on this statement, 122 (54.71%) gave the superintendent a rating of 8, 9, or 10. Overall, the concept of expectations had a mean rating of 7.359 (SD = 2.528) with 50.45% of the respondents assigning a rating of 8, 9, or 10 to their superintendent.
Table 4

Descriptive Analysis of Expectations (n=224)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>High Occurrence (%)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPECTATIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.411 (2.466)</td>
<td>133 (59.38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7.570 (2.481)</td>
<td>138 (61.88%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7.632 (2.440)</td>
<td>136 (60.99%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks &quot;What can we learn?&quot; when things don't go as expected.</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7.027 (2.788)</td>
<td>122 (54.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.393 (2.397)</td>
<td>129 (57.59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiments and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.125 (2.550)</td>
<td>116 (51.79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Expectations</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.359 (2.528)</td>
<td>113 (50.45%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Number of respondents who gave a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on the statement.

Leadership. Respondents to the survey rated their superintendent on 12 statements that fell under the construct of leadership. The statement, ‘Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others’ received the highest rating with a mean of 8.054 (SD = 2.155). A little over 68% of the respondents gave their superintendent a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on this item. For the statement, ‘Asks for feedback on how his/her
actions affect other people’s performance’, respondents gave the lowest rating with a mean of 6.183 (SD = 3.040). Of the 224 respondents on this statement, 92 (41.07%) gave the superintendent a rating of 8, 9, or 10. Overall, the concept of leadership had a mean rating of 7.576 (SD = 2.493) with 53.13% of the respondents assigning a rating of 8, 9, or 10 to their superintendent.

Table 5

Descriptive Analysis of Leadership (n=224)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>High Occurrence (%)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEADERSHIP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>8.054 (2.155)</td>
<td>152 (68.16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.933 (2.209)</td>
<td>152 (67.86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spends time and energy making certain that the people that he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.826 (2.069)</td>
<td>148 (66.07%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7.587 (2.438)</td>
<td>136 (60.99%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows through on promises and commitments that he/she makes.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.879 (2.316)</td>
<td>151 (67.41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.527 (2.500)</td>
<td>127 (56.70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people’s performance.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>6.183 (3.040)</td>
<td>92 (41.07%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kouzes and Posner (2017) believe that leaders engage in The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership when ensuring great things take place in their organizations. All 5 statements embody their research and contain information regarding The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. The research data supports the work of Kouzes and Posner regarding the frequency of these leadership practices being exhibited by school district superintendents within the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership.

Each of the survey statements provided an indication of how Kentucky principals perceived the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. The data gathered were evidence that principals in Kentucky know and understand the exemplary leadership practices of their superintendents. The low standard deviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>High Occurrence (%)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting a common vision.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.076 (2.579)</td>
<td>117 (52.23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.429 (2.540)</td>
<td>132 (58.93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paints the &quot;big picture&quot; of what we aspire to accomplish.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.638 (2.558)</td>
<td>139 (62.05%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.817 (2.369)</td>
<td>145 (64.73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7.969 (2.461)</td>
<td>152 (68.16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Leadership</strong></td>
<td><strong>224</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.576 (2.493)</strong></td>
<td><strong>119 (53.13%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Number of respondents who gave a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on the statement.
values provide evidence that the principals in the sample share similar thoughts on each survey statement. The “strong” rating demonstrated that just over half (averaging a 51.79%) of the principals perceived that their superintendents exhibited strong skills on average for the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership. This is a lower percentage than expected considering that it was required that each principal have worked with their current superintendent for a minimum of one year prior to responding to the survey. The data supports the use of exemplary leadership practices by superintendents (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Waters & Marzano, 2006; Boris-Schacter, 1999).

**Impact of Years of Experience on Leadership**

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if the years of experience as a Kentucky superintendent had an effect on the perception of principal as measured by the four leadership constructs. The independent variable represented the four different superintendent experience groups: 1 year, 2 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and 11 or more years. The dependent variable was the superintendents’ rated score by principals on a survey. An alpha level of .05 was used for all analyses.

**Trust.** Table 6 provides a breakdown by years of experience of the superintendent of the mean score for the construct of trust. As revealed, principals gave superintendents with a single year of experience the higher rating on the 6 statements falling under the category of trust (M = 8.7447, SD = 1.3422). Superintendents with 6 to 10 years of experience received the lowest score on trust (M = 7.1784, SD = 2.4760).
Based upon the results of the ANOVA, the rejection of the null hypothesis

$$H_01: \text{There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of trust}$$

compared to the years of experience of the superintendent, was warranted. There was a significant effect on the construct of trust as perceived by principals based on the years of Kentucky superintendent experience at the $$p < .05$$ level for the three conditions, $$F(3, 220) = 4.073, p = 0.008$$ (see Table 7).

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>64.163</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.388</td>
<td>4.073</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1155.158</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>5.251</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1219.320</td>
<td>223</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further examination was carried out by using Tukey HSD analysis to determine which pair of conditions were individually significant. As presented in Table 8, there was a significant difference between the perception for trust of
superintendents with one year of experience compared to those superintendents with 2 to 5 years and 6 to 10 years of experience.

Table 8
Post Hoc Table for Trust - Difference in Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2-5 Years</th>
<th>6-10 Years</th>
<th>11 + Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>1.4275*</td>
<td>1.5694*</td>
<td>1.3869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 Years</td>
<td>.1418</td>
<td>.0041</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td>.1825</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant at the .05 level

Support. Table 9 provides a breakdown by years of experience of the superintendent of the mean score for the construct of support. As indicated, principals gave superintendents with a single year of experience a higher rating on the 6 statements falling under the category of support (M = 8.8806, SD = 1.1634).

Superintendents with 6 to 10 years of experience received the lowest score on support (M = 6.9211, SD = 2.6196).

Table 9
Construct of Support – Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.8806</td>
<td>1.1634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 5 Years</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>7.0864</td>
<td>2.3761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 Years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6.9211</td>
<td>2.6196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+ Years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.9579</td>
<td>2.6829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.3124</td>
<td>2.4151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second null hypothesis, Ho2: *There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of support compared to the years of experience of the superintendent*, was examined with the ANOVA. The results indicated that a significant effect existed on the construct of support as perceived by principals based on the years of Kentucky superintendent experience at the $p < .05$ level for the 3 conditions, $F(3,220) = 6.315$, $p = 0.000$ (see Table 10). The rejection of the null hypothesis was warranted at the 0.05 level.

Table 10

*Analysis of Variance of Support Construct*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>103.128</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34.376</td>
<td>6.315</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1197.541</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>5.443</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1300.669</td>
<td>223</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further examination was carried out by using Tukey HSD analysis to determine which pair of conditions were individually significant. As presented in Table 11, there was a significant difference between the perception for support of superintendents with 1 year of experience compared to those superintendents with 2 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and 11+ years of experience.
Table 11

Post Hoc Table for Support - Difference in Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2-5 Years</th>
<th>6-10 Years</th>
<th>11+ Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>1.7942*</td>
<td>1.9595*</td>
<td>1.9227*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td>.1653</td>
<td>.1284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.0368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant at the .05 level

Expectations. Table 12 provides a breakdown by years of experience of the superintendent of the mean score for the construct of expectations. As revealed, principals gave superintendents with a single year of experience a higher rating on the 6 statements falling under the category of expectations (M = 8.3660, SD = 1.6938).

Superintendents with 11+ years of experience received the lowest score on expectations (M = 7.0004, SD = 2.5999).

Table 12

Construct of Expectations – Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.3660</td>
<td>1.6938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 5 Years</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>7.2260</td>
<td>2.1653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 Years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7.1396</td>
<td>2.5982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+ Years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.0004</td>
<td>2.5999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.3588</td>
<td>2.2923</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the analysis using the one-way ANOVA, the construct of expectations as perceived by principals based on the years of Kentucky superintendent experience was significant at the p < .05 level for the 3 conditions,
F(3, 220) = 2.805, p = 0.041 had a significant effect (see Table 13). The rejection of the null hypothesis, Ho3: *There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the construct of expectation compared to the years of experience of the superintendent*, was warranted.

Table 13

*Analysis of Variance of Expectations Construct*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>43.170</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.390</td>
<td>2.805</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1128.596</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>5.130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1171.766</td>
<td>223</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further examination was carried out by using Tukey HSD analysis to determine which pair of conditions were individually significant. As presented in Table 14, there was a significant difference between the perceptions for expectations of superintendents with 1 year of experience compared to those superintendents with 2 to 5 years of experience.
Table 14
*Post Hoc Table for Expectations - Difference in Means*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2-5 Years</th>
<th>6-10 Years</th>
<th>11 + Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>1.1400*</td>
<td>1.2264</td>
<td>1.3656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 Years</td>
<td>.0864</td>
<td>.2256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.1392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant at the .05 level

**Leadership.** Table 15 provides a breakdown by years of experience of the superintendent of the mean score for the construct of leadership. As revealed, principals gave superintendents with a single year of experience a higher rating on the 12 statements falling under the category of leadership (M = 8.5571, SD = 1.5741). Superintendents with 6 to 10 years of experience received the lowest score on leadership (M = 7.3767, SD = 2.3790).

Table 15
*Construct of Leadership – Descriptive Statistics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.5571</td>
<td>1.5741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 5 Years</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>7.3905</td>
<td>2.0835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 Years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7.3767</td>
<td>2.3790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+ Years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.4563</td>
<td>2.3815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.5764</td>
<td>2.1528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fourth null hypothesis, Ho4: *There is no significance difference in the perceptions of the construct of leadership compared to the years of experience of the superintendent*, was examined. Based upon the analysis using an ANOVA, there was
a significant effect on the construct of leadership as perceived by principals based on
the years of Kentucky superintendent experience at the \( p < .05 \) level for the 3
conditions, \( F(3,220) = 2.953, p = 0.033 \) (see Table 16).

Table 16

*Analysis of Variance of Leadership Construct*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>40.008</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.336</td>
<td>2.953</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>993.487</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>4.516</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1033.495</td>
<td>223</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further examination was carried out by using Tukey HSD analysis to
determine which pair of conditions were individually significant. As presented in
Table 17, there was a significant difference between the perceptions for leadership of
superintendents with 1 year of experience compared to those superintendents with 2
to 5 years of experience.

Table 17

*Post Hoc Table for Leadership - Difference in Means*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2-5 Years</th>
<th>6-10 Years</th>
<th>11 + Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>1.1667*</td>
<td>1.1804</td>
<td>1.1009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 Years</td>
<td>.0137</td>
<td>.0658</td>
<td>-.0795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant at the .05 level

**Overall.** Table 18 provides a breakdown by years of experience of the
superintendent of the mean score for the constructs overall. As revealed, principals
gave superintendents with a single year of experience a higher rating on the 30 statements overall (M = 8.6226, SD = 1.4145). Superintendents with 6 to 10 years of experience received the lowest score overall. (M = 7.1985, SD = 2.4211).

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.6226</td>
<td>1.4145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 5 Years</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>7.2818</td>
<td>2.1261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 Years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7.1985</td>
<td>2.4211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+ Years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.2429</td>
<td>2.4751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>7.4667</td>
<td>2.1944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the results summarized in Table 19, the reject of the fifth null hypothesis, Ho5: *There is no significance difference in the overall perception of the leadership skills behavior compared to the years of experience of the superintendent*, was warranted ( F(3,220) = 4.010, p = 0.008 ). A significant difference existed when considering all of the constructs as perceived by principals based on the years of Kentucky superintendent experience at the p < .05 level.

Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>55.678</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.559</td>
<td>4.010</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1018.185</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>4.628</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1073.863</td>
<td>223</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further examination was carried out by using Tukey HSD analysis to determine which pair of conditions were individually significant. As presented in Table 20, there was a significant difference between the overall perception of superintendents with 1 year of experience compared to those superintendents with 2 - 5 years and 6 - 10 years of experience.

Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2-5 Years</th>
<th>6-10 Years</th>
<th>11 + Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>1.3408*</td>
<td>1.4240*</td>
<td>1.3797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 Years</td>
<td>.0833</td>
<td>.0389</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.0444</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant at the .05 level

Summary

This chapter reported the results from a research study focused on the perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. The data acquired in the study shows that leadership behaviors associated with the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership do have a positive impact on the perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. In addition, the data provides evidence that years of experience for a superintendent does make a significant difference in the perceptions their principals have toward their leadership behaviors. A summary of the research study and conclusions from the data along with limitations and implications for future studies are included in Chapter 5.
The constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership as identified in Chapter 3 determined the categories of perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. The data collected were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA and indicated a significant difference existed on all of the constructs as perceived by principals based on the years of Kentucky superintendent experience at the p < 0.05 level for the 3 conditions, $F(3,220) = 4.010$, $p = 0.008$. In addition, a Tukey HSD analysis determined that there was a significant difference between the overall perception of superintendents with 1 year of experience compared to those superintendents with 2 to 5 years and 6 to 10 years of experience. The analysis clearly identified 1 construct as having a significant difference across all categories. A Tukey HSD analysis determined that there was a significant difference between the perception for support of superintendents with 1 year of experience compared to those superintendents with 2 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and 11+ years of experience.

The purpose of this research study was to determine the perceptions Kentucky principals have toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. The answers to the research questions used to guide this study were concluded based on the results of the analysis obtained.

1. What are the leadership behaviors of Kentucky’s superintendents as perceived by their principals?
The research study data shows that superintendent leadership behaviors associated with the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership were perceived highly by their principals.

2. Do the years of experience for a Kentucky superintendent influence the 4 leadership constructs as perceived by their principals?

The research study data indicates that superintendent years of experience did influence the 4 leadership constructs as perceived by their principals. Superintendents with 1 year of experience were perceived to have stronger leadership behaviors in the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership.
Chapter 5
Conclusions, Actions, and Implications

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to determine Kentucky principals’ perceptions of the leadership behaviors exhibited by their superintendents. The research questions for the study were:

1. What are the leadership behaviors of Kentucky’s superintendents as perceived by their principals?
2. Do the years of experience for a Kentucky superintendent influence the 4 leadership constructs as perceived by their principals?

The Kentucky Department of Education listserve provided email addresses for current principals and superintendents employed during the 2017-18 school year. A significant number of principals (1,252) were included in the sampling with 224 responding (n=224). The survey data from principals were collected via Google Forms.

Summary of Results and Findings

Two hundred twenty-four (224) principals completed the survey of the perceptions of principals toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents with the following descriptive statistics. Almost 52% of the respondents were male and 46% were female. Nearly all of the respondents reported being Caucasian (96%), and slightly over half (52%) were between the ages of 40 and 49 years old. Sixty-one percent of the principals who responded reported having served as a building level
principal for 2 to 5 years, and over two-thirds of the respondents (67%) indicated working in a rural school district. This suggests that most of the current Kentucky principals at the time of the study were in the early part of their administrative careers and serving in rural school districts.

Sixty-one percent (61%) of the responding principals in the survey reported working for a superintendent who had spent at least 2 to 5 years in his or her current position. This also suggests that the majority of the principals working in Kentucky school districts have worked for their current superintendent for more than 1 year. It also presents the large number of principals (75%) who have served for under 5 years and the significant number of superintendents (64%) who have served under 5 years. Building assignment levels showed that almost 40% of the responding principals worked in an elementary school.

It was not surprising that the largest number of building level principals who responded were elementary principals since the majority of school buildings in the state are elementary. Analyzing the descriptive data (presented in Table 1) and the descriptive analysis of constructs (presented in Table 2, 3, 4, and 5), it would be beneficial to determine if building levels played a significant role in the construct results.

An interesting assumption from analyzing the survey data was that the overwhelming majority of Kentucky principals have a positive perception about the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. The data provided strong incentive to school boards and superintendent preparation programs at the university level to place...
great emphasis on the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership when working with aspiring superintendents.

The framework for the study was based on a literature review of factors influencing the superintendent/principal relationship, supports for principals strengthening relationships, effects of positive relationships on student achievement, and exemplary leadership practices. As a practicing Kentucky superintendent with 7 prior years of experience as a school principal, I used my own experiences to develop the framework.

**Research Questions**

The Kentucky principals’ survey results were analyzed to determine the perceptions they had toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. The literature review supports the positive perceptions principals have toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents who practice the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership (Bjork, 1999; Cudeiro, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Waters & Marzano, 2006). The research study data supported the work of Kouzes and Posner regarding the frequency of their identified exemplary leadership practices (model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart) being exhibited by school district superintendents within the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) determined that years of experience for a Kentucky superintendent influenced the 4 leadership constructs as perceived by their principals. The independent variable represented the 4 different
superintendent experience groups: 1 year, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11 or more years. The dependent variable was the superintendents’ rated score by principals on a survey. An alpha level of 0.05 was used for all analyses. A Tukey HSD analysis was used to determine which pair of conditions was individually significant. As presented in Table 20, there was a significant difference between the overall perception of superintendents with 1 year of experience compared to those superintendents with 2-5 years and 6-10 years of experience.

Implications

The research study data clearly indicates that Kentucky principals have a positive perception toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. Behaviors exhibited by superintendents associated with the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership were perceived highly by Kentucky principals.

Communication appears to be the key trait Kentucky principals used to determine how they perceived the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. Superintendents who understand the vital importance of communicating frequently with their principals, providing unlimited support, and placing high expectations are modeling strong leadership behaviors for their principals.

Experience levels of superintendents were a major factor in how Kentucky superintendents’ leadership behaviors were perceived by their principals. The research study results showed that Kentucky principals rated superintendents who had served 1 year the highest in each construct and overall areas. It is uncertain why this result occurred, but future research could explore the idea that a beginning
superintendent typically has not fully developed their educational platform and therefore, seems to be operating in a “honeymoon” mode.

The data from the research study was evidence that superintendent leadership in Kentucky was relatively high based on the perceptions of their principals. Superintendent preparation programs at the university level appear to be providing courses of study centered on leadership behaviors that enable trust, support, expectations, and leadership connections to be established between superintendents and principals. In addition, the results of the study allow us to assume that superintendents in Kentucky place a high priority on developing positive and productive relationships with their principals.

Leadership behaviors practiced by superintendents associated with the construct of trust were perceived to be very high by Kentucky principals in the research study. Superintendents and principals obviously found these behaviors to be vitally important in the field of education. It can be assumed that superintendent preparation programs and professional learning opportunities are emphasizing the importance of trust building between superintendents and principals. The research study affirms the importance Kentucky principals place on trust building leadership behaviors exhibited by their superintendents. In addition, it provides evidence of the critical importance to ensuring superintendents are willing and able to practice trust building behaviors with their principals.

Kentucky principals perceived their superintendents’ leadership behaviors connected with the construct of support to be high overall in the research study.
While the overall data indicated strong perceptions about the construct of support by superintendents, it must be noted that the area specifically asking about creatively rewarding was considerably perceived to be lower than other areas in the construct. This key finding provides evidence of a need for superintendents to reflect upon their efforts to encourage the heart of principals and creatively acknowledge principals for the hard work in which they engage.

The research study indicated that Kentucky principals perceived their superintendents’ leadership behaviors relating to the construct of expectations to be high overall. Superintendents in Kentucky continually face the challenge of shrinking district budgets with the public’s expectation of meeting unlimited student, staff, and community needs. It is no surprise that superintendents were perceived highly in the construct of expectations. The job itself requires superintendents to place high expectations on themselves while constantly reflecting upon and critiquing their leadership practices.

Behaviors relating to the construct of leadership for superintendents were perceived highly by Kentucky principals. One particular area perceived highly was the ability and willingness of superintendents to set a personal example for others. On the other hand, Kentucky principals had a lower perception of their superintendents’ willingness to receive feedback about how his or her actions affect others. The research study data provides clear evidence that superintendents in Kentucky are learning strong leadership behaviors in university preparation programs and on the job. School Board members and state new superintendent induction programs can
utilize this research study data to develop strategies aimed at helping superintendents actively seek out feedback about how their actions affect others.

Superintendents are practicing the leadership behaviors associated with the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership on a high level according to Kentucky principals who participated in the research study. It can be assumed that Kentucky superintendents presently are serving during the most challenging times in the history of education. Lower state funding is causing budgets to shrink during a time where student needs are growing at an alarming rate. The research study data provides evidence that Kentucky superintendents are answering the many challenges in spite of growing obstacles.

**Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions**

**Limitations.** A limitation of the research study was that only a small sample size from Kentucky was included due to state department restrictions on use of the available “all principals” email server. The participants were not representative of the entire states or nation’s school superintendent and principal population as a whole. Therefore, results from the study cannot be generalized to the larger population.

Another limitation of the research was the participant experience. The participants were only required to have worked in that position for a minimum of 1 year. Due to this minimal requirement, some of the participants might only have worked with 1 other individual in the position. This lack of exposure to working with others in the position could result in skewed results based on minimal experience. The minimum
experience requirement for participants presents another limitation to the research, because the study is not a true random sample.

**Delimitations.** The use of only Kentucky principals in public schools and the narrow focus of only perceived superintendent leadership behaviors are delimitations of the research study. Studying public school Kentucky principals and the degree to which the responding research study participants reflected the overall group who were invited to participate by receiving the survey is a concern of the study. No private school principals participated in the study due to the convenience of locating Kentucky principals through the Kentucky Department of Education. Also, it is possible that some principals chose not to participate either due to time constraints or because of feeling uncomfortable with the topic. An additional concern of the study is the sole focus of Kentucky principal perceptions toward the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. Principal leadership is strong factor in school success, and a study including teacher perceived leadership behaviors has the potential to positively impact the field of education.

**Assumptions.** An assumption about the study that can be made is that respondents will answer all questions truthfully. To accomplish this, confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants in an effort to protect their interests. Participants were expected to answer all questions honestly after confidentiality was assured. Another assumption about the study is that leadership in school districts truly matter. School superintendents and principals are required to wear many hats and must exert leadership to maximize student success.
Recommendations for Future Research

In reviewing the results obtained for the individual survey statements, some interesting observations were regarding the highest and lowest perceived statements for each construct regarding the leadership behaviors of their superintendents. A high number of respondents perceived the construct of trust highly (M = 7.510, SD = 2.625) overall. The statement “Treats others with dignity and respect” was perceived very high (M = 8.027, SD = 2.609) while the statement “Actively listens to diverse points of views” was scored the lowest (M = 7.161, SD = 2.764) by the responding principals. Future research around this topic could be qualitative in an effort to determine what actions principals expect of their superintendents to feel heard.

A high number of respondents perceived their superintendent’s leadership behaviors in the construct of support to be high (M = 7.313, SD = 2.615) as well. The statement “Praises people for a job well done” was perceived the highest (M = 7.732, SD = 2.429) in the support construct and “Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects” scored the lowest (M = 6.848, SD = 2.589). Research in the future focused on this topic could be quantitative and compare student achievement results in school districts with a specific focus on employee rewards with school districts who do not offer rewards. The data clearly indicates the need for principals to feel valued through genuine and creative measures by their superintendent.

The construct of expectations for the leadership behaviors of superintendents was perceived highly (M = 7.359, SD = 2.528) by Kentucky principals. The statement
“Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do” scored highly (M = 7.632, SD = 2.440) by principals and “Asks ‘what can we learn?’ when things don’t go as expected” was perceived the lowest (M = 7.027, SD = 2.788). Qualitative research among superintendents aimed at determining the reasons for hesitancy to take risks has the potential yield beneficial results for the field of education.

Many of the Kentucky principal respondents perceived the leadership behaviors of their superintendents that encompassed the construct of leadership to be high (M = 7.576, SD = 2.493). The statement “Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others” was perceived very high (M = 8.054, SD = 2.155), while “Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people’s performance” scored the lowest (M = 6.183, SD = 3.040) in the construct. The data reflects a strong focus on setting a personal example for what superintendents expects of others, but a possible disconnect concerning how his/her actions affect principals’ performance. Future research to improve this area could take place in the form of a qualitative study revolving around superintendent leadership professional learning.

The literature calls attention to the importance of relationship building, setting clear expectations, and providing support to principals by superintendents (Bjork, 1999; Cudeiro, 2005; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Superintendents who focus on the exemplary leadership practices of model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart are positioned well to positively impact their principals (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). After the research study
data analysis, it can be argued that superintendents who focus on positive and supportive relationship building with clear expectations are perceived higher by their principals. Future research should focus on determining the levels of support needed to establish positive superintendant and principal relationships.

The research study data clearly indicates that years of experience for a Kentucky superintendent does influence the 4 leadership constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership. Surprisingly, superintendents with 1 year of experience were perceived higher by their principals than more experienced superintendents. One might explain this data by noting that the principals only had a minimal amount of work experience with newer superintendents. On the other hand, it can be considered that newer superintendents are more committed to providing support and actively listening to their principals on a higher level. Future research on this topic could be a qualitative study comparing the perceptions of different years of experience for superintendents on a more detailed level.

**Reflections**

Engaging in this research study has deepened my awareness of the profound impact relationship building has on productivity. I had the unique experience of completing the initial research for this study while serving in my 6th and 7th years as a high school principal. Pouring into the research of this study enabled me to gain clarity about my own perceptions toward the leadership behaviors of the superintendent for whom I was working with and the positive impact that had on my ability to lead. Completing the final part of this research study as a 1st year practicing
superintendent has been an invaluable experience for me professionally. As a practicing superintendent, I can see how my leadership style and focus on developing strong and positive relations built around the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership have an impact on principals, staff, and students. My focus on positive relationship building and communication makes a difference.

Conclusion

The research study data and literature review affirm the importance of relationship building between superintendents and principals based on the constructs of trust, support, expectations, and leadership. As a former principal, I feel principals will take their lead from the superintendent in regards to relationship building. Therefore, it is imperative that superintendent preparation programs at the university level provide greater emphasis on relationship building and communication skills. Current preparation programs provide aspiring superintendents solid skills in the areas of instructional leadership and management. Developing interpersonal skills is critically important for aspiring superintendents to become highly effective leaders in school districts. University superintendent preparation programs have the opportunity to positively impact student achievement by placing a greater emphasis on developing these skills in aspiring superintendents. Strong superintendent and principal relationships will create a high level of collegiality and partnership between the two, thus enabling the creation of common goals aimed at maximizing student achievement.
References


Appendices
Appendix A

Carter, Nick - Superintendent

From: Carter, Nick - Superintendent
Sent: Sunday, September 10, 2017 5:31 AM
To: All State Supt
Cc: m.kessinger@moreheadstate.edu
Subject: Doctoral Research Study Participation

Dear Kentucky Superintendents,

My name is Nicholas Carter and I am a doctoral candidate at Morehead State University. I am conducting a research study examining the perceptions of Kentucky principals toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents. As a current Kentucky superintendent, I feel the data obtained from this research study will be beneficial in helping develop and maintain strong principal relationships. I plan to email all Kentucky principals asking for their participation in an online survey. The survey should take principals fifteen minutes to complete.

Please let me know if you wish for me to not contact the principals in your school district. If you do not respond to this message, I will assume that there is not an objection.

If you have any questions, you can contact me at nick.carter@breck.kyschools.us or 270-668-2201, or the Chair of my committee, Dr. Michael Kessinger at m.kessinger@moreheadstate.edu or 606-424-8473.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Carter
Doctoral Candidate
Morehead State University
Superintendent
Breckinridge County School District

NOTICE OF CONFIDENTIALITY:
This e-mail, including any attachments, is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential information that is legally privileged and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are notified that any review, use, disclosure, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.
Appendix B

Carter, Nick - Superintendent

Dear Kentucky Principals,

My name is Nicholas Carter and I am a doctoral candidate at Morehead State University. I am conducting a research study examining the perceptions of Kentucky principals toward the leadership behaviors of superintendents. As a current Kentucky superintendent, I feel the data obtained from this research study will be beneficial in helping develop and maintain strong principal and superintendent relationships. I would like to invite each of you to participate in my research study by completing the survey at the link below. The survey should take fifteen minutes to complete.

If you have any questions, you can contact me at nick.carter@breck.kyschools.us or 270-668-2201, or the Chair of my committee, Dr. Michael Kessinger at m.kessinger@moreheadstate.edu or 606-424-8473.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxP88MnrXmr-uipjuv4K7mcRpu_jINHr2xknXykSHKN4DjFNA/viewform

Sincerely,

Nicholas Carter
Doctoral Candidate
Morehead State University
Superintendent
Breckinridge County School District

NOTICE OF CONFIDENTIALITY:
This e-mail, including any attachments, is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential information that is legally privileged and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are notified that any review, use, disclosure, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.
Principal Perceptions of Superintendent Leadership Behaviors

Nicholas Carter, September 2017, All Rights Reserved

Adapted from the Superintendent Understanding of Principals' Educational Responsibilities (SUPER) Survey
Copyright 2009 Robert Jay Roelle. All rights reserved

INSTRUCTIONS:
This instrument contains questions that will be used to determine the perceptions you have for your superintendent's leadership behaviors. Please complete the survey by choosing the corresponding number of a statement on the rating scales. The survey for this study will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw your participation at any time during the survey.

Part I: Informed Consent Statement

Morehead State University

Protocol Title: Perceptions of Principals toward the leadership behaviors of Superintendents.

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership behaviors of Kentucky superintendents based on principals' perceptions. Public school principals in Kentucky will be anonymously surveyed.

What you will be asked to do in the study: Participants will respond to 30 survey items of an online survey.

Time required: The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Risks and Benefits: I do not perceive any foreseeable risks for participating in the study. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. Individual participants will not benefit directly from this study. Participation will contribute to advancing the knowledge of leadership behaviors exhibited by Kentucky superintendents as perceived from principals.

Incentive or Compensation: There is no extra credit or other incentive for participating; therefore, you will not be adversely affected in any way if you choose not to participate.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. There will be no connection between a participant and his or her individual responses. Responses will only be analyzed as a part of the larger group. The data from this study will only be accessible by the researcher and one faculty advisor from Morehead State University. This research study will use a web-based, electronic survey instrument. The survey software will not be programmed to collect IP addresses from any participants.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you elect to discontinue participation, any information already collected will be discarded.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: Nicholas G. Carter (270-665-2100, ncarter@moreheadstate.edu)

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study: Dr. Scott Niles, Email: s.niles@moreheadstate.edu

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1YGBfGkWFQCuUbq2IGkx1JK09mIshYfRyOu6ryd3y0WVYb/wcodh
PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS

3/4/2018

Principal Perceptions of Superintendent Leadership Behaviors

* Required

1. Do you wish to participate in this research study? Please check yes to move on or no to withdraw from the research study. *

   Mark only one oval.
   - Yes  Skip to question 2.
   - No   Skip to “Thank you for your time.”

Skip to question 3.

Part II: Professional Experience

2. Have you served as a school principal in Kentucky for at least one year? *

   Mark only one oval.
   - Yes  Skip to question 3.
   - No   Skip to “Thank you for your time.”

Part III- The Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) Observer

Please read each statement carefully, and using the rating scale, ask yourself: “How frequently does my superintendent engage in the behavior described in each statement?”

The rating scale runs from Almost Never to Almost Always. Click in the circle that best applies to each statement.

3. Sets a personal example of what he/she expects others.

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4. Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.

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### Principal Perceptions of Superintendent Leadership Behaviors

#### 5. Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.
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#### 6. Develops cooperative relationships among the people that he/she works with.
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#### 7. Praises people for a job well done.
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#### 8. Spends time and energy making certain that the people that he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.
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#### 9. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.
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#### 10. Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.
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Principal Perceptions of Superintendent Leadership Behaviors

11. Actively listens to diverse points of views.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Almost Never
Almost Always

12. Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Almost Never
Almost Always

Part IIIB- The Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) Observer

Please read each statement carefully, and using the rating scale, ask yourself: "How frequently does my superintendent engage in the behavior described in each statement?"

The rating scale runs from Almost Never to Almost Always. Click in the circle that best applies to each statement.

13. Follows through on promises and commitments that he/she makes.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Almost Never
Almost Always

14. Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Almost Never
Almost Always

15. Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Almost Never
Almost Always

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16. Treats others with dignity and respect.
   Mark only one oval.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Almost Never
   Almost Always

17. Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.
   Mark only one oval.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Almost Never
   Almost Always

18. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance.
   Mark only one oval.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Almost Never
   Almost Always

19. Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting a common vision.
   Mark only one oval.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Almost Never
   Almost Always

20. Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.
    Mark only one oval.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Almost Never
    Almost Always

21. Supports the decision that people make on their own.
    Mark only one oval.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Almost Never
    Almost Always

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22. Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.
   Mark only one oval.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Almost  Never  Almost  Always

23. Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.
   Mark only one oval.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Almost  Never  Almost  Always

24. Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.
   Mark only one oval.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Almost  Never  Almost  Always

25. Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.
   Mark only one oval.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Almost  Never  Almost  Always

26. Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.
   Mark only one oval.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Almost  Never  Almost  Always
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<td>27. Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.</td>
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<td>28. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mark only one oval.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Experiments and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mark only one oval.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mark only one oval.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Gives members of the team a lot of appreciation and support for their contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mark only one oval.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1fDx5zswFv/Taq/btbc299ZU96/x/wWg6Rg0CL6YYV3YX/edt
Part IV- Demographics

33. What gender do you identify with?
   Mark only one oval.
   □ Female
   □ Male
   □ Prefer not to say

34. What race/ethnicity do you identify with?
   Mark only one oval.
   □ American Indian or Alaskan Native
   □ Black or African American
   □ Hispanic or Latino
   □ Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
   □ White
   □ Multiracial

35. What is your age range?
   Mark only one oval.
   □ 20-29
   □ 30-39
   □ 40-49
   □ 50-59
   □ 60 +

36. What is the total number of years you have worked as a principal under the current superintendent? (Include this school year)
   Mark only one oval.
   □ 1 year
   □ 2-5 years
   □ 6-10 years
   □ 11 or more years

37. How would you describe your school setting?
   Mark only one oval.
   □ Urban
   □ Suburban
   □ Rural

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1f0x6qyvPCvXt6a46k9hjU09mNwxwylRIGDSc1BYWV3vedtI
38. What best describes your school?
   Mark only one oval.
   - Elementary
   - Middle/Junior High School
   - High School
   - 6-12
   - K-8
   - K-12
   - Other:

39. How many schools are in your school district?
   Mark only one oval.
   - 1-3
   - 4-8
   - 9-13
   - 14-17
   - More than 17

40. How many years has your superintendent been the superintendent in your school district?
   (Include this school year)
   Mark only one oval.
   - 1 year
   - 2-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11 or more years

41. Was your superintendent ever a principal prior to becoming a superintendent?
   Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

42. Was your superintendent ever a principal in your school district prior to becoming the superintendent?
   Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10dGzwPCX4sbaG8lI5thB9wKyl6RgDcULYyVvYwe/edit
Stop filling out this form.

Thank you for your time.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/110s60wq/C/6b6kz28g/199n1w8ly6y3DvLcLUfYVwYw/edit#
VITA

NICHOLAS G. CARTER

EDUCATION

December, 2004  Bachelor of Arts
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

May, 2009  Master of Arts
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Pending  Doctor of Education
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2005 - 2008  High School Teacher
John Hardin High School
Elizabethtown, Kentucky

2008 - 2009  High School Teacher
Breckinridge County High School
Harned, Kentucky

2009 - 2010  Elementary Assistant Principal
Hardinsburg Elementary School
Hardinsburg, Kentucky

2010 - 2017  High School Principal
Breckinridge County High School
Harned, Kentucky

2017 - Present  Superintendent
Breckinridge County School District
Hardinsburg, Kentucky
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Award Description</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Service and Advocacy Distinguished Educator Award</td>
<td>Kentucky Association for Gifted Education</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Kentucky</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Outstanding Graduate Award</td>
<td>Morehead State University</td>
<td>Morehead, Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Outstanding Graduate Award</td>
<td>Morehead State University</td>
<td>Morehead, Kentucky</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>