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# Aspiring to the superintendency: factors that influence the decision

Regina P. Campbell

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**ASPIRING TO THE SUPERINTENDENCY:  
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DECISION**

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A THESIS

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Requirements for the Degree of

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(in Educational Leadership)

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May, 2001

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**ASPIRING TO THE SUPERINTENDENCY:  
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Thesis Advisor: Dr. Russell J. Quaglia

**An** Abstract of the Thesis Presented  
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This study investigates and identifies the factors impacting the superintendency and examines them, positive and negative, as they influence potential and current superintendent certificate holders to complete the process of applying for a superintendency.

Three sample groups were used in this study: current Maine superintendent certificate holders, students enrolled in graduate administration classes, and currently practicing superintendents. These three groups were selected because of their unique positioning on the career ladder to the superintendency (Burnham, 1988). The aggregate sample included 236 respondents, comprising 82 superintendents, 90 certificate holders and 64 students.

Three survey instruments were designed for this study specifically for each of the three groups.

The first phase of data analysis focused on demographic factors (i.e., present position, age, location) for each of the three groups (superintendents, certificate holders

and students). The responses of the three groups were compared. Frequency data was analyzed by means of chi square tests, and a series of one-way ANOVA's were conducted to compare the elements of the superintendency to determine if differences were identifiable between the three groups. Scheffe post-hoc tests were run to identify significant differences between groups that emerged from the significant oneway ANOVA's SPSS was used for all analysis.

Most of the superintendents surveyed reported that they were satisfied in their current position and would apply for another superintendent's position in the future.

The responses of the certificate holders tended to be more aligned with the responses of the superintendent group than with those of the student group. The notable difference was that twenty-two percent for the respondents reported that they were not interested in applying for a superintendent's position.

The student respondents were significantly younger than the other two groups. They agreed with the superintendents and certificate holders on eight of the top ten influencing factors in pursuing a superintendency as well as eight of the ten least influencing factors.

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## CHAPTER 1

### **An Endangered Profession?**

#### Introduction

The position of Superintendent of Schools is one of the most challenging yet satisfying positions in American society. Despite the challenges of the position, “...superintendents will find great satisfaction in what they do best...helping others to learn and grow” (Miller, 1992). Acting as chief executive officer of the school organization, the superintendent supervises the overall administration of the school system and, in accordance with the policies of the organization, provides professional leadership to ensure educational opportunities for all students. In short, the superintendent must be nothing less than politically sophisticated, able to display excellence as a leader, and an exemplary educator.

This position is paramount to the preservation and advancement of the educational organization especially in this era of national, state and local school reforms. We are now entering our second decade of “reform”. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 placed schools and educators under public scrutiny by parents, the media, and the politicians. Not since the 1950’s “scare” of Sputnik have so many school reform efforts been brought to the forefront. The significant changes in school organizations and schooling in general, for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, will closely involve the position of the superintendent. While most Americans agree that schools need to be reformed and improved, there is no consensus on how to accomplish this goal. This ambiguity poses both a problem and an opportunity for all superintendents. Although legislatures will

issue educational mandates, parents and administrators at the local level will most likely determine the route of school reform for their children. Superintendents will need to facilitate and guide the direction of this reform through leadership and must be secure in their vision for reform. They must lead the school board, staff, and community toward that vision. The education of America's most precious asset, its children, is at stake. Superintendents of the future will be very important to the future of the nation and will be at the center of the movement of creating more effective schools for our children to learn and grow in.

### The Rationale

The importance of the superintendency alone should serve as a compelling reason to motivate talented educational professionals to aspire and actively pursue this position. But, in recent years, projections have indicated a decline in interest (Daresh & Playko, 1992), with fewer people expressing an interest in the superintendency as a career goal (Volp, 1994).

In 1988, the Maine Department of Education and Cultural Services created a committee to look at Maine's superintendents and principals in terms of supply, demand and implications for recruitment, selection and retention. Specifically the charge to the Administrative Supply and Demand Committee was to investigate two issues: the turnover rate in the superintendencies and principalships in Maine school districts and the availability of qualified replacements. When determining the qualifications for replacement, three factors were considered and examined: size and condition of the pool of eligible applicants, their perceived ability to fill the positions and the trend in candidate availability. The Committee published a report that confirmed that there "...has

been a gradual increase in the number and percentage of vacancies in superintendencies...” The report also indicated that “. . . the statewide pool of educators eligible for certification as administrators is more than ample to meet the projected vacancies.”

But the numbers soon changed. According to the Maine Department of Education’s Sex Equity Report (1995-96) and the 1998 reported data from the Department of Certification, the number of active certificate holders decreased by 129 in a seven-year period.

Although these numbers were accurate in that they identified the exact number of active certificate holders, when one actually looked at the people they represented, the figures told another story. Over one hundred people on the list were retired, employed out of state or just not interested in the job of superintendent, which furthered narrowed the pool.

According to a MSMA report, *The Maine Superintendency: A Report on Turnover*, there were approximately 100 superintendent vacancies in the state of Maine between 1995 and 1998. (MSMA, 1998) Candidate pools have ranged from 5 to 30 candidates for each advertised position. The majority of searches produced fewer than 20 applicants. The quantity and quality of these application pools have caused much frustration to School Boards in choosing chief school executives. During the 1999-2000 school year, three school boards have reopened their superintendent searches, and several more have employed interim superintendents, eventually offering them regular contracts.

The declining pool of superintendent candidates, the high turnover rate of superintendents, and the large pool of individuals holding superintendent certificates who

are not applying for superintendencies are major issues that need to be addressed (MSMA, 1998).

A 1992 report, *The Study of the American School Superintendency*, found that one third of superintendents surveyed followed the path of teacher, principal, and central office administrator. The career path for women and minority groups usually includes a central office position before a superintendent's position (Glass, 1992). By holding a central office position, potential candidates have the opportunity to receive on-the-job specialized experience that will benefit them later in their role as superintendent.

Burnham (1988) examined career patterns of superintendents and found that those who had been selected as "exemplary" had followed the track of teaching, principalship, central office position and superintendent more often than those in the random sample.

Read in 1998 found that in Maine there had been a significant decline over the past ten years in the number of administrative positions, especially entry level positions. She suggested that the observed decline in administrative positions at the central office level could possibly have negatively affected the perceptions of potential candidates (Read, 1998). Without the experience acquired in entry level positions, i.e., assistant superintendent, curriculum coordinator or elementary supervisor, potential candidates may feel inadequately prepared for the responsibilities of a superintendency. This is one of the factors contributing to the decline in interest that is taken into consideration in the study.

The state of Maine would benefit from an examination of the pool of those who hold superintendent certificates but not superintendent positions in terms of its makeup, intent and its members' reluctance to apply for a superintendency. This assessment

should consider demographics, skills and intentions surrounding the superintendency as a career option. We need to understand better why certified administrators are not seeking the position of the superintendent with the same vigor as their peers did only a few years ago (Daresh & Playko, 1992).

Currently we have only quantitative data: numbers of certificate holders, numbers of positions and research results related to job satisfaction (Glass, 1992; Miller, 1992; Volp, 1995). There have to be underlying reasons, real or perceived, for why individuals who have obtained superintendent certificates choose not to seek such employment.

Therefore it is important to investigate and determine the condition of this certified pool of candidates for the position of superintendent in the State of Maine. It is critical to consider if the state of Maine is a potential candidate for a “leadership vacuum” in terms of applicants at the superintendent’s level.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to determine why there is declining interest among administrators in pursuing the superintendency as a career choice (Daresh 1992; Glass, 1992; MSMA, 1998; Volp, 1995) despite research that reports that superintendents feel that they are doing a “good” to “excellent” job and that they find satisfaction in their positions (Glass, 1992; Miller, 1992; Volp, 1995).

This study was designed to investigate and identify the potential and current leadership pool for the position of superintendent in the state of Maine. Three groups were surveyed. The first consisted of individuals currently enrolled in an advanced degree program in administration (potential certificate holders), the second included individuals who currently hold superintendent’s certificates but are not currently

employed in this capacity and the third consisted of practicing superintendents. These practicing superintendents are deemed to have a realistic picture of this unique leadership position. They have experienced the rigors of the position and can voice the realities of the position. Here we compare the perceptions of currently employed superintendents to those of those certified or preparing to be employed as superintendents to determine the motivating and deterring factors associated with the position.

Approximately 100 students are currently enrolled in graduate level programs in administration at the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine. There are also approximately 250 individuals who hold current Maine certificates for the superintendency who are not employed as such (Department of Education, 2000) and 146 individuals presently serving as superintendents in the State of Maine (Department of Education, 2000). Each group was surveyed with the intent to identify their interest in pursuing a superintendent's position and their current perceptions of the pro's and con's of the superintendency as a career choice.

Specifically the purpose of this study was to identify through a review of the literature factors impacting the superintendency and to examine them, positive and negative, as they influence potential and current certificate holders to complete the process of applying for a superintendency. This study documented and compared the factors obtained from all three groups. The following questions addressed this issue:

1. What are the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders that influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position?
2. What factors influence current superintendents to stay in their positions?
3. How do currently employed and potential applicants differ in their views of elements of the superintendency?



This research was designed to identify the reason(s) behind the declining interest among potential candidates (students and certificate holders) in their pursuit of a superintendent's position. It was also the intent of this study to identify factors that influence current superintendents to remain in their positions. This study was designed not only to identify factors that influence potential candidates to pursue the position of superintendent, but also to identify factors that act as deterrents. The responses to these factors will be compared to the responses of practicing superintendents. It will also report the elements that are deterrents.

In summary, this research was designed to identify factors that influence potential candidates to pursue a superintendent's position and practicing superintendents to remain in their positions. It also identifies factors that act as deterrents. The results will identify discrepancies between perceptions held by potential candidates and realities of the position as reported by practicing superintendents.

### Significance of the Study

Are we on the brink of a shortage of quality Superintendents in public education in the State of Maine? If the pool of candidates for the superintendency is in fact declining and potential candidates are not interested, who will be our future superintendents? Who will lead and manage school organizations in the state in school reform movements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Do we have an adequate pool of interested candidates for this position? Why are certificate holders not applying for superintendent's positions? Is there enough interest among potential certificate holders to pursue the position of superintendent as a career choice to meet the needs of our LEA's? If not, what is holding them back? Why aren't

qualified and dedicated individuals pursuing the position of superintendent as aggressively (Daresh, 1992) as in the past?

This study was designed to answer these questions. This data will serve as an important tool in aiding the educational community and state policymakers to better understand the reasons behind the declining interest in the superintendency as a career choice. Lastly, it provides accurate and timely data supporting the true status of candidates for the position of superintendent and perhaps more importantly the reasons, real or perceived, supporting these numbers.

Because of the national scope of this problem, this study also provides information concerning the degree of difficulty or ease in obtaining data surrounding the issue of declining applicants for the position of superintendent. This study may have practical implications in the areas of preparation, training and recruitment practices in educational administration in that it will target the areas that are deterring potential applicants from applying for the superintendency as a career choice.

### Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 contains a review and critique of the relevant literature. It includes a historical perspective of the superintendency in terms of leadership, professional training, and responsibilities. Research in the areas of career ladders and job satisfaction are also included as they pertain to the position.

The methodology and instrumentation are described in Chapter 3. Included in this chapter is detailed information covering the sample, instrument development, procedures and data analysis. An explanation of the development of items in terms of validity and reliability are also provided.

Chapter 4 includes demographic information and the results of the statistical analyses. The data is reported in terms of frequency comparisons, chi square tests and a series of oneway ANOVA's.

Chapter 5 contains a summary and discussion of the findings. Limitations and implications of this study are also discussed.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Review of the Literature**

#### Introduction

The purposes of this study were to (1) Identify the factors that may influence potential and current superintendent certificate holders in their pursuit of a superintendent's position, (2) Identify the factors that influence current superintendents to remain in their positions and (3) Determine if the current and potential applicants differ in their views of the superintendency. The intent of this comparison is to provide information that may help explain why there appears to be declining interest among potential superintendents in pursuing the superintendency as a career choice.

What we know is this: in a three year period (1995-1998) there were close to 100 superintendent vacancies in the state of Maine (MSMA, 1998). It was also reported that the pool for filling these positions was less than adequate in terms of numbers of applicants (MSMA, 1998). The intent of this dissertation is to provide data that addresses this situation.

To help us understand the reasons for an apparent decline in interest among aspiring administrators to pursue the superintendency as a career choice and the reasons practicing superintendents remain in the position, the following research questions are posed:

1. What are the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders that influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position?
2. What factors influence current superintendents to stay in their positions?
3. How do currently employed and potential applicants differ in their views of elements of the superintendency?

A Review of the Literature is presented to provide the information necessary to answer these research questions. This review is divided into five major areas: Historical Perspective, Major Job Responsibilities, Professional Training, Career Advancement, and Job Satisfaction. These five areas are reviewed for two purposes. The first is to provide a foundation of information concerning the superintendency from its beginning to its present state. This is included to provide a basic understanding of the position of superintendent. The second purpose is to identify factors that may influence potential superintendent candidates to pursue or not pursue a superintendency as a career choice and the factors that influence current superintendents to continue in their positions. These factors provide the basis for developing a survey for this dissertation.

This Review begins with a brief Historical Perspective of the superintendency including the contemporary trends associated with the position. These trends provide the foundation for the present day roles of the superintendent.

The Major Job Responsibilities of the superintendent is the next area reviewed. These areas of responsibility include educational leadership, managerial and political.

Professional Training for the position of superintendent is the next area reviewed. This area is included to show the process a potential candidate follows for superintendent certification. This area also provides the framework for the area of Career Advancement in Educational Administration.

The area of Career Advancement includes the pathways and patterns associated with obtaining a superintendent's position. This area was investigated to provide a basic understanding of the different means in place to reach the superintendency.

Even though the responsibilities of the position and the means to get there are documented, there is still one area that needs to be studied. That area is Job Satisfaction. Is job satisfaction possible in this multifaceted and challenging position?

Lastly, I will summarize my findings and highlight the discrepancies that I found in this Review of the Literature. I will then explain the next steps that are needed to answer the questions raised.

The gathering of information for this review of the literature took many forms. ERIC searches, formal and informal conversations, and e-mail correspondence with those in the field and those studying the field took place over a three-year period. A pilot study was also conducted in the fall of 1998 to determine the extent of need to pursue this issue. What was communicated overwhelmingly from all entities involved was that there is a great urgency to investigate the present day situation. To meet this goal the following question must be answered: What are the factors that influence potential applicants in their pursuit of the superintendency as a career choice and practicing superintendents to remain in their position? This review of the literature will address that question by identifying the job responsibilities of the superintendent and evidence of factors needed for job satisfaction.

### Historical Perspective

*"I have always believed that leadership in public life consists of finding out the most important social, economic, political and educational trends. Then I direct those trends in the manner that people want to go." (Frank Cody, 1919, pg. 151)*

The history of the superintendency can be traced back to the late 1700's and early 1800's. At one time this was a part time position performed by members of the

community. These committees had authority over and responsibility for every aspect of the school organization. They not only developed policy, but they enforced it as well (Copeland, 1996). But with the growth of American cities and the corresponding expansion of the public school systems, a need for specialized help in directing and supervising schools surfaced. It became apparent that the educational community was too large and too complex for the lay committees to control. By the early 1800's, boards of education had begun to explore the appointment of an educator to head the public school system. The office of the superintendent was developed to assist with the maintenance and control of the day-to-day operations of the school (Dykes, 1965). In 1837 the Common Council appointed the first superintendent in Buffalo, New York. In July of that year the state of Kentucky followed, as did others.

During the 1840's and 1850's these newly appointed superintendents acted in a pseudo-intellectual phase (Blount, 1998). They structured schools to resemble "huge, mechanical, educational machines or mills" that resembled the "cotton-mill and the railroad" and the "state's prison" (p.40).

But appointed superintendents were not the norm. This changed with the famous Kalamazoo Court case in 1874. (Dykes, 1965). This case gave local school boards the right to tax property owners for support of education. This act in itself stimulated the growth of public high schools across the nation, which in turn brought pressure to local boards to appoint one person to oversee school systems. The need for full time leaders was a result of the growth of the public school system nationwide. No longer could members of the business community accomplish the challenges of the superintendency on a part time basis. In addition to their day to day responsibilities, these early

superintendents traveled from large cities to villages preaching the gospel of a free public education. They served as moral role models, spreaders of the democratic ethic, and, most importantly, builders of the American dream (Callahan, 1966). Those early positions bore little resemblance to the current position. The first superintendents were often viewed as glorified clerks, whose main responsibility was to relieve the lay boards of burdensome and time-consuming record keeping (Dykes, 1965; Griffiths, 1966).

“Whereas school leaders in the nineteenth century tended to see themselves as constituting an aristocracy of character, in the twentieth century they began to regard themselves as a distinct group of experts, certified by specialized training...elaborating legal and bureaucratic rules, and turning to science and businesses as sources of authority for an emergent profession” (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p.129). Using their practical experience and by studying leadership and management theories and practices, they (new superintendents) have left us with a “succession of theories of leadership” (Stufflebeam, 1995).

The style of leadership employed in those earlier times was the same as the one used in commercial and sometimes military organizations (Patterson, 1992). The industrial model of governing organizations has provided us with an idea of what leadership looked like and what it should be. This style focused on the central values of power and control. “Organizations have been conceived, constructed, and evaluated on the premise that leaders are responsible for directing and controlling the organization. Through the pyramid of the hierarchical structure, the people at the top direct the people in the middle to tell the people at the bottom what to do” (Patterson, 1992, p.49). This method is still with us today.



The theory of organization and management has progressed through a number of stages: “scientific management”; the “human relations approach”; “behavioral school” of management; the “systems approach” and most recently, a mix of “total quality,” “outcomes-based education,” and “campus based management” orientations (Grogan, 1996). Grogan also comments that a current superintendent’s main responsibilities are to impart democratic qualities to a school system.

In summary, the role of the superintendent started as being the keeper of the schools, with the board’s making almost all policy and administrative decisions of importance. This role has evolved to the superintendent’s becoming the chief executive officer of the school organization (Stufflebeam, 1995). Our first superintendents were pioneers in reforming schools and training future school leaders as replacements (Dykes, 1965). The consolidation of school districts in the 1950s, the social upheaval of the 1960’s and 1970s and the financial drought of the 1980s and 1990s fueled this change in approach.

### Major Job Responsibilities

Although the role of the superintendent started out to be a simple one, keeper of the schools, it has become much more complex. The superintendent must effectively deal with a number of different stakeholders: the federal, state and local courts; the school board; professional and support staff and unions; the media; student and parent groups; public and private funding agencies; professional educational groups; colleges and universities and the local community. Writ (1990) said that much of the changing role of the superintendency could be attributed to public expectations. He also stated that the superintendency is truly one of the most complex leadership roles in our society.

The role of the superintendent was an evolutionary one closely associated with changing social factors. The evolution had three phases. The first started with the implementation of the superintendent's position in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time the role of the superintendent was one of record keeper and schoolmaster, supervising students and teachers. All other decisions were made by the school board. During the latter parts of stage one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, superintendents became responsible for all operations of the district. They were free to make day-to-day decisions that were usually not subject to school board approval (Callahan, 1996). The changing nature of the economy and culture of America, first driven by rural farms and later driven by manufacturing, was also beginning to be seen influencing the management of our schools.

But this change didn't occur overnight. Cubberley, a (former) superintendent in the late 1800's, called this transitional time one of "struggling to become true professionals" (1922, pg. 51). This struggle for professionalism was the beginning of the modern day definition of the superintendent. The "grand old men" (Ellwood Cubberley, George Strayer, and Frank Spaulding) crusaded for an executive style of leadership (Glass, 1992). This group was instrumental in reforming schools and school boards. Perhaps more importantly, they laid the groundwork necessary to preparing future superintendents to be able to provide civic leadership, scientific management, and established business values in the schools.

An example of how this was accomplished follows. In 1898 Cubberley brought his experiences as superintendent of schools to a new level. He accepted an appointment as Assistant Professor of Education at Stanford University with the challenge of

transforming the field of education into a respectable one, thus saving the department from termination. He succeeded in saving the department and spread his ideology across the nation, while he failed to convince the Stanford faculty that education was a respectable discipline. He developed a power base outside of the university and reinforced his beliefs by serving as a consultant on many state and federal commissions.

The second phase of the American superintendency began in the early 1900's. At this time the role of the superintendent could be described as a "quasi-businessman" (Griffiths, 1966). Griffiths explains that superintendents in this phase used the principles of scientific management to transform their school districts an industrial model. It was during this phase that a large degree of decision making was moved from the school board to the superintendent. Superintendents were becoming more secure in their roles with the school board and public. They were becoming more assertive with their leadership.

The theories of Max Weber (1938) characterize this phase. Almost all modern organizations have the characteristics outlined by Weber- a division of labor, a hierarchy of authority, rules and regulations, and a career orientation. The role of the superintendent could be compared with that of a machine routinizing production. In this comparison, the superintendent would emphasize precision, speed, clarity, regularity, reliability and efficiency. This would be achieved through a fixed division of tasks, hierarchical supervision, and detailed rules and regulations. This use of a bureaucratic model emphasizes specialization of tasks and routine operating rules. The characteristics associated with the superintendency included an increase in regulations, formal

communications, centralized decision making, and a sharp distinction between administration and staff (Lundenburg & Ornstein, 1991).

Also during this phase, the country was becoming more urban. Although the majority of school districts were still in rural areas, the majority of students attended city schools. With this urbanization movement came the urgency to centralize control of all management activities, including the schools. This movement, consistent with scientific management principles, was seen by many nonsuperintendent educators as not being in the best interest of the schoolchildren and the schools they attended (Glass, 1992).

The third phase of the superintendency had its roots around the 1950's and may be ending as we speak. Griffiths and Getzels (1996) described this phase of "professionalism" as one of great debate over the role of the superintendent and how to prepare an administrator for that role. The theory of social science began to influence preparation programs, where growing numbers of professors of educational administration, who have never been superintendents, began to dictate what was being taught (Sass, 1989).

In the late 1980's the role of the superintendent found itself under fire. Up until that point the successful superintendent had been a practitioner of hierarchical bureaucracy and scientific management. But this role of "expert manager" was loudly questioned by school reformers (Glass, 1992). In fact, unhappiness with the American schools often focused on the authority and control held by administrators. School critics felt that if administrators could not change the educational system, then they were guilty of not providing an equal educational opportunity for all children and the reform necessary to achieve it (Glass, 1992).

Not everyone agreed with this concept. Cuban (1988) maintains that the superintendents of the past were managers, where as superintendents of the future must be instructional leaders. In order to bridge the gap between both roles, a superintendent must use political skills to achieve the educational goals. Blumberg further developed Boyd's (1974) and Cuban's (1976) premise by stating that modern superintendents must be politically driven. By this assertion he meant that the traditional views and expectations of the superintendent may have directly conflicted with the desires and demands for educational reform and restructuring (Boyd, 1984). He went on to say that there was a need for superintendents to acquire the skills and attitudes necessary for conflict resolution.

In summary, the major job responsibilities of the superintendent now fall into three categories: educational, managerial and political. The role of the superintendent is to maintain these three roles simultaneously. How is this accomplished?

#### Leading the Organization

Rost (1993) spent many hours researching the definitions of leadership. He analyzed 221 definitions (of leadership) from materials that were written from 1900 to 1990. These definitions followed an evolutionary process, which showed the changes in the perception of leadership. The following outlines the key beliefs in each decade starting with the 1900's.

From 1900 to 1929, leadership definitions emphasized control and centralization of power. Even then there were differences of opinion. Moore (1927) defined leadership as "the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation" (p.124). Schenk (1928) provided a different view. To

him “leadership is the management of men by persuasion and inspiration rather than direct or implied threat of coercion” (p. 111).

In the 1930’s, the idea of the group phenomenon or social process emerged. The idea of domination was questioned. The view of leadership as control and authority had clearly lost its dominance among those who wrote about leadership in the decade before World War II. This trend continued into succeeding decades.

“Leadership is personality in action under group conditions....It is interaction between specific traits of one person and other traits of the many, in such a way that the course of action of the many is changed by the one” (Bogardus, 1934, p.3).

The group approach of understanding leadership dominated leadership literature during the 1940’s. This era represented a significant movement away from viewing leadership as domination and control. Reuter (1941) stated that “leadership is the result of an ability to persuade or direct men, apart from the prestige or power that comes from office or other external circumstances” (p.133). Leadership was also believed to be “the behavior of the individual while he is involved in directing group activities” (Hemphill, 1949, p.4).

The leadership studies of the 1950’s continued to endorse the group theory or group approach, but with the influence of behaviorists. This influence of democratic ideology on defining leadership was perhaps the most important development of this decade. Leadership was defined as the relationship that developed shared goals (Hemphill, 1958) or “...what leaders do in groups” (Gibb, 1954, p.884).

During the 1960’s, increasing support for viewing leadership as a behavior that influences people toward shared goals emerged (Seeman, 1960). Leadership was “influencing actions of others in a shared approach to common or compatible goals”

(Gibb, 1969, p.270). Merton (1969) defined leadership as “an interpersonal relationship in which others comply because they want to, not because they have to” (p.2614).

Leadership became a serious topic of study for management science and organizational behaviorists during the 1970's. During this period, we see a shift from the group approach of the social psychologists to the organizational behavior approach of the management scholars (Rost, 1993). This approach would extend into the 1980's.

Leadership was a term used to define human interaction.

“Leadership is a process by which individuals take an initiative to assist a group to move towards the production goals that are acceptable to maintain the group, and to dispose of those needs of individuals within the group that impelled them to join it” (Boles & Davenport, 1975, p.117).

The 1980's and 1990's saw leadership “recast as great men and women with certain preferred traits influencing followers to do what the leaders wish in order to achieve group goals that reflect excellence defined as some kind of higher level effectiveness” (Rost, 1993, p. 91). The influence of the industrial paradigm on leadership theory was great and very persuasive. Conceptual frameworks of leadership in the 1980's would explain leadership as doing the leader's wishes, achieving group or organizational goals, as management, as influence, and as transformations (Rost, 1993).

How does this relate to the role of the superintendent? Clearly there are different views as to how the superintendent should lead the organization. There are studies that investigate the role of the superintendent as a leader who guides a school from “an existing state to a preferred one” (Hord, 1993, p.2). Hord states that although we know much about superintendents in terms of goal setting, strategic planning and school board relations, we still know little about superintendent effectiveness in leading school reform issues (1993). Cuban (1984) pointed out this deficiency out several years ago. He

maintained that due to lack of research in this area “no facts...exist on superintendent behaviors that cause district improvement through their leadership” (p.146).

In recent years attention has been paid to the superintendent as an instructional leader (Glass, 1993; Myers, 1992). Keeping in mind the political aspect of the position of superintendent, Cuban (1988) stated that in the past the superintendent’s instructional role was overshadowed by his managerial role. But an overlapping of the two occurs when the superintendent uses political skills to achieve educational ones. Without political awareness, it is unlikely that the superintendent would be able to obtain the necessary resources or community support to bring about school reform. This is accomplished through leadership.

Recent studies of exemplary superintendents report that these leaders are working in districts where there is “a strong emphasis on educational leadership” (Glass, 1992, p.67). In his 1992 study of the skills of effective superintendents, Glass (1992) reports that the most important performance areas for superintendents are environment and curriculum. But there is still little research about the leadership role of the superintendent in the course she “might take in order to develop curricula and provide instructional models” (p.25).

The American Association of School Administrators (1993) has recently provided specific guidelines for a superintendent to follow through the publication of the pamphlet *Professional Standards of the Superintendency*. According to this pamphlet, superintendents must be creative, flexible, and visionary. They are also to be collaborative leaders who will need to address “a growing trend toward school-based management and decision-making as school districts become increasingly decentralized



and local schools become more autonomous”(p. 14). These trends lead away from the earlier ones of centralization and consolidation of school districts and focus on charismatic, authoritative school management (Grogan, 1996).

In this climate of a more unpredictable community environment, the superintendent’s role will be more of a “choreographer” or “orchestrator” (Crowson, 1987) of district restructuring. This also suggests that a different type of superintendent in terms of personal characteristics is needed for the future (Grogan, 1996). Johnson (1993) states that superintendents today will be “well served with a new model of leadership” (p.29). She believes that this new approach to leadership needs to be more educationally informed and less business directed. Even though Hord (1993) believed that “the act of politics has taken precedence over the craft of instruction in the superintendency (p.4), both factors are vital to the improvement of learning in our schools (Grogan, 1996).

Two frameworks that have been associated with leading organizations in the public and private sector are the human resource framework and the political framework. Both can be seen in the role of the superintendent.

A superintendent acting in the human resource frame would operate in a fashion that emphasized the need to meet the individual’s and the organization’s needs. She would acknowledge that the needs of the organization and the needs of the individual must be a match. In managing interpersonal and group dynamics, she would employ strategies that enhance mutuality and collaboration (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

According to Blasé (1991), “Schools are complex, unpredictable social organizations that are extremely vulnerable to a host of powerful external and internal forces. Leadership in schools is often limited as a result of dealing with... the daily

dynamics of social influence in schools”(p.32). In order to be effective, the superintendent must be aware of the political frame.

The political frame views organizations as political arenas that are very much alive and vocal with a menu of complex individual and group interests. This political frame lends itself well to a superintendent’s organization. It insists that organizational goals are set through negotiations among the members of the coalition (Bolman, 1991). Each member of the organization provides a different perspective and resource in the bargaining process of goal setting. It also views authority as only one of many forms of power. Although it takes into account the needs of the individual and group, it “focuses on situations of scarce resources and incompatible preferences where needs collide” (Bolman, 1991).

This political perspective is most closely in tune with the current realities of the superintendency. Blumberg (1985) points out that the modern superintendent, as opposed to those earlier in the century, must be more politically driven. Due to the disenchantment of the public with American schools, superintendents often find themselves the target of criticism. The tension that existed in society during the 1970’s and 1980’s spilled over into the schools and led to a superintendency much different from the one that existed during the quiet years of the 1950’s (Campbell, 1990). The traditional views and expectations of future superintendents may conflict with the desires and demands for substantial institutional restructuring.

When Cuban (1988) analyzed the historical trends and associated research of the role of the superintendent, he found that the managerial and political roles of the superintendent dominate superintendent behavior as opposed to the instructional

leadership role. Glass (1992) also reported that the political nature of the superintendent's position dominates practice in these changing times.

### Professional Training

How do we prepare and make our superintendents aware of these challenges? What do we have in place to ensure their success for the future? The next section will describe the past and present opportunities for professional training for the position of the superintendent.

Training is a vital part of any profession including the superintendency. But the history of preparation for this position has not been as consistent and defined as the training for other professions such as medicine, law, and accounting (Carter, 1993). Each of these professions has national and state boards that dictate a well-defined process for obtaining licensure. In contrast, the American school superintendent's professional career most likely starts in the classroom, moves on to a building level administrative position, then maybe a central office position (depending on the size of the district) or directly into a superintendency.

Formal training for the superintendency is sketchy at best. As mentioned, our first practicing superintendents often returned to the classroom to groom aspiring administrators for key positions. This task was taken over by universities that developed programs in educational leadership focusing on theory and application.

Former superintendents, such as Cubberley, returned to the college classroom as teachers to train and place students in key city superintendencies. Their curriculum focused on solving what they considered to be educational problems. If you were preparing to become a superintendent in the first half of the century, you would have used

a text written by the “founding fathers” of the superintendency. This book of wisdom was a compilation of procedures to follow based on the experiences of former superintendents (Glass, 1992).

There are no national standards for the training or certification of superintendents. Instead this process is dictated by individual states and varies from state to state. Most superintendents are approved for certification upon completion of “approved” programs of study sponsored by institutions of higher education. These programs vary in subject content, degree of difficulty, and required field/clinical experiences (Glass, 1992).

There has been much concern centered on the quality of academic preparation and training programs for superintendents and aspirants (Carter, 1993; Carter & Glass, 1993; Grogan, 1996; Miskel, 1990). The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has developed specific professional standards for the superintendency. They are as follows: (1) leadership and district culture; (2) policy and governance; (3) communications and community relations; (4) organizational management; (5) curriculum planning and development; (6) instructional management; (7) human resources management; and (8) values and ethics of leadership (1993). Hoyle and Oates (1994) felt that using the AASA professional standards would improve the superintendency in three areas: (1) by providing a clear focus for the selection, preparation and licensure of superintendents; (2) by promoting greater respect for the position of superintendent; (3) and by creating board members who are better informed about the role and responsibilities of the superintendent.

Most administrators enter a superintendency by earning at least one academic degree and meeting state certification requirements. All states require an academic degree

to obtain teacher certification and most states require a master's degree for administrative certification despite the fact that several states do not have administrative certificate programs (Glass, 1992).

Grogan (1996) reports that currently approximately ninety percent of the superintendents in the United States hold some form of an educational administrative certification and that thirty-six percent hold a doctorate (1996). Eighteen years ago twenty-eight percent of superintendents held doctorates (Glass, 1992). Superintendents themselves are seeing the need for more formal academic preparation for the superintendency than what is required for certification.

Ultimately, candidates for a superintendency are expected to be prepared in two ways: “(1) to have a high level of formal training, including eligibility for, if not completion of, state superintendent certification and a university degree beyond a bachelor's, and (2) to have credible prior experience on the job as an administrator capable of handling a superintendency, if not actual experience as a superintendent” (Glass, 1992).

In the state of Maine, a Master's Degree is the minimum education degree a person must hold to become certified as a Maine superintendent. Other requirements include evidence of three years of satisfactory public or private school teaching experience or three years of equivalent teaching experience in an instructional setting (e.g., military, business, post secondary institution, industry), evidence of three years of previous administrative experience in schools or equivalent experience as an administrator in an institutional setting (e.g., military, business, industry, public or private agency), and documented competency in the following areas: community relations,

school finance and budget, supervision and evaluation of personnel, federal and state civil rights and education laws, organizational theory and planning, educational leadership, educational philosophy and theory, effective instruction, curriculum development, staff development, teaching the exceptional student in the regular classroom, knowledge of the learner and the learning process and equal employment practices (20A MSRA 13019-A et seq.).

There are currently attempts to at least regionalize administrative certification requirements (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 1996) and to issue superintendent certificates through alternative certification processes.

#### Career Advancement

While aspiring superintendents are engaged in the necessary coursework to be eligible for certification, they are already on one of the many rungs of the career ladder to the superintendency. Their current position, what rungs they will touch and how long it will take them to reach the top have been studied and documented.

The pathway to the superintendency has historically been teacher, principal, and superintendent (Glass, 1992). In a 1992 nationwide study conducted by AASA, 37.7 percent of the respondents followed this track, and 30 percent followed the track of teacher, principal, central office administrator, and superintendent. In earlier studies (1960 and 1971), only 14 percent and 17 percent respectively of the superintendents had held central office positions. The larger the district the greater the percentage of individuals having held central office positions prior to employment.

A career stop at the central office provides administrators much needed training and experience for the superintendency. This idea is supported by the results of

Burnham's 1987 and 1988 studies of career patterns for two groups of superintendents. The first group was a randomly selected national sample. The second group was made up of "exemplary" superintendents. Burnham found that the exemplary group more often followed the track of teacher, principal, central office administrator, and superintendent than the randomly selected group (Burnham, 1988).

Gaertner (1981) provided us with a study of three mobility patterns for administrative advancement, two of which lead directly to the superintendency. The first pathway include the positions of a specialist, administrator of instruction (supervisor), assistant superintendent and superintendent. The second pathway included the position of assistant secondary school principal, secondary school principal, assistant/associate Superintendent, and superintendent. The third pathway seldom led to a superintendency. It included the positions of assistant elementary principal, elementary principal and superintendent. Only in the case of the superintendency are the paths of men and women similar (Stockard, 1984). But the length of time to reach a superintendency varies greatly between men and women (Grogan, 1989).

There is yet another pathway to the superintendency that is currently emerging. It is the alternative route which skips either or both of the teaching and administrative experiences currently required. Under the alternative certification program offered in New Jersey, superintendents need no experience in the principalship, and neither prospective superintendents nor administrators have to have worked as teachers (Natale, 1992). People from outside the field of education can move into an administrative position if they have a master's degree in a leadership or management field, such as business, public, or education administration, and pass a test assessing their knowledge of

leadership and management as it relates to school administration. Not everyone approves of this path. Robert Peterkin (1992), director of the urban superintendents program at Harvard University and a former Milwaukee superintendent, doesn't believe that it is possible for someone from a business background to run a school system. "None of this is magic, but I have concerns with someone going into the superintendency with no understanding of the teaching and learning process in the public schools" (p. 12).

In spite of Peterkin's perspective, this approach is gaining momentum in this time of needed school reforms and low numbers of applicants for administrative positions (AASA, 1992).

### Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction in the multifaceted and complex role of the superintendent almost sounds contradictory. Just as communities differ, so do the roles, backgrounds and expectations for superintendents (Glass, 1992). Satisfaction in one's job and how it relates to job performance has been much-debated (Klass & Michael, 1991). Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a "pleasurable feeling that results from the perception that one's job fulfills or allows for the fulfillment of one's important job values" (p.38).

During the "Human Relations Era", job satisfaction was believed to be a determinant of job performance (Kottkamp, 1990). The proponents of this era convinced theorists and administrators that a happy worker is a productive worker (Locke, 1976). This belief is still held by the majority of educators today. But through a review of the job satisfaction literature, I found that this satisfaction-causes-performance hypothesis is questioned. Brayfield and Crockett (1955) demonstrated through their research that the attitude-performance relationship is more complicated and not as straightforward as once



believed. It was also found that the correlation between the two variables, satisfaction and performance, was quite low (Vroom, 1964). What exactly do we know about this phenomenon?

Job satisfaction, motivation and reward systems are included in one area of organizational theory. The strongest influence in this area is motivation because it overlaps with both of the other two components (Pardee, 1990). Herzberg's (1959) Motivation/Hygiene Theory states that motivational factors can cause satisfaction. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory explains that people are motivated by unmet needs that are in a hierarchical order and that all lower needs must be met before we can be motivated by a higher need. McClelland's concept of achievement motivation is considered to be an outgrowth of both Herzberg's motivation/hygiene theory (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982) and Maslow's self-actualization theory (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1970).

Motivation can be defined as those forces that push or propel an individual to satisfy basic needs or wants (Yorks, 1976). The type of reward directly correlates to the need. Dressler (1986) maintains that unsatisfied needs produce a tension that results in motivation. Maslow agrees with this statement, "Only unsatisfied needs provide the source of motivation; a satisfied need provides no tension and therefore no motivation" (Burke, 1987). Yet others believe that the factors that lead to job satisfaction are solely intrinsic. When a person experiences intrinsic motivation, that person tends to be committed to the job and gains self-fulfillment through it (Aldag, 1979).

Gilbreth (1986) stated that jobs should be designed in a manner that those who perform them derive a feeling of fulfillment. This idea is central to the satisfaction perspective on job design. It suggests that fitting the characteristics of jobs to the needs

and interests of the people who perform them provides the opportunity for satisfaction at work. One approach to accomplish this is called the vertical job enrichment method. This method is based on Herzberg's Motivation Hygiene Theory, which is centered around job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Herzberg's Motivation Hygiene Theory, sometimes referred to as a two-factor theory, focuses on motivation as it relates to the accomplishment of work (Hall & Williams, 1986). Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction were the results of two separate factors. The "satisfiers" in this theory are the 'motivating factors' and the "dissatisfiers" are the "hygiene factors". Specifically the "satisfiers" are achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth. The "dissatisfiers" are company policy, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status, job security, and personal life (Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, 1959). Hygiene was defined as the sense it operates to remove hazards from the environment (Duttweiler, 1986).

Herzberg maintains that there needs to be proper management of the hygiene factors; when they are satisfied there tends to be an elimination of job dissatisfaction, but it does little in the way of motivating the individual to superior performance (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982).

Although Herzberg's theories have been attacked for reasons of lack of replication and validity of findings, his theory is still widely known and continues to stimulate interest in the areas of motivation and job satisfaction. Perhaps Herzberg's greatest accomplishment is that his work helped influence the more recent ideas that jobs need to satisfy higher order desires for growth, achievement and recognition.

Hackman and Oldman (1976) developed a theory that took into account the horizontal loading of job enlargement and Herzberg's vertical loading of job enrichment. They proposed that five core job characteristics influence a worker's experience of three critical psychological states. It was their belief that jobs in and of themselves are likely to motivate performance and contribute to employee satisfaction. In order to do so, jobs must have the following five characteristics:

1. Skill variety: the degree to which a job holder must carry out a variety of different activities and use a number of different personal skills in performing the job.
2. Task identity: the degree to which performing a job results in the completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work and a visible outcome that can be recognized as a result of personal performance.
3. Task significance: the degree to which a job has a significant impact on the lives of other people, whether those people are coworkers in the same firm or other individuals in the surrounding environment.
4. Autonomy: the degree to which the jobholder has the freedom, independence and discretion necessary to schedule work and to decide what procedures to use in carrying it out.
5. Feedback: the degree to which performing the activities required by the job provides the worker with direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

These job characteristics directly influence the degree of three critical

psychological states, the personal, internal reactions to a job. The first state is called experienced meaningfulness of work. This refers to the degree that a person feels his job is useful and valuable, not only to herself, but to the organization and community as well. The second state is called experienced responsibility for work outcomes. This state refers to the level of personal accountability and responsibility a person feels towards his job. The third state, knowledge of results, reflects the degree to which the worker maintains an awareness of the effectiveness of his work.

According to Hackman and Oldham, if workers experience these three psychological states simultaneously, the following resulted. The workers may view their jobs as interesting, challenging and important and may be motivated to perform them simply because they are so stimulating, challenging and enjoyable.

For the case of a worker not reaching this state, there are measures and guidelines that can be used in diagnosing and implementing job redesign for them (Miner, 1990). Work redesign involves improving the five core characteristics of jobs or increasing the overall motivating potential of the job.

McClelland provides us with a theory of motivation that is closely linked to the concepts of learning. The main idea of McClelland's theory is that an individual's needs are learned through coping with his environment, and since these are learned needs, rewarded behavior recurs at a higher frequency (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1979). In other words, when a need is strong, its effect will motivate the person to use the behavior necessary to satisfy the need.

McClelland's factors which reflect a high need for achievement are these:

1. Achievers like situations in which they take personal responsibility for finding solutions to problems.

2. Achievers have a tendency to set moderate achievement goals and take “calculated risks”.
3. Achievers want concrete feedback about how well they are doing (McClelland and Johnson, 1984).

This overwhelming need for achievement dominates practice. It motivates through a desire to increase one’s self-esteem through the exercise of one’s talent (Wallace, Goldstein & Nathan, 1987). In a study on school leadership, it was found that job satisfaction correlates with a leadership style that is practiced in the role of a superintendent (Koll, 1992).

In the superintendency, satisfaction can be derived from a number of activities. Gross and Trask (1964, 1976) found that satisfaction comes from different job responsibilities and differs according to sex. They found that more women derive satisfaction from supervising instruction, whereas men find more satisfaction from working on administrative tasks. Working with people was a source of satisfaction for most superintendents (Williams & Willower, 1983).

Glass (1992) found in his study of the American superintendency that nearly two-thirds of the 2500 superintendents surveyed indicated considerable satisfaction in their jobs. Prestige and status of position were cited as two of the factors that supported this data. Superintendents also felt that they were doing a “good” to “excellent” job and received satisfaction from their work. Wesson (1993) conducted a study involving fifty-one urban and rural female superintendents focusing on the following: job satisfaction, job benefits, self-fulfillment, personal strengths, and perceptions of superintendent qualities sought by school boards. She found that the superintendents involved in the

study found job satisfaction in the area of bringing about change “making a difference,” “being involved in change,” and “providing direction” ( Wesson, 1993, p. 15).

A high degree of power and control over an organization provides motivation and job satisfaction for most superintendents (Daresh, 1992). Superintendents must be aware of the culture their community represents. They must know the social structures of their constituents. Superintendent must use the mission of their organizations and their personal vision to guide and mold the policy decisions of their organization. This, the ability to exercise power and control, in itself is a powerful motivator (Daresh, 1992).

But there is also the phenomenon called the superintendent contradiction (Cuban, 1998). According to Cuban, the superintendent must simultaneously maintain three roles: the instructional role, the managerial role and the political role in order to make good school reform happen. He must play these roles in defining and carrying out the purpose of school for her community. During the 1980's the unhappiness with school reform often focused on the authority and control that superintendents held. Blumberg points out that the modern day superintendent, as opposed to those superintendents employed earlier in the century, must be more politically driven. In other words, superintendents need to be aware that the traditional views and expectations of the superintendent of the 2000's may at times directly conflict with desires and demands for substantial institutional restructuring.

### Conclusion

Public pressure on superintendents for accountability is likely to increase in the next century. While most Americans agree that schools need to be reformed and improved, there is no consensus as to how this goal should be accomplished. This

situation poses both a problem and an opportunity for superintendents. Given that there is no agreed upon path or formula for school reform, solutions will most likely be developed or chosen at the local level (Glass, 1992). This is perhaps the greatest challenge for future superintendents.

School superintendents hold one of the most challenging and satisfying positions in American society. They are the CEO's of what are often the largest employers in town and the lightning rod for every social and economic problem facing our nation (Miller, AASA, 1992). However, in recent years, there is increasing recognition that fewer people are expressing interest in this position (Daresh, 1992; Glass, 1992; MSMA, 1999; & Volp 1995). Because of this apparent discrepancy between the motivators in terms of rewards associated with the position and the declining availability of aspiring personnel for this position, further research is necessary to identify the underlying causes.

This review of the literature has traced the evolutionary journey of the superintendency from one of record keeper to one of power in the school organization. Cubberley (1898) was instrumental in bringing this position of manager of the schools to a new level. He laid the groundwork for Griffith's (1996) "quasi-business man" phase which outlines the managerial responsibilities of the superintendent. Cuban (1988) tells us that superintendents of the future need to be instructional leaders. But in order to lead successfully, Blasé (1991) maintains that superintendents must acquire the skills needed to succeed in the political arena.

Four areas, educational leadership, managerial, political and job satisfaction, identified from this review provided the basis for the development of the survey factors that either act as motivators or deterrents for potential candidates in their pursuit of a

superintendent's position. These factors also helped current superintendents report the realities of the position and depending on how they ranked each area, their satisfaction in their position (Daresh, 1992; Glass, 1992).

As outlined in this review, there are plenty of motivators for potential candidates to derive satisfaction while performing the duties of a superintendent. These motivators include the ability to impact change, the ability to exercise power and control over the organization and the salary and fringe benefits (Daresh & Playko, 1992). Williams and Willower (1983) reported that working with people was a source of satisfaction for most superintendents. Glass (1992) found that superintendents found considerable satisfaction in their jobs and in turn were motivated to continue in their positions.

There are clear pathways to this position following the track of teacher, principal, and superintendent or teacher, principal, central office administrator, superintendent (Grogan, 1996). There are also varied methods in place to earn certification ranging from a high level of formal training, including eligibility for a state superintendent certificate to having credible prior experience on the job as an administrator capable of handling a superintendency (Glass, 1992).

There are studies (Daresh & Playko, 1992; Glass, 1992; Volp, 1995; Wesson, 1993) that testify that superintendents are satisfied in their job and believe they are doing a "good" to "excellent" job (Glass, 1992), and that there is a need for superintendents to blaze the trail for school reform.

Yet, with all of this in mind, statistics support a lessening of interest among potential candidates for a superintendent's position. The importance of the



superintendency, above all, should serve as the most valid reason to motivate educators to pursue this position as a career choice.

This Review of the Literature illustrates the emergence of the three major categories of job responsibilities of the superintendent: educational leadership, managerial and political. The factors used in the three survey instruments - Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Students, Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Certificate Holders, and Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Superintendents - were developed as a result of this Review of the Literature.

## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology

#### Introduction

This chapter contains a brief summary of the relevant research previously conducted on the topic of supply and demand for the superintendency. It describes the three sample groups: superintendents, current certificate holders and potential certificate holders in terms of demographics. The development of the items used in the three survey instruments: *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Students*, *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Certificate Holders*, and *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Superintendents* is provided as well as the procedure used to obtain the research data. Lastly, an explanation of the analyses of data is included.

#### Research History

Apparently the first supply and demand superintendent's study was conducted in 1923 under the direction of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association. Subsequently, the American Association of School Administrators conducted a 10 year study in 1952 and has since produced a major survey document every ten years. These reports took varied forms, including yearbooks and survey project reports. The formal names of each of these studies are: "The Status of the Superintendent in 1923"; "Educational Leadership, 1933"; "The American School Superintendent, 1952"; "Profile of the School Superintendent, 1960"; "The American School Superintendent, 1971"; "The American School Superintendency, 1982; and "The Study

of the American School Superintendency, 1992". Due to World War II, no report was conducted during the 1940-46 period.

The content and the direction of the studies of the superintendency have been varied, as have been the sampling techniques, titles and issues covered. All of the studies defined superintendents, who they were and what their job responsibilities were in relation to districts. Only within the last ten years have there been studies that have looked at the motivators and deterrents associated with the superintendency (Daresh & Playko, 1992; Read, 1998; Volp, 1995). These studies either targeted practicing superintendents, those certified to be superintendents but not employed in this capacity or those in advanced degree programs in educational administration. To date, there has not been a study that has examined these three groups simultaneously and compared their perceptions of the position.

Specifically, this research was designed to examine the factors that influence potential and current certificate holders in their pursuit of obtaining a superintendent's position. This study documents and compares through the use of three survey instruments the responses of all three groups. The following questions were addressed:

1. What are the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders that influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position?
2. What factors influence current superintendents to stay in their positions?
3. How do currently employed and potential applicants differ in their views of elements of the superintendency?

This research utilized three samples: current Maine superintendent certificate holders, students enrolled in graduate administration classes, and currently practicing superintendents. These three groups were selected because of their unique positioning on the career ladder that leads to the superintendency (Burnham, 1988). Together they provide a progressive view of the superintendency. Their combined insights may help to better explain the reason(s) behind the declining interest in the number of people interested in the superintendency.

### The Sample

The first two groups, students enrolled in administration classes and current certificate holders, were selected for this study on the basis that they represent, in varying degrees, the pools of candidates, present and future, for superintendencies in the state of Maine.

#### Potential Certificate Holders

The student group, through their enrollment in educational administrative graduate level classes, is positioned on the pathway that leads to the superintendency. They are at the threshold of considering the superintendency as a career choice (Daresh and Playko, 1992). Most are in the novice stage of administrative careers. Their intent to continue on the ladder to pursue the superintendency as a career choice coupled with their reasons behind this decision will ultimately better explain what the future pool of candidates for the superintendency looks like in the state of Maine.

This pool of respondents consisted of one hundred students enrolled in the Educational Leadership Master of Science program or the Educational Administration Advanced Study Program in the University of Maine system. This group included

primarily teachers or beginning administrators. They were surveyed for two reasons. The first was their placement on the career ladder to the superintendency. The second was based on research that reported that superintendents begin a master's program in educational administration after about three years of classroom teaching (Glass, 1992).

Instructors of Educational Administration classes at the University of Southern Maine and the University of Maine were very accommodating when contacted by phone and in person when asked to distribute the cover letters and surveys to their students. The surveys were returned in prepaid envelopes that were provided.

### Certificate Holders

All **248** people who hold valid Maine Superintendent certificates (MSMA, 2000) are included in this study. These certificate holders represent a range of interest in the superintendency, from those who aspire to a superintendent's position to those who have retired from one. This group includes the most immediate pool of candidates for the superintendency, those who are next in line in terms of credentials. In the academic sense they are ready. They have taken the necessary coursework to prepare them for the position of superintendent and as a requirement for obtaining their superintendent's certificate, they have taught school and held an administrative position (including a superintendency).

This group includes, but is not limited to, principals, assistant principals, special education directors, vocational directors, assistant superintendents and retirees of careers in education. It also includes a group who applied for certification simply because they qualified, with no real intention of ever pursuing a position (MSMA, 1998). Typically, a

person decides to become a superintendent while serving as a building principal or in a central office position (Glass, **1992**).

### Superintendents

The third pool consists of currently (**1999**) employed superintendents (**N=147**). March (**1987**) speculated in his study that experienced superintendents could very well provide the practical information that will enable school bureaucracies to work (cited in Crowson, **1987**). This group was in the best position to report the realities of the superintendency and their reasons for staying in the position.

This group included all currently practicing Maine superintendents. As a group they have lived the realities of the position with varying tenures and educational experiences. In line with this, they could report their perceptions of the rigor of the position on a statewide basis. One hundred forty-seven practicing superintendents were surveyed to ensure that all sizes and types of school systems were represented. This group was included to provide a current and realistic view of the present day superintendency. Their reported information was used as baseline data to provide information about the present day superintendency and also to be used in the comparative analysis of the data collected from the potential pool of candidates for the superintendency.

### Survey Response

Of the **494** surveys mailed, 236 (**48%**) surveys were returned. Only one was found unusable. A breakdown of the returned surveys is as follows: 82 of the **146** (56%) superintendent surveys mailed were returned, **90** of the **248** (36%) certificate holder

surveys mailed were returned, and 64 of the 100 (64%) student surveys were returned.

Respondents returning the survey questionnaire generally completed all relevant items.

### Superintendent

#### Certification

Of the 82 responding superintendents (10 female and 72 male), 17 (20%) held an Assistant Superintendent's certificate, 44 (54%) held a Principal's certificate, 9 (11%) held an Assistant Principal's certificate, 7 (8%) held a Director of Special Education certificate and 40 (49%) held Teacher certificates. Other certificates held included Special Education Consultant, Curriculum Coordinator, Speech Clinician, Director of Vocational Education, and Director of Guidance.

#### Age

The age of the respondents is as follows: 4% of the reporting superintendents were between the ages of 30 and 39, 17% were between the ages of 40 and 49, 79% were over the age of 50, of which 14.8% were over 60 years of age (See Table 1).

Table 1: Age of Practicing Superintendents

Group	n	Percentage
30 – 39	3	4%
40 -49	14	17%
50 –59	52	64%
60+	12	15%

### Location

The responding superintendents represented all geographic regions of the state. Twenty-two percent lived in the Central region, 21% lived in the Southern region, 12% lived in the Aroostook region, 15% lived in the Mid Coast region and 10% lived in the Down East, North Central and Western regions (See Figure 1).

### Interest in Remaining in Position

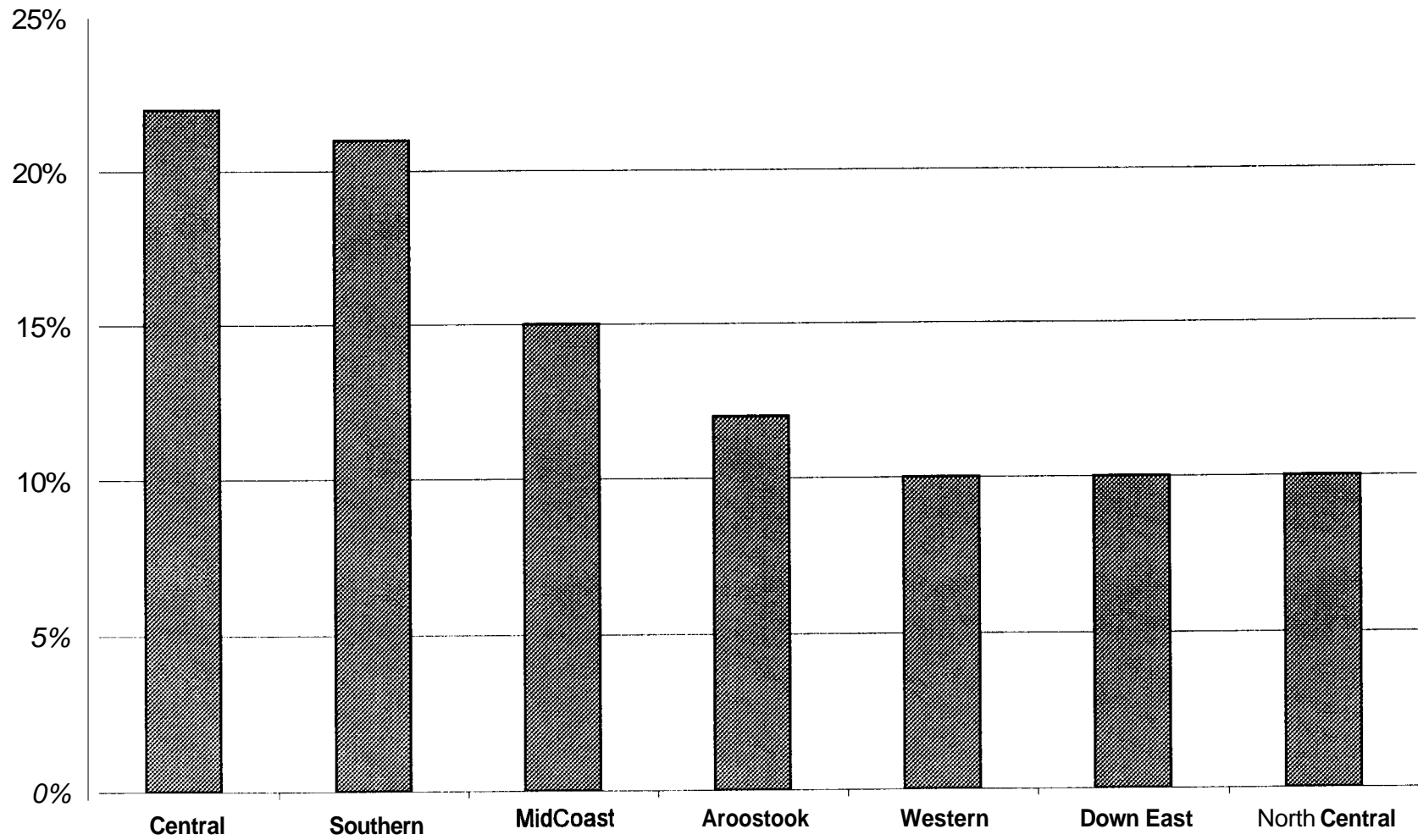
One of the main purposes for collecting this data is to determine how the factors identified by current superintendents influence their decision to stay in the superintendency. Seventy-four percent of the superintendents reported that they were satisfied in their current positions. One factor that may have influenced this response was that over 95% of the responding superintendents' families were supportive of their decision to be a superintendent. It was also reported that 55% of the superintendents thought they would be interested in applying for another superintendent's position, while only 23% were undecided (See Table 2).

Table 2: Superintendents Interested in Applying for Another Superintendency

Group	n	Percentage
Interested	45	55%
Not Interested	18	22%
Undecided	19	23%



**Figure 1: Participating Superintendent by Region**



### Travel Time

Practicing Superintendents are well aware of the time commitment required for the position. Ten percent of the superintendents would be willing to travel more than 60 minutes to a new job, while 45% preferred to keep their commute under 30 minutes.

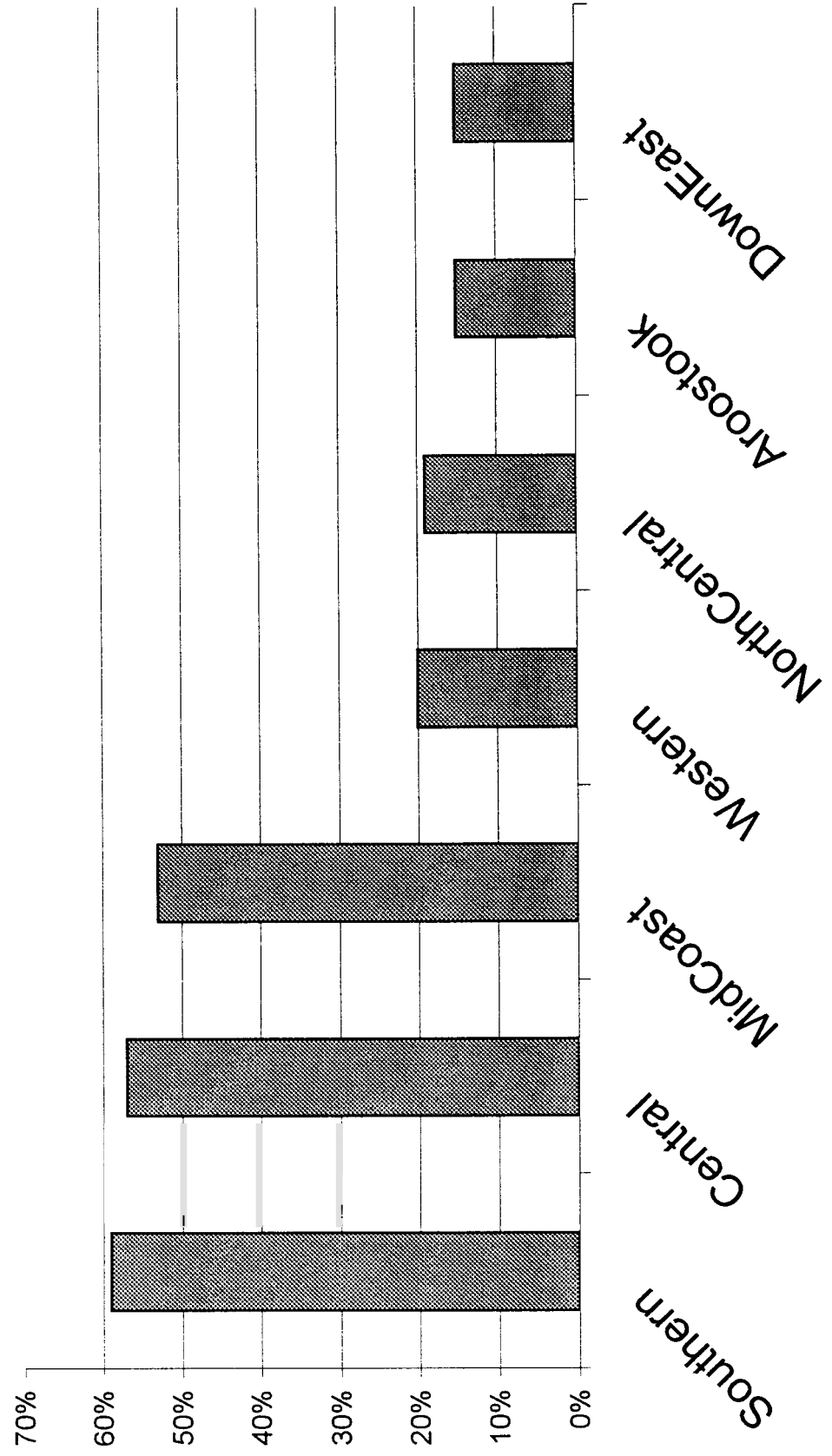
### Job Satisfaction

The majority (89%) of the superintendents reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied in their current position. As reported, the respondents also indicated that 95% of their families are either very supportive or supportive of them in this position. When asked which region they would consider for employment, they were given a choice of choosing more than one region. Of the seven regions, three appeared to receive the most interest: the Mid- Coast (53%), the Central region (57%), and the Southern region (59%). Twenty percent or less of the practicing superintendents were interested in superintendencies in the Down East (15%), Aroostook (15%), North Central (19%), or Western (20%) regions of the state (See Figure 2).

### System Preference

Again, respondents were given the option of choosing more than one system structure. The majority of superintendents, 82%, reported that they would prefer to work in a School Administrative School District that was governed by one school board and provided schools for a K-12 student population. A total of 73% would consider working in the same structure but without a high school within the district. Fifty percent would like to work with a school board and a city council in a K-12 structure, while less than 3% were interested in a superintendency that entailed working with multiple school

Figure 2: Region in Which Superintendent Would Apply



boards in either a K-12 or K-8 structure. The group was split in terms of their preference of having a high school as part of their system with 52% preferring one and 48% either not preferring a high school or being neutral.

In summary, the responding superintendents represent all seven superintendent regions and have the support of their families in terms of their career choice. Over half would apply for another superintendent's position despite the fact that 79% are over 50 years of age. These practicing superintendents would apply for positions in all seven regions, but are most interested in the southern, central and mid-coast regions. As far as system preference, an SAD with a single school board and high school was the most popular choice (82%) for those interested in applying for another superintendency.

#### Certificate Holder

According to state data (Maine Department of Education, 2000), a total of 248 people hold valid Maine Superintendent certificates but are not employed as superintendents. The *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Certificate Holders* was mailed to all 248 certificate holders. Ninety surveys were returned (36%). A breakdown of the returned surveys is as follows: 26 female (29%) and 62 male (71%). Only one was found unusable.

#### Certification

Certificates held by this group of respondents are as follows: 29% held Assistant Superintendent certificates, 73% held Principal certificates, 12% held Assistant Principal certificates and Director of Special Education certificates, and 5 1% held Teacher certificates. Other certificates held included Curriculum Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, Special Education Consultant, Reading Specialist, Vocational Director,

Literacy Specialist, Director of Adult Education, and Library/Media Specialist (See Figure 3).

### Age

The reported ages of the certificate holders were as follows. Of the responding certificate holders, 1% were between the ages of 20 and 29, 1% were between the ages of 30 and 39, 18% were between the ages of 40 and 49, while 77% were over the age of 50, of which 16.7% were over 60 years of age (See Table 3).

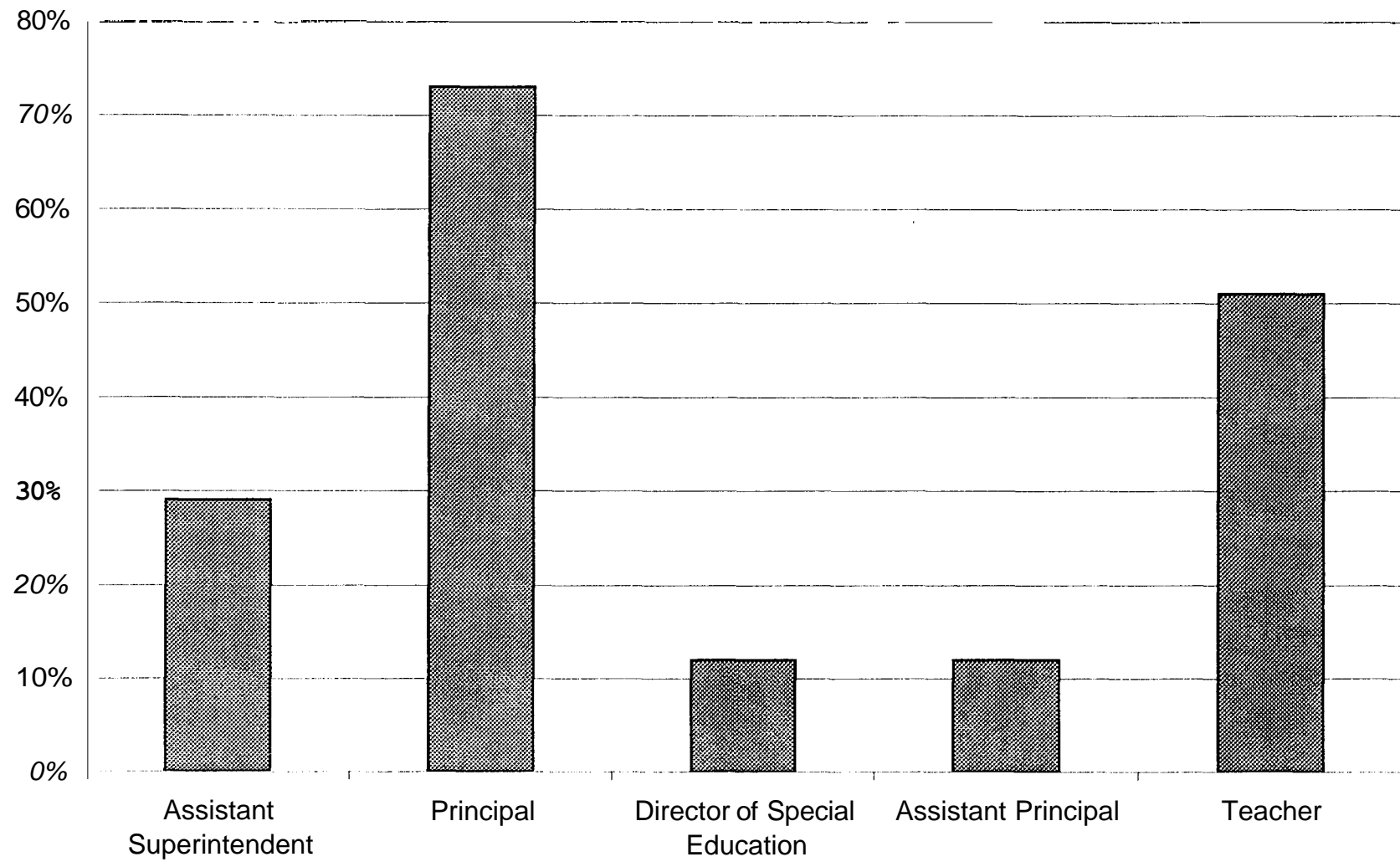
Table 3: Age of Certificate Holders

Group	n	Percentage
30 –39	1	1%
40 – 49	16	18%
50 – 59	55	63%
60+	15	17%

### Location

This group of certificate holders represented all seven superintendent regions. Six percent of the respondents lived in the Aroostook region, 6% lived in Down East region, 8% lived in the North Central, 8% lived in the Western region, 20% lived in the Mid Coast region, 26% lived in the Central, and 26% in the Southern regions.

Figure 3: Additional Certification of Superintendent Certificate Holders



### Interest in Applying for a Superintendent's Position

Despite the fact that this group is on the pathway to the superintendency (AASA, 1988), only 22% of the respondents reported that they were interested in applying for a superintendency. The remaining 78% were either undecided (29%) or uninterested (49%) (See Table 4).

Table 4: Certificate Holders Interested in Applying for a Superintendency

Group	n	Percentage
Interested	19	22%
Not Interested	43	49%
Undecided	25	29%

Of the total group, 33 (13%) respondents had applied for a superintendent's position at some point. From those who had applied, 88% had applied more than once with 16% not receiving an interview.

One influence that may have a positive effect on the group who had applied for a superintendent's position is that over 75% of their families were supportive of their decision to pursue the superintendency as a career choice.

### Regions of Interest in Applying for a Superintendent's Position

As with the practicing superintendents, there was more interest in applying for a superintendent's position in the Central region (51%), in the Southern region (43%), and in the Mid-Coast region (39%). Interest in the remaining four regions is as follows: 29% in the Western region, and 18% or less in the North Central (18%), Down East (16%), or

Aroostook (12 %) regions (See Figure 4). Seventeen percent of the respondents were willing to travel more than 60 minutes to a new job while 83 % preferred to keep their commute under an hour.

#### System Preference

The majority of respondents, 78%, reported that they would prefer to work in a School Administrative District that was governed by one school board and provided schools for a K-12 student population. The second choice (72%) would be to work in the same structure but without a high school within the district. Sixty percent would consider working with a school board and a city council in a K-12 structure while less than 4% were interested in a superintendency that entailed working with multiple school boards in either a K-12 or K-8 structure. Forty-six percent of the respondents reported that they would prefer to have a high school as part of their system, while 10% would not and 44% were neutral (see Figure 5).

In summary, 77% of the respondents were over the age of fifty, of which 17% were 60 or older. Only 22% were interested in applying for a superintendent's position. Interest in a superintendent's position lies primarily in three regions: the Central region, the Southern region and the Mid Coast region. This group has strong (75%) family support to pursue a superintendent's position as a career choice.

#### Potential Certificate Holder

It is reported that students enrolled in educational administration coursework are on one of the pathways that lead to the superintendency (AASA, 1988). Although there is more than one pathway to the superintendency, all pathways begin with advanced



Figure 4: Regions In Which Certificate Holders Would **Apply**

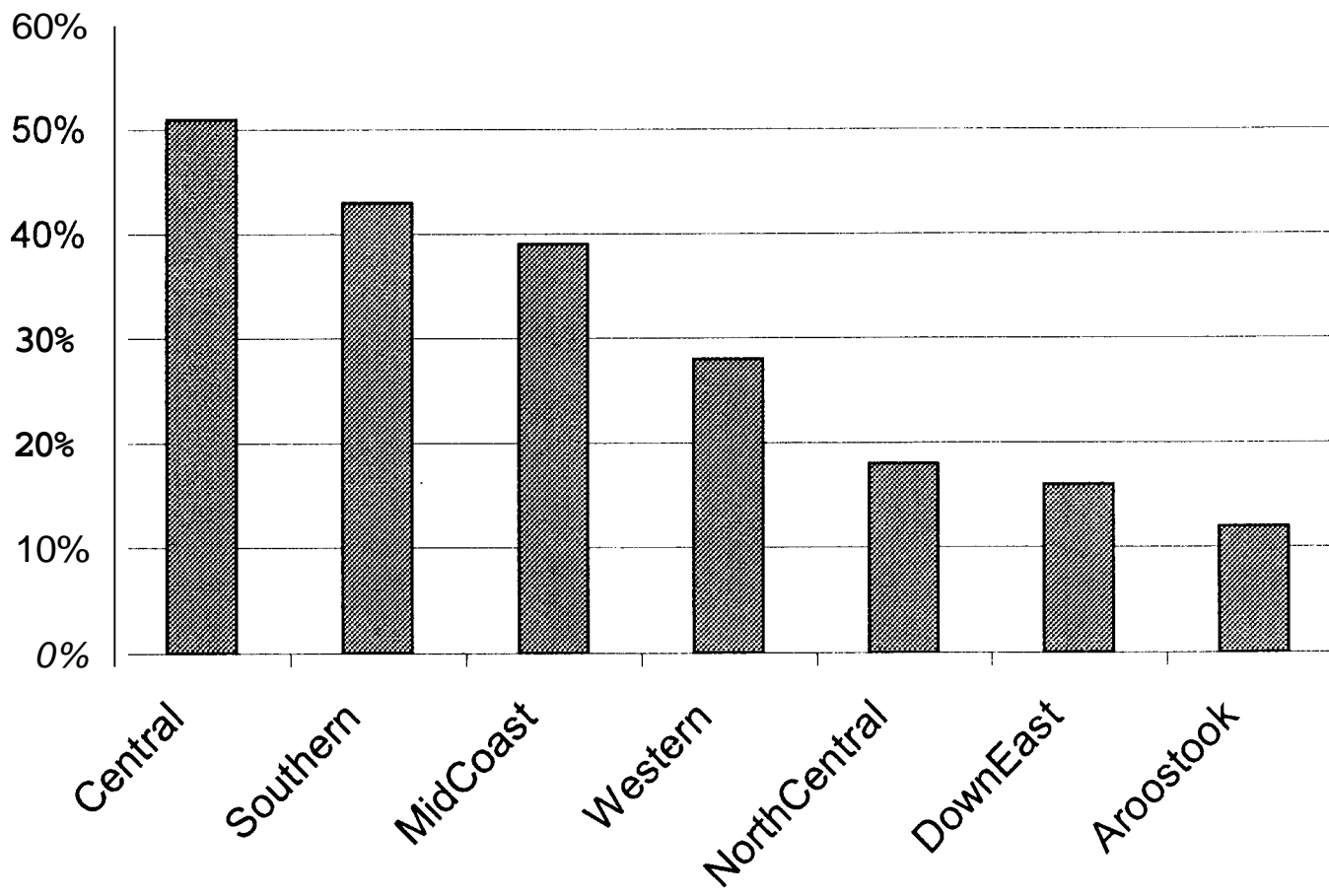
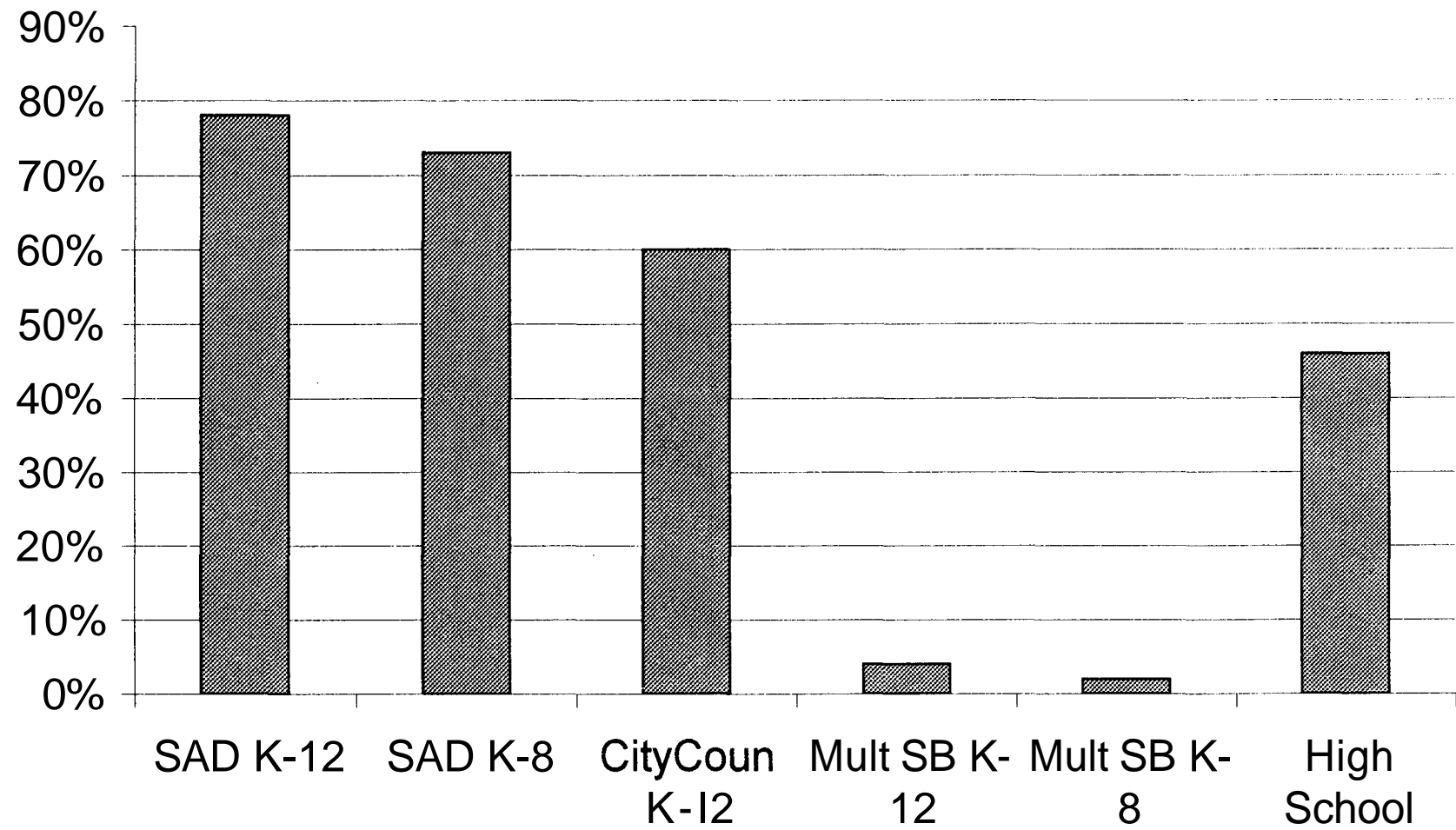


Figure 5: System Preference



coursework in administration. The student group, potential certificate holders, was chosen for their placement on this continuum. Although they are at the novice stage of their career in administration, their perceptions and intent are both valuable and necessary to help determine the factors influencing potential candidates, such as themselves, to pursue the superintendency as a career choice.

### Certification

Of the 100 students enrolled in a graduate level Educational Administration class in the University of Maine system, 64 responded to this survey (24 female and 40 male). Of this group, 14% held Principal certification, 50% held Assistant Principal certification, 2% held certification for Director of Special Education, and 89% held Teacher certification. A total of 12% held other certificates which included Curriculum Coordinator, Guidance Director, Director of Student Activities, School to Career Coordinator, Dean of Faculty, Behavior Strategist, and Technology Trainer.

### Future Certification

The student respondents were enrolled in educational administration classes for a variety of reasons. Most were completing coursework for certification requirements. Of the respondents, only 19% reported that they planned on applying for a superintendent's certificate in the future along with only 13% planning on applying for an assistant superintendent's certificate. More were interested in applying for a principal's certificate (77%) coupled with 42% planning on applying for assistant principal's certification. Fewer than 13% were planning on applying for certification in the areas of Director of Special Education, Curriculum Coordinator, Athletic Director, and Teacher (see Table 5).

Table 5: Future Certification for Potential Certificate Holder

Certification	<u>n</u>	Percentage
Superintendent	12	19%
Assistant Superintendent	8	13%
Principal	49	77%
Assistant Principal	27	42%
Director of Special Education	8	13%
Teacher	8	13%
Other	4	4%

### Age

This group of respondents were at the beginning stages of a career in administration and their reported ages reflect that status. Eighty-five percent of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 49, with 41% of the respondents between the ages of 30 and 39, and 44% between the ages of 40 and 49. The remaining 16% were split equally between being younger than 29 (8%) or older than 50 (8%) (See Table 6).

Table 6: Age of Potential Certificate Holder

Group	n	Percentage
20 – 29	5	8%
30 – 39	26	41%
40 – 49	28	44%
50 – 59	2	3%
60+	3	5%

#### Location

Exactly 50% of the respondents lived in the Southern region, while 14% lived in either the Mid-Coast or Central region, 11% in the Western region, 8% in the North Central region and less than 3% in the Down East region.

#### Interest in Applying for a Position

Despite the fact that this group was at the beginning stages of their careers in administration, with most still teaching full time (63%), 19% said that they were interested in applying for superintendent's position and 19% were undecided.

An influencing factor for this response may be that 76% of their families were supportive of this decision, while only 7% were clearly non-supportive and 17% were indifferent.

### Regions of Interest in Applying for a Superintendent's Position

Exactly 50% of the potential certificate holders live and work in the Southern region. It appears that they would like to seek a superintendent's position in that region as well. Sixty-two percent of the total respondents reported that they would apply for a superintendency in the Southern region followed by 38% in the Mid-Coast region, 14% in the North Central region and Down East, and less than 4% in the Aroostook region.

For a superintendent's position, 35% of the respondents would travel no more than 30 minutes, while 62% would commute up to an hour.

### System Preference

There were five choices of educational systems provided in this study: SAD with a single school board K-12, SAD with a single school board K-8, Single Municipality, Union/CSD with multiple school board's K-12, and Union/CSD with multiple school boards K-8. The majority of respondents, 69%, reported that they would prefer to work in a School Administrative School District that was governed by one school board and provided schools for a K-12 student population. Fifty percent would consider working in the same structure but without a high school within the district. Sixty-three percent would consider working with a school board and a city council in a K-12 structure, while less than 8% were interested in a superintendency that entailed working with multiple school boards in either a K-12 or K-8 structure. Forty-six percent of the respondents reported that they would prefer to have a high school as part of their system, while 10% would not and 44% were neutral.

In summary, the group of potential certificate holders are significantly younger than the superintendents and the certificate holders. Thirty-nine percent are either

interested or undecided about pursuing the superintendency as a career choice. If they do choose the superintendency as a career choice, they will have family support (76%).

### Group Comparisons

A further comparison of demographic information reported by the three groups is made through the use of Chi-square tests. This reported information is important in that it provides the reader with an accurate and current descriptive comparison of each pool of respondents in terms of their present situations and their intent for future career plans.

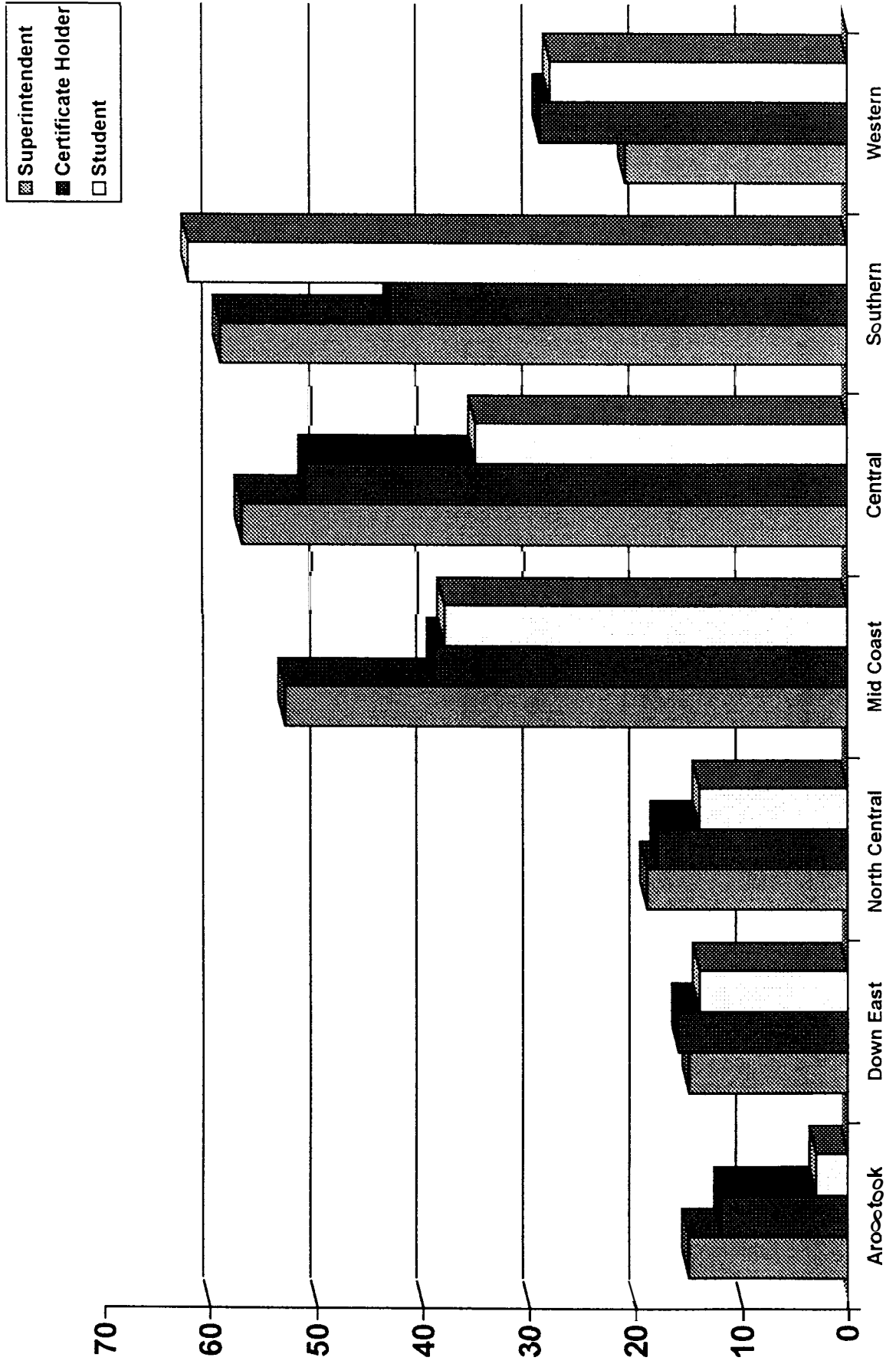
Chi-square tests were used to determine the degree of association or relatedness of categorical variables reported by superintendents, certificate holders and students. These tests were used to examine the variables of interest among all three groups and to examine the factors that may play a role in influencing potential superintendent candidates to pursue a superintendency and practicing superintendents to stay in their position.

### Variables of Interest

The variables of interest that were tested included age, distance willing to travel, family support, present location by regions, and willingness to relocate.

The group of respondents ( $n=236$ ) were found to be equally distributed by position in the following regions throughout the state: Aroostook, Down East, North Central, Mid-Coast, Central, Southern, and Western. There were also no significant associations found in the willingness to relocate as a function of group membership superintendents, certificate holders or students (See Figure 6).

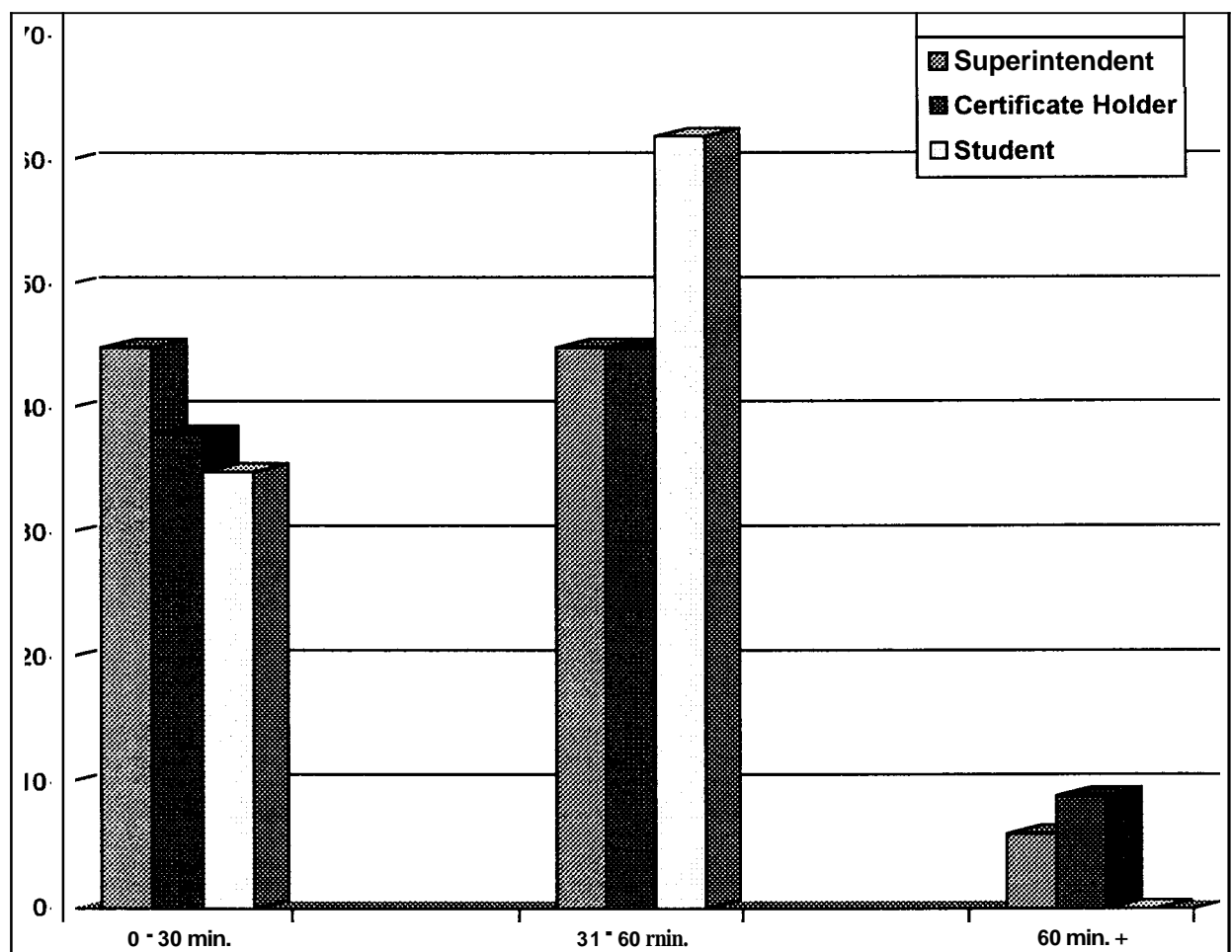
Figure 6: Willingness to Relocate





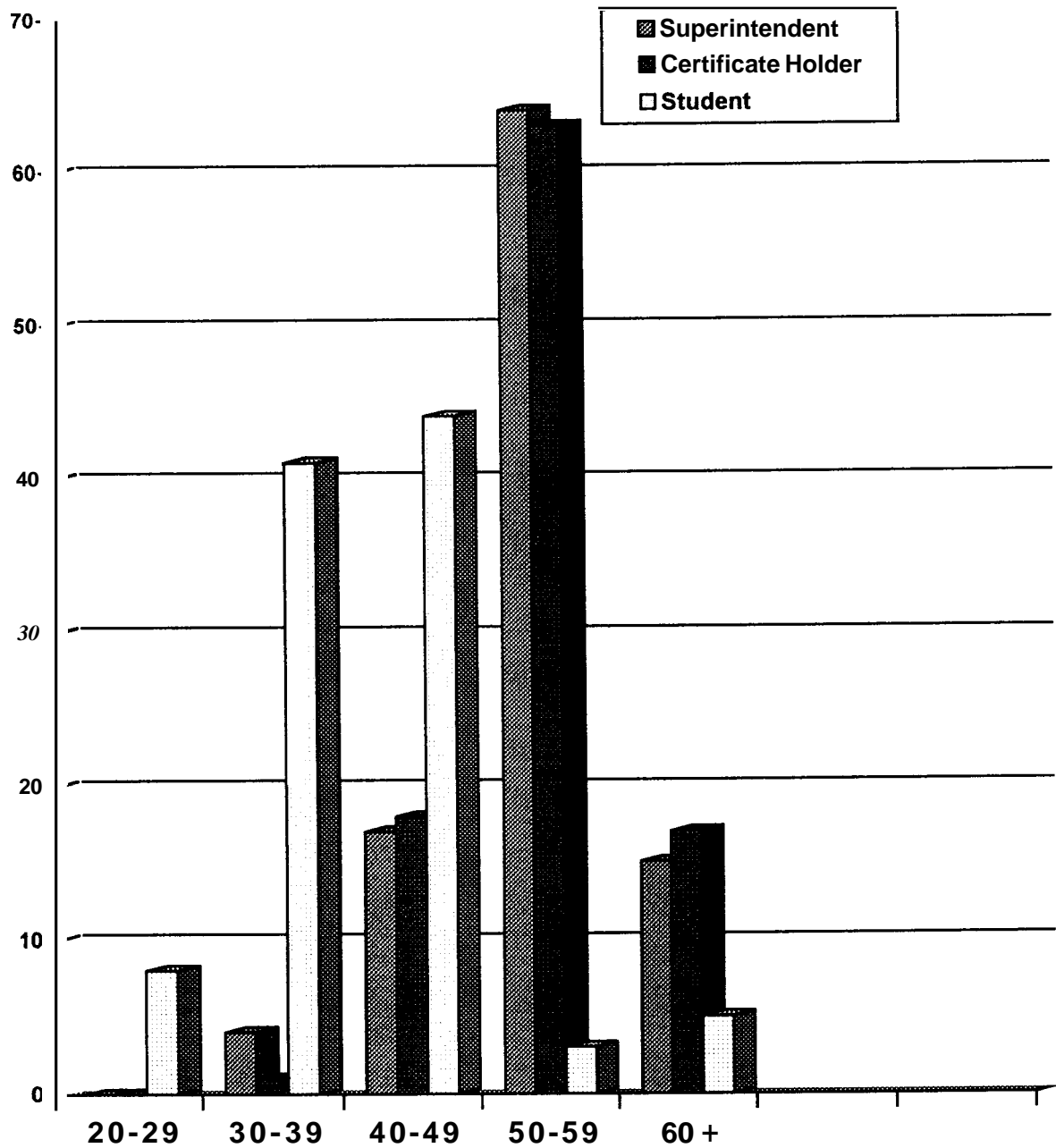
The majority (89%) of the respondents reported a preference for traveling less than an hour. (See Figure 7). It was also found that there was no degree of association in the willingness to travel to a new position.

Figure 7: Distance Willing To Travel



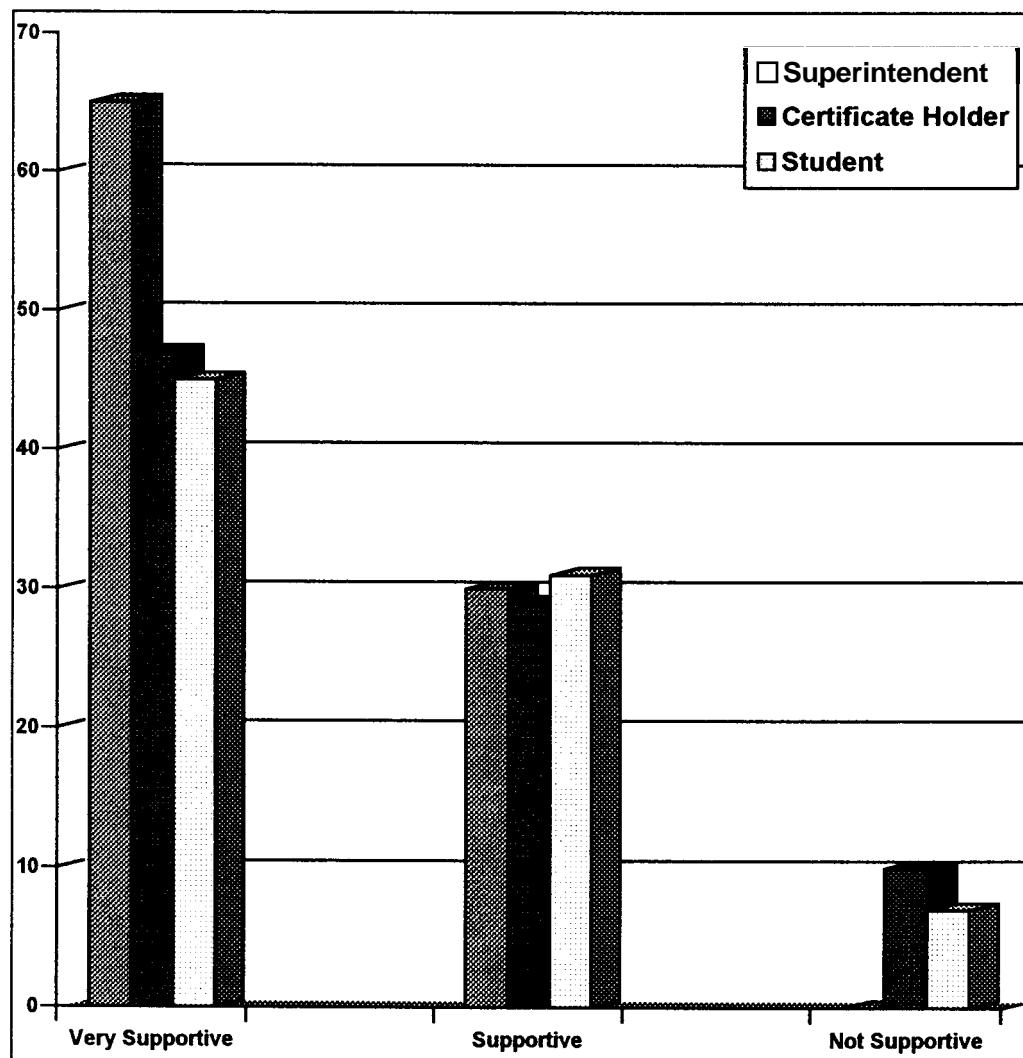
As would be expected, the age and the type of respondent were significantly associated. Students were significantly younger than either the superintendents or certificate holders ( $\chi^2 (8) = 115.95, p < .05$ ). (See Figure 8).

Figure 8: Age



Furthermore, the families of practicing superintendents were significantly more likely to support their decision to choose the superintendency as a career choice ( $\chi^2 (6) = 13.615, p < .05$ ) in comparison to the families of certificate holders and students, who tended to be more negative or neutral. (See Figure 9).

Figure 9: Family Support



In summary, there were no significant associations found in the areas of location, travel time, or willingness to relocate as a function of the position. However, there were significant associations found in the areas of age and family support as a function of the group of superintendents, certificate holders and students. The families of practicing superintendents are most supportive and the students are the youngest of the three groups.

### Instruments

Three survey instruments were developed: *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Students* (Appendix A), *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Certificate Holders* (Appendix B), and *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Superintendents* (Appendix C). The items used in these instruments came from a variety of sources including the 1988 study, *A Look at Maine's Superintendents and Principals: The Supply, The Demand, and Implications for Recruitment, Selection and Retention*; the *Administrative Supply Survey* (McIntire, 1999); the *Superintendent's Job Characteristic Survey*, developed by Daresh and Playko (1992) and the AASA publication of the *Professional Standards for the Superintendency* (1993).

Each survey instrument was designed specifically for one of the three groups: students enrolled in an Educational Administration classes, current superintendent certificate holders not holding a superintendent's position, and practicing superintendents. The three different surveys accommodated for the differences in the professional makeup of each of the groups. All survey questions were selected on the basis of their ability to provide specific information needed to answer the research questions outlined above.

Each survey consisted of thirty-nine questions. The following questions were common to all three: educational level, certificate(s) held, gender, age, family support, location by region, willingness and distance to commute to a superintendent's position, willingness to relocate by region for a superintendent's position, size and type of system preferred, and elements that influence the decision to seek the superintendency. Demographic information was asked of all three groups in order to paint a picture of the respondents in terms of location, age, gender, reported family support and career aspirations.

Each survey also requested that respondents identify their intent to pursue or remain in a superintendent's position. Data was collected that identified and ranked the influencing factors to pursue or remain in a superintendent's position (educational leadership, managerial, political, and job satisfaction) which could help explain the reasons for potential applicants to seek or current superintendents to remain in a superintendent's position.

This information was necessary to determine certain characteristics of the present and potential pool of candidates for the superintendency. In Glass's (1992) study of the superintendency, he reports that one third of the respondents obtained their first superintendency by being promoted within their district. He also reports that a key factor in the decision of an administrator to pursue and relocate for a superintendent's position is greatly influenced by family support. These questions were also included to help determine the level of job satisfaction experienced by superintendents in their present positions and their perceived satisfaction (Herzberg, Mousner, & Snyderman, 1959).

Each survey contained specific items designed to identify the respondent's motivators, real and perceived, (Cuban, 1976; Cunningham & Hentges, 1982; Davidson, 1987; Pitner, 1978;; Sonedecker, 1984;) or barriers (Blumberg, 1985; Braddom, 1988; Carlson, 1971; Cuban, 1976; Cunningham & McCloud, 1988; Davidson, 1987; Pitner, 1978) as associated with the position of superintendent.

All three groups were asked to rate twenty-six elements, motivators and deterrents, on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very positive) to 5 (very negative). Their responses were used to determine how these twenty-six elements influence their decision to pursue or stay in a superintendent's position. Questions 13-39 were based on the 1993 AASA Professional Standards for the Superintendency. These standards were developed through consultation with many stakeholders and members of professional organizations on a national level. This group, the "Jury of 100", defined standards for what a superintendent should know and be able to do. These standards include: (1) Leadership and District Culture; (2) Policy and Governance; (3) Communications and Community Relations; (4) Organizational Management; (5) Curriculum Planning and Development; (6) Instructional Management; (7) Human Resources Management; and (8) Values and Ethics of Leadership. These standards could be categorized into four main areas: educational leadership, human resources, politics, and business management (Miller, 1992).

The survey instrument collected data in four categories. Three categories covered the responsibilities of the superintendent: educational leadership, managerial and political. The fourth category covered the area of job satisfaction. All three survey instruments were adapted to fit the current environment in Maine.

### Development of the Items

Factors that emerged from the Review of Literature, items in existing superintendent survey instruments and the standards developed by AASA were reviewed for use in the surveys. These documents specifically looked at the current responsibilities and practices at the superintendent's level in terms of motivators and deterrents. From this review, a list of items was developed for each group. A panel was formed to help make the necessary judgments concerning face validity and logical validity for the survey instrument. These members were chosen for their expertise, experience and success in their current positions. Each member was given a copy of the proposed instrument, a copy of the research question, and a set of directions. Recommendations from the panel were to shorten the instrument, eliminate the items that were redundant and reword certain items. This group determined that the revised instrument had content validity at least to the extent that face validity and logical validity could be determined. A final instrument was developed and used in a pilot study the winter of 1999 to determine if the survey items were clear and concise, represented a range for responses and appeared to be appropriate for the area being measured.

### Reliability

A test of reliability was run on all three survey instruments: *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Students*, *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Certificate Holders*, and *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Superintendents*, to calculate that the items that measured the influencing factors on all three surveys responded in a consistent

manner. It was determined that the survey instruments were reliable since the standardized alpha and the alpha were both found to be .91.

### Procedure

The *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Certificate Holders* and *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Superintendents* were mailed to 248 certificate holders and 147 superintendents on February 14, 2000. The surveys were mailed from the Center of Research and Evaluation at the University of Maine. The *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Students* was distributed by instructors to 100 students enrolled in graduate educational administration classes at the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine.

Along with the survey instrument, a letter of introduction and a self addressed stamped envelope was sent to each identified respondent in the three pools. The cover letter asked each participant to fill out the attached survey and return it in the envelope provided. The cover letter included a summary of the study and assurances that the data received would be kept confidential and the results of the study would be shared with each participant upon request. (See Appendix)

### Data Analyses

In order to address the question of a decline in interest in pursuing the superintendency as a career choice, three different groups were compared. The first group included respondents who are potential certificate candidates (students), the second group included respondents who have current superintendent's certificates but not employed as a superintendent (certificate holders), and the third group included presently employed



superintendents. These groups were chosen for their placement on the pathway to the superintendency.

The first phase of data analysis focused on demographic factors (i.e., present position, age, location) for each of the three groups (superintendents, current certificate holders and potential certificate holders). The responses of the three groups were compared. Frequency data was analyzed by means of chi square tests, and a series of one-way ANOVA's were conducted to compare the elements of the superintendency to determine if differences were identifiable between the three groups. Scheffe post-hoc tests were run to identify significant differences between groups that emerged from the significant oneway ANOVA's. SPSS was used for all analysis.

In summary, this chapter outlined the method by which this research study was conducted. It provided a description of the participants and a rationale for their participation. The three survey instruments were explained in terms of their development and use. The methods used to analyze the data generated from the use of these instruments was also discussed.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis of Data

This chapter presents a report of the data and analyses as they relate to the following research questions:

1. What are the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders that influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position?
2. What factors influence current superintendents to stay in their positions?
3. How do currently employed superintendents and potential applicants differ in their views of elements of the superintendency?

Data was generated through the use of three survey instruments: *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Superintendents*, *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Certificate Holders*, and *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice for Students*. The survey instruments were designed to meet four primary objectives. The first objective was to obtain demographic information that would provide a current and accurate description of all three groups surveyed: superintendents, certificate holders and students. The second objective was to obtain accurate information from people who have a superintendent's certificate and those who could potentially receive superintendent's certification in regard to their perceptions of the superintendency and their intent to pursue the superintendency as a career choice. The third objective was to obtain accurate information from all practicing superintendents regarding their perceptions of their job and their intent to continue as a superintendent. The fourth objective was to compare the perceptions of those who are potential superintendent certificate holders (students) and those administrators who hold certification but are not currently in a superintendent's position

(certificate holders) with the responses of employed superintendents in order to help determine the reason(s) for a decline in interest among potential candidates to pursue the superintendency as a career choice. Data were gathered from three different sources: currently practicing superintendents, superintendent certificate holders not currently holding superintendent positions, and students enrolled in Educational Administration graduate programs.

The data was analyzed with a focus on two areas, demographic factors and perceptions (both motivators and deterrents) of the superintendency as a career choice. Results of Chi-square analyses and analyses of variance are also presented in tables in this chapter. To determine significance, a  $p < .05$  level was selected.

### Influencing Factors

1. What are the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders that influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position?

There were three common factors identified by students and certificate holders that appear to positively influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position. These three factors received the highest ranking ("very positive") and are as follows: being an advocate for children ( $\bar{x} = 1.70$  and  $\bar{x} = 1.21$ ), being an advocate for education ( $\bar{x} = 1.58$  and  $\bar{x} = 1.27$ ) and influencing change ( $\bar{x} = 1.91$  and  $\bar{x} = 1.40$ ). Three of the same factors received the lowest reported ranking ("somewhat negative") for both groups. The factors that would have the most negative impact on a decision by potential and current superintendent certificate holders to pursue or remain in a superintendency included accommodating special interest groups ( $\bar{x} = 3.61$  and  $\bar{x} = 3.60$ ), distance from the classroom ( $\bar{x} = 3.86$  and  $\bar{x} = 3.64$ ), and evening matters ( $\bar{x} = 4.0$  and  $\bar{x} = 3.80$ ). Evening matters received the lowest ranking for all three groups.

= 3.61), distance from the classroom ( $x = 3.74$  and  $x = 3.64$ ) and evening matters ( $x = 3.97$  and  $x = 3.80$ ). Evening matters received the lowest rating from all three groups.

Table 7 illustrates the five highest ranked factors that influence students, certificate holders and superintendents to either pursue or remain in a superintendent's position. Table 8 illustrates the five lowest ranked factors by this same group.

Superintendents and certificate holders responded overall positively to the 27 survey questions by responding either "very positive" or "somewhat positive" to more than half of the questions. A breakdown of the negative responses is as follows.

Of the two groups, students, responded the most negatively. The mean score of the following 7 questions received a negative rating from the student group:

- Participation in collective bargaining (Mean = 3.23)
- Distance from the classroom (Mean = 3.86)
- Evening matters (Mean = 4.01)
- Accommodating special interest groups (Mean = 3.55)
- Job security (Mean = 3.38)
- Year round responsibilities (Mean = 3.26)

The superintendents and the certificate holders did not respond as negatively as the student group did. Only four questions received a negative rating. The group of superintendents reported a negative Mean score for the following questions:

- Participation in collective bargaining (Mean = 3.32)
- Distance from the classroom (Mean = 3.7)

Table 7: Highest Ranked Factors that Influence a Decision to Pursue or Remain in a Superintendent's Position

Rank	Student	Certificate Holder	Superintendent
1	Being an advocate for education (Mean= 1.58)	Being an advocate for children (Mean = 1.20)	Being an advocate for children (Mean = 1.17)
2	Being an advocate for children (Mean = 1.70)	Being an advocate for education (Mean = 1.26)	Being an advocate for education (Mean = 1.25)
3	Influencing change (Mean = 1.91)	Influencing change. (Mean = 1.39)	Influencing change (Mean = 1.28)
4	Mentoring other educators (Mean = 1.93)	Mentoring other educators (Mean = 1.59)	Serving as CEO (Mean = 1.41)
5	Direct Involvement in policy formation (Mean = 1.96)	Involvement in long term planning (Mean = 1.60)	Direct involvement in policy formation (Mean = 1.52)

Table 8: Lowest Ranked Factors that Influence a Decision to Pursue or Remain in a Superintendent's Position

Rank	Student	Certificate Holder	Superintendent
23	Year round responsibilities (Mean = 3.26)	Involvement in complex legal issues (Mean = 2.75)	Job security (Mean = 2.69)
24	Job security (Mean = 3.38)	Job security (Mean = 3.15)	Year round responsibilities (Mean = 2.73)
25	Accommodate special interest groups (Mean = 3.55)	Accommodate special interest groups (Mean = 3.61)	Accommodate special interest group (Mean = 3.65)
26	Distance from classroom (Mean = 3.86)	Distance from classroom (Mean = 3.64)	Distance from classroom (Mean = 3.74)
27	Evening matters (Mean = 4.01)	Evening matters (Mean = 3.80)	Evening matters (Mean = 3.97)

- Evening matters (Mean=3.97)
- Accommodating special interest groups (Mean=3.65)

The group of certificate holders reported a negative Mean score for the following four questions:

- Distance from the classroom (Mean=3.64)
- Evening matters (Mean=3.80)
- Accommodating special interest groups (Mean=3.61)
- Job security (Mean=3.15)

### Analysis of Variance

To determine the significant differences between the means of the three groups, superintendents, certificate holders and students, a series of oneway ANOVA's was conducted. This test was used to analyze statistical variations both within and between each of the three groups. In doing so, an F value was generated and then used to determine statistical significance.

The results of the significant oneway ANOVA's for each question is shown in Table 9. The Scheffe post-hoc tests were run to identify significant differences between groups that emerged from the significant oneway ANOVA's. The following is an analysis of these factors as they relate to the research questions.

1. What are the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders that influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position?

It was found that mentoring other educators ( $\bar{x} = 1.60$ ) and the management of personnel ( $\bar{x} = 2.26$ ) appear to be significantly more important to certificate holders than to students. It also appears that fringe benefits ( $\bar{x} = 1.82$ ) and working with local

Table 9: Factors that Influence a Decision to Pursue or Remain in a Superintendent's Position

Factor	Student		Certificate Holder		Superintendent		F
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Work with school boards	2.92	.98	2.34	.89	2.13	.89	9.66**
Serve as <b>CEO</b>	2.49	.97	1.80	.87	1.41	.63	29.70**
Personnel management	2.78	1.00	2.26	1.04	1.94	.78	17.31**
Financial management	2.88	1.00	2.26	1.04	1.94	.78	17.31**
Involvement in planning	2.03	.92	1.60	.62	1.54	.63	9.34**
Influencing change	1.91	.95	1.40	.67	1.28	.48	15.50**
Advocate for education	1.58	.91	1.27	.54	1.26	.49	5.53**
Involvement in policy	1.97	.90	1.66	1.30	1.52	.69	3.38*
Advocate for children	1.70	.89	1.21	.41	1.17	.38	17.92**
Mentoring educators	1.93	.90	1.60	.62	1.63	.73	4.19*
Visible in community	2.58	1.00	2.09	.94	2.01	.96	6.83**
Working with local leaders	2.23	.98	1.83	.81	1.91	.74	4.43*
Work with adults	2.28	.92	1.94	.84	1.88	.73	4.65*
Work with political leaders	2.83	.91	2.49	1.04	2.43	.90	3.48*

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$



community leaders ( $x = 1.83$ ) appear to be significantly more important to certificate holders.

## 2. What factors influence current superintendents to stay in their position?

It was reported that direct involvement in policy formation appears to be significantly more important to superintendents than to students. Working with state and political leaders appears to be significantly more important to superintendents.

## 3. How do currently employed superintendents and potential applicants differ in their views of elements of the superintendency?

Superintendents found involvement in complex legal issues ( $x = 2.47$ ) and serving as chief executive officer ( $x = 1.41$ ) to be significantly more important than the other two groups. It also appears that being more visible in the community ( $x = 2.01$ ), working with adults ( $x = 1.88$ ) and having year round responsibilities ( $x = 2.73$ ) are significantly more important to superintendents and certificate holders.

In general, most of the factors appear to be more important to practicing superintendents than to the other two groups: certificate holders and students. This result could be due to their personal experience in the position.

## Conclusion

Most of the superintendents surveyed reported that they were satisfied in their current position and would apply for another superintendent's position in the future. Their families were very supportive of their decision to become a superintendent, which may play a role in their reported feeling of satisfaction. All regions were represented and most of the reporting superintendents were in their fifties. In general all of the factors

appeared more important to superintendents than to the other two groups: certificate holders and students. This may be due to their personal experience in the position.

Specifically, superintendents reported that their role as an advocate for children was their most important reason for staying in the superintendency. It was followed by being an advocate for education (educational leader) and being in the position to influence change (political). But when you look at the ten most positively ranked factors, you find representation from all four areas of responsibility, educational leadership, management, political and job satisfaction. This could mean that superintendents do in fact like the multifaceted dimension of their position as well as derive satisfaction from it.

The least positive influences included distance from the classroom and evening matters. In fact, evening matters was the most negatively ranked activity for all three groups.

The responses of the certificate holders tended to be more aligned with the responses of superintendent group than with those of the student group. They shared nine out of ten of the most positively ranked factors and ten out of ten of the most negatively ranked factors that would influence their decision to either pursue or remain in a superintendency. The certificate holders were in the same age bracket (or slightly older) and represented all seven geographical regions. The majority of their families also supported their decision to pursue a superintendency as a career choice. But there was one notable difference. Only twenty-two percent of the certificate holder respondents reported that they would be interested in applying for a superintendent's position. Comparing this information with that of the majority of superintendents reporting that they would apply for another position, is alarming. It is a concern because although the

factors were ranked almost the same for both groups, positively and negatively, they did not provide a strong enough influence for certificate holders to pursue the superintendency as a career choice.

Student respondents followed this trend. Although they were significantly younger than the certificate holder group, only one fourth of them reported that they were interested in pursuing a superintendency at some point in their career, despite the fact that their families would be very supportive of this decision. They agreed with superintendents and certificate holders on eight of the top ten influencing factors in pursuing a superintendency as well as eight of the ten least influencing factors. The hope for this group changing their minds about pursuing a superintendent's position as a career choice lies in the fact that they are on a pathway that leads to the superintendency and the majority are very interested in obtaining administrative certification.

Chapter five will provide a discussion of the findings in terms of their meaning and significance to the research questions.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Summary and Discussion of Findings**

#### The Problem

There have been approximately 100 superintendent vacancies in the state of Maine over the past three years (MSMA, 2000). The range of numbers of candidates for each vacancy was between five and thirty. Most of these searches produced fewer than twenty applicants, of whom not all were certified. These pools of limited size and insufficient certification have been frustrating to school boards in choosing their next chief executive officers. During this past year (1999), three school boards have reopened superintendent searches and several more have employed interim superintendents.

The declining size and questionable quality of the pool of superintendent candidates, the high turnover rate of superintendents, and the presence of a large pool of individuals holding superintendent certificates who are not applying for superintendent's positions create an enigma for educational policy makers. (MSMA, 1998). This study investigated the factors that influence potential candidates (students and certificate holders) to pursue superintendent's positions and the factors that influence superintendents to remain in their positions by posing the following questions:

1. What are the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders that influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position?
2. What factors influence current superintendents to stay in their positions?
3. How do currently employed and potential applicants differ in their views of elements of the superintendency?

The importance of the superintendency alone should serve as a compelling reason to motivate talented leaders to aspire to and actively pursue this position. The position of superintendent of schools is one of the most challenging yet satisfying positions in American society. Despite the challenges of the position, superintendents find great satisfaction in what they do best, helping others to learn and grow (Miller, 1992). Acting as chief executive officers of school organizations, superintendents supervise the overall administrations of school systems. Through the development and implementation of the policies of organizations, they provide the professional leadership that ensures educational opportunities for all students. In short, the superintendent must be nothing less than politically sophisticated, able to display excellence as a leader, and an exemplary educator.

The position of superintendent is paramount to the preservation and advancement of the educational organization especially in this era of national, state and local school reforms. We are now entering our second decade of “reform”. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 placed schools and educators under public scrutiny by parents, media, and politicians. Not since the 1950’s “scare” of Sputnik have as many reform efforts been initiated. The significant changes in school organizations and schooling in general, for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, will most likely involve superintendents. While most Americans agree that schools need to be reformed and improved, there is really no consensus on how to accomplish this goal. This ambiguity poses both a problem and opportunity for all superintendents. Parents and administrators at the local level will most likely determine the route of school reform for their children. Superintendents may be the most appropriate individuals to facilitate and guide the direction of this reform through

leadership. They must be secure in their vision for reform and be able to lead school boards, staffs, and communities toward emerging visions.

It is very apparent that there are different views on how superintendents should lead school organizations. These views have evolved over the past *two* hundred years. The superintendents of the past were managers, whereas the superintendents of the future must be instructional leaders (Cuban, 1988). In order to bridge the gap between both roles, superintendents must use political skills to achieve educational goals.

The quality of the education of America's most precious asset, its children, is at stake. They deserve nothing less than the very best of the educational profession. Superintendents of the future will be very important to the future of the nation and will be at the center of the movement toward creating more effective schools.

We need our best and brightest who have chosen a career in education to fill this role. We need to uncover what is standing in their way in order to clear the path to adequate leadership at the level of superintendent.

### Importance of the Study

Who will be our future superintendents? Who will lead school organizations in the school reform movements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? We in the State of Maine need to determine whether we in fact have ~~an~~ adequate pool of potential candidates for the superintendency or whether we are on the brink of experiencing a "leadership vacuum". We cannot wait to do this. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is upon us.

According to the Maine Department of Education's Sex Equity Report (1995-96) and the 1998 reported data from the Department of Certification, the number of active certificate holders had decreased by 129 in a seven-year period leaving a total of 248.

This could be in part due to the “graying of the superintendency”, a by-product of the “baby boomer” generation. Although these numbers were accurate in that they identified the exact number of active certificate holders, when you actually looked at the people these numbers represented, another story was told. Over one hundred names on the list were retired, employed out of state or just not interested in the job of superintendent. These qualifications furthered narrowed the pool.

The question that remained is,” Why are the remaining certified individuals opting not to apply for a superintendent’s position?” What is holding them back? It just doesn’t make sense that these certified individuals, who are next in line for the superintendency, are not seeking employment in the same numbers that their predecessors were a few years ago (Daresh & Playko, 1992).

### Research Questions

My Review of the Literature established that the pathway to the superintendency has historically been teacher, principal, and superintendent. In a 1992 nationwide study conducted by AASA, 37.7 percent of the respondents had followed this track, and 30 percent had followed the track of teacher, principal, central office administrator, and superintendent.

Gaertner (1981) provided us with a study of three mobility patterns for administrative advancement, two of which lead directly to the superintendency. The first pathway includes the positions of a specialist, an administrator of instruction (supervisor), assistant superintendent and superintendent. The second pathway includes the position of assistant secondary school principal, secondary school principal, assistant/associate superintendent, and Superintendent.

Two groups were chosen for this study as a result of this research. The first group, certificate holders, was chosen for its proximity to the position of superintendent in terms of preparedness. In Maine, a Master's Degree is the minimum educational degree a person must earn to become certified as a superintendent. Other requirements include evidence of three years of satisfactory public or private school teaching or three years of equivalent teaching experience in an instructional setting (e.g., military, business, post secondary institution, industry) and evidence of three years of previous administrative experience in schools or equivalent experience as an administrator in an institutional setting (e.g., military, business, industry, public or private agency). In addition, the candidate must have documented competencies in the following areas: community relations, school finance and budget, supervision and evaluation of personnel, federal and state civil rights and education laws, organizational theory and planning, educational leadership, educational philosophy and theory, effective instruction, curriculum development, staff development, teaching the exceptional student in the regular classroom, knowledge of the learner and the learning process and equal employment practices (**20A MSRA 13019-A et seq.**).

The second group chosen were students enrolled in an Educational Administration graduate program. They were selected because they are also on the pathway that leads to the superintendency. Simply by participating in administrative coursework, students are on one of the rungs of the ladder that leads to the superintendency (Daresh, 1992). Although the notion of pursuing the superintendency as a career choice may not be at the forefront of their present career aspirations, it is important to hear from this group in



terms of their intentions and the factors that may influence them to seek such a position in the future.

As reported in this research, these two groups, certificate holders and students, comprise the logical pool of candidates for present and future vacancies in the superintendency. What is keeping them from taking the next step?

This study examined exactly that question by asking the following question:

1. What are the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders that influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position?

The second question centered around currently employed superintendents. There are approximately 146 practicing superintendents in Maine (Department of Education, 2000), and between the years of 1997 and 1999 there have been over one hundred superintendent vacancies (MSMA, 2000). Possible reasons for this turnover include relocating out of state, retirement, new or different positions, or a new superintendency. But are there other reasons as well? How do practicing superintendents feel about their positions? What makes them stay and what makes them leave? This group possesses a wealth of knowledge and experience (one whose primary responsibility is to lay the foundation for school reform). Their insights, realities and perceptions of the superintendency as a viable career choice need to be made known and dealt with to help ensure that this level of leadership stays in proportion to the needs of the educational community. The following research question was designed to generate the necessary data to address this important situation.

2. What factors influence current superintendents to stay in their positions?

Lastly there is a need to compare the potential influencing factors of those who are on a career pathway to the superintendency with those who are living the realities of

the position. We need to determine if potential candidates have an accurate or a skewed or distorted picture of the day to day and long range responsibilities of the superintendency. How do their perceptions compare with those of practicing superintendents? Are all three groups influenced by the same factors to pursue or remain in a superintendent's position, or the reverse, to shy away from one? These issues were addressed by answering the following question:

3. How do currently employed and potential applicants differ in their views of elements of the superintendency?

### Findings

For each of the three pools of respondents, superintendents, certificate holders and students, an overview of their demographics will be presented. I summarize the significant findings and interpreted the results by responding to each research question using the four lenses introduced in the Review of Literature: educational leadership, management, political issues and job satisfaction.

#### Superintendents

Surveys were sent to all 146 practicing superintendents in Maine (Department of Education, 1999). The return rate was 56%. Twenty-one participating superintendents requested a copy of the results of the study. This level of response showed that superintendents are either concerned or at the very least curious about the nature of this research.

The majority of this group of superintendents are in their 50's (64%) and their residences were fairly evenly distributed throughout the state (Aroostook 12%, Down East 10%, North Central 10%, Mid-Coast 15%, Central 22%, Southern 21% and Western

10%). With this distribution, I feel confident that the reported results reflect a valid cross section of responses of the practicing superintendents in Maine. Although this group held a variety of degrees, most appeared to have taken the pathway that included a stop at the principalship (51%) before reaching the superintendency.

These superintendents reported satisfaction in their current position of superintendent (74%), and more than half reported that they would be interested in applying for another superintendent's position (55%). This finding could be due to the fact that their families support them in their decision to be a superintendent (95%). Despite the number of evening commitments (the most negatively rated influence reported by superintendents), the position of superintendent provides a level of prestige and financial security for the superintendent's family as well as the superintendent.

As reported, 55% of these practicing superintendents would be interested in applying for another superintendency as long as the commute was less than one hour. The regions that would benefit from this pool are the Mid-Coast region (53%), the Central region (57%), and the Southern region (59%). Less than 20% were interested in applying in the remaining regions: Western (20%), North Central (19%), Aroostook (15%), and Down East (15%). This preference may cause problems for filling superintendent vacancies for these school units in the future.

School Administrative Districts with a single school board and a K-12 student population were by far the most sought after position (82%). This choice was closely followed by a school unit of the same structure but without a high school (73%). No doubt the word has spread concerning the additional evenings required for units comprised of more than one school board. Again, evening matters were rated to have the

least positive influence in remaining in the superintendency, and this reported data supports that. Only half of the superintendents (50%) would be willing to consider the challenge of working with a city council. This may be a result of the constant and sometimes negative publicity such positions receive during times of controversy such as school budgets and referendums. With the continuous murmuring of consolidation at the state level (Woodward, 1997), the structure of this position could very well be the model for the superintendent of the future.

Overall, our practicing superintendents are satisfied but aging. Even though there is ample interest in applying for future superintendencies from this group, preferred locations and age of applicants appear to be factors that need to be considered in determining realistic numbers of potential applicants across the state. Presently our needs are met. Considering this data, this situation may not be the case in the near future.

### Certificate Holders

A total of 248 people hold valid Maine Superintendent certificates but are not employed as superintendents (Maine Department of Education, 2000). All 248 certificate holders were sent a survey. Ninety surveys were returned (36%), one of which was not usable.

This group's age range was very similar to that of the superintendent's group, which is somewhat alarming. Seventy-seven percent were over the age of fifty; 17% of the total respondents in this group were 60 or older. If this is pool is the next in line for the superintendency, we will most certainly be facing lower numbers of applicants in the next few years. You cannot expect to fill future vacancies with the majority of candidates nearing retirement age.

What complicates the picture even more is that these potential candidates are really not interested in applying for a superintendency (49%) despite the fact that their families would be supportive of such a decision (75%). Of the **22%** who are interested, they are only interested in certain parts of the state with a commute of less than one hour. The majority of respondents lived in the Mid-Coast, Central and Southern regions (**72%**) and reported that these would be the regions of choice if applying for a superintendency: Central region (50%), Southern region (43%), and the Mid-Coast region (39%). These are the same regions that the superintendents chose to apply in, which is good for these regions, but not for the others. Again, we also cannot lose sight of the fact that the majority of the respondents represent an aging population.

This group had much in common with the superintendents. They were approximately the same age, held the same administrative certificates, chose the same regions as preferences for a superintendent's position and had overwhelming family support. They both preferred the single school board K-12 system over the other types of systems.

Of the 89 respondents, only 33 (37%) reported that they had applied for a superintendent's position at some point in time. Of the 33, 88% had applied more than once with 16% not having received an interview.

This information, coupled with the low percent (**22%**) of certificate holders interested in applying for a superintendent's position, certainly points to a "number crunch" for the superintendencies in the near future.

## Students

Of the students enrolled in a graduate level Educational Administration class in the University of Maine System (2000), 64 (64%) responded to this survey. These students were significantly younger than the group of superintendents and certificate holders. Ninety-two percent were less than 50 years old, and 49% of the total respondents in this group were less than 40 years old. This group was most interested in obtaining principal certification (77%), although 19% reported that they were interested in obtaining superintendent certification. Twenty percent stated that they might be interested in applying for a superintendent's position with almost the same percent (19%) undecided. This trend could very well mean that almost 40% of the student respondents have not ruled out the superintendency as a career choice. With only 7% of the students' families non-supportive of this career option, this news is encouraging. These students are showing interest and are progressing on one of the pathways that lead to the superintendency (AASA, 1992).

Along with the superintendents and the certificate holders, this group (69%) would prefer to work in K-12 systems with a single school board. On this topic, the students (63%) and certificate holders (60%) show more interest in working with a city council (local municipal government and elected officials) than the group of practicing superintendents (50%). This response could be due to naivete on the part of the potential superintendents or it could be that they view such a position as one of prestige (Glass, 1992) and a necessary challenge for school reform. This response could also have something to do with the location of the respondents. Fifty percent of the responding students reside in the southern region as do 43% of the certificate holders. Many of the

superintendencies that involve working with elected officials such as a city council are located in this region. Perhaps the most determining factor for this discrepancy between the responses of superintendents and potential superintendents is that the respondent superintendents may have had experience in such a position, or at the very least first hand knowledge of the perils of the relationship from fellow superintendents.

### Relatedness and Significant Findings

A series of chi-square tests was used to determine the degree of association of categorical variables reported by superintendents, certificate holders and students. The variables of interest that were tested included age, distance willing to travel, family support, present location by regions and willingness to relocate.

The group of respondents was found to be equally distributed throughout the state as a function of group membership. There were no significant associations found in the willingness to relocate as a function of group membership (superintendents, certificate holders and students), and the majority of respondents (89%) reported a preference to travel less than an hour. There was no degree of association found in the willingness to travel to a new position.

What was found was that students were significantly younger than either the superintendents or certificate holders. The families of practicing superintendents were significantly more likely to support their decision to choose the superintendency as a career choice.

In summary, there were no significant associations found in the areas of location, travel time, or willingness to relocate as a function of the position. However, there were significant associations found in the areas of age and family support as a function of the

group: superintendents, certificate holders and students. The families of practicing superintendents are most supportive and the students are the youngest of the three groups.

Superintendents of schools will be instrumental in the preservation and advancement of educational organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Unless we change the way we govern schools, this position will continue to involve three important roles, the educational leadership role, the managerial role and the political role. In order to succeed in this multifaceted position, superintendents must receive satisfaction from their work. What factors influence superintendents to stay in positions, what factors influence potential candidates (students and certificate holders) to seek these positions, and how do superintendents' ratings of the factors compare with the reported ratings of the potential candidates? These are the questions that were answered in this report.

### Research Question 1

What are the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders that influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position?

Twenty-six survey items were developed to represent the three roles of the superintendent (educational leader, management, and political) as well as factors that measure job satisfaction. These factors were ranked by potential (students) and current certificate holders as they act as influencing factors in pursuing a superintendent's position.

The most influential factors for both groups centered around the educational leadership role of the superintendent. These factors included being an advocate for students and an advocate for education. Advocating for children and education are the basis of most vision statements in education regardless of what position you hold. It was reassuring that these two groups saw these as the most influential factors in pursuing a



superintendency. Both groups also ranked influencing change as a strong reason to pursue a superintendency. Advocating for students and education goes hand in hand with the change process in that one drives the other and neither can be accomplished in isolation. Mentoring other educators received a high rating as well. This selection may have been due to the uncertainty that most new positions hold, especially one as isolated as the superintendency. By this item's high ranking, you could get the impression that more potential candidates would take the leap to the superintendency if a strong mentoring program were in place.

The three least influential factors for both the students and certificate holders were accommodating special interest groups (political), distance from the classroom (job satisfaction), and evening matters (job satisfaction). These three factors are very real parts of the job and need to be considered.

Superintendents are expected to use their skills to implement what others decide, including school boards, state legislators and Congress. Very often school boards are influenced by special interest groups. It is up to the superintendent to clarify the group's agenda, work with them to advance the system's agenda, and put things in perspective for the school board to make the right decision for the school organization. Superintendents need to play organizational politics to build coalitions for their organizations in order to survive potential crisis situations (Cuban, 1996).

Distance from the classroom is a reality of accepting a superintendent's position. Job responsibilities usually prevent a superintendent from spending much time in classrooms. But there is nothing stopping a superintendent from making time for this activity, as many are beginning to do. It is a matter of setting and scheduling priorities.

Evening matters, such as meetings, school events and co-curricular activities, received the lowest rating, and rightly so. The superintendent on the average spends 75 evenings out a year (Sternberg, 1998). This pace is grueling and is at the top of the list for superintendent retirements and leaving the profession (Glass, 1992). Therefore this area is one that needs to be addressed through local and state policy.

With only 22% of the certificate holders interested in pursuing a superintendency, it is clear that the negative influences outweigh the positive. The highest rated factors that influence current certificate holders to pursue a superintendent's position do not appear to be influential enough to sway members of this aging population to pursue superintendencies. An explanation for this situation may be the age of the population, 80% of whom are age 50 and above.

Even though the other potential group, students, rated the same factors as most influential and least influential, this group may provide hope in that they are significantly younger (92% are younger than 49, of which 49% of the total respondents in this group are younger than 40 years of age) and enrolled in Educational Administrative coursework. While 20% are interested in pursuing a superintendency, 19% are still undecided.

Although the reported factors do not appear to be strong enough to provide as large a pool as some would desire for the superintendency, there is enough information provided to begin examining and changing present practices.

## Research Question 2

What factors influence current superintendents to stay in their positions?

All superintendents were asked to rate a list of twenty-six factors that influence their decision to remain in a superintendent's position. These factors covered the three major roles of the superintendent's position: educational leader, management and political, as well as factors that influence job satisfaction.

Superintendents gave being an advocate for children the highest overall rating. This item was followed by being an advocate for education, influencing change and serving as chief executive officer. The first two factors fall in the educational leadership category, whereas serving as chief executive officer is a managerial responsibility. It appears by these responses that superintendents are most influenced to stay in their superintendent's positions by their role as educational leaders and managers. This finding is good for the profession in that these are two of the three key areas of responsibilities. With a total of 55% of participants reporting that they would apply for another superintendent's position, I feel confident in saying that these factors influence practicing superintendents to remain in their position.

The third area of responsibility, political, was rated on the average as somewhat positive. This area is the most challenging for superintendents (Cuban, 1996), but one that is needed to maintain or improve the district's image in order to implement desired programs and secure new resources.

The ten lowest rated influences were primarily in the areas of job satisfaction and political responsibilities. Accommodating special interest groups, distance from the

classroom, and evening matters, specifically nights dedicated to the school system, were rated the lowest.

Superintendents can control the numbers of evening commitments to an extent. But due to the nature of the job, they must be visible and available to the community and school board. This aspect of the position is where the managerial and political nature of the job comes into play. If superintendents are successful in these areas, the changes generated from their educational leadership role will be much easier to implement.

These factors are not new. There have been previous studies that have documented them as reasons for superintendents leaving the profession (Miller, 1992; MSMA, 1998).

### Research Question 3

#### **3. How do currently employed and potential applicants differ in their views of elements of the superintendency?**

Differences between the means of the three groups' responses to each factor (superintendents, certificate holders and students) were determined by a series of one way ANOVA's. An interpretation of these results will be made in the format of superintendent responsibilities (educational leadership, managerial and political) and job satisfaction.

First and foremost the superintendent is the educational leader of the school organization. Both superintendents and certificate holders found the factors that support this role to be significantly more important than the students did. These factors included influencing change, being an advocate for education and children, and involvement in policy formation. Mentoring other educators was found to be significantly more

important to certificate holders than to students, even though both rated it in the top four influences.

When looking at how the managerial factors influence both groups (potential and practicing superintendents), it is not surprising that superintendents found more of them significantly important than certificate holders or students. Superintendents reported that being chief executive officer and involvement in legal complex issues were significantly more important than the other two groups. Certificate holders agreed with superintendents that working with school boards, financial management and involvement in long term planning were significantly more important than the student group did. These areas may have received this rating because of the fact that all administrators have experience working with school boards at some point in their career and have realized the importance in doing so. Long term planning is just one of the areas in which a collaborative effort with the school board is paramount to ensure that the vision of the system is carried out. Financial mismanagement is the number one reason for the dismissal of a superintendent (Glass, 1992). This fact is common knowledge in superintendent circles and also discussed in administrative classes.

The political responsibilities of the superintendent are both challenging and frustrating, but it is the vehicle for school reform. When looking at how the political factors influence both groups, it is not surprising that superintendents and certificate holders found more of them significantly important than the students. Both superintendents and certificate holders have spent more time in the public arena than students have, simply as a result of their jobs in administration. These ratings could also be the result of naivete on the students' part as to the importance of this responsibility.

Other areas that were found to be significantly more important to superintendents and certificate holders than students included visibility in the community, working with local community and state leaders and working with adults. Seeing the importance of these areas may come with experience in the field, which the superintendents and certificate holders may possess to a greater degree.

The last area, job satisfaction, shows agreement once again between the superintendents and certificate holders in their reported areas of significant importance. Fringe benefits were significantly more important to certificate holders than to students. This could be a result of the age difference between both groups, one at the beginning of their career and one nearing retirement. It is no surprise that job security is significantly more important to superintendents than to certificate holders or students. With school board terms lasting three years, superintendents soon find themselves working for a board that may not have had anything to do with hiring them. Also, being at the forefront in the political arena, a superintendent may gradually lose support over the years. It is the one position in education from which one can be dismissed without reason (other than non-renewal of probationary teachers).

Family support was rated high for all three groups, but was significantly more important to superintendents than to certificate holders and students. Due to the nature of the job, family support is imperative.

But when simply looking at the means of the reported influences (to either pursue or remain in a superintendent's position) some interesting generalizations can be made. The responses of both groups, the superintendents and the certificate holders, tended to be more aligned with each other than with the responses of the student group. The

superintendents and the certificate holders shared nine out of ten of the most positively ranked factors and ten out of ten of the most negatively ranked factors that would influence their decision to pursue a superintendency or remain in a superintendent's position. The certificate holders were in the same age bracket (or slightly older) than the superintendents and represented all seven geographical regions.

Despite the fact that the student respondents were significantly younger than the certificate holder and superintendent groups, they did agree with superintendents and certificate holders on eight of the top ten influencing factors in pursuing a superintendency as a career choice. They were also in agreement with them in eight of the ten least influencing factors.

The notable difference between the potential candidates for the superintendency (students and certificate holders) and the practicing superintendents is that only one fifth of the students and one fourth of the certificate holder respondents reported that they would be interested in applying for a superintendent's position. Comparing this information with that of the 55% of the superintendents reporting that they would apply for another position, is alarming. It is alarming in the sense that although the factors were ranked almost the same for both groups, positively and negatively, they did not provide a strong enough influence for the majority of students and certificate holders to pursue the superintendency as a career choice.

**An** assumption can be made that students and certificate holders do in fact have a true picture of the realities of the superintendency through their rating of the factors that influence them to pursue a superintendent's position. This study documented that all three groups (superintendents, current certificate holders and potential certificate holders)

agreed on the factors that most influence and least influence them in the pursuit of a superintendent's position. However, the factors that were rated more positive than those rated more negative were not strong enough influences for the certificate holders and students to show interest in the superintendency as a career choice.

The hope for this group changing their minds in terms of pursuing a superintendent's position as a career choice lies in the fact that they are already on a pathway that leads to the superintendency and the majority are very interested in obtaining administrative certification. What needs to be done is to focus in on what has already placed them on the pathway to the superintendency, administrative coursework, and use it as a vehicle to provide an honest picture of the superintendency that will inspire them to pursue it. As reported in the data, potential candidates tend to have a pretty realistic picture of the present day superintendency. Therefore to increase interest the actual picture needs to be adjusted and more information needs to be made known to the potential candidates about the position. People tend to make judgments about the position by watching a few models during their tenure in education. If they are viewing a superintendent who portrays the job as having too many evenings out, unrewarding, and confrontational, then it is little wonder that they are not interested. They need to be exposed to the other 55% of the superintendents who would apply for another superintendency or those who are happy in their positions and feel that they are doing a "good" to "excellent" job (Glass, 1992). This competing image needs to be publicized. With the majority of aspiring administrators having experience in only one district, their views may be based on a small sample and thus distorted.



In *summary*, all three groups (superintendents, current certificate holders, and potential certificate holders) agreed that being an advocate for education, being an advocate for children and influencing change were the most influencing factors to either pursue the superintendency as a career choice or to remain in a superintendent's position. They also agreed that accommodating special interest groups, distance from the classroom and evening matters were the least influential factors in either pursuing or remaining in a superintendent's position.

### Limitations

The ability to generalize from a study is affected by the nature of the limitations placed on the study (Borg and Gall, 1971). The limitations of this study are discussed.

This study took place in the state of Maine. Due to that fact, the number of respondents (N=236) was small despite the fact that the overall response rate was a respectable **48%**. Along those same lines, the smaller number of respondents compared to the entire potential sample could force this study to be considered exploratory rather than compelling, despite the statistical controls for possible sampling error. Ideally, replication of this study with a new and larger sample would be the next step.

A potential sampling bias could exist because the data obtained from the student population came primarily through men and women who were the most accessible. The student sample was relatively small (N=100) given the number of students enrolled in administrative coursework throughout the year. These respondents were also at the beginning stages of their educational careers and most (71%) had no previous experience as an administrator. Their responses were based on their perspective of the superintendency from a distant view and usually from only one example.

By returning the questionnaire, the respondents (superintendents, certificate holders, and students) were self-selected participants. It is unknown whether those who participated differed from those who did not participate (i.e., did not return the questionnaire). The survey instrument itself occasionally relied on retrospective information. This fact could possibly have influenced how the participants answered the questions (i.e., respond as they feel they should).

Because the participants knew the general theme of the study (i.e., the reasons behind the decline in interest in the superintendency as a career choice), there could be significant discrepancies between their responses and their actual behavior. As in most research dealing with attitudes, respondents' attempts to reduce cognitive dissonance are potential factors.

Although these limitations are important, they should not be used to disclaim the data collected. The data collected is accurate and is needed to examine the issue of supply and demand at the level of superintendent. The superintendent's role is a critical one for the improvement of education. If we are going to use the same governance patterns for public schools that have been in place for the past one hundred years, the superintendent of schools will remain as a critical role and needs to be pursued by our administrators. The person fulfilling this role needs to have courage, talent and vision (Daresh & Playko, 1992). Superintendents, by the very nature of their job, are at the center of change in the educational arena. Educators, parents, community members and government officials must band together in support of the learning experiences that our children, as students, deserve. Superintendents are needed to lead this complex human enterprise by using a balance of knowledge, training, experience, personal skill and energy (Volp, 1995).

### Implications

The implications derived from this study for administrative preparation programs and local, state and national policy changes are wide ranging. With the declining numbers of candidates and potential candidates for the position of superintendent, it is imperative that current practices be reviewed and modified.

The career pathway to the superintendency includes stops at teaching and some form of administration. In order to secure an administrative certification, additional administrative coursework and a master's degree are necessary. These advanced degree programs are the most logical vehicles to use to reach potential candidates for the position of superintendent. Data derived from this study point to the following recommendations:

- Provide introductory administrative course work that highlights the various administrative positions in education, including the superintendency. Some potential applicants have a very narrow view of the career opportunities in educational administration. This trend is especially true for those who work in small rural districts. They need to have information from the field early on in their career in order that they understand the alternative routes on the administrative pathway.
- Involve practicing superintendents who have been selected from their peers as positive influences and who view challenges as opportunities to improve the educational program in administrative coursework.
- Develop opportunities for potential superintendents to “practice” leadership, managerial, and political skills within a controlled environment. Summer

internships, fall or spring “practice superintendencies” would provide an opportunity for more of those “undecided” to take the leap. These internships would differ from the traditional means in that the “practice superintendent” would prepare and run board meetings, handle sensitive situations and use leadership techniques learned in the classroom in a controlled environment. Practicing superintendents would be on their own in the field for a designated period of time. Districts that are in transition between superintendents could act as sites with the cooperation of the University (coursework) and the State Department (conditional certification).

- Give honest and realistic feedback to those who wish to pursue a superintendency but do not have the demonstrated skills or leadership to perform the duties on an ongoing basis.
- Help individuals find a mentor and support group (that have demonstrated success in their superintendent career) as part of the certification process.
- Award incentives to communities that are members of School Unions to restructure their school governing format to that of a SAD model. This would reduce the number of evening commitments for Superintendents of Unions and address one of the barriers that was identified by current and potential Superintendents.
- Provide a view of the Superintendency that is realistic thus competing with the typical view of the superintendency as a job filled with stress, anxiety, loss of personal time, and conflict. Potential candidates for the Superintendency need

to hear from those Superintendents who enjoy their work and find satisfaction in this career choice as documented in the results of this study..

- Mandate, through the certification process, professional development activities for superintendents to learn strategies to overcome barriers associated with the superintendency (i.e. accommodating special interest groups, managing evening commitments and dealing effectively with legal issues).
- Encourage Superintendents through state organizations and the certification process to schedule time (on a yearly basis) to teach a class in their area of expertise. Distance from the classroom was an identified barrier for current and potential Superintendents. Providing an opportunity to stay involved with classroom teaching will not only address this barrier but also provide Superintendents with first hand knowledge for their role as educational leaders.

Lastly, the findings of this study need to be made known to local and state officials for their review and comment. They need to be made to understand the potential leadership vacuum the state of Maine is facing and challenged to restructure the position of superintendent into one that is a more “livable” career. This change can be accomplished by enacting policies and legislation that begin to ease the negative influences: confrontations with adversary groups, distance from the classroom and evening matters. Local policy can provide a procedure for any adversary groups to follow. This policy can include steps that must be taken by concerned groups which are implemented by the superintendent and fully supported and endorsed by the school

board. This process would eliminate the feeling of isolation that superintendents experience when dealing with these groups. Superintendents would also feel support when it was most needed.

**As** a condition of Board membership, electing towns should require board members to attend sessions that prepare them for their role on the school board and compensate them for doing so. State legislators can easily eliminate the need for excessive budget meetings by funding education in a fair manner that ensures essential services and programs are provided for all students regardless of location. Supporting such measures as state wide teacher negotiations would also alleviate a number of evening commitments. An aggressive recruitment program needs to be developed and funded for the increasingly difficult time school districts have in filling all administrative positions. With practices such as these the most negative influences would be addressed and alleviated. It may also help in the area of job satisfaction for the superintendent as well as making the job more attractive to potential applicants.

In addition to changes in recruitment, preparation and mentoring programs for potential and current superintendent candidates, additional research is needed to further investigate the decline in interest among men. Despite the fact that there is an overall decline in interest in pursuing the superintendency as a career choice, the number of female superintendents has almost doubled in the past ten years, with 15 employed female superintendents in 1991 compared to the **27** in 2000 (State Department of Education, 2000).

This study determined that all three groups (superintendents, current certificate holders and potential certificate holders) agreed on the factors that most influence and

least influence them in the pursuit of a superintendent's position. Additional research centered around these influencing and deterring factors needs to be conducted to provide more information to address the declining interest in the superintendency.

This study needs to be replicated in a larger region to more fully represent the population. This step would provide a more thorough exploration of the variables used in this study. Furthermore, this process is not only a concern in the state of Maine; it is also shared on a national level (AASA, 1992) and needs to be studied further.

It would also be interesting to survey the other stakeholders in education: local, state and national policy makers to receive their view of this dilemma and their recommendations for improvements.

In summary, our best and brightest are out there in our schools teaching and administrating. We need to somehow inspire them to consider the top leadership position in education, the superintendency. Since the importance of the position alone doesn't appear to be enough motivation, we must take a closer look at the responsibilities of the position and make changes where applicable. The University system, local school boards, state legislators and national policy makers must work collaboratively to develop this top educational leadership position into one to which our best and brightest teachers and administrators will aspire.

### Final Comments

Superintendents are dream builders for America's children (Crowson & Glass, 1991), which is the reason the work of the superintendent is so important. The superintendent holds the power to provide the ideas, design the blueprints and implement

methods that will allow those dreams to come true. The superintendent's most important work is to help students realize their dreams through their role as the school leader.

This caliber of leadership is only possible if the right people are in the position and appropriate training is provided. We need to start to seriously encourage and recruit our best educators for this position. The superintendents of the future will need to employ skills that emphasize team building, shared leadership and instructional improvement, in spite of the outdated image of district manager. These are the same skills that separate our teachers and administrators from those who are average to those who are exemplary. We need to aggressively explore this population.

Although our current practicing superintendents are experienced, with more academic training than ever before and considerable years of experience as superintendents, chances are that they will not be working far into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus training and preparation of superintendents for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is critical. This area, the preparation for the superintendency, needs to be closely examined. Although discussion surrounding superintendent preparation is usually a philosophical one, what is being done now in terms of program and coursework may be obsolete. Certification and training programs need to be developed to meet the needs of our future superintendents.

Professional preparation needs to be expanded beyond the classroom credit hour approach to meaningful and productive work in the field. New programs are also needed to prepare potential candidates by employing more field-based training experiences for the real life adventures of the superintendency. While the structure of families, technology and community expectations continue to change the way we attract and prepare school superintendents to "do business" needs to change as well. We need people



who are more creative, flexible and “visionary risk takers” who keep the needs of the child at the top of their agenda. To build confidence in this often isolated and challenging position, there is a strong need for a mentoring program to assist new superintendents or those aspiring to the position. A blend of theory, research, applied knowledge and skill development needs to replace the traditional methods for certification attainment.

The truth of the matter is that the opportunity to become a superintendent will only increase. Surveys reveal that more than 50 percent of the 13,800 superintendents plan to retire during the next ten years (Glass, 1992). Loss of talent and experience will result, but the openings will afford greater professional advancement opportunities for young, eager and sometimes better trained people who aspire to the job. Who will be the school superintendent leaders that are needed to lead the school districts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

The Maine school superintendency should be an exciting leadership opportunity that those in education aspire to achieve. Our children deserve it, as do our staffs, parents and community. Because the responsibility for education rests primarily with the state and schooling rests primarily with local school units, the effort to relieve the school superintendency of its unwelcoming nature must be done. This task needs to be accomplished in a collaborative effort involving all stakeholders. Issues such as evenings out, collective bargaining, school funding, and dealing with adversary groups are influences that must be addressed. When are people going to realize that only then will the superintendency be what it was intended to be by the Legislature and expected to be by local School Boards, the Dream Builder of our children?

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## APPENDIX A

### Survey of Influences on the Superintendency

## Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice *Superintendent*

Please take a few minutes to complete and return this survey in the postage-paid envelope provided. Do not put your name or the name of your district on this form. All responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your time.

1.) Please check all of the certificates you currently hold:

<input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Superintendent <input type="checkbox"/> Principal <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Director of Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
--	--

2.) Please check one:

<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
---------------------------------	-------------------------------

3.) Age:

<input type="checkbox"/> 20-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-59	
<input type="checkbox"/> 30-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 60-69+	
<input type="checkbox"/> 40-49		

4.) Which region do you live in?

<input type="checkbox"/> Aroostook	<input type="checkbox"/> North Central	<input type="checkbox"/> Central	<input type="checkbox"/> Western
<input type="checkbox"/> Down East	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Coast	<input type="checkbox"/> Southern	

5.) During some point in your career, do you think you would be interested in applying for a different superintendent's position? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

If you answered No, please **go** to Question 13.



6.} How satisfied are you in your current position?

☐ Very Satisfied      ☐ Satisfied      ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied      ☐ Very Dissatisfied

7.} How many superintendent positions have you applied for in your career? \_\_\_\_\_

8.} How supportive is your family of your decision to be a superintendent?

☐ Very Supportive      ☐ Supportive      ☐ Non-Supportive      ☐ Indifferent

9.} How far would you commute for a superintendent's position?

☐ 0-30 minutes      ☐ 31-60 minutes

☐ 61-90 minutes      ☐ 90+ minutes

10.} Please check all regions in which you would apply for a superintendent's position.

☐ Aroostook      ☐ North Central      ☐ Central      ☐ Western

☐ Down East      ☐ Mid-Coast      ☐ Southern

11.} How desirable would the following list of educational systems be to you when applying for a superintendent's position?

	<u>Very Desirable</u>	<u>Doesn't Matter</u>	<u>Very Undesirable</u>
<b>SAD</b>			
Single School Board K-12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Single School Board K-8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Single Municipality</u>			
School Board and City Council K-12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Union/CSD</u>			
Multiple School Boards K-12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multiple School Boards K-8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12.) Not all educational systems in the State of Maine include high schools. As a superintendent, how would you feel about having a high school as part of your system?

Prefer

☐

Not Prefer

☐

Neutral

☐

**Directions:** Please rate each element as it influences your decision to stay in the superintendency.

	Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Neutral	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative
13.) Salaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.) Fringe Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.) Influencing Change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.) Working as a liaison with community groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.) Being an advocate for education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.) Being visible in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.) Direct involvement in policy formation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.) Participation in collective bargaining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.) Working with local community leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.) Opportunity to work with adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.) Working with school boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.) Serving as a chief executive officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.) Ability to influence student activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.) Distance from the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.) Evening matters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.) Personnel management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.) Financial management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.) Accommodating special interest groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.) Job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.) Working with state political leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.) Involvement with <b>long</b> term planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

34.} Year round responsibilities	Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Neutral	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative
35.} Conflict management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.} Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.} Involvement with complex legal issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.} Being an advocate for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39.} Mentoring other educators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice *Certificate Holder*

Please take a few minutes to complete and return this survey in the postage-paid envelope provided. Do not put your name or the name of your district on this form. All responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your time.

1.} Please check all of the certificates you currently hold:

<input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Superintendent <input type="checkbox"/> Principal <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Director of Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
--	--

2.) If employed, what is your current position?

3.) Please check one:

☐ Female  
☐ Male

<input type="checkbox"/> 20-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-59 <input type="checkbox"/> 60-69+
--	---

5.) Are you interested in applying for a superintendent's position? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided

If you answered No, please **go** to Question 13.

6.) Have you applied for a superintendent position? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If yes, how many times? \_\_\_\_\_ How many times have you been interviewed? \_\_\_\_\_

7.) How supportive is your family of this career move?  
☐ Very Supportive ☐ Supportive ☐ Non-Supportive ☐ Indifferent

8.} How far would you commute for a superintendent's position?

☐ 0-30 minutes ☐ 31-60 minutes

☐ 61-90 minutes ☐ 90+ minutes

9.} Which region do you live in?

☐ Aroostook ☐ Northcentral ☐ Central ☐ Western

☐ DownEast ☐ Mid-Coast ☐ Southern

10.} Please check all regions in which you would apply for a superintendent's position.

☐ Aroostook ☐ Northcentral ☐ Central ☐ Western

☐ DownEast ☐ Mid-Coast ☐ Southern

11.) How desirable would the following list of educational systems be to you when applying for a superintendent's position?

	<u>Very Desirable</u>	<u>Doesn't Matter</u>	<u>Very Undesirable</u>
<u>SAD</u>			
Single School Board <b>K-12</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Single School Board <b>K-8</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Single Municipality</u>			
School Board and City Council <b>K-12</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Union/CSD</u>			
Multiple School Boards <b>K-12</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Multiple School Boards <b>K-8</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12.) Not all educational systems in the State of Maine include high schools. As a superintendent, how would you feel about having a high school as part of your system?

	<u>Prefer</u>	<u>Not Prefer</u>	<u>Neutral</u>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate each element as it influences your decision to seek the superintendency.

	<u>Very Positive</u>	<u>Somewhat Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Somewhat Negative</u>	<u>Very Negative</u>
13.) Salaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.) Fringe Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.) Influencing Change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.) Working as a liaison with community groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.) Being an advocate for education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.) Being visible in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
19.) Direct involvement in policy formation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<u>Very Positive</u>	<u>Somewhat Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Somewhat Negative</u>	<u>Very Negative</u>
20.) Participation in collective bargaining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.) Working with local community leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.) Opportunity to work with adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.) Working with school boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.) Serving as a chief executive officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.) Ability to influence student activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.) Distance from the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.) Evening matters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.) Personnel management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.) Financial management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.) Accommodating special interest groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.) Job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.) Working with state political leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.) Involvement with long term planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.) Year round responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.) Conflict management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.) Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.) Involvement with complex legal issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.) Being an advocate for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39.) Mentoring other educators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice *Student*

Please take a few minutes to complete and return this survey in the postage-paid envelope provided. Do not put your name or the name of your district on this form. All responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your time.

1.} Please check all of the certificates you currently hold:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Superintendent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assistant Superintendent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assistant Principal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Director of Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____

2.} Please check all of the certificates you plan on applying for in the next five years:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Superintendent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assistant Superintendent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assistant Principal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Director of Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____

3.} If employed, what is your current position?

_____
-------

4.) Please check one:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	Male

5.) Age:

<input type="checkbox"/>	20-29	<input type="checkbox"/>	50-59
<input type="checkbox"/>	30-39	<input type="checkbox"/>	60-69+
<input type="checkbox"/>	40-49		



6.} Are you interested in applying for a superintendent's position? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Undecided  
If you answered No, please **go** to Question 13.

7.} How supportive is your family of this decision?  
☐ Very Supportive ☐ Supportive ☐ Non-Supportive ☐ Indifferent

8.} How far would you commute for a superintendent's position?  
☐ 0-30 minutes ☐ 31-60 minutes  
☐ 61-90 minutes ☐ 90+ minutes

9.} Which region do you live in?  
☐ Aroostook ☐ North Central ☐ Central ☐ Western  
☐ DownEast ☐ Mid-Coast ☐ Southern

10.} Please check all regions in which you would apply for a superintendent's position.  
☐ Aroostook ☐ North Central ☐ Central ☐ Western  
☐ DownEast ☐ Mid-Coast ☐ Southern

11.) How desirable would the following list of educational systems be to you when applying for a superintendent's position?

Very Desirable

Doesn't Matter

Very Undesirable

SAD

Single School Board **K-12**

☐
☐
☐

Single School Board **K-8**

☐
☐
☐

Single Municipality

School Board and City Council **K-12**

☐
☐
☐

Union/CSD

Multiple School Boards **K-12**

☐
☐
☐

Multiple School Boards **K-8**

☐
☐
☐

Prefer

Not Prefer

Neutral

☐
☐
☐

12.) Not all educational systems in the State of Maine include high schools. As a superintendent, how would you feel about having a high school as part of your system?

Directions: Please rate each element as it influences your decision to seek the superintendency.

Very  
Positive

Somewhat  
Positive

Neutral

Somewhat  
Negative

Very  
Negative

13.) Salaries

☒
☐
☐
☐
☐

14.) Fringe Benefits

☒
☐
☐
☐
☐

15.) Influencing Change

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

16.) Working as a liaison with  
community groups

☒
☐
☐
☐
☒

17.) Being an advocate for education

☐
☐
☒
☐
☐

18.) Being visible in the community

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

	<u>Very Positive</u>	<u>Somewhat Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Somewhat Negative</u>	<u>Very Negative</u>
19.) Direct involvement in policy formation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.) Participation in collective bargaining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.) Working with local community leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.) Opportunity to work with adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.) Working with school boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.) Serving as a chief executive officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.) Ability to influence student activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.) Distance from the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.) Evening matters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.) Personnel management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.) Financial management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.) Accommodating special interest groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.) Job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.) Working with state political leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.} Involvement with long term planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.) Year round responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.} Conflict management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.) Prestige	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.) Involvement with complex legal issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.) Being an advocate for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39.) Mentoring other educators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## APPENDIX B

### Correspondence

February 14, 2000

Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Maine working on my dissertation. The intent of my study is to determine why there is lessening interest among current and potential administrators to pursue the superintendency as a career choice. The specific purposes of my study are: 1) to determine to what extent the factors identified by potential and current superintendent certificate holders influence their pursuit of a superintendent's position, 2) to determine how factors identified by new superintendents (employed as a superintendent for no longer than five years) influence their decision to stay in their position, and 3) to determine the relationship between the factors identified by those who are potential and current certificate holders but not in a superintendent's position and practicing new superintendents (employed as a superintendent for longer than five years).

The enclosed survey, *Survey of Influences on the Superintendency as a Career Choice*, is being used as a research instrument for my dissertation. Surveys have been sent to students enrolled in the Educational Administration Masters of Education Program and The Educational Administration Advanced Study Program in the University of Maine system, current superintendent certificate holders not employed as superintendents and practicing superintendents who have been in their position for five years or less. The survey should take about ten minutes to fill out and participation is voluntary. All questions need not be answered and there is no penalty for not participating.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout this research. Only research assistants in the College of Education and Human Development and I will see the data. No names of participants or districts will be used in reporting data. For this reason participants are asked **not** to put any identifying information on the survey. If a survey is returned with identifying information, the information will be deleted. All surveys will be kept in a locked file and only the results will be reported. Once the study is completed and approved, all surveys will be destroyed. If you wish a copy of the final report or have any questions concerning this study, please call me at 696-4054 or 696-5102, or my faculty advisor, Dr. Russell J. Quaglia at 581-2492 for more information. I anticipate having the results of this study completed by May 2000.

The data derived from this study will serve many purposes. It will become an important tool in aiding the educational community and state policy makers in their understanding of where we stand as a state in our ability to fill the critical need of adequate leadership at the superintendent's level. This study will also provide accurate and timely data supporting the true status of candidates for the position of Superintendent and perhaps more importantly, the reasons, real or perceived, behind the numbers.

I would appreciate your help in my study. Please complete this survey and return it to me in the postage-paid envelope provided.

With sincere thanks,

Regina Campbell

## BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Regina P. Campbell, born August 9, 1953, attended private and public schools in two states and completed degree programs in education at the University of Connecticut and the University of Maine.

Ms. Campbell is a member of numerous educational organizations and honor societies. She has been a teacher at the elementary, middle, high school and college levels. She has been an elementary principal and central office administrator. Regina has edited and written articles on educational leadership.

Currently, she works as a Superintendent of Schools for two School Administrative Districts, a State Agent for an Unorganized Territory and Graduate Instructor. She is a candidate for the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership from The University of Maine in May, 2001.