

Female superintendents' perception of emotion and its impact on
ethical decisions: a phenomenological study

by

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DEDICATION

To Mark Moulton, my husband, confidant and greatest supporter.

To Betty and Ken Persenaire, my mother and stepfather, and my barometer for a strong and effective work ethic. Although Ken did not get to see the culmination of the hard work, he was a cheerleader to the end.

To Chuck McAninch, my father and educational enthusiast.

To Jason Moulton. Remembering your favorite childhood book: *Fortunately, I met your dad. Unfortunately, he already had a son. **Fortunately, it was you.***

Words cannot express how much I love you all.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to understand the impact of emotion on the ethical decision-making of female superintendents. According to Cuban (2001) educational leaders encounter an abundance of complexities including many difficult, potentially explosive situations in which they must make ethical decisions. The study of superintendent perception on the emotional impact on ethical decision-making is incomplete without the consideration of female superintendents. This study added to the literature informing of the role of superintendent with specific attention to the female superintendent.

This study utilized observations, review of archival data, and semi-structured interviews, with a purposeful sample of ten female superintendents in mid-sized Texas school districts. Moustakas (1994) provided an outline and a model of the phenomenological methodology that the researcher followed. Using a phenomenological approach provided for understanding several individuals' common experiences of a phenomenon that can culminate in developing practices, policies and greater understanding about the features of the phenomenon. There were three emergent themes supporting the evidence of emotion as an enveloping foundation in ethical decision-making by these female superintendents. These were: *control by the female superintendent, communication as a requisite skill, and emotion tied to personnel decisions.*

This study adds to the body of knowledge regarding the ways in which emotion impacts decision-making. The results of this study may be applicable to female superintendent training and practice, as well as superintendent and board relations.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

George Washington is credited with the saying, “Moral duty and happiness are inseparably connected” (Cleveland, 1864, p. 54). Educational leaders should find it worthy to lead under Washington’s assertion and for their careers to reflect such significance. Making decisions in and for organizations, however, affects one’s emotional import. If we place confidence in Washington’s words, decisions grounded in ethical verity are more likely to lead to a state of happiness. However, little is known about how emotions influence an individual's ethical decision process (Gaudine & Thorne, 2001).

The school superintendent is the chief administrative officer in the school district (Katz, 2003; Pounder, 1990). It is a position of wide influence. The position of superintendent has jurisdiction of the facilities, and educational services of their geographical area. Most importantly the superintendent has oversight of students and employees, which implies a moral obligation as education is a moral undertaking and superintendents are confronted with ethical dilemmas on a daily basis (Fitch, 2009). The daily decisions of the superintendent are resolutions of moral dilemmas with the potential to restructure human life (Foster, 1986; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). With such power, ethical leadership and ethical decision-making is imperative. Only recently have begun to understand processes in the brain to understand how emotion and reason are both necessary to decision-making and moral decision-making (Berthoz, 2006).

Emotion is a reaction that occurs when individuals encounter significant relationships with others (Barrett & Campos, 1987; Frijda, 1986). Our emotions are a vital aspect of our nature (Hawkins, 2008). Emotion however is often labeled a dispensable feature to the ethical decision-making process; feelings relegated to a place in line behind the cognitive facts and skills learned in school (Gaudine & Thorne, 2001). However, recent research in neuroscience implies that decision-making results from a complex interplay of emotions and reason. Reaching back to one of Plato's most enduring contribution, there is a two-part division of the mind, reason and emotion. Decision-making is either rational or emotional (Lehrer, 2009). The ancient limbic system of the brain is the seat of basic emotions such as fear, aggressiveness and contentment. We now know the limbic system wins out over our rationality many times (Ochsner & James, 2005). Malcolm Gladwell (2009) illustrated that we make instant decisions without knowing why, and then make up rational reasons to justify an emotional decision. In "Thinking, Fast and Slow", Kahneman (2011) explains two systems that determine the way we think. System 1 is fast, intuitive, skilled, and emotional; system 2 is slower, intentional, deductive, and more logical. Kahneman explains that system 1, the sensing system of the brain, accesses reality and presents an unambiguous object-based impression of it to system 2, the reasoning system of the brain. System 2 checks for reasonableness and then accepts and integrates or rejects and possibly corrects the impression. Kahneman theorizes that any "inherent ambiguity is resolved by our intuitive sensing", and if it is reasonable, it is accepted unchallenged, with supporting points brought in after the fact.

Given that the role of superintendents and school boards are grounded in the responsibility of making sound ethical decisions, more research is needed to determine the extent to which emotions are influential to the making of sound ethical decisions. Emotions are a component of decision-making and therefore, that calls for a thoughtful examination. A lack of research exists in educational leadership regarding emotion and ethical decision-making. Adding to the body of research was a clear intention of this study.

Background to the Study

Educational leaders encounter an abundance of complexities including many difficult, potentially explosive situations in which they must make ethical decisions (Cuban, 2001; Messick & Bazerman, 1996). Although there is no commonly recognized theoretical framework to study decision-making, the theory of rational decision-making governed early literature (Cranston, Erich & Kimber, 2003; Davis & Davis, 2003; DeMartino, Kumaran, Seymor & Dolan, 2006; Edwards, 1954; Kahneman, 1991; White, 1999). However we now know that that is not how humans make decisions. “Decisions don’t just happen by themselves, people make, or don’t make, decisions.” Processes of the human mind are complex. Experience and emotion can alter our judgment even while striving for objectivity errors in our thinking may emerge (Finkelstein, 2010). This is why it is important to focus on the judgments, decisions and behaviors of organizational leaders, as decision-making is an area of profound importance.

Context, emotion and heuristics amalgamated with logic and reason present a new approach to understanding the decision-making processes (Berthoz, 2006; Gladwell, 2005; Izard, 2011; Lehrer, 2009, Rogerson, Gottlieb, Handelsman, Knapp & Younggren,

2011; Schwarz, 2000). Reminiscent of Plato's two-part division of the mind (Lehrer, 2009), James (1884) believed that there were two different kinds of thinking: associative and true reasoning. Damasio's work on multiplicity of consciousness's links emotion to our feelings for what we perceive. Kahneman (2011) explained that two systems within the brain, the intuitive, system one, and the reasoning brain, system two, drive the way we think. System One is fast, instinctual, and emotional; System Two is slower, intentional, and more logical. The largely unconscious System One makes intuitive snap judgments based on emotion, memory, and practical rules of repetition. The logical and conscious System Two analytically checks the facts but is so languid and distractible that it usually defers to System One. Research and new methods of inquiry seem to be catching up to a long held suspicion of subjective consciousness (Damasio, 2000).

Emotion

Emotion, as a term, reflects phenomena that are difficult to reduce to a single definition (Frijda, 1986). James (1884) limited his investigation of emotions to those with a distinct bodily expression. Emotions are complex constituent processes, grounded in biology and represented in social compartments (Gross, 1999). Describing the behaviors of people, or explaining behaviors that have no purpose or reason, can help to provide a working definition of emotion (Frijda, 1986). It is the description of beliefs, motivations and desires that has overtaken the simplistic identification of a feeling or sensation (Baron, 1992; Marks, 1981). Emotions are also reflected in our faces, voices and gestures (Baier, 1990). Izard (2011) supports Darwin's observation that the visceral representation of emotion signals intent of what one is likely to do, provides foundational inferences about the environmental conditions, and manages social interactions.

Trustworthy evidence of what people feel supplements the less trustworthy evidence of what people say. Beliefs, motivations and desires from expressed emotions provide a check on the evidence we get from words and reasoned, purposeful behaviors (Baier, 1990). The idea that emotions can affect understanding has been suggested in several recent works (Berthoz, 2006; Damasio, 2000; Starkey, 2008).

Ethical Decision-Making

Different models of decision-making exist. An ethical decision is defined as a decision that is both legal and morally acceptable to the larger community (Jones, 1991) or individual behavior that is subject to or judged according to generally accepted moral norms of behavior (Trevino, Weaver & Reynolds, 2006). Historically, research concerned with ethical decision-making was framed around traditional moral theory associated with justice and duty (Trevino, Brown & Hartman, 2003) and the ideas that decisions are made on the basis of rationality or the maximizing of a preferred value over all others (Fitch, 2009). In addressing a moral or ethical issue, the movement of decision-making is from the problem to the course of action that will resolve it. Therefore, there are times where instead of manipulating all attributes of all available options, an elimination of aspects model is utilized. This approach to decision-making involves the creation of criteria and eliminating all options that do not meet that criterion. Research linking the role of emotion in making ethical decisions is advancing (Barnes & Thagard 1996; Bechara & Damasio, 2005; Davis & Davis, 2003; DeMartino et. al., 2006; Dunn, Dalgleish & Lawrence, 2006; Gaudine & Thorne, 2001; George, 2000; Hawkins, 2008; Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007; Irby & Brown, 1995; Lehrer, 2009; Mellers & McGraw, 2001; Mellers, Schwarz, Ho & Ritov, 1997). Recent utilization of functional

neuroimaging, fMRI scans, has allowed unprecedented study of brain engagement evocative of moral emotions during ethical decision-making scenarios (Heekeren, Wartenburger, Schmidt, Schwintowski & Villringer, 2003). According to Lehrer (2009) morality at its core is based on emotion, not logic. Moral decision-making is about feeling sympathy for others. Lehrer concludes that the capacity for making moral decisions is built into the circuitry of normal human brains, probably the result of evolutionary forces favoring cooperation within groups.

Gender differences. Coinciding with the increase of women in the role of superintendent (Amedy, 1999; Brunner 1997; Ceniga, 2008; Gammill & Vaughn, 2011; Irby & Brown, 1995; Mertz & McNeely, 1990; Pounder, 1990) is the emerging literature base regarding gender differences in ethical decision-making (DeVore & Martin, 2008; Fabes & Martin, 1991; Martinek, 1996; Skrla, 2000; White, 1999). This body of research has grown from the concept of a feminine leadership model. While feminist researchers have not claimed that the traits they describe as a part of the feminine leadership model are those demonstrated by women only or by all women in leadership positions, they have observed these traits in women in their studies. The studies infer that the ethical dimensions of men and women may be different. Men tend to be duty and principle oriented; women are more context oriented and tend to view the world in a more emotional and personal way. Women tend to lead in more democratic, participatory and less autocratic styles and decision-making reflects these preferences.

Emotion and Decision-Making

Emotions are complex constituent processes, grounded in biology and represented in social compartments (Gross, 1999). Emotions represent themselves in a collection of

changes in body and brain states. One's perceptions, actual or recalled, relative to a particular object or event elicit emotion (Damasio, Tranel & Damasio, 1998; Damasio, 2000). Emotions play an extensive role in thought processes and behavior (Bowers, 2009; Forgas, 2001; Forgas & George, 2001; George, 2000). Being aware of one's own emotions can be useful in terms of directing attention to pressing concerns and signaling what should be the focus of attention (Frijda, 1986; George, 2000). Emotions can be used to choose among many possibilities in making decisions. Anticipating feelings if certain events took place can help decision makers choose among multiple options (Damasio, Tranel & Damasio, 1998). Emotions can be used to enable certain kinds of cognitive processes: positive moods can facilitate creativity, integrative thinking, and inductive reasoning, and negative moods can facilitate attention to detail, detection of errors and problems, and careful information processing (Mayer & Salovey 1997). Emotion is beneficial to decision-making when it is integral to the task, but can be disruptive when it is unrelated to the task (Bechara & Damasio 2005). Emotion is not to be ignored as a trigger that signals the existence of an ethical dilemma (Gaudine & Thorne, 2001).

Particular to this study was whether emotion precedes cognition or if emotion is post cognitive relative to ethical decision-making. Lazarus (1984, 1990) believes understanding generates the emotion. In contrast, Zajonc (1980, 1984) contends that although they function conjointly, emotion can be a separate process from cognition and may lead to affective judgments that precede intellectual awareness. According to Damasio (1998, 2000) and Kahneman (2011), emotions dictate and restrict which fragments of information are used in ethical decision-making. Ethical decision-making

represents the highest cognitive and emotional achievement of humans (Gardner, 2007). Knowledge and reasoning alone are ordinarily not sufficient for making advantageous decisions. At its best, ethical decision-making weaves together emotion, high reasoning, creativity, and social functioning, all in a cultural context (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007).

Gender Perspective

The superintendent is the chief executive officer of a school district. How a superintendent thinks and how a superintendent acts affects others not only in the organization but also outside the organization. Leaders set the moral tone (Bennis & Nanus, 1997). The superintendent must make decisions and must model behaviors that are moral in nature. Identifying and understanding contributing components to superintendent performance is worthy study. A more complete understanding of how emotion influences ethical decision-making process has become necessary. The more narrowed lens of female perspective on the decision-making process is a worthy perspective to enrich the body of knowledge. According to Irby & Brown (1995) there are gender differences regarding the influences related to leadership style. Many lay people and research psychologists believe that women are more emotional than are men: Women are believed to experience and express most emotions more intensely and more frequently than are men; men, if they are emotional at all, are believed to experience and express more anger (Shields, 1987). Differences exist in the functional significance of emotion and bias in the evaluation of other's emotion. (Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Fabes & Martin, 1991). If one gender exhibits a higher level of emotional evaluation, the question

of whether there is a difference in actual ethical behaviors can have broad social and moral ramifications (White, 1999).

Somatic Marker Theory

The Somatic Marker Theory (Damasio, 1994) is a model of how feedback from the body may contribute to successful decision-making in situations of complexity and uncertainty (Dunn, Dalgleish & Lawrence, 2006). Somatic refers to the Greek word soma. Because the layman, researcher, psychologist, or physiologist can interpret the term emotion differently, using the term somatic referred to the collection of body related responses that mark an emotion (Damasio, 1998; Bechara & Damasio, 2005; Dunn, Dalgleish & Lawrence, 2006). The somatic marker hypothesis provided neurobiological evidence in support of the notion that people often make judgments based on hunches, gut feelings, and subjective evaluation of the consequences (Damasio, 1994; Zajonc, 1984). Damasio contends that for every response option considered, a somatic state is generated, including sensations from the viscera, internal environment, and the skeletal and smooth muscles. Emotional states leave somatic markers that can be reactivated on future decision-making occasions. The marker enables the new decision to be guided by the previously felt emotion (Baumeister, DeWall & Zhang, 2007). It is these bodily feelings that normally accompany our representations of the anticipated outcomes of options, feelings that arise from the neural machinery that underlies emotion. Damasio's somatic marker theory suggests that the role of emotions in decision-making is biologically extensive and complex. Somatic marker theory has made a valuable contribution to further the idea that emotion can be a benefit as well as a hindrance when making a decision.

Problem Statement

The Azam study (2010) examined how male superintendents perceive emotion's impact on their ability to make decisions and further to identify how these same superintendents perceive emotion's impact on the board trustees' decisions. Using observed somatic markers; Azam guided the reflection of 12 superintendents and produced a phenomenological study that showed how emotion, specifically fear, was evident in superintendents' and trustees' decision-making. Absent from this study were differences that might exist in looking specifically at female superintendents and the impact of emotion of ethical decision-making.

Fineman's (1991) findings held that adult stereotypes appear to be based on a deficit model of male emotional expressiveness or the belief that men do not express the emotions that they feel. Additional work regarding stereotyping and judgments (Robinson, Johnson & Shields, 1998) provided evidence that observers, regardless of their own gender, utilize gender based stereotyping when there is a lack of concrete situational evidence to base a decision. Bianchin and Angrilli (2012) investigated both men and women to find that women exhibited greater sensitivity and vulnerability to adverse and stressful events. Neel, Becker, Neuberg & Kenrick (2012) found cues to harm via perceptions of anger were linked to men and cues to friendship via perceptions of happiness were linked to women. A problem of this study was to identify in what ways do female superintendents perceive emotion's impact on their decisions and the decisions of the board trustees.

The study of superintendent perception on the emotional impact on ethical decision-making is incomplete without the consideration of female superintendents. The

purpose of this study was to examine (1) how female superintendents perceive emotion's impact on their ability to make decisions, and (2) how female superintendents perceived emotion's impact on board trustees' decisions. Given the broad context of decision-making by superintendents it was important to analyze the role of perceived emotion by female superintendents. The changing face of school leaders to include increasing numbers of women provided both opportunity and resolution to address this problem.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to document whether a relationship existed between perceived emotional experience and the impact on decisions in female superintendents' decision-making. Qualitative research is suited to studies involving human behavior and human experience to construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are (Bogdan & Bilkin, 1998). This was a phenomenological study of female superintendents' perception of emotion and its impact on ethical decision-making in public schools. This investigation concerning the leadership practices of women school superintendents is important as it increases the quantity of research particularly looking at qualities of female leaders. "As more such studies accumulate, researchers and practitioners should move toward a better understanding of women's work lives as superintendents" (Skrla, 1998, p. 5).

Significance of the Study

Ethical leaders must rely on moral courage and moral reasoning to make rational, ethical decisions (Kidder & Born, 2002). It is important to investigate additional factors that ethical leaders rely on to make rational, ethical decisions in order to frame a more complete list of evidences of quality performance as a public school superintendent. The

ethical leadership characteristics identified in this study serves as a model for superintendents and in establishing competencies for professional development activities surrounding ethical leadership. The Azam study provided a link between leadership theory, demographics, and ethical decision-making by collecting information from male practitioners. This study accomplished the same with female practitioners. As a quasi-replication of the Azam (2010) study, this research looked at any similarity or refraction noted due to the difference in superintendent gender.

Critical to the superintendent's ability to bring about and maintain positive change in a district is the quality of performance and the relationship the superintendent upholds with the school board (Petersen & Fusarelli, 2001; Petersen & Williams, 2005). This study also reached into the actor's reflective meta-cognition (Dolan, 2002) of emotional impact on the quality of judgment and decisions within an organization (Baron, 1992; Finkelstein, 2010; Jones, 1991; Lehrer, 2009; Kahneman, 1991; Kahneman, 2011; Messick & Bazerman, 1996; Rogerson, Gottlieb, Handelsman, Knapp & Younggren, 2011). It is important for superintendents to maintain a state of trustworthiness and be seen as the morale leader of a successful school system (Cuban, 1988; Gardner, 2007; Schlechty, 2009; Sergiovanni, 1992; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Therefore it is important to equip superintendents and aspiring superintendents with reflective text and discourse for maintaining skills and persona to sustain success in the profession. School districts may need to address how shared emotional states can influence the resolution of ethical dilemmas (Gaudine & Thorne, 2001). Consequently, school boards will be interested in knowing if differences exist between male and female superintendents regarding perceptions of emotion in making ethical decisions. Information gained from this study

may be helpful to school boards in the recruitment and selection of a new superintendent or may aid in the evaluation of an incumbent superintendent.

Overview of Methodology

There are three primary research models: quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods (Creswell, 2003; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Orcher, 2005). Quantitative research provides for the interpretation of statistical data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) within an objective reality (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Phenomenology, a scholarly academic design grounded in qualitative research, attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives, understandings and their construct of reality of a particular situation (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gather data regarding the perspectives of research participants to: (a) explore how emotion impacts the ethical decisions made by female superintendents, and (b) to investigate how perceived emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees impacts female superintendents' job performance. Data collection included multiple interviews with female superintendents, use of field notes and recordings based on observed regularly scheduled school board meetings, and a review of board policies. Participants for this study were selected purposefully, according to Hycner (1985, p.294) "the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants." Because Boyd (2001) regards two to 10 participants or research subjects as sufficient to reach saturation and the recommended number of participants in a phenomenological study generally is 10 (Riemen, 1986; Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2003; McCracken, 1998), a

sample size of 10 female superintendents of mid-sized (populations 600-4,000) school districts in Texas were chosen.

The methods of data collection were observations of school board meetings, participant interviews, and archival data review. The observation of the board meeting took place prior to the first interview with the corresponding superintendent. This researcher audio-recorded the observation of the board meetings as one means of obtaining data. Interviews of each female superintendent were predicated on the research questions of this study. A dynamic dialogue was anticipated as observation data from the board meeting was interjected into the conversation. Prior to each interview, the purposes of the investigation were explained. The researcher audio recorded each interview. It was anticipated that the interviews be value-laden and biased, informal and inductive. Following the interviews, a written transcription was e-mailed to the participants for member-check review. This researcher reviewed each research participant's school board policy manual. Local policies with language exclusive to the district are labeled with an *X*. A review of these policies that were added or amended in the last year led to the identification of decisions that had potential emotional basis. Questions to extract the emotional context of the policy development were developed. A journal and research notes were kept to document this researcher's descriptions and interpretations of the interviews and observations. Journaling assisted in the analysis of the data.

Research Questions

The research questions had basic assumptions (a) that human beings are emotional by nature, (b) that emotion is a vital component of decision-making, and (c)

that proper implementation of both emotion and reason by superintendents and board trustees is conducive for ethical decision-making (Cranston, Ehrich & Kimber, 2003; Fitch, 2009; Gaudine & Thorne, 2001; Jones, 1991; Mayer, Kuenzi & Greenbaum, 2009; Messick & Bazerman, 1996; Pijanowski, 2008; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008). The research questions that framed this study did so to ask a question about a practice to be considered (Johnson, 2009). The practice under consideration was explicit attention to emotion in decision-making. These questions were utilized to begin the interview process honing in on the diverse impact of emotion in decision-making. Subsequent information was based on the dynamic dialogues that ensued. The research questions for this study were:

1. In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions made by female superintendents?
2. In what ways does perceived emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees impact female superintendents' job performance?

Delimitations

This study was conducted in the state of Texas with ten female superintendents of public school districts considered mid-sized. The pool of superintendents was chosen from those districts with 2011-2012 reported enrollment of 600-4,000 students. Although the state of Texas often utilizes the University Interscholastic League (UIL) designation of 1A-5A to identify school size, this study expanded on the UIL 2A and 3A size schools chosen in the Azam study so that a greater pool of women superintendents can be accessed. Currently defined, 2A and 3A schools have enrollments of 200-989, translating to district sizes of 600 - 2900. A review of the Who's Who in Texas Public Schools

(TASA, 2011) showed the pool of female superintendents expanded by 12, to 69 potential participants, with an adjustment to the size of the districts considered for inclusion in this study. Only currently employed public school superintendents were considered. Interim, associate and assistant superintendents were not part of this study because the impact of decision-making by these positions is not considered to be as terminal and or binding as those of the superintendent. Private, charter and alternative structure school leaders were not included in this study due to the inconsistent governance structure of these organizations relative to public schools in Texas. This study specifically focused on the superintendents' perception of their emotions and the impact that their emotions have on decision-making. Furthermore, the superintendents were asked to focus on how emotion impacts the policy decisions rendered by their trustees. The experiences, reflections, attitudes and assigned meaning of the superintendents regarding the impact of emotion on decision-making were the essence of this study. The scope of this study was tied to the work of Azam (2010). The quasi-replication of that work compelled the choice of similarly positioned participants. The size of the district, the type of district represented and the intentions of the research questions were all limited by this choice.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are made with regard to this study. Participating superintendents answered the research questions honestly and engage in open dialogue that fairly represented their experiences, reflections and attitudes. Second, those superintendent participants adequately understood their role as the district's decision

maker, having the technical knowledge and skills requisite of the position. Additionally, there was an assumption that the policy decisions rendered by school boards and individual trustees may have been emotionally charged by single-issue agendas or the current political landscape.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms have been specifically defined to support understanding and knowledge of this study. These definitions were specifically germane to this study and preferred by the author; other terms may be defined in literature and cited resources.

Board of Trustees. The title of a governing board elected to direct the policies of an educational institution, seven in most districts, elected typically for a term of three years.

Decision-making. The internal process of evaluating situations based on facts at hand. For public school superintendents, decision-making is an endogenous, self-contained process where facts are gathered and choices are made that serve the district mission.

Discourse. Defined by Grogan (1994) is the use of sets of commonly shared words, phrases, and symbols to communicate.

Emotion. A limitation based on this study is the generalized, universally accepted definition of emotion. A collection of changes in body and brain states triggered by a dedicated brain system that responds to specific contents of one's perceptions, actual or recalled, relative to a particular object or event (Damasio, Tranel & Damasio 1998; Damasio, 2000). For the purpose of this study emotion was identified through the use of

somatic markers.

Epoché. A phase in which the researcher eliminate, or clarify about preconception. Researchers need to be aware of "prejudices, viewpoints or assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation" (Patton, 2002).

Ethical Decision-making. An ethical decision is a decision that is both legally and morally acceptable to the larger community (Jones, 1991). The ability to respond with the most ethical answer as aligned with the individuals' perceptions of the educator code of ethics (Texas Administrative Code Title 19 Part 7, Chapter 247, Rule 247.2) and superintendent certificate (Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Part 7, Chapter 242, Rule 242.15)

Intuition. A thing that one knows or considers likely from instinctive feeling rather than conscious reasoning. It is a phenomenon hidden in the subconscious. It is a product of both facts and emotions and a form of associative thinking that integrates knowledge, experience, intelligence, and respect for the unknown into responsive and productive decision-making (Agor, 1986; Glasner, 1995).

Metacognition. Metacognition refers to a level of thinking that involves active control over the process of thinking that is used in learning situations. Planning the way to approach a learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating the progress towards the completion of a task are skills that are metacognitive in their nature. Similarly, maintaining motivation to see a task to completion is also a metacognitive skill. The ability to become aware of distracting stimuli – both internal and external – and sustain effort over time also involves metacognitive function. Executive management processes involve planning, monitoring, evaluating and revising one's own thinking

processes and products. Strategic knowledge involves knowing *what* (factual or declarative knowledge), knowing *when and why* (conditional or contextual knowledge) and knowing *how* (procedural or methodological knowledge). Both executive management and strategic knowledge metacognition are needed to self-regulate one's own thinking and learning (Hartman, 2001).

Morality. An individuals' definition of what is right or good.

Moral leader. (Sergiovanni, 1992) The heart, head and hand of leadership. The heart of leadership is what the person believes, values, dreams about and is committed to. The head of leadership is the theories of practice that the leader develops over times. The hand of leadership is simply the actions, behaviors and decisions the leader takes based on the heart and head of the leader.

Phenomenology. A method of qualitative research that focuses on the consciousness of an experience based on the first-person point of view. Phenomenology studies a conscious experience ranging from perception, thought, emotion, body awareness, and everyday activity. Phenomenological research is rooted in the study of phenomena: what appears to us-and is appearing.

Rational Decision-making. As a more realistic rather than scientific version, the bounded rationality model suggests that people reduce problems and decisions to a level at which they can be understood. This model suggests that we interpret information and extract essential features, and then within these bounds, we behave rationally (DeMartino, Kumaran, Seymor & Dolan, 2006).

Reflective Reasoning. Reflective Reasoning is the claim that knowledge is not certain, that judgments can be reasonable with relative certainty based on the evaluation

of available data - the ability to actively construct decisions, to evaluate knowledge in relationship to the context in which they were generated to determine their validity. The willingness to reevaluate the adequacy of their judgments as new data or new methodologies become available is an essential component of reflective reasoning (King & Kitchener, 2002).

Reflective Thought. Reflective thought as “an active response to the challenge of the environment” according to Dewey (1910), authentic learning only occurs when human beings focus their attention, energies, and abilities on solving genuine dilemmas and complexities – and when human beings reflect on their experiences. Intelligence does not develop exclusively as a result of action and experience; it develops as a result of reflection on action and experience (Benson & Harkavy, 1997).

Somatic Markers. Physiological changes (e.g., muscle tone, heart rate, endocrine release, posture, facial expression, etc.) occur in the body and are relayed to the brain where they are transformed into an emotion that tells the individual something about the stimulus that they have encountered. Over time, emotions and their corresponding bodily change(s) become associated with particular situations and their past outcomes (Damasio, Tranel & Damasio, 1998; Damasio, 2000).

Somatic-Marker Theory. This theory proposes an explanation of how emotions make decision-making possible. Originated from the work of Antonio Damasio, the role of emotions in decision-making is biologically extensive and complex.

Superintendent. The CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of a public school district. The superintendent is hired by the board of trustees and oversees the day-to-day operations of the entire district.

Texas Public School. A school district in Texas that is responsible for the education of public school students, that receives funds from the state and its local tax efforts, and is governed by a locally elected or appointed board of members. For the purpose of this study, publicly funded choice and charter schools were not included.

Trustee. The term used to identify an individual elected to a local board of education.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. An introduction, the statement of the problem, significance of the study, study delimitations and definition of terms are to be included in Chapter one. Chapter two presents a review of the literature. More specifically, the chapter addresses literature relating to the standards of ethical decision-making within the ranks of public school superintendents and similarities or differences that may exist between male and female superintendents. Research literature that reflects what is currently known about the impact of emotions on decision-making also appears in this chapter. Chapter three details the research design and methodology used in this study. This phenomenological study is designed to document a relationship between perceived emotional experience and the impact on decisions. Chapter four presents results of the data collection. Data collected through extended semi-structured interviews with female superintendents followed school board meeting observations. The review of archival data including locally developed policy informed the study. Chapter 5 is a summary of the study, the research findings, implications, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which emotions influence the making of sound ethical decisions by female superintendents in public schools. This study is a replication of a previous study in 2010 by Robert Azam who viewed and analyzed data through the observation and report of male superintendents and their respective school board trustees. By approaching the phenomena through the perspective of female superintendents I will be able to add to a limited body of literature that pursues a link in educational leadership regarding emotion and ethical decision-making. This literature review examined the constructs of emotion, ethics, decision-making and the role of the public school superintendent. The conceptual framework utilized in this study examined the relationship, if any, between emotion and ethical decision-making by female superintendents and school board trustees in public schools. Any cohesiveness and connectedness among the constructs is presented to further substantiate assumptions of this work. Finally, this section concludes with a review of works regarding Somatic Marker Theory, presented as a basis for reporting emotions and research findings.

There is abundant literature and research in the independent areas of emotion, ethics, decision-making and educational leadership. There was intention devoted to the discriminate narrowing in each construct. The selection of text to review included vetted historical perspectives found mainly in books and book sections and more contemporary work that affirmed, enhanced or refuted the former. Specific attention was paid to the selection of literature that integrated the constructs and furthered an association between

emotion and ethical decision-making of female superintendents. Given that policy decisions often define a school district (Ethrensal & Fist, 2008), the impact of emotion on and by the board of trustees' decisions was selected for review to underscore the role of superintendents and school boards as grounded in the responsibility of making sound ethical decisions.

Emotion

Emotion, as a term, reflects phenomena that are difficult to reduce to a single definition (Frijda, 1986). Emotions are complex constituent processes, grounded in biology and represented in social behaviors (Gross, 1999). At least seven fundamental emotions exist: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, surprise and contempt (Ekman, 1973; Izard, 1977). Emotions represent themselves in a collection of changes in body and brain states. James (1884) limited his investigation of emotions to those with a distinct bodily expression. Emotions are reflected in our faces, voices and gestures (Baier, 1990). Izard (2011) supports Darwin's observation that the visceral representation of emotion signals intent of what one is likely to do, provides foundational inferences about the environmental conditions, and manages social interactions. Choosing to measure and evaluate emotion relies on the trustworthy evidence of what people feel to supplement the less trustworthy evidence of what people say. Beliefs, motivations and desires from expressed emotions provide a check on the evidence we get from words and reasoned, purposeful behaviors (Baier, 1990).

Perceptions, actual or recalled, relative to a particular object or event elicit emotion (Damasio, Tranel & Damasio, 1998; Damasio, 2000). Emotions perform an extensive role in thought processes and behavior (Bowers, 2009; Forgas, 2001; Forgas &

George, 2001; George, 2000). Being aware of one's own emotions can be useful in terms of directing attention to pressing concerns and signaling what should be the focus of attention (Frijda, 1986; George, 2000). Describing the behaviors of people, or explaining behaviors that have no purpose or reason can help to provide a working definition of emotion and the phenomena that invites the use of terms we associate with the observation of such behavior (Frijda, 1986). It is the description of beliefs, motivations and desires that has overtaken the simplistic identification of a feeling or sensation (Baron, 1992; Marks, 1981). The idea that emotions can affect understanding has been suggested in several recent works (Berthoz, 2006; Damasio, 2000; Starkey, 2008).

Emotion and Ethical Decision-Making

Emotions play an extensive role in thought processes and behavior (Bowers, 2009; Forgas, 2001; Forgas & George, 2001; George, 2000). Being aware of one's own emotions can be useful in terms of directing attention to pressing concerns and signaling what should be the focus of attention (Frijda, 1986; George, 2000). Emotions can be used to choose among many possibilities in making decisions. Anticipating feelings if certain events took place can help decision makers choose among multiple options (Damasio, Tranel & Damasio, 1998). Emotions can be used to enable certain kinds of cognitive processes: optimistic moods can support creativity, integrative thinking, and inductive reasoning, and negative moods can facilitate attention to detail, detection of errors and problems, and careful information processing (Mayer & Salovey 1997). Emotion is beneficial to decision-making when it is integral to the task, but can be disruptive when it is unrelated to the task (Bechara & Damasio 2005). Emotion is not to

be ignored as a trigger that signals the existence of an ethical dilemma (Gaudine & Thorne, 2001).

Most individuals separate reason and emotion in the workplace, often treating emotion as an afterthought (Fineman, 2003). Particular to this study is whether emotion precedes cognition or if emotion is post cognitive relative to ethical decision-making. Lazarus (1984, 1990) believes understanding generates the emotion. In contrast, Zajonc (1980, 1984) contends that although they function conjointly, emotion can be a separate process from cognition and may lead to affective judgments that precede intellectual awareness. According to Damasio (1998, 2000) and Kahneman (2011), emotions dictate and constrain which fragments of information are used in ethical decision-making. Ethical decision-making represents the highest cognitive and emotional achievement of humans (Gardner, 2007). Knowledge and reasoning alone are ordinarily not sufficient for making advantageous decisions. At its best, ethical decision-making weaves together emotion, high reasoning, creativity, and social functioning, all in a cultural context (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007).

Emotion and Gender

Do women and girls differ from men and boys with respect to emotion? Gender was once presumed to be a stable and trait-like component of identity (Shields, 1987; Wester, 2002). Gilligan (1982) found that more than being innately male or female, it was the way we practiced being male or female that informed our viewpoints. Previous gender role experiences are reported to be an essential factor in emotional responses (Wood, Rhodes & Whelen, 1989). Retrospective reports of emotional experiences require recall, summarization and integration of past experiences that may be grounded in gender

roles. Doing gender was a way to display emotion (Stets, 2004). Assuming gender stereotypes are a heuristic scheme to make sense about what happens (Robinson, Johnson & Shields, 1998). Gender stereotypes are dogmas held about what is appropriate and expected for men and women (Diekmann & Eagle, 2000). Western culture has reinforced the idea of emotion and feelings as a widely held stereotype where we presuppose the control, rationality and expression of feelings (Putnam & Mumby, 1993; Shields, Garner, DiLeone & Hadley, 2004). Shields (1987) reports that men and women, as role groups, report their approach to and understanding of emotion differently. There is argument that the female gender role encompasses more emotional sensitivity and expressiveness (Wood, Rhodes & Whelan, 1989). Women and girls were believed to feel and display emotion more frequently and deeply than men (Barrett, Robin, Pietromonaco & Eyssell, 1998; Fabes & Martin, 1991). The question at hand in the review of more recent research is whether gender role experiences can be manipulated, re-experienced or practiced to elicit emotional responses that are less stereotypical.

More recent empirical research on gender and emotional experiences shows that social roles and context affects the gender emotion nexus (Barrett, Robin, Pietromonaco & Eyssell, 1989; Fineman, 2003; Fry, Greenop, Turnbull & Bowman, 2009; Schwarz, 2000; Wood, Rhodes & Whelan, 1989). People do not leave their emotions at home and regardless of the bureaucratic arenas that promote adherence to rules and procedures, emotions accompany each person (Knights & Suman, 2008). Emotional experiences bear some resemblance to constructivist approaches that indicate emotional responses may be dependent on social norms and rules (Vogel, Tucker, Wester & Heesacker, 1999). Attention to the immediate environment and expressions taken immediately following

and emotional experience may be more salient and reflective of the social situation (Barrett, Robin, Pietromonoco & Eysell, 1998).

Technology exists that attempts to measure emotional responses regardless of a gender role influence. Using facial electromyography (EMG) and functional magnetic resonance imaging of the brain (fMRI), researchers have struggled to link specific emotional states with precise and discrete physiological responses (Bechara & Damasio, 2005; Bechara, Damasio & Damasio, 2000; Bianchin & Angrilli, 2012; Brown & Reid, 2006; Damasio, Tranel & Damasio, 1998; Dunn, Dalgleish & Lawrence, 2006; Leland & Grafman, 2005; Naqvi, Shiv & Bechara, 2006). Research on physiological responses to emotional stimuli using EMG demonstrated that women exhibited more facial EMG activation than men. Notably, women had higher correlations between facial EMG activities and self-rating of positive and negative emotions than men did (Schwarz, 2000). Bianchin & Angrilli (2012) reported significant influence of gender on emotion processing. Their results support the view that females are more susceptible to negative life experiences and stress.

Although the social context will be closely replicated, given the gender role experiences in women, it is expected that during the course of this study there will be a more extreme verbal response to the expression of emotions experienced, as compared to the males in the Azam (2010) study. Given that the woman gender role may be more willing to report extreme emotional responses, both well-being and dissatisfaction are expected to be reported in greater detail and with enhanced verbosity. Additionally, gender differences in emotional dispositions may show gender differences in policy preferences (Schwarz, 2000). Further research might include a mixed sex dyad of

reporting: female researcher with male participants, or male researcher with female participant, to investigate whether emotional experience reporting is gender dependent regarding the researcher.

Ethics

Ethics is generally defined as the study of right and wrong. Additionally, the rules of conduct relative to the expectations of the social context are a common definition of ethics according to the *Random House College Dictionary*. The word ethics originates from the Greek word ethos. The concepts of logos, pathos and ethos guided Greek culture. Logos literally means word and is the use of logic. Pathos signifies emotion. Ethos refers to trustworthiness or credibility: the characteristic spirit of a person or organization as manifested in the attitudes, aspirations and customs is representative of the values and beliefs Cavalier, 2002). In some instances it is defined in terms of what it is not, referring to matters such as misconduct, corruption, fraud and other types of illegal behavior (Cranston, Erich & Kimber, 2003). Freakley and Burgh (2000) emphatically say that ethics “is about what we ought to do” (p. 97). Therefore, ethics requires a judgment be made about a given problem or situation.

Personal Ethics

Personal ethics reflect a general expectation for people in society. Personal ethics can be found in principles we presume of one another without needing to formalize the expectation. In 1952, Hare wrote of the reasons we have principles. He specifies that in our early years we are obedient to a principle, the thought of not obeying it becomes untenable to us. If we fail to obey it, we experience remorse; when we do obey it, we are at ease. Obligation therefore is a foundation of our intuitive personal ethics and is a basic

preference. We rarely question the principles under which we were brought up and rarely think or engage in metacognition relative to an intuitive principle. Beyond mere intuitive personal ethics is the fact that individuals vary in their abilities to think critically and to act accordingly. Critical thinking will cause different individuals to develop themselves to adhere to different sets of intuitive level rules, deciding when to engage in critical thinking and when to stick unquestioningly to one's intuitive level principles. Our personal subjectivity impacts how to conduct ourselves (Mabry, 1999).

Professional Ethics

Ethics and ethical decisions based on intuition as described above will unavoidably be dynamic. Because instability regarding ethical practice is highly unattractive, codes of conduct have been established for professional conduct (Mabry, 1999). Professional ethics can be drawn from legal issues, policies, organizational culture, and public interest. Global, societal and community context impact professional ethics as well as economic and financial conditions. An ethical leader not only endeavors to do the right things but also to do things right (Kocabas & Karakose, 2009). In education, moral imperative and ethical authority compel us to serve the welfare of the student (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). Ethics seems to be property to the profession. Administrators characterized as partial, biased, cruel, or unpredictable in their decisions usually find themselves in a great deal of trouble in their jobs. Administrators deal with fairness, equality, justice, and democracy as much as they deal with test scores, teachers' salaries, parents, and budgets (Strike, Emil & Jonas, 2005). Codes of conduct and standards of practice are important signs of the professionalization (Mabry, 1999). Numerous organizations: American Association of School Administrators (AASA, 2007),

National Education Association (NEA, 1975), National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 2008), and Texas Administrative Code (TAC, 2010) have articulated a variety of ethical behaviors expected of educational leaders. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) suggest that educational leaders develop their own personal code of ethics based on professional experiences and critical events in consideration of their personal values.

Decision-Making

The human brain is designed to learn. By making predictions on past experiences and qualifying the usefulness of those predictions, our brain compels us to make decisions in the same direction. When the experiences and predictions fail to yield acceptable decisions, the brain changes. It takes a lot of prediction and feedback to build good models for decision-making. (Gladwell, 2005; Kurtz, 2003). Only experience creates skill. (Gladwell 2008). Reason and analysis engage the prefrontal cortex in decision-making (Demartino, Kumaran, Seymor & Dolan, 2006; Heekeren, Wartenburger, Schmidt, Schwintowki & Villringer, 2003; Lehrer, 2009). Decision-making however is not about merely performing tasks more skillfully (Klein, 2011). The emotional brain too can learn overtime to see patterns and connections that can be useful in decision-making (Lehrer, 2009). When faced with making quality or superior decisions the challenge in current research is to look at which decision-making system is best suited to the context of the situation (Kahneman, 2011; Klein, 2009; Klein, 2011; Lehrer, 2009). Too much thinking can be harmful in many decision situations. Moving beyond reason and analysis to a blend of emotion and reason is suggested (Damasio, 2000; Gladwell, 2005; Lehrer, 2009). In essence, it is the brains internal argument where emotions and reason interact

to sort out the final decision (Klein, 2011; Lehrer, 2009).

Ethical Decision-Making

In 1991, Jones wrote of the lack of theoretical and empirical works on ethical decision-making in organizations. He speculated that there might be a lack of scholars interested in both ethics and organization behavior and decision-making. Since that time there is myriad references to ethical decision-making, among them ethical decision-making in the field of education. A code of ethics in itself, of course, cannot guarantee ethical practice or to be cure-all for other problems in a profession but can be a prevailing document in approaching a decision. Different models of decision-making exist. An ethical decision is defined as a evaluation that is both legal and morally acceptable to society (Jones, 1991) or individual behavior that is subject to or judged according to generally accepted moral norms of behavior (Trevino, Weaver & Reynolds, 2006). Historically, research concerned with ethical decision-making was framed around traditional moral theory associated with justice and duty (Trevino, Brown & Hartman, 2003) and the ideas that decisions are made on the basis of rationality or the maximizing of a preferred value over all others (Fitch, 2009; McDevitt, Giapponi & Tromley, 2007). In addressing a moral or ethical issue, the movement of decision-making is from the problem to the course of action that will resolve it. It not clear that ethical decision-making is best conceptualized as a simple, linear process, given the complex and dynamic details and contexts that are likely to be involved in the problem (Mabry, 1999). Therefore there are times where instead of manipulating all attributes of all available options, an elimination of aspects model is utilized. This approach to decision-making involves the creation of criteria and eliminating all options that do not meet that criteria

(Morrell, 2004). Complex research from McDevitt, Giapponi & Tromley (2007) identifies variables that are related to the confidence and personal beliefs of the individual decision maker. Strong decision makers will be confident in following their judgment when faced with the opportunity. Contemporary studies (Clark, 2012; Paxton, Ungar & Green, 2011; Rogerson, Gottlieb, Handelsman, Knapp & Younggren, 2011) dispute standard ethical decision-making approaches such as standard based and consequential (Gaudine & Thorne, 2001; Maxcy, 2008; Trevino, Brown & Hartman, 2003) as empirically unproven. They argue that ethical issues, often infused with nonrational factors should be understood as a hermeneutic process: repeated and progressive questioning, reflection and reasoning to reconcile the complex characteristics of the process as well as the judgment.

Emotion and Ethical Decision-Making. Historical research is encumbered with reports that decisions suffer from the irrational influence of the emotions. Emotions were attacked as an illegitimate consideration in legal decisions (Dworkin & Zacharias, 1977) and in economics (Edwards, 1954). Drawing further back, Greek and Roman philosophers suggested that people would make better decisions if they reduced the emotion in their lives. Cognition was seen as the primary and preferred factor in decision-making. Cognition and reason led to logic and were therefore the foundations of decision-making (Hare, 1981; Kohlberg, 1982). Cognition was seen as constructing goals and decisions, leaving emotion to play a secondary and confounding role to the processes of reason. (Anderson, 2006)

Like the emergence of literature linking ethics, organizational behavior and decision-making, the text available that further introduces research linking the role of

emotion in making ethical decisions is advancing (Anderson, 2006; Andrade & Ariely, 2009; Barnes & Thagard 1996; Bechara & Damasio, 2005; Davis & Davis, 2003; DeMartino et. al., 2006; Dunn, Dalgleish & Lawrence, 2006; Gaudine & Thorne, 2001; George, 2000; Hawkins, 2008; Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007; Irby & Brown, 1995; Lehrer, 2009; Mellers & McGraw, 2001; Mellers, Schwarz, Ho & Ritov, 1997). These findings are bad news for philosophers and ethicists of the past who maintain that moral decisions must be based on reason (Helmuth, 2001). To arrive at a decision people use both logic and emotion. Most of us have suspected that our emotions played a part in decision-making. We may have labeled them as irrational or out of control (Hawkins, 2008). Determining if the emotions support or hinder ethical decision-making is without consensus at this juncture (Baumeister, DeWall & Zhang, 2007). Without emotions, especially negative emotions, individuals would not make many decisions at all (Anderson, 2006). Luce (1998) found that subjects opted to decrease negative emotion though decision thereby pursuing future emotional states. Recent utilization of functional neuroimaging, fMRI scans, has allowed unprecedented study of brain engagement evocative of moral emotions during ethical decision-making scenarios (Heekeren, Wartenburger, Schmidt, Schwintowski & Villringer, 2003). The work of Damasio (1994) showed that patients with brain damage, although able to retain intellectual capacity, lost the ability to associate emotion and feeling to the anticipated consequences of an action. Because of the loss of affect, decisions were made with abandon and failed to result in the patient learning from their decisions. Individuals who have difficulty connecting their emotions with decisions make very poor decisions in some contexts (Bechara, Damasio, Tranel & Damasio, 1997; Shiv, Loewenstein, Bechara, Damasio &

Damasio, 2005). Studies regarding current versus future emotional state are cogent to this review. Where current emotional states cause subjects to alter their priorities for immediate mood reparation, in contrast anticipated emotion outcomes can improve decision-making (Baumeister, DeWall & Zhang, 2007). According to Baumeister (1997) some future emotions are linked to personal distress and cause subjects to make foolish decisions. Lehrer (2009) writes that morality at its core is based on emotion, not logic. Moral decision-making is about feeling sympathy for others. Lehrer concludes that the capacity for making moral decisions is built into the circuitry of normal human brains, probably the result of evolutionary forces favoring cooperation within groups. Finally, it is likely that without emotions we would feel no need for decisions (Anderson, 2006) without emotion the decision would be neglected. Without emotions to alert us to the opportunity all decision choices would appear equal.

Gender and Ethical Decision-Making. Coinciding with the increase of women in the role of superintendent (Amedy, 1999; Brunner 1997; Ceniga, 2008; Gammill & Vaughn, 2011; Irby & Brown, 1995; Mertz & McNeely, 1990; Pounder, 1990) is the emerging literature base regarding gender differences in ethical decision-making (DeVore & Martin, 2008; Fabes & Martin, 1991; Martinek, 1996; Skrla, 2000; White, 1999). This body of research has grown from the concept of a feminine leadership model. While these researchers do not claim that all women or only women in leadership positions exhibit the traits they portray as a part of the feminine leadership model, these traits have been observed in women throughout their studies. The studies infer that the ethical dimensions of men and women may be different (Gilligan, 1982; Irby & Brown, 1995; Shaprio & Stefkovich, 2005). Men exhibit behaviors that are grounded in duty and

principle; women are more oriented to the environment and tend to interpret the world in an emotional and personal way. Women tend to lead in more democratic, participatory and less autocratic styles and decision-making reflects these preferences.

Role of Superintendent

The superintendent is the chief executive officer of a school district. The thoughts and actions of a superintendent affect others not only in the organization but also outside the organization. Leaders set the moral tone (Bennis & Nanus, 1997). The superintendent must make decisions and must model behaviors that are moral in nature. Identifying and understanding contributing components to superintendent performance is a worthy study. School superintendent roles are being reimaged, renegotiated, and redesigned (Bredeson, 1998; Brunner, 1997; Grogan, 1994). Traditionally defined as the implementer of policy established by the board of education (Konnert & Augenstein, 1990), the role of superintendent has transformed to represent a more holistic approach to leadership (Brunner & Bjork, 2001; Cuban, 1988; Kowalski, 2005; Nir & Eyai, 2003). Administrative problem solving of the past showed that administrators employed ethics as a foundation to decision-making infrequently and only under certain situations (Leithwood, 1995). Today the dominant images of moral and technical leader encased in the contexts of the district and politics suggest that the textbook superintendent is a rare find (Cuban, 1988). According to Houston (2001, p.432), characteristics of successful superintendents include (a) being a great communicator, (b) being an outstanding facilitator and persuader, (c) being able to sell ideas, (d) having the ability to operate in paradoxes without black and white thinking, (e) knowledge of pressures, (f) being a reflective practitioner, and (g) being a problem solver. Studies examining the role of

superintendent offer suggestions of effective leadership characteristics yet have not linked leadership styles to district performance (Kowalski, 2005(a); Leithwood, 1995; Peterson & Fusarelli, 2001). However in this age of educational reform the role of the superintendent brings a new governance structure, modifies leadership practices, and emphasizes accountability for results (Logan, 1998).

Notwithstanding the lists of skills encompassing instructional leadership, perceptions of effectiveness, and influences on school culture in this age of accountability, the moral imperative that remains is to serve the best interest of the student (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). Emerging research suggests that ethical leaders are characterized as honest, caring, and principled individuals who make fair and balanced decisions (Bowers, 2009; Calabrese & Roberts, 2001; Kocabas & Karakose, 2009; Pijanowski, 2008; Pipkin, 2000). Ethics in school administration deals with educational actions that take place in school and the decisions that impact the action. (Kocabas & Karakose, 2009). Educators must come to understand that their decisions are grounded in the values and ethical frameworks that they deem relevant to their professional work (Begley, 2009).

The more narrowed lens of female perspective on the decision-making process in the role of superintendent is a worthy perspective to enrich the body of knowledge. Historically, women have encountered obstacles in attaining leadership positions. Discussions regarding gender and the superintendency generally begin by identifying the under representation of women in the superintendency (Bjork, 2000; Brunner & Bjork, 2001; Gardner, 2007; Grogan, 2000; Skrla, 2000; Wallin, 2007). Recent findings show that in a survey of more than 2,000 superintendents nationwide, 24 percent were women. This figure is up from 13 percent when the survey was last taken a decade ago (Holland,

2011). In 1997 there were approximately 92 female superintendents in Texas, this year there are approximately 151 (TASA, 2011). Although women are attaining educational leadership positions at an increased rate there are gender differences regarding the influences related to leadership style (Irby & Brown, 1995). According to Gardner (2007) the body of research that examines female administrative behavior suggests several components that are commonly associated with women: (a) relationships with others are central to the actions displayed, (b) women exhibit greater knowledge of teaching methods and techniques, and (c) women exhibit a more democratic, participatory style. This reflects earlier studies where women demonstrated higher perceived people-related and cognitive competencies and men scored higher in areas related to facilities, management and conflict (Martinek, 1996; Ragins, 1989).

Many lay people and research psychologists believe that women are more emotional than are men: Women are believed to experience and express most emotions more intensely and more frequently than are men; men, if they are emotional at all, are believed to experience and express more anger (Shields, 1987). Differences exist in the functional significance of emotion and bias in the evaluation of other's emotion. (Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Fabes & Martin, 1991). If one gender exhibits a higher level of emotional evaluation, the question of whether there is a difference in actual ethical behaviors can have broad social and moral ramifications (White, 1999). Although there is amassed research on the effect of emotion and decision-making it is absent a gender lens and gender differentiation (Finkelstein, 2010; Hawkins, 2008; Izard, 2011; Kahneman, 2011; Rogerson, Gottlieb, Handelsman, Knapp & Younggren, 2011; Vohs, Baumeister & Loewenstein, 2007).

Superintendent and Board of Trustees

School board members, who are usually lay people elected by their communities have the responsibility of hiring and evaluating public school superintendents and working with them in formulating school policies (Chase & Bell, 1990). This statement may be an oversimplification of the boards' role since boards and board members have multiple roles and relationships (Ethrensal & First, 2008). Given that the role of superintendents and school boards are grounded in the responsibility of making sound ethical decisions, the extent to which emotions influence the making of sound ethical decisions informs this study. In a study of 275 school board presidents, the most cited reason for lack of congruency by the superintendent and board was communication and human relations (Grady & Bryant, 1991). Foucault (1980) suggested that it is in communication with one another that people learn to clarify their ideas and construct a renewed sense of reality. Effective decisions cannot be reached until all parties have equal access to the information. If ineffective communication impacts the dynamic of the roles, sound ethical decisions will suffer. While school boards have power, they are usually unpaid, part-time, and untrained and, except for the information presented to them by the superintendent or perhaps what they pick up informally, they know little of the underlying issues for the scores of complex decisions requiring their approval at each board meeting (Cuban, 1988). Therefore, school boards rely on the professional judgment of the superintendent in many educational matters (Petersen & Fusarelli, 2001). Critical to the superintendent's ability to bring about and maintain positive change in a district is the quality of performance and the relationship the superintendent upholds with the school board (Petersen & Fusarelli, 2001; Petersen & Williams, 2005; Tallericco, 2001).

Therefore organizational culture cannot be overlooked in the decision-making process (Bolman & Deal, 2003). By thinking of decision-making as a continuum reflection is needed on the scope of strength of such a continuum (Dawson, 2000).

Somatic Marker Theory

The Somatic Marker Theory (Damasio, 1994) is a model of how feedback from the body may contribute to successful decision-making in situations of complexity and uncertainty (Baumeister, DeWall & Zhang, 2007; Dunn, Dalgleish & Lawrence, 2006). Specifically, Damasio (1994, 1996) proposed a hypothesis that a defect in emotion and feeling plays a significant role in defective decision-making. Somatic refers to the Greek word soma. Because the layman, researcher, psychologist, or physiologist can interpret the term emotion differently, using the term somatic will refer to the collection of body related responses that mark an emotion (Damasio, 1998; Bechara & Damasio, 2005; Dunn, Dalgleish & Lawrence, 2006). The somatic marker hypothesis provides neurobiological evidence in support of the notion that people often make judgments based on hunches, gut feelings, and subjective evaluation of the consequences (Damasio, 1994; Zajonc, 1984). Damasio contends that for every response option considered, a somatic state is generated, including sensations from the viscera, internal environment, and the skeletal and smooth muscles. Emotional states leave somatic markers that can be reactivated on future decision-making occasions. The marker enables the new decision to be guided by the previously felt emotion (Baumeister, DeWall & Zhang, 2007). It is these bodily feelings that normally accompany our representations of the anticipated outcomes of options, feelings that arise from the neural machinery that underlies emotion. Damasio's somatic marker theory suggests that the role of emotions in decision-making is

biologically extensive and complex. Somatic marker theory has made a valuable contribution to further the idea that emotion can be a benefit as well as a hindrance when making a decision (Bechara, Damasio & Damasio, 2000; Leland & Grafman, 2005; Naqvi, Shiv & Bechara, 2006). Given that somatic markers are not part of our conscious mental activity, they cannot be observed by reflection and introspection. If though observation emotions can be measured through somatic makers and we hypothesize that these same somatic markers influence actions, we observe the nexus of emotion and decision-making.

Somatic Marker Criticism

Most theories on decision-making rely on a cognitive perspective where the assessment of future outcomes drives the decision. Although the Somatic Marker theory represents a fascinating model of how feedback from the body may contribute to successful decision-making in situations of complexity, there is a lack of parsimony. Damasio's theory neglects to explain what initially generates the specific patterns of body-state changes. Critics contend that Somatic Marker Theory is an extension of other mechanisms for constraining decision-making (Dunn, Dalgleish & Lawrence, 2006). Rolls (1999) too argues that Somatic Marker theory introduces body signals that interfere and confound the decision-making system debate. Marker signals that arise in the bioregulatory processes seem to be advancing rather than misrepresenting the soundness of the decision-making debate. Critics of Somatic Marker Theory seem to imply that additional evidence needs to be gathered to further support the theory (Bechara, Damasio & Damasio, 2000).

Conclusion

The role of school superintendent is one of wide influence. Superintendents are confronted with ethical decisions on a daily basis. Given that experience creates skill (Gladwell 2008), a clearer understanding of the best experiences should lead to the best skill. Criteria for making quality decisions have moved from a purely cognitive rational activity to reflection upon a blend of emotion and reason (Damasio, 2000; Gladwell, 2005; Lehrer, 2009). Emotion however is often labeled a dispensable feature to the ethical decision-making process; feelings take their place in line behind the cognitive facts and skills learned in school (Gaudine & Thorne, 2001). Research is now showing the two systems, rational and emotional, are not exclusive and work together to drive the way we think and therefore decide (Kahneman, 2011). It is the brains internal argument where emotions and reason interact to sort out the final decision (Klein, 2011; Lehrer, 2009).

By introducing a gender perspective to the discussion, it may further findings of difference of functional significance of emotion and bias in the evaluation of other's emotion. (Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Fabes & Martin, 1991). If one gender exhibits a higher level of emotional evaluation, the question of whether there is a difference in actual ethical behaviors can have broad social and moral ramifications (White, 1999).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The following chapter sets out, with emphasis, the methodology and process used for this phenomenological study. The rationale for a qualitative study that attempts to reveal how female superintendents interpret, relate to and utilize responsive emotional communication with their boards is explained. This chapter also includes the process for data collection including efforts identifying participants, data protection and data analysis. The topic of this study was driven by this researcher's desire to help women superintendents identify, consider and utilize appropriate emotionally based communication in superintendent-board interactions. A semi-structured interview process in concert with observations and review of artifacts collected provided for the necessary data required to report on this phenomenological human experience.

Rationale for Qualitative Study

There are three primary research models: quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods (Creswell, 2003; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Miles, 1984; Orcher, 2005). Quantitative research provides for the interpretation of statistical data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) within an objective reality (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). The data for qualitative analysis comes from fieldwork: spending time in the setting of study (Bogdan & Bilkin, 2003; Creswell, 2003; Dilley, 2004; Glesne, 2005; Patton, 2001; Rubin, 1995). Putting both quantitative and qualitative strategies in the same study is the construction of a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2003). Sound rationale for selecting a research model included selecting and analyzing data that yielded results that are easier to interpret (Gall,

Gall & Borg, 2007). A quantitative approach uses tools of survey and experiment to examine relationships between and among variables (Creswell, 2003). A quantitative approach, given the purposes of this study, would have been nearly impossible to analyze given the variety, complexity and non-linear statistical reporting required addressing emotional and ethical responses. A mixed-method approach was not practical for this study because of the absence of collected quantitative data (Creswell, 2003; Greene & Caracelli, 1997).

In contrast to a quantitative or mixed-methods approach, the underlying assumptions or basic characteristics of the qualitative design is concerned primarily with process rather than outcomes or products; that exploration is interested in meaning, implemented with human mediation as the primary instrument, and analyzed through descriptive and inductive reasoning (Bogdan, 2003; Creswell, 2003; Orcher, 2005). Phenomenology, a scholarly academic design grounded in qualitative research, attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives, understandings and their construct of reality of a particular situation (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Glesne (1999) contends phenomenology is how people experience and perceive their experiences. To determine what an experience means for the participants of a study is the aim of a phenomenological study. Phenomenological research strives to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, abstaining from any pre-given predetermined framework, but remaining true to the facts (Groenewald, 2004). This researcher attempted to establish meaning of a phenomenon from the views of this study's participants (Creswell, 2003) concerning the phenomenon of ethical decision-making. Gall, Gall & Borg (2007) note several advantages to phenomenological research that served the structure of this study.

Unlike ethnography, a new base of understanding was not required given the importance of the sensations and perceptions that the researcher brought to the recording and interpretation of the experience. Likewise a case study would have limited the reflections of perspective to an instance in action (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). Case studies strive to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation (Cohen, 2007). Based on Groenewald (2004), phenomenological methodology was identified as the best means for this type of study. In contrast to positivism, this researcher cannot and did not pretend to be detached from the presuppositions of the research questions. It was the responsibility of the researcher to describe the structure of the experience based on reflection and interpretation of the research participant's story. Explicit beliefs, personal knowledge and experiences held by this researcher were valued in this phenomenological study. (Lester, 1999; Moustakas, 1994; Mouton & Marias, 1990).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gather data regarding the perspectives of research participants to: (a) explore how emotion impacted the ethical decisions made by superintendents, and (b) to investigate how perceived emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees impacted superintendents' job performance. Data collection included multiple interviews with female superintendents, use of field notes and recordings based on observed regularly scheduled school board meetings, and a review of board policies.

Research Design

Participants for this study were selected purposefully, according to Hycner (1985, p. 294) "the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants." Because Boyd (2001) regards two to 10 participants or research subjects as

sufficient to reach saturation and the recommended number of participants in a phenomenological study generally is 10 (Riemen, 1986; Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2003; McCracken, 1998), a sample size of 10 female superintendents of mid-sized (populations 600-4,000) school districts in Texas were chosen. The methods of data collection were observations of school board meetings, participant interviews, and archival data review.

Observation

Observation, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “provides here-and-now experience in depth” (p.273). Observational research is a social research technique that involves the direct observation of phenomena in their natural setting. Observations however involve more than just hanging-out. Purposeful and self-aware observers use observation systematically (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2001). An overt approach to the observation of school board meetings was taken. There was no need to either mix with the participants undetected or participate in the research. The observation of the board meeting took place prior to the first interview with the corresponding superintendent. This researcher recorded by note-taking the observation of the board meetings as one means of obtaining data. An observational template (see Appendix A and Appendix B) was used to chronicle the frequency of emotional phrases, the speaker, ensuing body language, and the researchers impression of the context and observed reactions from others involved.

Interview

Interviews are a common form of data collection in qualitative research (DiCiocco-Bloom, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). According to Bingham & Moore

(1931), interviewing is a conversation with a purpose. Guba and Lincoln (2005) further purport that conducting interviews allows the researcher to obtain timely constructions of persons, events, activities and claims, as well as feelings, motivations, and concerns. Guiding participants to reconstruct events as experienced in the past, and projections as they are expected to be experienced in the future became topics for constructive conversation. Another purpose for the interview, according to Patton (2001), is to access the perspective of the person being interviewed, rather than relying on observation by the researcher. Prior to each interview, the purposes of the investigation were explained. The researcher audio recorded each interview. It was anticipated that the interviews be value-laden and biased, informal and inductive. Following the interviews, a written transcription was e-mailed to the participants for member-check review. Member checks allowed this researcher to (a) examine whether or not the perspectives relayed to the researcher were accurately documented, (b) be informed if there were any sections which could be problematic (personally or professionally) to participate if the data were published, and (c) assist in helping with the development of new ideas and interpretations (Glesne, 1999). A follow up interview to ensure validity and saturation was sometimes conducted, looking for the superintendent's perspective toward emotion in regard to their decisions as well as the decisions of board members as noted in the observations of the board meetings.

Archival Data

Archival data can provide information and be accessed and utilized without intrusion. This researcher reviewed each research participant's school board policy manual. Local policies with language exclusive to the district are labeled with an *X*. A

review of these policies that were added or amended in the last year led to the identification of decisions that may have had an emotional basis. Questions to extract the emotional context of the policy development were developed. A journal and research notes were kept to document this researcher's descriptions and interpretations of the interviews and observations. Journaling assisted in the analysis of the data. Journal entries assisted this researcher in recognizing and articulating any personal influence and biases of the participants, the researcher and the processes leading to the findings and conclusions (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Moustakas (1994) provided an outline and a model of the phenomenological methodology that the researcher followed. Using a phenomenological approach provided for understanding several individuals' common experiences of a phenomenon that can culminate in developing practices, policies and greater understanding about the features of the phenomenon.

The type of problem most appropriate for this form of research is one in which it is essential to cognize several individuals' common or shared experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). In the preparation to collect data four tasks were completed: (a) formulate the research questions, (b) conduct the literature review, (c) develop the criteria for selecting participants, and (d) develop the questions needed for the research interview. The act of collecting data required the researcher to engage in the *epoché* process as a way of creating an atmosphere and rapport for conducting the interview. Epoché is a term derived from Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) for suspending judgment about the context preceding the phenomenological exploration. Moustakas (1994) further recommended the bracketing of the question so that the researcher

recognized differences in the decision-making structures used by the participants. To fully explain how participants interpret the phenomenon, this researcher must bracketed out, as much as prudent, own experiences. The final step in collecting data was to conduct the interview to obtain the descriptions of the experience. The participants were asked two broad, general questions (Moustakas, 1994): What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What conditions have ordinarily influenced your experiences of the phenomenon? Although other open-ended questions were asked, these two questions focused attention on gathering data that led to the textural and structural descriptions of the participants' experiences, and led to an understanding of their common experiences.

Following the collection of data through the observation of board meetings, participant interviews and review of archival records an extensive analysis of the data controlled the identification of significant observations and statements that led to an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Organization and evaluation of data began by approaching every statement relevant to the topic as having equal value. Clustering the significant information into themes was an essential next step. Textural descriptions using the significant observations, statements and themes were combined with structural description, the context and settings that influenced the experiences, by the researcher to develop the essential invariant structure. Referred to as the essence of the study, the essential invariant structure is the focus on the common experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2007). It was the researchers role to fully develop reports of both the textures and structures of the experience into the meanings and essences of the phenomenon.

Rationale for Research Design

If, as Glesne (1999) contends, phenomenology is how people experience and perceive their experiences, the selection of this design is appropriate. In this research female superintendents were asked to review and provide perspective on events that influence their beliefs and practices. Given the purposes of this research a phenomenological study was appropriate because it centered on the manifestation of an issue focusing on its entirety (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The relationships between the participants and the phenomenon, based on the participants' perspective of events are the focus of this study (Moustakas, 1994). By looking at multiple perspectives on the same situation the researcher made some generalizations of what something is like from an insider's perspective (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Superintendent and board leadership and decision-making is highly subjective and in need of interpretation. Leadership occurs as a result of human interface and perceptions, which can only be studied and exposed through elucidation (Razik & Swanson, 2001; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Whereas qualitative research focuses more on the nonmathematical analytic procedures that are formulated from a variety of sources, quantitative research provided for the interpretation of statistical data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A quantitative approach, given the purposes of this study, would have been nearly impossible to analyze given the variety, complexity and non-linear statistical reporting required addressing emotional and ethical responses.

Research Questions

A quasi-replication of the 2010 Azam study, this research was conducted in the state of Texas including the interview and observation of ten female superintendents and

a respective board meeting. To conduct a phenomenological study using qualitative research methods, the researcher designed the study with a set of research questions (Berg, 2001; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2003; Patton 2002). The research questions for this study replicated the questions from the Azam (2010) study of male superintendents and decision-making.

1. In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions made by female superintendents?
2. In what ways does the perceived emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact female superintendents' job performance?

Data Sources

A purposeful, homogeneous selection of participants was used for this study (Moustakas, 1994). Participant selection was critical to this study in order to draw comparability from the Azam (2010) study that identified the main criterion for participation in his study as male superintendents employed in 2A and 3A districts, of all ages, races, religions. This study's participants are currently employed female superintendents in Texas public schools. It was the intention of this research to solicit the participation of mid-sized (population 600-4,000) district female superintendents without regard to age, race, religion or tenure. Interim superintendent, associate or assistant superintendents were not part of this study. The emotional involvement in decision-making is different with interim, associate, and assistant superintendents compared to full time superintendents. (Azam, 2010). The selection of mid-sized district female superintendents was based on accessibility where no less than 69 women currently hold positions with these criteria (TASA, 2011). By expanding the Azam (2010) criterion, 12

additional women superintendents were eligible for the study, thereby enhancing the likelihood of obtaining the 10 participants in a profession that continues to be dominated by men (Sanchez, 2010).

Data Collection Methods

The data collection included three different methods: (a) observation, (b) analysis of board policy as archival data and (c) semi-structured interviews. All data collection methods were supplemented with observer notes or journal entries. Based on the Moustakas (1994) approach to phenomenological study data was collected first by observing a regularly scheduled school board meeting; a structured long-interview with the superintendent participant followed. A review of archival data provided additional insight to decision-making. Follow up correspondence completed the collection phase of this study to supplement descriptive text.

Observation

School board meeting observations represented a segment of the data collection process. Observation data was collected from female superintendents and their respective board members during one, full-length, regularly scheduled board meeting. Descriptive data focusing on the emotional attitudes and characteristics from the meetings through the use or nonuse of emotional words was collected. Emotional word lists that suggest happy, sad, mad, and afraid were utilized (see Appendix A). Observations also recorded physical expressions of emotion such as facial expressions and tones used by the superintendents and board members (see Appendix B).

Interview

The participant, superintendent, interview followed the observation of the board meetings. Subsequent interviews were sometimes necessary to provide the most complete body of data. The interview is the most commonly used data-collection method in phenomenological research (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 1999; Seidman, 2006). Moustakas (1994) identifies three basic types of phenomenological interviews: informal conversation, interview guides with forced selection choices and open-ended interviews. The style of interview utilized in this study was an informal conversation. The informal conversation is a method of identifying data and sharing experiences. Individual interviews were especially valuable in gaining detailed descriptions of particular ethical dilemmas experienced by the participant. In order to refine the informal conversation, this researcher employed a semi-structured interview by purposely-grouping topics and questions according to a prepared interview guide (see Appendix D). This researcher asked open-ended questions orally of the participant who responded with mostly reflective answers. Although likened to a regular conversation, semi-structured interviews cause the researcher to listen intently to ascertain key words, phrases and ideas (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). New questions emerged and answers were collected to supplement the answers ascertained from those derived from the interview guide. This interview process allowed participants to look deep within themselves to truly understand the meaning behind their behaviors (Seidman, 2006). Note taking, including researcher notes enhanced this method of data collection. Audio recordings along with e-mail correspondence were employed to ensure accurate transcription.

Archival Data

Archival data can provide information and be accessed and utilized without intrusion. Individual school board policy manuals are a matter of public record. This researcher reviewed each research participant's school board policy manual. Legal policies represent legislative impact and represent necessary rule making. Local policies however are subject to local board interpretation and decision-making. Local policies with language exclusive to the district are labeled with an *X*. This researcher identified local policies labeled with an *X* for review and directed discussion in a follow-up interview with the female superintendent participant. Questions to extract the emotional context of the policy development were developed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study followed specific procedures for phenomenological research (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). This structure is based upon the essential meanings that are present in the descriptions of the participants and is determined by analysis and intuitive insights (Kleinman, 2004). Moustakas (1994) emphasizes two general features of the phenomenological method: Bracketing and phenomenological reduction, and two forms of analysis including intuition and imagination and a more systematic approach often referred to as chunking or coding. Chunking is set of elements with strong associations for each other and weak association with other elements (Brown, 2005; Creswell, 1998). Hycner (1999) emphasizes the importance of the researcher going back to the recorded interview and forth to the list of non-redundant units of meaning to derive clusters of appropriate meaning.

The first step in the phenomenological reduction process required the researcher set aside, or bracket, all preconceived notions about the phenomenon, as much as possible. This permitted the researcher to more fully understand the experience from the participant's point of view. This required reflection to identify potential biases so that the researcher maintained a state of openness, or Epoché, by setting aside prejudgments or preconceived ideas about emotion and decision-making. In the second step of phenomenological data analysis process, the researcher, through interview and observation, listed each significant and relative statement, giving each statement equal value. This study used audio-recorded interviews that were transcribed verbatim. Along with written notes, to be sure they were complete and correct, participants examined the transcript of their experience as a means of member checking. Researcher notes were used to identify significant and relevant statements and behaviors from which the researcher wrote a structural description of the experience to accompany the interview and observation statements. The structural description probed how the phenomenon was experienced, looking at all possible alternate meanings and perspectives. The imaginative variation process was then introduced, investigating frames of reference and reviewing divergent perspectives. Finally, the researcher grouped or chunked the statements into clusters of similar meaning units, or themes. To assist in the process, color-coding repetitive and overlapping statements was utilized. After all independent observations, interviews and archival data were collected and analyzed, the development of themes and experiential textures to represent a compilation of the phenomena, despite diversity in the individuals and settings studied was attempted. “Good research is not generated by rigorous data alone ... [but] ‘going beyond’ the data to develop ideas” (Coffey &

Atkinson, 1996, p. 139).

Incorporating the techniques of using multiple data sources, multiple investigators, multiple theoretical perspectives, or multiple methodologies is effective in order to carry out triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Groenewald, 2004). The emotional involvement of the board was reviewed by examining current board policy of each research participant's board policy manual. Local policy, identified by an X indicated unique policy, developed or modified specific to an independent board of trustees. Review of these policies indicated local perception of legal policies and yielded clues to emotional impact where these policies were present. According to the Texas Association of School Boards, policy division, there are some universally adopted local policies, beyond those a review of unique decisions to address board policy were utilized in data analysis, where these policies were present.

Data Management Plan

Following proposal defense and IRB approval in May 2012, data was collected from observations, interviews and archival data review over a three-month period of time beginning in June 2012. Although most mid-sized school boards meet one time per month, meetings and subsequent interviews of two participants per month was accomplished within the proposed timeframe. By scheduling two sessions per month, there was a 33% buffer of time built into the management plan. The analysis of data was anticipated to be complete by October of 2012, with successful defense by December 2012.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of data and data analysis is achieved by applying evaluative criteria. Trustworthiness builds on the audit trail of field notes, process notes and researcher comments (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This research maintained a record of each research participants' interviews as well as meticulous transcripts to help ensure trustworthiness. Careful preparation of the research questions and observing a semi-structured interview script supported trustworthiness of the research. Creswell (2003) recommends using at least two of the following primary strategies to accomplish trust and credibility: (a) triangulation, (b) member checking, (c) use of rich, thick description, (d) bias clarification, (e) use of negative information, (f) prolonged field engagement, (g) peer debriefing and (h) use of an external auditor. This study employed four of these strategies: triangulation, member checking, rich data, and peer viewing. Each strategy is evident in this research.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a technique that facilitates understanding and credibility through the validation of data from more than two sources. Specifically, it refers to the combined use of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. By combining multiple theories, methods, and empirical materials, researchers hope to overcome the weakness or bias that come from single method, single-observer and single-theory studies (Bogdan & Biklin, 2003). Triangulation, the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data, in this study included multiple interviews, observations and the review of documents. (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Truthfulness may be a problem for some people since certain opinions or behaviors are not socially

accepted. Repeat interviews throughout the course of the study aided in establishing rapport and fortifying the validity of the interviews. They also allowed the participant time to think more deeply about their own feelings, reactions and beliefs (Glesne, 1999).

Member checking. Research participants reviewed their statements for accuracy and completeness (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider this the single most significant provision to augment a study's credibility

Rich data. Rich data and thick descriptions are notes and recordings of the observations with enough detail and variety to provide a full and revealing picture of the phenomenon (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Detailed description in this area provided an important provision for fostering credibility as it helped to express the actual phenomenological situations that was investigated. Readers will align authenticity and believability with a fully developed narrative.

Peer viewing and debriefing. Peer debriefing is having a qualified researcher, unattached to the project, consult with the researcher (Orcher, 2005). Opportunities to meet with peers for external reflection and review were invited and welcome. Feedback offered to the researcher at each presentation made over the duration of the project was carefully considered for inclusion.

Transferability

Qualitative researchers strongly consider the concept of replication, as defined in quantitative terms, differently. The question of quantitative replication can be found through qualitative transferability to evaluate findings (Hoepfl, 1997). Transferability is an essential criterion for quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability was addressed by doing a thorough job of describing the research and dealing fairly with the beliefs and

assumptions that school superintendents have broad expertise and talents dealing with school leadership and decision-making. Transferability, in this case, referred to the degree to which the observation of emotion and perceived impact on ethical decision-making were generalized or transferred to other service organizations where leaders make politically charged decisions. The process of transferability in regard to the researcher was the ability to draw on implicit knowledge, intuition, and personal experiences, and to apply them to the patterns and experiences described in the study (Groenwald, 2004; Patton, 2001). According to Trochim of Cornell University (2002), the person who wishes to transfer the results to a dissimilar context assumes the responsibility for making the judgment of the reasonableness of the transfer.

Summary

Qualitative methodology was utilized for this study. A phenomenological study was conducted to ascertain Texas female superintendents' perceptions of emotion in superintendent-board communication and emotions effect on decision-making. Observations and the review of archival data informed a semi-structured interview process. Data analysis provided the structure of a study intending to inform this researcher's desire to help women superintendents identify, consider and utilize appropriate emotionally based communication in superintendent-board interactions.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presented an analysis of a phenomenological study to address the two original research questions: (1) In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions made by female superintendents; and (2) In what ways does perceived emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees impact female superintendents' job performance? This analysis followed a specific set of steps and activities to inspect the current condition of decision-making by public school female superintendents and boards of trustees.

The results were presented in three sections. The first section represented the data ascertained from the observation of each school district's regularly scheduled public board meeting. This data is represented in Appendix C. This section details emotional words, discourse or behaviors exhibited by the superintendents and trustees. The superintendents' reaction to the trustee's exhibition of emotion is also noted. The second section represented data gathered from comprehensive analyses of each participant's school's district policies. The policies discussed in this section represent those initiated or amended within the tenure of the current superintendent and represent an emotional tie to the trustees. The third and final section represented the data amassed from the individual interviews with each participating female superintendent. Pre-selected questions regarding the superintendents' perception of their own emotional response and that of their board members frames the section. This section also reveals exceptional supplemental information gathered during board meeting observation and expounded in the individual interview.

Methodology Summary

A purposeful, homogeneous selection of participants was used for this study (Moustakas, 1994). Participant selection was critical to this study in order to draw comparability from the Azam (2010) study that identified the main criterion for participation in his study as male superintendents employed in 2A and 3A districts, of all ages, races, and religions. This study's participants are currently employed female superintendents in Texas public schools. It was the intention of this research to solicit the participation of mid-sized (population 600-4,000) district female superintendents without regard to age, race, religion or tenure. Interim superintendent, associate or assistant superintendents were not part of this study. The data collection included three different methods: (a) observation, (b) analysis of board policy as archival data and (c) semi-structured interviews.

Observation

Ten participants' regularly scheduled board meetings were observed prior to the participant interview, and the researcher utilized a template to maintain focus on words and actions of an emotional state and that provided for uniform observation between different districts' board meetings. Descriptive data was gathered by documenting the use of emotional words and actions by board members and superintendents throughout the public section of the meetings. No closed session sections of the board meetings are included in this data. At each meeting, the corresponding reactions of the trustees' reactions to the superintendents' expression of emotion and the superintendents' reactions to the trustees' expression of emotion were noted through scripting the use of words, the time, the context and the corresponding reaction.

Analysis of Policy

Following the observation of the meeting I examined each district's policies. Each of the participant schools' policy manuals, retrieved from Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) online, was reviewed. Reviewing all Local-X policy and selecting only those policies found in that particular participant's district allowed for explicitly unique policy to be identified.

Interviews

The six standard interview questions and board policies identified as unique to the district were e-mailed to the participants prior to the interviews. All interviews took place within three weeks of the observed board meeting. In-depth conversational interviews were conducted for the purpose of data collection in this qualitative study. Interviews were conducted through phone conversations and e-mail conversations. Each participant was provided and engaged in the opportunity to review their responses as a process of member checking. The information gathered portrayed their experiences and personal understanding in accurate and thoughtful language.

Participants. Participants for this study were identified purposefully and a sample size of 10 female superintendents of mid-sized (populations 600-4,000) school districts in Texas was chosen. The 10 superintendents varied in age, race, and years of educational experience. The average length in their current position was 6.4 years. Six of the participants were in their fifth year as a superintendent. Nine of the participant superintendents were serving in their initial superintendent position, which indicates that they have not moved to a second position as superintendent. Current Texas state accountability status for each district was no less than Academically Acceptable, 2

districts were rated Recognized and 1 district was rated Exemplary. Three districts met the Adequately Yearly Progress federal accountability standard in the most recent year.

Table 1

District Participant Demographics

| Superintendent participants | Years at current position | Current district enrollment | Current state accountability rating | Current federal accountability rating |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A | 4 | 1225 | AA | Missed AYP |
| B | 4 | 1820 | Ex | Met AYP |
| C | 5 | 1962 | AA | Missed AYP |
| D | 0 | 3943 | AA | Missed AYP |
| E | 5 | 1137 | AA | Missed AYP |
| F | 5 | 1318 | AA | Met AYP |
| G | 11 | 1225 | R | Missed AYP |
| H | 6 | 819 | R | Met AYP |
| I | 3 | 894 | AA | Missed AYP |
| J | 5 | 1651 | AA | Missed AYP |

Note. AA=Academically Acceptable; Ex=Exemplary; R=Recognized; AYP=Adequate Yearly Progress

Results

In order to answer the questions: (1) In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions made by female superintendents; and (2) In what ways does perceived emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees impact female superintendents' job performance, data was recorded in consideration of the three data sections: observations from regularly scheduled school board meetings, analysis of

unique board policy, and female superintendent interviews. Data was collected following Moustakas' phenomenological methodology. Epoché was the first consideration. Each participant's data was read, reread and coded for analysis. Observations of board meetings focused on the words and actions of trustees and superintendents that were coded as pleasant or unpleasant according to the word list in Appendix A. Archival data provided topics for discussion during the superintendent interviews. Uniquely worded board policy was discussed to determine any emotional basis for adoption. Semi-structured interviews with the superintendents included six standard questions, a review of locally developed policies and follow-up questions to clarify the participants' perspectives. The interviews yielded three significant themes: (1) Control by the female superintendent, (2) communication as a compulsory skill, and (3) emotion follows personnel decisions.

Epoché

During the observation of regularly scheduled board meetings and the interviews with the female superintendents, data was collected following Moustakas' phenomenological methodology. To realize epoché according to Moustaka (1994, p. 87), to take no position and approach each quality with equal value, I detached myself, as much as possible, from the research of the participants to identify and better understand my current beliefs, positions and subjectivities on emotion and the impact on decision-making between superintendents and school board members. My journal efforts allowed for documentation of those beliefs and assumptions so that I could set them aside in the hopes of being a better repository of the detailed experiences of others. This explicit effort was repeated throughout the research schedule because of familiarity with the

experiences being studied. As a current superintendent, I hold a variety of presumptions, positive and negative, those were not appropriate to the open approach needed in the collection of data. By engaging in this bracketing I was more fully able to understand the experience from the participant's perspective.

Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting Observations

Regularly scheduled public school board meetings were attended between June and November 2012, for each of the sites included in this phenomenology study. The observed school board meetings were formal in terms of mandatory abidance with Open Meetings Act of 1967. The Open Meetings Act provides for governmental decision-making to be accessible to the public. It requires meetings of governmental bodies to be open to the public, except for expressly authorized closed sessions, and to be preceded by public notice of the time, place and subject matter of the meeting. Each of the participant districts maintains a boardroom for the purpose of these meetings. Each of the boardrooms provided for the trustees and superintendent to sit facing the audience. Districts B, D, and G presented their trustees on a raised platform or stage. Districts B, D, and F provided the trustees with microphones, although they were not it use during the observation. Present at all 10 of the observations were additional district level staff administrators such as assistant superintendents and business officers. Also present at all 10 of the observations were one or more of the campus principals. Generally the district and campus level administrators observed the meeting from the audience section. District level staff members in districts D, E, F and J had a place at the board table. In district I campus principals had a separate table between the board and audience. All 10 of the board meetings hosted an audience. District H had the largest audience with more

than 50 community members in attendance. The boardroom for district H accommodated for the large number of observers. District E however, with their staff seated at the board table, provided only 10 guest chairs. During the board meetings I was an observer. Board members were not informed of my intent in the observation of the meeting. At one meeting I was introduced by the superintendent as a colleague and friend. At another meeting I was approached by the board president and was questioned regarding my attendance. When probed about the subject of my research, I politely declined an answer. The board meetings ranged in length from 57 min at district J to 4 hr 30 min at district I. Refreshments for the board and staff members were available at all 10 meetings. District I was celebrating the superintendent's acceptance of a new position with the Educational Service Center, cake and punch was provided to all in attendance.

During the observations of the board meetings, I made notes according to a template (Appendix B). Descriptions of the setting, the participants, and the behaviors exhibited during the board meetings were noted, including statements made by the participants. A map of the board setting was utilized in order to manage who made statements and who responded to any emotional statement or activity. Observations of the board meetings were scheduled prior to the interview with the superintendent as a safeguard against provoking unnatural or presumptive behavior and answers on the part of the participant.

At each of the ten regularly scheduled meetings I took detailed notes to record emotional phrases or language used by the superintendent or trustees. In addition to the initial record, the reactions to the emotion were also noted. The meetings ranged in length from one to six hours. I did not ask, nor was I invited into any closed session

section of the board meetings. By selecting only regularly scheduled meetings, team building and training sessions were not a part of the data collected in this study.

Use of Emotional Phrases. Trustees more frequently used emotional phrases compared to superintendents. Appendix C is a record of all recorded emotional comments. Of the seventy-recorded comments by trustees, 20 comments were coded as pleasant, four attributed to female trustees and 16 to male trustees. “You’ve done a good job,” said male trustee 2 of district A in regard to a presentation from the district’s business manager. District B, male trustee 4 directed, “I appreciate you,” to a board colleague during discussion of participation in the presentation of a new master planned community in the district. At the meeting of district I, female trustee 5, during a discussion about student assessment said, “This is a wonderful letter from our Spanish teacher.” Fifty comments were coded as unpleasant or difficult comments, 16 from female trustees and 34 from male trustees. At the district F meeting, male trustee 4 said, “Don’t let that happen again,” during a presentation from the assistant superintendent during a presentation on federal accountability. Male trustee 1 in district G uttered, “That’s too much money,” during discussion regarding track repairs. During a discussion to extend a lease of property in district H, male trustee 2 called out, “it’s not fair to them.”

The aggregate board member representation was 45 male trustees and 25 female trustees (see Table 2). The ratio of male to female trustees in the participant groups was 7:5 or 64% male and 36% female.

Table 2

Emotional Statements by Trustee Gender

| Statement type | Male trustee | Female trustee |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|
|----------------|--------------|----------------|

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|----|
| Pleasant statement | 16 | 4 |
| Unpleasant/difficult statement | 34 | 16 |

Given that there were nearly twice as many male trustees, there was a preponderance of pleasant emotional phrases from males. Using this same basic analysis, the numbers of unpleasant/difficult phrases were congruent with the trustee gender make-up. However, school district F had a female trustee who accounted for eight of the unpleasant/difficult female statements. Eliminating this one trustee's participatory statements, the unpleasant/difficult phrases are also predominately represented by male trustees. During the observations there was no overt anger or rage displayed, there were no belligerent outbursts, as trustees and superintendents conducted themselves in a professional manner.

Reaction of Superintendents. Although each meeting was aligned to the Open Meetings Act, the districts differed in their approach to the formality of the meeting and hence the superintendents reactions to the emotional phrases throughout the meeting. Districts A, B, and I were explicitly formal in their use of Roberts' Rules of Order. Last names were used to acknowledge contributions and address motions. The superintendents' reactions to emotional phrases in these districts were predominately neutral, exhibiting neither observable physical reaction nor a verbal utterance. At district I when male trustee 2 said, "I would like to see extracurricular numbers, it's embarrassing when smaller school have bigger numbers. We need to increase our participants," the superintendent sat back in her chair without comment or gesture. In district B, during the superintendent's report on tuition and transfer policy, when male trustee 4 said, "I think

it’s inconsistent to charge for those investing in our community when we allow transfers,” the superintendent appeared to listen attentively, but offered no verbal reply. In contrast, four of the board meetings were conducted in a more relaxed manner. Board members and superintendents used first names, and addressed each other in a familiar nature. The superintendents at districts C, D, F and G, although also predominately neutral in terms of no verbal responses to the emotional phrases, were noted as smiling or nodding in agreement and sat back in their chairs in a relaxed manner. Female trustee 4 from district C used the term “wonderful” and superintendent C smiled. At district D, as board members shared their experiences about the crafting of the district vision and mission, superintendent D smiled and laughed with the board members.

Content of Emotional Phrases. Statements recorded from the 10 board meeting observations were coded as either pleasant or unpleasant/difficult. Analysis of the statements produced eight areas of content. Three major content areas, identified by having 10 or more emotional statements included financial decisions, testing/accountability and policy/contracts. Five minor content areas, identified by having 2-10 statements included board business, students, personnel, district growth, and technology (see Table 3).

Table 3

| <i>Emotional Statements by Content</i> | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Content | Pleasant statement | Unpleasant/difficult statement |
| Board Business | 7 | 1 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|----|
| Students | 5 | 0 |
| Personnel | 4 | 4 |
| Financial Decisions | 1 | 24 |
| District Growth | 1 | 1 |
| Testing and Accountability | 5 | 5 |
| Policy and Contracts | 0 | 14 |
| Technology | 0 | 2 |

Frustrations and irritations in the form words and gestures were observed when topics involving financial decisions, and policy were involved. During a discussion in District B regarding policy on transfer and tuition, male trustee 7, sitting forward in his chair asked rhetorically aloud, “We’re trying to attract students aren’t we?” In district E, male trustee 1 asked the superintendent, “Can we appeal Chapter 41 status?” In response superintendent E expressed her frustration in having to return funds to the state because of the Chapter 41 designation. District F female trustee 3 and male trustee 4, argued during a policy review. Male trustee 4 said, “Why are you changing the policy? I think you’re opening a can of worms. Why is the current policy not being enforced?”

Body Language

I also observed and recorded body language used by both the trustees and the superintendents. Somatic Marker Theory supposes that not only do emotionally laden words influence body language, but also that certain body positions and movements suppose the use and response of emotional words.

Unpleasant remarks and body language. Regardless of the context of the discussion, certain physical characteristics or gestures were present when trustees made unpleasant/difficult emotional comments or statements. Indifferent to gender, when trustees' were upset or concerned, generally they would sit forward in their chairs and look at the individual leading the discussion, usually the board president or superintendent. A male trustee from district B stated, "Do you have this information broken down by sub groups? Why can't you?" The statement was directed at the assistant superintendent making a presentation on accountability. This same trustee, later in the meeting, appeared agitated and again sat forward with the comment, "Do you have concerns with Apple?" during a discussion of technology purchases where the district was recommending a specific vendor. A female trustee in district F commented, "Why does band count and not PE? It doesn't make any sense." during this aggressive exchange of comments regarding graduation policy the female trustee sat forward in her chair and waived a rolled up piece of paper toward the superintendent. A male trustee from district H sat forward and addressed the superintendent in a raised voice to say, "...it's not fair to them" in a discussion about a pending contract for the use of district facilities. This same male trustee in district H frequently rolled his eyes and shook his head in a negative manner when the superintendent spoke to either explain or defend her decisions related to the topic of district facilities. In district B, during a discussion of technology purchases and the best brand to select, male trustee 7 asked a rhetorical question of the technology director at the same time flinging his hand in the air as if to dismiss the answer from the technology director.

Pleasant remarks and body language. Statements recorded as pleasant were accompanied by mixed body language. During the positive exchange by trustees about the crafting district D's vision and mission statement, each trustee was sitting attentively forward in their chair, the superintendent smiled and an affirmative motion to adopt the districts vision and mission statement followed. School district E had pleasant comments such as, "Happy you are all here!" "Amen," and "That's Great," where trustees were observed sitting back in their chairs, they smiled, laughed and shared eye contact across the board table and with the audience. At no time were trustees or superintendents observed rising out of their chairs or exhibiting disruptive/aggressive behaviors.

Reactions of superintendents and body language. Superintendents of the 10 districts were seated at the board table throughout the board meeting. Predominantly the position of the superintendent was seated back in their chairs in a relaxed manner. Responses to emotional statements were met with this same neutral body position, seated back in their chair. Facial displays were limited to smiles and mostly affirmative nods. There was no observed rolling of the eyes, crossing of arms, or other demonstrative displays. The boards that conducted their meetings in a more casual manner had superintendents that were more likely to laugh and engage the board members on a personal level. District C opened their meeting with presentations from student groups. During this section the district C superintendent smiled with direct eye contact toward board members, staff and audience. District D superintendent was seated next to the board president and was observed reaching over to point out information in the board packet. Superintendent D smiled frequently throughout the meeting. In two of the meetings the superintendents appeared nervous and anxious in their interactions with

specific board members. In district F female trustee 3 questioned the superintendent repeatedly during a discussion of policy. The superintendent on two occasions interrupted the board member with explanation or defense. She shook her head in a negative manner with this trustee only. In district H, in front of a large crowd, the superintendent was observed perspiring as male trustee 2 continued to disagree with the superintendent's statements and explanations.

Review of Policy

Because data from observations is limited, archival data further informed and supported the study. Policy review preceded the participant interview so that evidence from the review was included in the interview phase. By including an archival data review methodological triangulation was provided to the research on the phenomena. Each of the participant schools' policy manuals, retrieved from Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) online, was reviewed. The online version of school policy in Texas is almost always the most current version. Each of the 10 participant districts subscribed to the TASB model with seven policy sections: A-Basic District Foundations; B-Local Governance; C-Business and Support Services; D-Personnel; E-Instruction; F-Students; and G-Community and Governmental Relations. Board Policy is further divided within each of the seven policy sections to reflect both LEGAL and/or LOCAL policies. Judicial and legislative decisions interpreted by TASB attorney teams form LEGAL policies. Public school districts have no discretion in these legal policies. However, LOCAL policies are specific to each district, reflective of the local control afforded to the board of trustees. Local policies cannot negate or contradict legal policy but may further delineate or describe the business of the district to honor local control.

Local policies that are uniform or consistent to intent, using common language were labeled with A, B, or C, etc. A local policy crafted by the district was labeled with an X. Occasionally policy labeled with an X exhibited wording unique to the district. Local-X policy is included in each district's manual. For example, local policy that identified the Title IX Coordinator for the district is a FB (LOCAL)-X policy. Although unique in the name of the Title IX Coordinator, each district had a similarly worded and intentioned policy. The review of policy for this study excluded this type of Local-X policy. Reviewing all Local-X policy and selecting only those policies found in that particular participant's district allowed for explicitly unique policy to be identified. Some of the identified policies were old, in relation to the superintendent's tenure. Each superintendent was asked if the identified Local-X policy, modified during their tenure, was crafted due to emotional influences. Because individual districts exhibit a unique educational philosophy, their crafted Local-X policies were expected to reflect that philosophy. In addition, emotional agendas of board members may have also influenced Local-X policies. It was these unique policies that I asked superintendents to address.

School district A has a total of 31 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. Policy DEA (LOCAL) was amended in 2012 during the tenure of the current superintendent. In regard to the question of whether there was an emotional attachment to the adoption of the policy, Superintendent A replied:

It was a result of the fires. The fact that some of the employees, well after the work was over and everything settled down. And then I believe it was my business manager who said someone's asked if they were going to get paid, no it was someone who didn't get paid because they weren't here. That's what it was,

it was one of the maintenance workers did not come in to work and could have, but because I said on the TV, on the radio, on the internet and everywhere else saying schools are closed due to the fires we want our faculty staff and students to be as safe as possible blah-blah-blah-blah, that meant don't (come to) work to some employees. Well our principals, a couple of principals went to check on things at the schools to make sure that everything I was saying was true; like the schools are not in danger, the fires are out, there's so much smoke – you cant breathe. I had a meeting with all administrators and called them in to work...they came in to work and these are people on contract, they're going to get paid anyway. But the one maintenance worker that "I could have worked but I..." but chose not to, and others came in to work because they knew they had to get in their days, even those maintenance work all the time anyway, the question was raised. And then I started calling around to other superintendents like Leander (ISD) and other places that had experienced the fires to see what they were doing. And some of them were actually saying that their people were being paid because this was something that they could not control. And so I talked with the attorney, this is the situation: I have these two maintenance employees who were here everyday. Because I was, and we were riding out into the areas where the fires were and then coming (back) talking about what was destroyed and what wasn't. What could we do today? Could we start school or can we not? And everyday we did that. So I knew that those two has worked. So we had some discussion and dialogue with the attorneys and other schools, with our board, and that's how that policy came about. It was those of us that actually came in and worked at a

time when the conditions they really can't. Then those people were paid extra and above. For the salary for that week, school was closed down but we weren't, you were going to get paid regardless, but you got an extra check if you came in and worked two days, you got paid for those two days. If you didn't come in and you were in maintenance or whatever, you were paid for that or you were allowed to comp it out so that there was no question that, "I came in and didn't get anything.

School district B had a total of 23 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. Four unique policies provided further discussion with the superintendent. EIA (LOCAL) amended in 2012. Superintendent B replied:

OK, that had a very sound basis to it. We have a lot of Dual Credit classes at the high school. And we operate with the NCTC calendar and so we've been finishing the first semester before Christmas. And then the second semester is the semester that begins when we come back in January. And so what has happened to us is that the fall semester has become very short, like 80 days. Compared to our spring semester, at about 100 days. And so when we were trying to get three six weeks grading periods out of the fall term, we were really getting five-week, and a five-week, and a six-week, and then seven weeks in the spring. So we felt like if we could go to four grading periods instead of six it would be more logistically sound. That's all that was.

EIC (LOCAL) amended in 2012. Superintendent B said:

That again was logistics. And it was equity based to make it as fair as possible. If you were in band for four years you were getting the benefit of four years of fine

arts. But if you were in athletics, you weren't getting that. And it leveled the playing field more for students to only have your four core areas. Like if somebody was taking a pre-AP class or AP class or a dual credit class and someone else was taking maybe an art class, or maybe a theater class, it was not, they didn't have the same opportunity. So to judge the students, it was to rank, not to judge, but to rank those students based only on those subjects that would be the same was the most equitable and so that's why we went with that. It is a change, but it was not based on the board, or emotion. It was from me and the assistant superintendent and the principal at the high school.

CE (LOCAL) amended in 2011, Superintendent B clarified:

The only thing that has been added about fund balance in the recent past is the line about, that all expenditures from fund balance would be board approved. But this part on here about the budget amendments, or the fund balance purpose, none of that been added in the recent past. So this came from TASB, we didn't put all of this in about the five separate classifications of fund balance. The non-spendable, restricted, committed, and the assigned and unassigned. None of that was put in by us. So I don't know why the other districts wouldn't have that. But at any rate this was not an unusual, it was not anything special for us.

School district C had a total of 39 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. In general, Superintendent C disclosed:

All of these policies were part of an administrative and board policy review that occurred in July 2011. We did not have emotional reaction to the policies. Our board discussed the policies over a 4-5 hour period and had good exchange and

review. I do not recall any policy that was contentious or emotional. Our board was in agreement with suggested changes and no board member was outside the parameters of the policies. Most of the policies are steeped in legal policy and even local differences are clear, logical, and based on good practice and historical success in our district.

Unique to district C was policy DCB (LOCAL) amended in 2012. Superintendent C said:

No emotion, because we do not hire staff who are not certified. In the rare case that we must, we have a clear contract that outlines the staff members obligation to test, the dates, and the employee's responsibility. Also the guidelines and contract are clear that failure to fulfill contract will result in loss of contract. We educate staff and board on these issues.

DEE (LOCAL) amended in 2012 was also unique to district C. Superintendent C declared that there was, "No emotion, because we have clear guidelines for travel expenses, reimbursement processes, and we educate our staff/board on these policies."

EI (LOCAL) amended in 2012 was another referenced policy. According to superintendent C:

No emotion; our board was united in this decision and believed that this was the correct policy. There was not fall out except from one parent in the community in 2008 when we adopted this policy. The board was united and quire firm in their decision.

Regarding policy FO (LOCAL) amended in 2011, Superintendent C shared:

Our board continues to support corporal punishment and we only use that with parental permission. We discussed this at length when a parent allowed it last year and the child's buttock was bruised. Even in that situation, the board was dispassionate about the parents' complaint against the principal. The board felt the parent agreed to the punishment and bruising could occur.

School district D had a total of 40 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. Because the review of policy was limited to the tenure of the superintendent and the superintendent of district D is new to the district as of July 2012, no policies were discussed.

School district E had a total of 18 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review, there were no unique policies amended during the tenure of the superintendent and no policies were discussed.

School district F had a total of 26 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. DFE (LOCAL) amended in 2010 was reviewed by superintendent F, she said:

There was a time when XXX ISD had a lot of resignations, and the board wanted to know why – for documentation against an administrator, I believe. That was before me. We have a low turnover rate now and have had years when at least one campus had no new staff members.

In regard to DH (LOCAL) amended in 2012, Superintendent F revealed that, “The board is very conservative about student and staff dress code. There have been a couple of employees that the board thought looked unprofessional, so dress code was revised to reflect their expectations for staff.”

School district G had a total of 55 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. This district had the largest number of policies eligible for review. Additionally, Superintendent G had been with the district 11 years allowing for more attention to and interfaces with policy review. In regard to BDD (LOCAL) amended in 2006, Superintendent G recalled that, “We had board members who called the attorney and ran up our bill without the knowledge of the business office or the superintendent.” CPAB (LOCAL) was amended in 2002, superintendent G said of this policy:

We are a small town, and I can’t remember a specific instance, but at times, those outside the system would use the system to send out information that was not school related. We have also had to correct employees for putting out political information.

CW (LOCAL) amended in 2010 was grounded in mild emotion as superintendent G recalled: “A past superintendent named a street and library after someone in the community. When we did our bond, the board wanted to make sure they had a policy for naming.” Superintendent G also reflected on her own emotional deliberation regarding EED (LOCAL) amended in 2003. “We have a lot of seniors who do not stay all day (much to my dismay). If they stay for five, we can count them a full day in PIEMS. It is a money issue”, she said. EHDA (LOCAL) amended in 2011, reflected new rules regarding required remediation for state testing. Superintendent G shared, “Many years ago, when we first all started remediating in summer school, there were students who did not come. The administrators asked for this policy and we worked with our district lawyer to put it in place.” FMD (LOCAL) amended in 1985 was recognized by the

superintendent as a policy unique but out of the time frame, however she offered comment due to the emotional undertone of the policy content. Superintendent G said:

Note the words school sponsored. Several years ago, a student was burned badly when a can of gas that she threw and the fire came back on her. For a time, there were not school-sponsored bonfires. This was before my time. The athletic booster club came to me and asked that they ask the Board if they could sponsor one. I got the lawyer to weigh in on this and he highly recommended they the board not approve a bonfire. Emotion ruled. The board approved that the athletic boosters could hold the bonfire. It is held on school property and students attend. This is one that is against my better judgment.

School district H had a total of 24 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. Regarding policies CH (LOCAL) amended in 2007 and CNA (LOCAL) amended in 2008, Superintendent H indicated that there was no emotion in the board decisions. In 1999, Superintendent H recalled that CRE (LOCAL) was amended:

Because of the emotional aspect of a person who is injured missing work and thus jeopardizing income, XXX ISD has a sick leave pool that allows other employees to donate to an individual with a catastrophic illness/injury. This is an emotional decision that was made by the district to help other employees.

DNA (LOCAL) amended in 1997 provided for only scheduled appraisal sessions, Superintendent H said; “I think the staff appreciates this just because they still view the observation as a measuring tool for punishment and not as a tool to inform the principal about improving instruction. The principal’s do get unscheduled data from walkthroughs.”

School district I had a total of 26 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. DMA (LOCAL) was amended in 2010 and addressed employee leave.

Superintendent I shared:

Policy DMA (LOCAL) was emotionally positive for faculty and staff. The rationale was based on comp time or swap days. In a 2-A district it is challenging to meet the professional development needs and desires of all faculty and staff.

Policy DMA (LOCAL) allows faculties' professional needs to be met on their time.

Superintendent I said of FEC (LOCAL) amended in 2012; "Policy FED (LOCAL) was slightly emotions for some. The rationale was to deter the number of student absences, increase attendance, and increase students' academic success by being present in school and learning."

School district J had a total of 39 policies that were unique or worded specifically for this district. Policies DBA (LOCAL) amended in 2010, DFAA (LOCAL) amended 2012, and DGBA (LOCAL) amended 2012 were all employee related policies and Superintendent J indicated that there was no emotion in these decisions. FOC (LOCAL) amended in 2010 reflected the authority of the discipline hearing officer. Superintendent J remarked, "Authority to recommend DAEP – policy indicates that hearing officer decision (board designee) is final and cannot be appealed. Not emotional."

Superintendent J said about GKDA (LOCAL) amended in 2008: "Superintendent can approve distribution of literature on campuses...different than many districts who leave this decision up to the principal...not emotional...its just that we are a small district and can be consistent with the superintendent making decisions."

Schedule of Interviews

As the researcher, I contacted via email, each participant after attending her board meeting to request an interview time. Additionally, I provided the six baseline questions and the identified policies, unique to the district, to better express value upon the time required for the interview. While the observation established a baseline, the interviews provided rich, thick information on the participants' reflection of both their personal decision-making styles and the styles of their respective board members. In addition, the interview allowed an opportunity for exploration of my collected data that may not have been recognized by the superintendent as they were engaged in the meeting and not an observer. I recorded the interviews and then transcribed the interviews verbatim. Each participant reviewed her own interview via e-mail as a process of member checking. The questions and answers from the interviews may be found in appendices D, E, and F.

Question 1. The first question posed to the superintendent participants was: In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent? Seven of the 10 superintendents reported, in some form, that they do not allow emotion to interfere with their professional decisions. The superintendent of district D stated most emphatically, "My emotions do not interfere with or impact my ability to maintain ethics in my decision-making. I generally look to policy and the law to confirm or support decisions I have to make." Superintendent B replied, "Emotion does not impact my decisions. I base my decision, as a superintendent, on data." "There is no place for emotion in decisions."

The following answers include ancillary statements explaining their position. The superintendent of school district C answered:

I don't believe that I allow emotions to impact my decisions rather I rely on my ethical core, board policy, and advice from peer superintendents or our legal counsel. I try to make dispassionate decisions and do not think that emotions inform my decisions. The more difficult the decision, the less likely that emotion would be involved because I seek guidance from the districts core beliefs and my own ethical core with students at the center of my decision-making.

Superintendent I maintained:

Overtime, I have conditioned myself to base my decisions analytically on the districts' policy, financial impact, what is best for our young people and faculty, community values, will a precedent be set, and what is the right thing and best for the children and long term impact on the district. After determining the analytical impact from the previously mentioned area, I make my decision with my emotions or 'gut' feeling.

The superintendent from school district E added,

Emotion impacts me personally but does not sway me from making decisions that must be made. I perceive myself as having very strong values, beliefs, and assumptions about ethical behavior, a certain moral code. My desire to make a decision that is fair and ethical outweighs my desire to be liked and accepted. I believe this attitude sustains me during times of difficult decisions. If I perceive myself as being particularly emotional about a decision I will wait 24 hours before making that decision. I strive to be as objective as possible.

Conversely, the superintendents that reported some level of emotion in their own decision-making asserted "When emotions come to play they can negatively impact some

of your decisions,” and more specifically, “Decisions about personnel, especially impacting job security weigh heavily, impacting me emotionally.”

Question 2. The second interview question asked about the superintendent’s perception of emotional decision-making on the part of the board. Four of the respondents cited instances of high emotional bearing by the trustees. Superintendent A said, “Their opinions and their decisions impact my performance greatly. Here lately it’s really been impacted because they made an emotional decision...in not extending my contract.” Superintendent I recalled:

All of the board of Trustees graduated from this ISD, their spouse graduated from the ISD, their children graduated from the ISD, and/or currently attend the schools in the ISD. This is important and at times challenging because their emotional ties and history impact their decisions. At times I have struggled when their decisions were based on their personal relations, perceptions, and/or emotions instead of the facts.

Superintendent G added:

I believe that boards like legislators respond much more to emotion when making their decisions than they do to logic. I have a perfect example of a decision my board made out of emotion, impacting my job performance. We had a custodial employee that was not performing. He is also mentally deficient to a certain extent. He had several instances where he had a traffic mishap, and lied about it to his supervisor and to me. The last time, he let a truck run into our high school cafeteria. Luckily, there were no students in the truck’s path. Because he was an

At-Will employee, I released him from his job. He filed a grievance and the Board overturned my decision.

Superintendent H shared, “being a female in a male dominated world is difficult in and of itself and often times very emotional.” Superintendent H alluded to the barriers of being a female superintendent in several of her answers, she was the only participant to make such declaration.

Question 3. In response to the impact of emotional decision-making by boards, five of the respondents mentioned enhancing communication tactics and information sharing as a means to combat any ill effects of emotion. Superintendent J said, “If the board is uptight about something and acting emotionally, I see my performance increase in both communication frequency and amount.” “The decisions I make on the part of the board are based on policy and procedures. This does remove the emotion from the decision-making but does not remove the emotional results,” added Superintendent H. When asked about their ability to recognize an increased emotional state, only one of the superintendents, superintendent B, maintained that she does not let herself “become emotionally involved in board decisions.” The other 11 superintendents recognized their own escalated emotions under conditions of mistrust and during stressful situations. Superintendent A stated, “When...I’ve been informed that there’s a set-up coming...I try to stay calm...that’s when I recognize...an increase in my emotions.” Superintendent F also saw, “My emotional state intensifies when I am blind-sided by a board member.” Other participants made similar claims about when they recognized their own increased emotional state: “When board members jump to conclusions...” from district E. “When others don’t consider the facts and emotional impact on others,” in district I.

Superintendent H said, “When people come to the discussion ill prepared.”

The same 10 superintendents also recognized their own increased emotional state in decisions that impacted people. “Dealing with and managing stressful situations, such as personnel matters...my emotional state tends to increase,” recalled the superintendent from school district D. Superintendent J said, “Decisions that impact quality of life for staff or students is stressful.” Superintendent C shared, “In personnel decisions, when people will lose their jobs, there is an emotional awareness.” The most experienced superintendent confided, “In the beginning I spent lots of sleepless nights. I rarely do anymore.”

Question 4. Regarding the fourth question that asked the superintendents to identify the conditions under which they recognized an increased emotional state within the board of trustees, six of the 12 superintendents refer to decisions that impacted the community, parents or students. Superintendent A stated:

When people employees/constituents complain. And if the squeaky wheel gets to them and tells their story, and color it to the point that the board member believes everything that they’ve just been told, then that just increases their emotional state.

Superintendent D recalled, “Decisions that prompted push-back from parents and community constituents as well as politically charged decisions often times generated negative emotional states with the board.” Superintendent J went on to say:

Board members become emotional when their pet issues are discussed. Board members that are parents are more emotional when decisions affect their child’s campus or activities. And even though we work to differentiate board responsibilities from parent responsibilities, I still see it as an issue.

In answering this question, the superintendent from school district F opined, “My board gets emotional about dress code, athletics and spending money – so I anticipate those nights and try to provide enough information to calm the situation...”

Question 5. The fifth question asked each superintendent to reflect on the conditions under which she makes her best decisions. Nine of the 10 participants identify having information, in the form of data, policy, and facts as the basic condition for making quality decisions. Superintendent C said, “My best decisions occur when I have time to research board policy and time to process all the possibilities.” Superintendent D replied, “When I am schooled on the topic and prepared with the appropriate information, I am confident in my decision-making.” Although Superintendent J identified information, data, facts and really honest dialogue as conditions for best decisions, she also identified that she makes her best decisions in a crisis situation. Superintendent F also recognized pressure as a condition for quality decisions. This was in contrast to Superintendent A, who said, “When there’s turmoil, and things like that, pressure, then sometimes I feel that I’ve rushed into a decision.” Superintendent D acknowledged the role of rest, exercise and striking a balance, “All work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy. I do believe in taking time for myself.” Superintendent I also noted making her best decisions when rested.

Four of the participants credited collaboration and dialogue with team members or legal council as a necessary component for quality decisions. “I make my best decisions when...I have collaborated with others to understand the levels my decision impacts,” said Superintendent I. The superintendent from school district C shared, “I am also far better when I have time to confirm my actions with legal counsel. I usually tell the

attorney what I want as an outcome and then ask him/her how I can achieve that result.”

Question 6. The final standard question posed to all participants was to identify the conditions under which the board makes its’ best decisions. Seven of the 10 respondents included some form of information as the basis for a quality decision. Another component mentioned by four of the superintendents was time to discuss the issues. “They need adequate information and time to discuss. I like to have a workshop sometimes for issues, so that they can talk,” said Superintendent F. A similar answer from Superintendent E was that the board makes its best decisions, “...when they have taken time to thoroughly discuss an issue and consider what is best for the majority of the students we serve.” Superintendent A stated, “I think still its when they are calm taken their time, when we’ve researched, evaluated, reflected, they’ve had time to dialogue and talk with each other, I think that’s when they make their best decisions.” Superintendent I answered this way:

My board members’ make their best decisions when they are rested, are not hungry, when their favorite chocolate candy is available, are not stressed from their personal jobs or families, feel they have made a very good decision, are positively recognized, and/or the majority agree with them personally.

Additional Questions. Four of the 10 school districts in this study exhibited unique circumstances based on either their current relationship with the superintendent or an anomaly of the board meeting observation. Additional questions were posed to these superintendents. School district A failed to renew the superintendent’s contract at her last performance review. The superintendent was especially candid in sharing her opinion regarding that decision:

Their opinions and their decisions impact my performance greatly. Here lately its really been impacted because they made an emotional decision, I feel, in not extending my contract. And it was based on a lie. I mean clearly, and I don't know how you can write this, but the scores were changed. The ink and handwriting shows this.

When asked about the last time her board was collectively happy she replied, "Basically they were pleased that I went out and found someone to do a facilities study on ADA." This was in response to a citizen complaint about an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access issue.

School district D had just hired the superintendent prior to the initiation of this study. The board meeting observed was her second regularly scheduled meeting as leader of this district. I asked her to reflect on her first few months and the transition. Superintendent D shared:

The newness of the job has been both exciting and challenging. Coming from a larger district, I feel well equipped to handle this job. I am fortunate to have a cohesive, support board, which makes my job so much more enjoyable. The challenge for me is managing the many tasks required for state and federal compliance matters and not having the resources or staff to cover all these areas. Much of this, then, falls to the superintendent, and it's quite daunting. Information overload is where I am right now.

School district H had posted an agenda that included a level three grievance against the superintendent, brought by a board member. Although I chose not to include closed session information in this study, I was prompted to ask this superintendent about

the last board election and whether or not there was contention. Affirming that there continued to be contention, she replied:

There were six candidates running for two positions. The two candidates running took information from a board meeting that was said by the superintendent, turned it around, and spread false information to the tax payers in order to gain votes.

School district J presented a unique observation script in that there were no emotionally laden statements. The meeting was succinct and mechanical. When asked about that observation, Superintendent J replied:

Most board meetings run smoothly, since we had a long closed session ahead I think that the action items were not controversial and therefore we could move through them quickly. I can't tell you about the decisions in the closed session, but we did have a lot of discussion behind closed doors.

Horizontalization

In the second step of the phenomenological data analysis process, the researcher listed every significant statement that was relevant to the topic and a function of horizontalization. Each statement was given equal value to realize imaginative variation. Horizons revealed themselves establishing unique conditions of the phenomenon. This phenomenological reduction aimed to create logical understanding of the interview answers, providing a connection of themes. Each transcript was examined multiple times to construct a full account of the superintendent's experience. The data in each interview seemed to cluster around certain themes. This resulted in thematic analysis. The establishment of themes provided a foundation to rearrange the data from all interviews so that no bit of data was left out.

Consistent in the interviews was each superintendent's acknowledgement that emotion impacts decision-making by the board. However it was their commitment to eliminate emotion as a causal factor in their own ethical decision-making that stood out. Standing on fact, data, policy and legal advice appeared to provide unquestionable validation for effective decisions. The superintendents were the controlling nexus for gathering the information for decision-making and limiting their own emotional contribution.

Throughout the interviews I noticed in three of the questions that superintendents relied on communication as a resource for ensuring quality decisions and mitigating poor decisions. The need to infuse and maintain quality communication throughout the organization is a relevant and familiar focus. These horizons were elements of the phenomenon of communication controlling superintendents and trustees.

The business of school is the business of personnel direction. Whether it is the students, staff, community, or board members, the influence of emotion was most noted in superintendent and board decisions that impacted people. The superintendents in this study shared how school board policy and informed judgments could not overcome the pressure associated with decisions affecting someone's quality of life. This is reminiscent of the sleepless nights and anxious times when the decisions of personnel reassignment, retention or grievance resolution fell to the superintendent and board. Although remembering that the school district belongs to the community, the resolve to execute the decision resides in the office of superintendent and her direction of the board.

Reflection After Data Collection. The first theme of control by the superintendent reminded me of examples of when the community, the staff or the board scrutinized my

rationale for decision-making and how I had to manage the same positions with control. Rejecting emotion as a factor of decision-making as a means of control presented itself and this horizon was an element of the same phenomenon. In identifying the essential skill set of communication, inn reflective discussions with my administrative team it is habitually communication efforts that underpin the success or failure of many of my district initiatives. Trustees, staff and community loath situations where they are not afforded the necessary information to adequately weigh in on the issue. My board continues to hold improved communication skills as a superintendent and board goal. The third theme that highlighted the increased impact of emotion on personnel decisions reminded me of examples where emotion enveloped decisions involving people and how I had to deal with the same situations, and this horizon was an element of the phenomenon.

Thematic Clusters

The reduction of the ideas promoted through the participants' statements allowed me to assign labels to the broad qualities. These broad qualities emerged from the invariant qualities as they pertained to the research questions guiding the study, those ideas that were not discarded as irrelevant, repetitive or excessive to the analysis. Through clustering and thematizing the invariants, the core themes of the experience were generated. Through the process, the themes of control by the female superintendent, communication as a compulsory skill and emotion follows personnel decisions developed into the encompassing themes of their responses.

Control by the Female Superintendent

Emotion was identified as a distinct component of decision-making on the part of

the superintendents and their boards. By managing the constituent components of the decision-making process such as factual data, established board policy, and reflection time, control managed by the superintendent was exerted to mitigate any negative impact based on emotion. Overt suppression of emotionally laden behaviors contributed to a deluded sense of the absence of emotion by the superintendents. Remaining in control demonstrated an obligation on behalf of the superintendent to appear to manage dispassionately so that it might appear rationally.

Communication as a Compulsory Skill

Superintendents collectively, through their description and reflections of decision-making revealed the indispensable aptitude to communicate within and for the organization. Whether requested or required to fulfill their duties, negative emotions were addressed and managed through enhanced communication on the part of the superintendent. The superintendents made conscious efforts to recognize when and where trustees were likely to exhibit advanced emotional states, accepting responsibility setting the stage for more informed dialogue and action.

Emotion Follows Personnel Decisions

Superintendents revealed a sense of anxiety and ownership with the emotional impact of decisions impacting people. Trustee emotion exhibited on behalf of constituent or individually preferred issues cued superintendents to the expected level of emotion. Decisions regarding students and staff were also laden with emotion prior to and during the decision timeline. It was the superintendent that was left to manage any residual emotion long after the decisions were made.

Imaginative Variation

By inserting variations of why events happened, utilizing my own personal experience to define the results of the observation and interviews with the participants, I employed imaginative variation. Imagining through differing perspectives, roles and intentions allowed for countless possibilities rather than a single riposte supported this phase of the analysis. The essential goal was to arrive at a full description of the experience revealing how the phenomenon came to be. An amalgamated statement of the experience effectively completes the phenomenological process.

Summary

In summary, this chapter depicted the experiences and responses by female superintendents regarding emotion and its impact on ethical decision-making. Full and rich interview responses, observations of regularly scheduled board meetings and a review of school board policies provided insight into the participants' perspectives on emotion. The experience exposed collective and unique characteristics of how female superintendents understand their job performance and manage their relationship with boards' trustees.

The questions that guided the study were, (1) In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions made by female superintendents; and (2) In what ways does perceived emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees impact female superintendents' job performance? The final chapter of this study addressed the above questions, assisting my study by providing greater understanding of the role of emotion in decision-making. The final chapter, in utilizing information from the literature review to link theory, ongoing research and a call for further research, provides practical

knowledge and direction to school district leaders.

CHAPTER V: INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter Five will present a summary of the purpose, procedures, and major findings of this research study. A discussion of the implications and recommendations for further study are also presented.

Ethical decision-making for a superintendent is a complex process. Many factors go into the making of an ethical decision. Laws, personal values, professional codes, local culture, and school board policies are some. Emotion however is often labeled a dispensable feature to the ethical decision-making process. Damasio (1998) purported that emotions can be used to choose among many possibilities in making decisions. Anticipating feelings if certain events took place can help decision makers choose among multiple options. Recent research in neuroscience implies that it is the complex interplay of emotions and reason that produce decisions. Berthoz (2006) stated that recently we have begun to understand processes in the brain to understand how emotion and reason are both necessary to moral decision-making. More recently we have come to understand that any “inherent ambiguity is resolved by our intuitive sensing”, and if it is reasonable, it is accepted unchallenged, with supporting points brought in after the fact (Kahneman, 2011).

The main purpose of this qualitative study was to answer the following research questions: (1) In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions made by female superintendents; and (2) In what ways does perceived emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees impact female superintendents’ job performance? The

significance of this study was to add to the growing base of literature about the ways in which emotion influences ethical decision-making by female superintendents. Given that the role of superintendents is grounded in the responsibility of making sound ethical decisions, the research in this study is needed to determine the extent to which emotions are influential to the making of sound ethical decisions. Although there is a collection of research on the effect of emotion and decision-making it is absent a gender lens and gender differentiation (Finkelstein, 2010; Hawkins, 2008; Izard, 2011; Kahneman, 2011; Rogerson, Gottlieb, Handelsman, Knapp & Younggren, 2011; Vohs, Baumeister & Loewenstein, 2007). Through the observation of the words and actions of the female superintendents and boards of trustees during regularly scheduled board meetings, the review of unique local policy and the corresponding superintendent interviews, the focus was on the superintendents' perception of emotion as a factor in the ethical decision-making in her district.

Particular to this study was whether emotion exclusively preceded cognition or if emotion is post-cognitive relative to ethical decision-making. According to Damasio (1998, 2000) and Kahneman (2011), emotions dictate and constrain which fragments of information are used in ethical decision-making. Distinctive to this study was the intention to see what similarities with male superintendents might be found within the 2010 Azam study that provided a link between leadership theory, demographics, and ethical decision-making by collecting information from male practitioners. As a quasi-replication of the Azam study, this research looked at the link between leadership theory, demographics and ethical decision-making by female superintendents plus any similarity

or refraction noted due to the difference in superintendent gender, the male superintendents in the Azam (2010) study.

Methodology

Superintendent and board leadership leading to quality decision-making is highly subjective and in need of interpretation. Leadership occurs as a result of human interaction and perceptions, which can only be studied and revealed through interpretation (Razik & Swanson, 2001; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). For this study data was collected from 10 mid-sized (populations 600-4,000) school districts in Texas led by female superintendents. The data collection for this phenomenological project included three different processes: (a) observation, (b) analysis of board policy as archival data and (c) semi-structured interviews. School board meeting data was collected from the observation of female superintendents and their respective board members during one, full-length, regularly scheduled board meeting. Descriptive data focusing on the emotional attitudes and characteristics from the meetings was collected.

Emotional words were characterized as pleasant or unpleasant/difficult. Descriptions of emotional actions and gestures were also collected. Archival data in the form of unique school board policy provided information that allowed the extraction of the emotional context of the policy development. A semi-structured interview with each superintendent garnered information on the impact of emotion in relationship to decision-making based on the perceptions of the female superintendents. The results of the data collection, especially the interviews, exposed participant behaviors, thoughts, and perceptions of their day-to-day decisions and how they interact with their boards. Interview data was chunked, horizontalized, and thematicized based on the Moustakas

approach to phenomenological study. The study revealed characteristics that acknowledged the manifestation of emotion while uncovering three emergent themes.

Summary of Results

Public schools are complex agencies led by superintendents and boards of trustees. This was an important study in the impact of emotion on decision-making in our public schools to help navigate complexities. The call for public schools to be more accountable is revolutionizing the educational system and fueling the public school debate. Yet with the increasing number of women superintendents in public schools there seems to be a lack of coordinated research on the important role of emotion in decision-making relative to female leadership. The implications of this study's findings were substantial for superintendents, board trustees, and community members.

Some research indicates that decision-making in schools was rational and goal-directed and reflective of a bureaucratic setting. Historical research on decision-making was encumbered with reports that decisions suffer from the irrational influence of the emotions. Emotions were attacked as an illegitimate consideration. Yet we know that "decisions don't just happen by themselves, people make, or don't make, decisions" (Finkelstein, 2010).

Ethical decision-making plays an increasingly important role in the daily decision-making of public school superintendents as they lead their school districts in an age of unprecedented diversity, school reform, and public accountability. Given that the role of superintendents and school boards are grounded in the responsibility of making these sound ethical decisions, the extent to which emotions influence the making of sound ethical decisions is considerable. The most important responsibility of the

superintendent is the oversight of students and employees, which implies a moral and ethical obligation (Fitch, 2009). The female superintendents of this study understood full well their obligation to act responsibly, morally, ethically and with exceptional intention. What they did not fully understand was the impact of emotion on their decisions and those of the board.

Emotional Phrases and Gestures

Observations of the regularly scheduled board meetings provided for the compilation of emotional phrases and actions by superintendent participants and board members. Emotional phrases and gestures were evident in nine of the 10 districts' regularly scheduled board meetings in varying degrees. Phrases were categorized as either pleasant or unpleasant/difficult and resulted in eight identifiable content areas. Although there was no preponderance of any one exact phrase, positive or negative, the 70 phrases collected from board trustees were able to be categorized as either pleasant or unpleasant/difficult. Twenty comments were coded as pleasant, four attributed to female trustees and 16 to male trustees. Fifty comments were coded as unpleasant/difficult comments, 16 from female trustees and 34 from male trustees. The substance of the phrases allowed for the emergence of three major content areas: finance, testing/accountability and policy/contracts. With further analysis of the phrases, 33 of the phrases were directly related to issues involving students, staff or community. Deming (2000) in talking about American business surmised that in American we are afraid of dealing with the business of people. Because public school represents one of the largest people business segments in American, it is the thoughts and actions of a superintendent and boards that affect others not only in the organization but also outside the organization.

Making decisions in public schools for and about people is impacted by emotion.

Emotion in Policy

The review of uniquely worded board policies provided content that further informed the researcher in the development of interview questions and provided insight into formalized decisions that may have been impacted by emotion. Each district had local policies that were developed to address the exceptional needs of the local school district. The Texas Association of School Boards provides for uniquely worded local policies by designating them (LOCAL)-X. District E had the fewest number of (LOCAL)-X policies with 18. District G had the greatest number with 55. The average for all 10 districts was 32 (LOCAL)-X policies. Policies that addressed issues affecting students, staff or community were exposed as having high emotional content according to the superintendents. Of the 15 uniquely worded local policies identified by the superintendents as having a high emotional correlation, 12 of these were created or amended in response to the issues of people in the district.

Superintendent Interviews

Through the semi-structured interview I was able to ask questions of the superintendents that allowed me to better understand their knowledge and experiences as superintendents. I processed each interview independently maintaining detailed transcripts. Through the phenomenological process it was my explicit beliefs, personal knowledge and experiences that delivered value to the study so that in conjunction with the respondents a co-participant lens was developed in providing the identification of themes.

Guided by the study's research questions the data analysis of this study, in

particular the superintendent interviews, I attempted to identify how female superintendents perceived emotion in their decision-making, and how emotional decision-making by the board of trustees' impacted the superintendents' decision-making. Seven of the 10 superintendents reported, in some form, that they do not allow emotion to interfere with their professional decisions. The superintendent of school district D said, "My emotions do not interfere with or impact my ability to maintain ethics in my decision-making. I generally look to policy and the law to confirm or support decisions I have to make." The superintendent from school district I offered, "I have conditioned myself to base my decisions analytically on the district's policy, financial impact, what is best for our young people and faculty, and community values..." In contrast when asked how they recognize their own increased emotional state, all but one of these respondents offered examples and therefore acknowledged that emotion truly is a component of decision-making and their role as superintendent. Superintendent A says that she recognizes her own increased emotional state when she "knows that it is a challenge," or when she is being "set up." Superintendent D shared that "dealing with and managing stressful situations, such as personnel matters," is when she recognizes an increased emotional state. Superintendent E held steadfastly to her comment that she does not let herself "become emotionally involved in board decisions."

When asked about the emotional decisions made by the boards, 100% of the superintendents could identify a time during their tenure when the board member(s) made a decision based on emotion. Superintendents reported that personnel decisions, community complaint issues, and lack of information or adequate time to discuss the information were the preponderant responses. When asked about the issues that

prompted emotional decisions, Superintendent A stated:

When people employees/constituents complain. And if the squeaky wheel gets to them and tells their story, and colors it to the point that the board member believes everything that they've just been told, then that just increases their emotional state.

Superintendent E said:

When an individual board member is being confronted in the community about a certain issue or social media postings make the rounds, I notice some board members behaving more emotionally.

Even though seven of the 10 superintendents initially indicated that they did not allow emotion to impact their own decision-making process, they were able to identify the lengths they went to in counteracting the impact of emotion. The frequent references to data, policy, collaborative dialogue and time to think are in themselves evidence that the superintendent was working to diminish the effects of emotion and therefore acknowledged emotions' impact. Five of the superintendents also noted their use of a "gut" feeling, intuition or experience as the foundation for their day-to-day actions. Intuition provides for the wide range of skills that embeds reasoning and rational thinking into emotion. The day-to-day intuitive decisions, although not formal decisions such as those recorded in policy, are wrapped in the spontaneous and dynamic dominion of the public school superintendent.

Superintendents' Perception of Emotion. Two types of situations face female superintendents in daily situations. Situations with clear right and wrong answers are called problems and those situations with two right answers are called dilemmas. The difficulty encountered with dilemmas is that social and political connections and

entanglements overwhelm us and produce a feeling of helplessness, which cannot be overcome by logical means (Cuban, 1994). School reform and cultural diversity has placed the superintendent in a position of conflicting values and public cynicism has locked the superintendent in ethical crosshairs. Every decision the superintendent makes has ethical consequences. The making of sound ethical decisions is paramount for the superintendent.

The superintendents of this study acknowledged that the work of educational leadership entails work that is simultaneously intellectual and moral. A blend of human, professional and civic concerns helped to cultivate an environment for learning that was fulfilling and socially responsible (Starrat, 2004). The superintendents of this study stated time and again that emotion had no bearing on their practices and decisions. Superintendent H said, “I make my best decisions when I can make the decision based on black and white policy.” They cited policy, collaborative dialogue with colleagues and counsel, laws, procedures and rules as tools to support their decisions. Superintendent C said, “My best decisions occur when I have time to research board policy and time to process all the possibilities. I am also far better when I have time to confirm my actions with legal counsel.” They talked about the steps they took to ensure that emotion did not influence their decisions. Superintendent G said, “I make my best decisions after gathering the facts, thinking through the problem, and then executing the decision without Board interference.” Throughout the echoes of their stalwart comments regarding the excise of emotion, they were paying homage to emotion and the delicate balance that it holds in decision-making. If there were no emotional influences in the decisions of these leaders, they would not spend the time to find the rationales to fight it.

In fact, emotion existed in such high levels and was intuitively perceived by the superintendents of this study in such a way to mask its presence when it came time for the decisions to be made. When the superintendents were asked to reflect differently on emotion, not merely if emotion was a consideration but rather on when they recognize increased levels of emotion, 100% of the respondents acknowledged that emotion plays a role in their leadership and thus their decisions.

While the female superintendents of this study might have first aligned with Lehrer (2009) who wrote that decision-making is either rational or emotional, this study in full view fits Gladwell's (2009) illustration that we make instant decisions without knowing why, and then it is up to the superintendent to identify rational reasons that justified an emotional decision.

Superintendents in this study overwhelmingly communicated a negative undertone in regard to the emotion exhibited by their board and board decisions. Superintendent I said, "Negatively speaking- Board members' emotional state increases when they are tired, do not believe they are informed, or others do not agree with their decisions." Superintendent F added, "My board gets emotional about dress code, athletics and spending money – so I anticipate those nights and try to provide enough information to calm the situation and sometimes I realize they need more, so I remind them that most decisions can wait and they can have time to think."

The superintendents in this study identified a need to control the information and pace of the dialogue regarding decisions elevated to the board. However, while school boards have authority, in Texas they are unpaid, part-time, and mostly untrained and, except for the information presented to them by the superintendent or perhaps what they

pick up informally, they know little of the primary issues for the myriad complex decisions necessitating their authorization at each board meeting (Cuban, 1988; Petersen & Fusarelli, 2001). Therefore, school boards rely on the professional judgment of the superintendent in many educational matters (Petersen & Fusarelli, 2001).

Emergent Themes

Comparable statements made by participants during observations and interviews, along with researcher insight of the analyzed data, resulted in the organized collection of data. Through the processes of chunking the data and horizontalizing the possibilities, the following themes emerged from analysis of the data:

Control by the Female Superintendent. The first emergent theme uncovered the need by the female superintendent to exert control in the decision-making process, regardless whether the decision was made solely by her office or the decision was an outcome of board action.

The superintendent is the chief executive officer of a school district. The thoughts and actions of a superintendent affect others both in and outside the organization. According to Houston (2001, p.432), characteristics of successful superintendents include (a) being a great communicator, (b) being an outstanding facilitator and persuader, (c) being able to sell ideas, (d) having the ability to operate in paradoxes without black and white thinking, (e) knowledge of pressures, (f) being a reflective practitioner, and (g) being a problem solver. The role of the superintendent brings a “governance structure, modifies leadership practices, and emphasizes accountability” for all outcomes (Logan, 1998). The superintendents of this study expressed in their actions and in conversation

regarding their roles the importance of the position. They indicated that they utilized the learned skills outlined by Houston (2001).

By managing the constituent components of the decision-making process such as factual data, established board policy, and reflection time, control managed by the superintendent was exerted to mitigate any perceived negative impact based on emotion. Although seven of the 10 respondents initially claimed that emotion was not a contributing factor in their decision-making process, 100% of the superintendents in this study were forthcoming as they shared behaviors and intentions to mitigate emotion and support reason in the decision-making process. So evident in this ability to control the rationales admitted in their actions, some superintendents sought out information to preempt the negative impact of emotion. Superintendent G said about her own best decision, “I make my best decisions after gathering the facts, thinking through the problem, and then executing the decision without board interference.” In regard to board decisions, Superintendent E shared,

My board gets emotional about dress code, athletics and spending money – so I anticipate those nights and try to provide enough information to calm the situation and sometimes I realize they need more, so I remind them that most decisions can wait and they can have time to think.

By identifying relative, cognitive rationales that might contribute to a decision the superintendents impression of control was established.

The women of this study also acknowledged the emerging characteristics needed to be an ethical leader; honest, caring, and principled individuals who make fair and

balanced decisions (Bowers, 2009; Calabrese & Roberts, 2001; Kocabas & Karakose, 2009; Pijanowski, 2008; Pipkin, 2000).

Given that women represent a mere 24 percent of the superintendents, approximately 151 in Texas (TASA, 2011) the pressure to prove oneself could be daunting. The superintendents in this study articulated the pressures of the position and not necessarily based on their gender. Superintendent E expressed that her best decisions come, “When I have given thought and careful consideration to an issue, looking at all sides and factors without injecting my personal feelings into the decision.” Superintendent D said, “When I am schooled on the topic and prepared with the appropriate information, I am confident in my decision-making.” Only two of the superintendents in this study explicitly shared that their best decisions come from intuition, and even then they backed up their viewpoint with rationale that included data, facts and collaborative dialogue.

This study determined that the desire to control multiple aspects of the decision-making process preceded and followed the decisions themselves. Whether the superintendent solely made the decision or the board made the decision, informed by the superintendent, the superintendent and her actions provided the information in and out of the process. In some way this contrasts with the research that implies women are participatory and less autocratic and that their decision-making reflects these preferences (DeVore & Martin, 2008; Fabes & Martin, 1991; Martinek, 1996; Skrla, 2000; White, 1999). Unfortunately having control may be little more than an illusion. The work of Janice Marturano (2011) promotes the idea that the vast majority of people in leadership roles have strong minds, deep expertise and good hearts. The female superintendents of

this study exemplified this. When faced with an uninformed option, it was very difficult to give up certainty. The certainty expressed in their positions, beliefs and explanations for decision-making may lie at the core of their personal identity. But in a changing world, certainty doesn't give us stability; it actually creates more chaos (Marturano, 2011). Succeeding in the new public school environment may need a different management paradigm from that developed for management in traditional and familiar settings. As school leaders face the daily dilemmas that require hundreds of routine and not-so-routine decisions, a wide range of values are pitted against each other. A school superintendent's job is highly contextual and leadership effectiveness is highly sensitive to that context. Simultaneously functioning as educational leaders, politicians, and organizational managers to influence any significant change in their districts would certainly drive the leader into control mode.

Communication as a Compulsory Skill. The topic of this study was driven by this researcher's desire to help women superintendents identify, consider and utilize appropriate emotionally based communication in superintendent-board interactions. The second theme to surface was the reliance on communication as a compulsory skill. Although the female superintendents did not explicitly identify their communication efforts as particularly emotional, the efforts were in response to emotional situations. Throughout the interviews I noticed in three of the questions' answers that superintendents relied on communication as a resource for ensuring quality decisions and mitigating poor decisions. The need to infuse and maintain quality communication efforts throughout the organization was a relevant and familiar focus. Seen as a panacea; the female superintendents in this work consistently used the lack of communication to

incriminate poor performance while conversely employing more communication to assuage confusion and malcontent. Just as Foucault (1980) suggested that it is in communication with one another that people learn to clarify their ideas and construct a renewed sense of reality, effective decisions cannot be reached until all parties have equal access to the information. The reported lack of effective communication impacted the dynamic of the roles, and sound ethical decisions suffered.

In regard to board decision, the female superintendents made conscious efforts to recognize when and where trustees were likely to exhibit advanced emotional states, accepting responsibility by setting the stage for more informed dialogue and support. Superintendent A said, “When they have research and data from me...when they have the specs from me...” Superintendent C said, “Our board does their best work when they have a broad based informational background with options. They do best when I give them options...” In the words of Superintendent F, “I like to have a workshop sometimes for issues, so that they can talk. Superintendent J supposed, “ (the) Board makes it’s best decisions when the leadership on the board is confident and informed.” In response to the impact of emotional decision-making by boards, five of the respondents mentioned enhancing communication tactics and information sharing as a means to combat any ill effects of emotion. Superintendent J said, “If the board is uptight about something and acting emotionally, I see my performance increase in both communication frequency and amount.” “The decisions I make on the part of the board are based on policy and procedures. This does remove the emotion from the decision-making but does not remove the emotional results,” added Superintendent H. Communication also underpins those times when superintendents make their best decisions, according to interview

responses. Superintendent J said, “I make my best decisions...with complete information, data, facts, and really honest dialogue regarding the options.” Superintendent I shared, “I make my best decisions...when I have collaborated with others to understand the levels my decision impacts.” Today’s effective superintendent has adeptly moved away from the classical administrative communication model that promotes one-way, directive, coercive exchanges inevitably reducing opportunities for mutual influence and information sharing (McGregor, 1967). Evident in the female superintendents of this study was an emerging communication expertise. Although initiated by the superintendent under the guise of control, relationship enhancing communication was symmetrical, all involved benefited from the dialogue and exchange. The leadership skill of communication is meaningless without regard to the effectiveness of the communiqué. How superintendents communicated, as well as how people perceived situations and environments, had a lasting impact on the success of an organization. Being self-aware was a necessary component of effective communication. Superintendent J said, “I make my best decisions...with complete information, data, facts, and really honest dialogue regarding the options.” Superintendent I shared, “I make my best decisions...when I have collaborated with others to understand the levels my decision impacts.”

Emotion Follows Personnel Decisions. Within public schools, all stakeholders, because of the nature of humanity, experienced tremendous amounts of emotion. Human beings are emotional by nature, and this emotion was a vital component of decision-making (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). As revealed, superintendents and trustees do not operate as unbiased individuals (Berthoz, 2006). People do not leave their emotions at home and regardless of the bureaucratic arenas that promote adherence to rules and

procedures, emotions accompany each person. (Knights & Suman, 2008). Lehrer (2009) writes that morality at its core is based on emotion, not logic. Moral decision-making is therefore about feeling sympathy for others.

The third surfacing theme was the advanced degree in which emotion was tied to decisions involving people. During the interview phase of the data collection the superintendents reported that along with their boards, they experienced a sense of anxiety and ownership with the emotional impact of decisions impacting people. Nine of the 10 superintendents reported that emotional states escalated with either themselves or their boards when dealing with people. Superintendent D shared that her emotional state increased when “Dealing with and managing stressful situations, such as personnel matters.” Superintendent C shared she becomes more emotional “In personnel decisions when people will lose their jobs.”

Evident in the findings of this study, decisions impacting humans were consistently tied to the female superintendents reflection of an emotionally based decision. Consistent with research from Fitch (2009), the superintendents and boards having oversight of students and employees implied a moral obligation as education is a moral undertaking and these superintendents were confronted with ethical dilemmas on a daily basis. Superintendent D shared that her emotional state increased when “Dealing with and managing stressful situations, such as personnel matters.” When asked about the issues that prompted emotional decisions, Superintendent A stated:

When people employees/constituents complain. And if the squeaky wheel gets to them and tells their story, and colors it to the point that the board member believes everything that they’ve just been told, then that just increases their emotional state.

Superintendent H added, “It is when the areas become gray and emotion is involved that the decisions are harder to make. The emotional decisions usually involve people.”

It was the appropriate mix of reason and emotion that stood out to superintendents as the best ethical decisions. Superintendent A confirmed,

I make my best decisions when I’m calm, when I have time to think and evaluate and reflect. When I have time to research things. Look at the pros and cons, talk to myself, sit down and involve administrators or my assistants.

In regard to increased emotion by the board, Superintendent A said that her board members are emotional “When people, employees (or) constituents complain.” “When an individual board member is being confronted in the community about a certain issue...” is what Superintendent E shared about her board. Superintendent H said, “The board gets emotional when it comes to kids.” Superintendent J added that, “Board members that are parents are more emotional when decisions affect their child’s campus or activities.” Of the 15 policies that were identified by superintendents as being conceived or amended as a result of emotion, 12 of these policies dealt with students, staff or community. In district C, the superintendent said, “Our board continues to support corporal punishment...we discussed this at length last year when a parent allowed it (swats) and the child’s buttock was bruised.” In district F the superintendent reflected that, “The board is very conservative about student and staff dress code. There have been a couple of employees that the board thought looked unprofessional, so dress code was revised to reflect their expectation for staff.” Whether the decisions reflected action upon children, staff or the community emotions led the decision-making process.

This finding has enormous implications for superintendents as they utilize negotiation techniques in working with staff and community. The superintendent that believes she can build a case for district change or important decisions using reason is doomed to be poor negotiator because she does not understand the real factors that are driving the others to come to a decision. Basing her negotiation strategy on logic relies on assumptions, guesses, and opinions. The competent and astute superintendent will leverage this knowledge to not only recognize, but also capitalize on the impact of emotion on decisions about and for people in her organization.

The Role of the Female Superintendent

The superintendent is the chief executive officer of a school district. Traditionally defined as the implementer of policy established by the board of education (Konnert & Augenstein, 1990), the role of superintendent has transformed to represent a more holistic approach to leadership (Brunner & Bjork, 2001; Cuban, 1988; Kowalski, 2005; Nir & Eyai, 2003). Notwithstanding the lists of skills encompassing instructional leadership, the moral imperative that remains is to serve the best interest of the student (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). Although women are attaining educational leadership positions at an increased rate there are gender differences regarding the influences related to leadership style (Irby & Brown, 1995). Early studies demonstrated that women rated higher in perceived people-related and cognitive competencies and men scored higher in areas related to facilities, management and conflict (Martinek, 1996; Ragins, 1989). If one gender exhibits a higher level of emotional evaluation, the question of whether there is a difference in actual ethical behaviors can have broad social and moral ramifications (White, 1999).

Due to the limited existence of research completed in regard to female superintendents' perspectives in understanding the impact of emotion in ethical decision-making, this study became representative of a body of research—comparable to that of Azam (2010)—critical to the understanding of the role of emotion in decision-making. Additionally, this research study reinforced the significant data found in contemporary and widely read text on the essential role of emotion in decision-making by Kahneman (2011), Klein (2011), and Lehrer (2009).

There was overt intent in this research to view the results through a feminine lens. According to Gosetti & Rusch (1995), females as leaders experience a different reality and interpret this reality differently than the traditionally dominant group. In 1989 Shakeshaft described considerable differences in the way men and women reach decisions. She found that female decision makers generally utilize an inclusive participatory style, which comes as a result of socialization. In the current educational work setting, the female superintendent may encounter gender role expectations and task-oriented behaviors that conflict with previously held beliefs and research findings. The majority of women in this study avoided any talk of gender presumably because they wished to be evaluated without gender interference. The work of Bell and Chase (1995) did not disclose a differently developed style in leadership between men and women. However, they found that gender is one of the contextual factors that shaped leadership practice. When focusing on superintendents they noted that women and men accomplish leadership tasks in much the same way, but women still have to deal with a unique set of difficulties because they are female in a traditionally male position. This difference in accomplishing leadership tasks may support the nuance differences observed in the

finding of differentiating this study from the Azam (2010) study.

In general the results of this study show a strong similarity with the Azam study. Azam concluded that accountability, fortified by a sense of fear, was an issue concerning emotion's impact in decision-making by male superintendents. This study identified the need for women to control their environment to assure accountability without a clear indication of the sources or underlying invariant. The women of this study did not identify nor did the analysis under the phenomenological process reveal signs of fear. What did emerge in both studies was the sense of obligation the superintendents of each study expressed. The superintendents attempted to manage the trustee's emotional decision-making in order to successfully lead their district. Female superintendents in this study chose and demonstrated the use of enhanced communication to support initiatives and to mitigate any perceived negative action in the district.

Azam also recognized that the male superintendents of his study reported a preponderance of negative emotion in decision-making process. They did however acknowledge the existence of emotion. In contrast, the female superintendents of this study reported initially that emotion did not impact their decision-making processes. Both studies were able to show through the interview answers that emotion in all forms resided in the activities and actions of the superintendents. In both studies the researchers found that the denial of emotion's impact in decision-making, positive, negative or non-existent, was to deny the art of decision-making. The decision-makers did not use only one of the modalities of decision-making. Given the distinctive emotional atmosphere of the public schools; work of and for people; the science of decision-making is enhanced by the art of decision-making. The art of decision-making requires intuition. Training,

experiences, data, law, board policy, etc. fortified the learned science of decision-making. The intuitive art of decision-making including imagination, creativity and the emotions of the decision-maker contributed to the process. Intuition was an emotionally based competency. Intuition provided for the wide range of skills that embeds reasoning and rational thinking into emotion much the way fast-slow thinking was described by Kahneman (2011). If as Lehrer (2009) reports that emotions are smart, the persistent attention to them will support effective decision-making by all superintendents.

Summary Statement

The concluding essence seems to be that emotion continues to exist in the decision-making process of both male and female superintendents and their boards. Regardless of the implied repression of emotion by superintendents the mere attempt to control and block emotion acknowledges its existence and impact. It is apparent that, overall, male and female superintendents are more alike than different. Additionally, the participants in this study are quite similar to subjects found in the literature on leadership and decision-making.

Implications for Training

No evidence of pre-service emotional training was distinct in this study's literature review. Given the extreme gravity of decisions made by superintendents, the lack of such training is defenseless. Although one can never fully understand the depth and breadth of the vocation, opportunities to engage in dialogue and thus learning regarding the role of the school superintendent and the range of the decisions made by the position, the inclusion of such pre-service training for superintendents will inform the candidates' ability and intention to meet the demands of the role. Pre-service attention

should include opportunities to explore, (1) emotional self-awareness, (2) leading others in emotional self-awareness, and (3) reasonable limits on the amount of information necessary to make a decision.

Implications for Further Research

Much of the research related to superintendency preparation programs has been based on white, male samples or has not considered gender or other backgrounds of their subjects (Tallerico, 2001). A continued effort to include demographic diversity in the study of superintendent preparation programs is required. Additional research should be conducted with female superintendents who work with boards of similar gender makeup. This research has not been adequately explored. The impact of a fully male board, or fully female board may yield differing and comparable results and conclusions. Specific to the study of emotion and decision-making, further research might include a mixed sex dyad of reporting: female researcher with male participants, or male researcher with female participant, to investigate whether emotional experience reporting is gender dependent regarding the researcher.

This study also brings up the question of why did the female superintendent feel the need to exert control over the decision-making process. In the Azam study, he found that male superintendents and their boards expressed fear, and it was considered an invariant structure of that study. Although it was not expressed or noted in this study, reasons that could be explored include fear, but could also be found in the need to nurture and co-dependency. Additional studies may provide answers.

Finally, this study should be conducted in states with teacher unions. The dynamic of the board and superintendent in Texas and other right to work states ignored

the influence of a third authoritative voice. According to the data obtained from the *Internal Revenue Service's Master Data File 2008-2009* (Center, 2013), 40 states have a teacher union presence. Replication is limited without such intention.

Relationship to Theory

A framework for decision-making was provided by the somatic marker theory; the somatic marker theory suggests that the role of emotions in decision-making is biologically extensive and complex. The Somatic Marker Theory (Damasio, 1994) is a model of how feedback from the body may contribute to successful decision-making in situations of complexity and uncertainty (Baumeister, DeWall & Zhang, 2007; Dunn, Dalgleish & Lawrence, 2006). The review of literature on Somatic Marker Theory provided neurobiological evidence in support of the notion that people often make judgments based on hunches, gut feelings, and subjective evaluation of the consequences (Damasio, 1994; Zajonc, 1984).

Somatic marker theory has made a valuable contribution to further the idea that emotion can be a benefit as well as a hindrance when making a decision (Bechara, Damasio & Damasio, 2000; Leland & Grafman, 2005; Naqvi, Shiv & Bechara, 2006). The results from this study were consistent with the somatic marker theory. Superintendent participants, through observation and interview, revealed that emotion impacted both their decision-making and the manner in which they responded to decisions made by others. Decision-making by superintendents occurred daily and often without time to fully evaluate all possible consequences or impacts, therefore reliance on the favorable outcomes of previous decisions guided these superintendents to rely on new decisions guided by the previously felt emotion. The somatic marker hypothesis

provided neurobiological evidence in support of the notion that people often make judgments based on hunches, gut feelings, and subjective evaluation of the consequences (Damasio, 1994; Zajonc, 1984). Through this theory, emotions directed decision-making behavior. Although the superintendents in this study expressed preference in being well prepared and having time to think through decisions, this was not always the case when leading a school district. The somatic marker hypothesis afforded a structure for decision-making and proposed that the method of decision-making depends on factors that adjust emotion and feeling (Rolls, 1999). Given that both emotion and reason do exist in the decision-making process of the female superintendent this concurrence neither proves nor disproves the somatic marker hypothesis. Understanding the function of both emotion and reason within the myriad context of leading and decision-making requires we invoke the somatic marker theory findings based on neuroscience to change the way we manage people.

Limitations

This research accepted certain uncontrollable elements identified as limitations. The consideration of the superintendents to fully participate in the interviews could not be controlled. Some interviews were missed and rescheduled multiple times in order to fully accommodate the participant. A comprehensively recognized definition of emotion was not established. However, a generally accepted definition of emotion is the “activation of the feelings triggered by experiencing love, hate, fear, etc., and usually accompanied by certain physiological changes, as increased heartbeat or respiration, and often overt manifestations such as crying or shaking” (“emotion,” Random House). It was expected that the participants would report genuine feeling and emotions to the best of

their abilities. It was further assumed that the participants would display genuine actions throughout this observation portion of the research study. The presence of the observer may have altered normal behavior to a degree; however, triangulated data in the form of policy review and semi-structured interviews was acquired to minimize the impact of this occurrence.

This study had limitations that may affect transferability. Although this study provides a paper trail that would allow other researchers the ability to transfer conclusions, the study was limited to one group of female superintendents in Texas mid-sized school districts. Ten female superintendents participated in the study. Results of larger studies could result in supplementary conclusions that agreed or disagreed with the findings of this study. This research can only explain the phenomenon in this particular place and time.

Recommendations For Practice

This study assessed the impact of emotion on decision-making as perceived by female superintendents. This study revealed that female superintendents deliberately accessed the most logical foundation for decisions to minimize the perceived influence of unacceptable emotions. In the business world, emotions continue to be viewed as irrational, an annoyance, a signal that the organization is unstable. But when asked, organizational leaders often say they most want engaged employees who exhibit passion, confidence, enthusiasm and determination. These are all emotions. (Greenspan, 2004). UCLA researcher, Dr. Matthew Lieberman, found that when we label our emotions we maximize our cognitive ability. He claims that by pushing down our true feelings in the

name of professionalism, we contradict our real experience, experience cognitive dissonance, and waste precious brain fuel in the process.

In order to understand and recognize emotion in self and others, superintendents would benefit from organizing close collegial relationships with a group of local superintendents for the purpose of discussing such ethical dilemmas. The opportunities to engage in collaborative visualization to resolve current issues or prepare for or even prevent difficult dilemmas in the future will be nurtured.

Regularly scheduled team building and visioning exercises including the superintendent and trustees to enhance communication efforts was advocated. By resolutely including imaginative experiential activities, the female superintendents' efforts to exercise unnecessary measures of control will be diminished. By simulating potentially caustic activities and labeling corresponding feelings, school district leaders will learn, through repetition, to value a range of decisions and responses.

If, as Deming (2000) surmised, that the problem with American business is that it is afraid of dealing with the business of people, superintendents and boards should regularly observe, engage and participate with members of the organization and community. In doing so the decision-making process in our public schools could be a practiced skill dedicated to the business of people rather than reactionary verdicts.

Conclusion

In conclusion this study sought to answer two primary questions (1) In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions made by female superintendents; and (2) In what ways does perceived emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees impact female superintendents' job performance? Ten female superintendents in

midsized Texas school districts was the assemblage for answering each of these questions. The culmination of this study resulted in the emergence of three critical themes that were all related to the ways in which emotion impacts ethical decision-making which was unlike the male superintendents of a previous study (Azam, 2010) who expressly acknowledged the presence of emotion in their decision-making process. By denying the significance of emotion in their own decision-making processes, the female superintendents in this study paradoxically confirmed that emotion does exist as a component of decision-making. The control exerted by these female superintendents manifested in data, policy, dialogue and time to cognize pending decisions, framed their decision-making process and provided for their most often used constituent leadership tool: communication. When allowed to observe their districts' processes and decisions, including their own, the superintendents identified that decisions regarding people carried the most emotion, both positive and negative. The themes identified in this study also have implications in the pre-service and on-going training of school leaders.

The findings of this study contribute to the field of educational leadership in variety of ways. This study confirms that emotion does affect superintendents' day-to-day operations of public schools, and it is a condition of the context of the decision where nuances exist. Clearly revealed in this study was that acknowledging emotion, directly or inversely, in making decisions was critical to managing and leading the business of the school district. These findings provide foundation for the further examination of the multifaceted phenomenon of emotional decision-making in public schools.

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APPENDIX A

PLEASANT FEELING WORDS

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| cheerful | glad | lucky |
| delighted | gleeful | merry |
| ecstatic | great | overjoyed |
| elated | happy | satisfied |
| excited | important | sunny |
| festive | joyous | thankful |
| fortunate | jubilant | |

UNPLEASANT / DIFFICULT FEELING WORDS

| | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| aggressive | fuming | irritated |
| angry | hateful | offensive |
| annoyed | hostile | provoked |
| bitter | incensed | resentful |
| boiling | indignant | sore |
| cross | inflamed | unpleasant |
| enraged | infuriated | upset |
| frustrated | insulting | worked up |

<http://www.psychpage.com/learning/library/assess/feelings.html>

APPENDIX B

Board of Trustees Meeting Observation Template

Date: _____ School: _____

Time Sweep () () () () () () () ()

Monitor and Document Emotional Statements

| Emotional Phrases | Time | Speaker | Body Language | Context | Reaction |
|-------------------|------|---------|---------------|---------|----------|
|-------------------|------|---------|---------------|---------|----------|

I'm upset....

I'm angry....

I'm frustrated....

I'm excited....

I'm happy.....

We're lucky.....

APPENDIX C

Trustee Meeting Observation Data

School District A

Meeting Date: July 10, 2012

Current District Accountability: Academically Acceptable - Missed AYP

Board Composition: 4 Male, 3 Female trustees (one female trustee absent)

Superintendent since 2008

Additional information: Style of meeting was very formal; Superintendent contract not extended at last evaluation; closed session 7:38-9:00

Time: 8:15

Emotional Phrase: "I don't mean to put you on the spot...where are we with mapping?"

Speaker: Female (5)

Body Language: Sitting back in chair

Context: Discussion of security cameras

Reaction of superintendent: Defensive

Time: 8:00

Emotional Phrase: "You've done a good job"

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: Sitting forward in chair

Context: Report by business manager

Reaction of superintendent: Pleased

Time: 7:12

Emotional Phrase: “Kudos job well done”

Speaker: Superintendent

Body Language: Calm

Context: Student accomplishments

Reaction of superintendent: non responsive

School District B

Meeting Date: July 16, 2012

Current Accountability: Exemplary - Met AYP

5 Male, 1 Female trustees, 1 vacancy (Aug 21, 2012 board member resigned)

Superintendent since 2008

Additional Information: No prayer – moment of silence; presentation from land developer about master planned community about to break ground and add more than 200 homes in the next year; board members concerned about accountability ratings of neighboring school districts; Superintendent was leaving for Italy the next morning.

Time: 8:20

Emotional Phrase: “Really glad to see you here”

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: Leaning forward

Context: Presentation by new master planned community group

Reaction of superintendent: non responsive

Time: 8:44

Emotional Phrase: “So this was reviewed by our counsel?”

Speaker: Male (7)

Body Language: neutral

Context: Presentation by new master planned community group

Reaction of superintendent: Nods, confirms question as statement

Time: 8:44

Emotional Phrase: "I appreciate you"

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: direct eye contact with female (3)

Context: Discussion re board liaison

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 9:00

Emotional Phrase: "Do you have this information broken down by sub groups?" Why can't you?"

Speaker: Male (7)

Body Language: in concerning matter leaning forward

Context: Directed to Asst. Supt in report on accountability

Reaction of superintendent: silence, sits back in chair ...defends by saying that there is improvement in TELPAS

Time: 9:09

Emotional Phrase: "Between AP and DC we have a lot of students earning college credit and that's good"

Speaker: Male (7)

Body Language: neutral

Context: Asst. Supt in report on accountability

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 9:10

Emotional Phrase: "I think it's inconsistent to charge for those investing in our community when we allow transfers"

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Supt report on FDA(LOCAL) tuition and transfers

Reaction of superintendent: attending

Time: 9:16

Emotional Phrase: "We're trying to attract students aren't we?"

Speaker: Male (7)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Supt report on FDA(LOCAL) tuition and transfers

Reaction of superintendent: attending

Time: 9:30

Emotional Phrase: "I like the initiative however I would recommend that as we develop board goals we decide if technology is an area to pursue"

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Discussion on purchasing iPads for 2012-2013 year

Reaction of superintendent: no affect

Time: 9:30

Emotional Phrase: "Do you have concerns with Apple?"

Speaker: Male (7)

Body Language: sitting forward and agitated

Context: Discussion on purchasing iPads and Male (7) suggesting that Apple is not the only platform

Reaction of superintendent: no affect

School District: C

Date: July 23, 2012

Current Accountability: Academically Acceptable – Missed AYP

Superintendent since 2007

3 Male, 4 Female

Additional Information: Superintendent used first names (familiar) with trustees; student achievement presentations; Closed session 7:55-9:30

Time: 6:35

Emotional Phrase: “Great, glad you’re here”

Speaker: Female (4)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: FFA student presentation

Reaction of superintendent: smiling

Time: 6:57

Emotional Phrase: “Wonderful”

Speaker: Female (4)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: FFA student presentation

Reaction of superintendent: smiling – taking notes

School District D

Meeting Date: August 20, 2012

Current Accountability: Academically Acceptable - Missed AYP

7 Male trustees

Superintendent since July 2012

Additional information: formal; the superintendent and two assistant superintendents were all PhD or EdD; first meeting for newly hired assistant superintendent for curriculum; second meeting for new superintendent.

Time: 7:06

Emotional Phrase: [Board President forgets name of board member]

Speaker: Male (5)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Approval of minutes

Reaction of superintendent: laughing (all board members laughing)

Time: 7:06

Emotional Phrase: [Shaking head in negative manner]

Speaker: Male (1)

Body Language: Shaking head negative manner

Context: Presentation of AYP standards for 12-13 and 13-14

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 7:30

Emotional Phrase: “Is there a Stage 6? [disgust]

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: Sitting back in chair

Context: Presentation of AYP standards

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 7:32

Emotional Phrase: “Thank you for a very detailed report and the efforts of the principals”

Speaker: Male (5)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Presentation of AYP

Reaction of superintendent: neutral [could not answer question from Male (3)]

Time: 7:50

Emotional Phrase: “This was a life changing event”

Speaker: Male (3)

Body Language: Sitting forward

Context: Discussion of Mission, Vision process

Reaction of superintendent: Smile

Time: 7:50

Emotional Phrase: “Changing lives comment is very exciting”

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: Sitting forward

Context: Discussion of Mission, Vision process

Reaction of superintendent: Smile

Time: 7:50

Emotional Phrase: “We’re here to make a positive difference in the lives of kids...happy/excited”

Speaker: Male (5)

Body Language: Sitting forward

Context: Discussion of Mission, Vision process

Reaction of superintendent: Smile

Time: 8:03

Emotional Phrase: “I’d love to make this motion”

Speaker: Male (1)

Body Language: Sitting forward

Context: Hiring recommendations

Reaction of superintendent: Smile

Time: 8:03

Emotional Phrase: “Can they help change lives” [enthusiastically]

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: Sitting forward

Context: Hiring recommendations

Reaction of superintendent: Laugh

School District E

Meeting Date: September 9, 2012

Current Accountability: Academically Acceptable - Missed AYP

Board Composition: 4 Male, 3 Female trustees

Superintendent since 2007

Additional information: All district administrators have assigned seating at or adjacent to the board table; very few chairs for audience

Time: 6:06

Emotional Phrase: "Happy you're all here"

Speaker: Male (5)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: Start of meeting

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 6:42

Emotional Phrase: "I want to apologize for the last time you were here, I was told that I was not nice"

Speaker: Male (1)

Body Language: leaning forward

Context: Presentation by architect firm – facilities need

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 7:11

Emotional Phrase: “Can we appeal Chapter 41 status?”

Speaker: Male (1)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: Supt report on a taxing entity meeting and the ISD reporting on Chapter 41 status

Reaction of superintendent: Sarcastic response to being only person at the entity meeting

Time: 6:06

Emotional Phrase: “Amen”

Speaker: Male (6)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: Resolution on testing

Reaction of superintendent: smiling

Time: 7:43

Board Composition: 4 Male, 3 Female trustees

Emotional Phrase: “That’s great”

Speaker: Female (3)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: Presentation on Duke Talent program

Reaction of superintendent: smiling

School District: F

Meeting Date: October 8, 2012

Current Accountability: Academically Acceptable – Met AYP

Board Composition: 2 Male, 5 Female trustees

Superintendent since 2007

Additional Information: TASB specialist was present for a Policy Review Seminar prior to the board meeting;

Time: 7:08

Emotional Phrase: “Good Class”

Speaker: Male (8)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: Presentation of TAKS/STAAR Scores

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 7:46

Emotional Phrase: “Don’t let that happen again”

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: Although said in a joking manner, trustee unhappy that assistant superintendent did not know an answer to a TAKS/STAAR procedural question

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 8:14

Emotional Phrase: “Let’s be realistic, only the core classes should count”

Speaker: Female (3)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Val/Sal discussion and class rank , TASB policy review

Reaction of superintendent: sitting forward, attentive

Time: 7:16

Emotional Phrase: “If the classes are required, they should count in rank”

Speaker: Female (6)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Val/Sal discussion and class rank , TASB policy review

– argumentative between board members

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 8:20

Emotional Phrase: “Why does Band count and not PE? It doesn’t make any sense.”

Speaker: Female (6)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Val/Sal discussion and class rank , TASB policy review

– argumentative between board members

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 8:20

Emotional Phrase: “Lana, we’ve talked about this at length!

Speaker: Female (3)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Val/Sal discussion and class rank , TASB policy review – argumentative
between board members

Reaction of superintendent: sitting forward with reply

Time: 8:33

Emotional Phrase: “Why are you changing the policy? I think you’re opening a can of
worms. Why is the current policy not being enforced?”

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Travel procedures for students/overnight - TASB policy review – argumentative
between board members

Reaction of superintendent: disagrees

Time: 8:33

Emotional Phrase: “That’s my concern, if the superintendent leaves there will be no
record in policy.”

Speaker: Female (1) – Supt

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Travel procedures for students/overnight - TASB policy review – argumentative between board members

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 8:40

Emotional Phrase: “Or not...”

Speaker: Female (3)

Body Language: sitting back – condescending tone

Context: Discussion of QZAB project

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 8:40

Emotional Phrase: “I’m having a hard time understanding why we need to redesign parking lots”

Speaker: Female (3)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Discussion of QZAB project

Reaction of superintendent: responds with sarcasm

Time: 8:40

Emotional Phrase: “I tell you what, we need to know exactly what we’re going to buy”

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Discussion of QZAB project, McKinstry financial expert presentation

Reaction of superintendent: defending QZAB purchases

Time: 8:40

Emotional Phrase: “Maybe I’m not understanding something; I don’t even know why we’re doing this.”

Speaker: Female (3)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Discussion of QZAB project, McKinstry financial expert presentation

Reaction of superintendent: defending QZAB purchases

Time: 8:40

Emotional Phrase: “We’ve been hit with this so quick”

Speaker: Female (3)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Discussion of QZAB project, McKinstry financial expert presentation

Reaction of superintendent: defending QZAB purchases

Time: 8:40

Emotional Phrase: “We’re already at \$1.17 and if it goes to I&S that’s \$0.12 more”

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: Shaking head in negative manner

Context: Discussion of QZAB project, McKinstry financial expert presentation

Reaction of superintendent: defending QZAB purchases

Time: 9:04

Emotional Phrase: "That's the problem with our country...spend-spend-spend"

Speaker: Female (3)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Discussion of QZAB project, McKinstry financial expert presentation

Reaction of superintendent: defending QZAB purchases

Time: 9:04

Emotional Phrase: "I'm not attacking you sir (directed to financial expert), we've been frustrated, we've been lied to before."

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Discussion of QZAB project, McKinstry financial expert presentation

Reaction of superintendent: defending QZAB purchases

Time: 9:18

Emotional Phrase: "This caught me off guard, I don't recognize this list at all

Speaker: Female (3)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Discussion of QZAB project, McKinstry financial expert presentation

Reaction of superintendent: defending QZAB purchases

Time: 8:40

Emotional Phrase: "I understand that!" directed toward superintendent with increased volume

Speaker: Female (5)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Discussion of QZAB project, McKinstry financial expert presentation

Reaction of superintendent: defending QZAB purchases

School District: G

Meeting Date: October 9, 2012

Current Accountability: Recognized, Missed AYP

Board Composition: 6 Male, 1 Female trustees

Superintendent since: 1998

Additional information: Friendly and conversational; Teacher of the year recipients were honored by the board; Superintendent was exceptionally attentive to my attendance by providing copies of reports

Time: 6:22

Emotional Phrase: "Good Job"

Speaker: Male (1)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: Dialogue regarding TASB summer leadership participation

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 6:37

Emotional Phrase: "What's the hold-up"

Speaker: Male (1)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: maintenance issues

Reaction of superintendent: provides explanation

Time: 7:02

Emotional Phrase: “Are you trying to avoid corporal discipline” (directed to principal in audience)

Speaker: Male (5)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: Discussion regarding policy FO(LOCAL)(LEGAL)

Reaction of superintendent: defends that this is one way an administrator can lose a certification

Time: 7:29

Emotional Phrase: “That’s too much money”

Speaker: Male (1)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: repairs on track

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 7:29

Emotional Phrase: “Am I the only one surprised with doubling the cost?”

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: repairs on track

Reaction of superintendent: neutral but leaning forward

Time: 7:31

Emotional Phrase: “Did we make a premature decision?”

Speaker: Male (5)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: repairs on track

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 7:34

Emotional Phrase: “I thought wireless meant no wires” (confrontational to supt)

Speaker: Male (1)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: use of bond funds held in I&S

Reaction of superintendent: defends the upgrade to a wireless system includes some wiring

Time: 7:36

Emotional Phrase: “We don’t need to make decisions just because we need to be happy, I need a good decision on this one. I’m the president and we’re going to do things right.”

Speaker: Male (5)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: Use of bond funds held in I&S

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 7:50

Emotional Phrase: “If QZAB is a loan and we already have a hard time making our budget, is this a good decision?”

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: back in chair

Context: QZAB loan

Reaction of superintendent: explains low interest rate in QZAB

School District: H

Meeting Date: November 12, 2012

Current Accountability: Recognized – Met AYP

Board Composition: 4 Male, 3 Female trustees

Superintendent since 2006

Additional information: More than 50 audience members; closed session 7:30-10:00 for level three grievance brought against the superintendent by a board member.

Time: 6:06

Emotional Phrase: “I’ve got a problem – too many versions of this contract. I disagree”

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: discussion about a lease agreement with local church

Reaction of superintendent: appears nervous – explains timeline regarding attorney input

Time: 6:07

Emotional Phrase: “...it’s not fair to them.”

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: discussion about a lease agreement with local church

Reaction of superintendent: defend and explain

Time: 6:08

Emotional Phrase: “I don’t know if anyone else has time to read over this new contract, I don’t have time with this short notice.”

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: discussion about a lease agreement with local church

Reaction of superintendent: defend and explain

Time: 6:13

Emotional Phrase: “Do you understand this is from our attorney, not us”

Speaker: Male (8)

Body Language: sitting forward – defending superintendent

Context: discussion about a lease agreement with local church

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 6:20

Emotional Phrase: “We do want to work with you, you are an asset to the community”

Speaker: Female (5)

Body Language: sitting back in chair

Context: discussion about a lease agreement with local church – church comment “then there’s no use coming to the school board if your attorney’s keep changing the contract?”

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

School District: I

Meeting Date: November 19, 2012

Current Accountability: Academically Acceptable – Missed AYP

Board Composition: 5 Male, 2 Female trustees

Superintendent since 2009

Additional information: Superintendent's resignation accepted to assume position in ESC 13; exceptionally long meeting with trustee debate on each issue; Closed session 10:05-11:00 to discuss personnel issue at high school.

Time: 6:13

Emotional Phrase: "It doesn't read clean"

Speaker: Male (9)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: review of bills/payments of reimbursable meal program

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 6:13

Emotional Phrase: "Legalistic nit-picking society..."

Speaker: Male (8)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: review of bills/payments of reimbursable meal program

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 6:13

Emotional Phrase: "Seems too good to be true usually means it is."

Speaker: Male (7)

Body Language: sitting back in chair

Context: QZAB presentation

Reaction of superintendent: Responds with background of McKinstry and QZAB

Time: 8:32

Emotional Phrase: "Celebrate Dr. Moyers resignation"

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: sharing cake and gift

Context: Letter of resignation

Reaction of superintendent: engaged

Time: 8:50

Emotional Phrase: "I'm confused, is this survey the same as the one the board sends out?"

Speaker: Female (1)

Body Language: neutral

Context: District Improvement plan presentation

Reaction of superintendent: answers "no"

Time: 9:32

Emotional Phrase: “This is a wonderful letter from our Spanish teacher”

Speaker: Female (5)

Body Language: sitting back in chair

Context: Campus Improvement Plan

Reaction of superintendent: smiling and nodding

Time: 8:32

Emotional Phrase: “Should we not just approve as requested”

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: sitting back in chair

Context: Request to extend counselor contract days due to STAAR

Reaction of superintendent: requests discussion in closed session

Time: 10:00

Emotional Phrase: “Happy to bring this TRE tax swap to you”

Speaker: Business Manager

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Budget amendments

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 11:00

Emotional Phrase: “My concern is that we are pulling him away from truancy duties and that is our problem”

Speaker: Female (1)

Body Language: sitting back in chair

Context: Discussion of reassignment of administrative intern / truancy officer

Reaction of superintendent: explains request on behalf of the elementary principal

Time: 11:00

Emotional Phrase: “I’m not saying that we shouldn’t get Jill some help...”

Speaker: Female (1)

Body Language: sitting back in chair

Context: Discussion of reassignment of administrative intern / truancy officer

Reaction of superintendent: explains request as no additional expenditure on behalf of the district

Time: 11:00

Emotional Phrase: “Hang in there, we’re going to get you some help”

Speaker: Male (4)

Body Language: sitting back in chair

Context: Discussion of reassignment of administrative intern / truancy officer - directed to principal in audience

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

Time: 11:15

Emotional Phrase: “What happened to the furniture that **was** in the superintendent’s office?”

Speaker: Male (8)

Body Language: sitting back in chair

Context: Discussion of furniture in the superintendent’s office

Reaction of superintendent: neutral (business manager explains)

Time: 11:30

Emotional Phrase: “I would like to see extracurricular numbers, it’s embarrassing when smaller schools have bigger numbers. We need to increase our participation.”

Speaker: Male (2)

Body Language: sitting forward

Context: Request for information at subsequent board meetings

Reaction of superintendent: neutral

School District: J

Meeting Date: November 26, 2012

Current Accountability: Academically Acceptable – Missed AYP

Board Composition: 5 Male, 2 Female trustees

Superintendent since 2007

Additional information: Very formal and concise; closed session 7:30-10:00.

(No emotional reports)

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

The interview questions will be no more than 10 in number. The total time for each interview will be no more than two hours.

1. In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?
2. How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?
3. Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?
4. Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?
5. Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?
6. Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?
7. Based on observation of school board meeting
8. Based on observation of school board meeting
9. Based on observation of school board meeting
10. Based on observation of school board meeting

APPENDIX E

Responses to Interview Questions by Respondent

Respondent A

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer A-1

Okay what I found is, when emotions come to play they can negatively impact some of your decisions. Based on the fact that I was tired of being badgered, I guess being pressured from a board member that was our past president. I had actually consulted with our attorney about an employee, an assistant principal, some irrational behavior and decisions he had made, and you know what, we just don't need this we're going to get into a lawsuit or something.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer A-2

Some, it depends on the circumstance, because if they make a decision that is made because of a lack of trust in me, or just because this is what "we want," I feel like they do not value my opinion or my knowledge or the facts of the research or whatever it is. Their opinions and their decisions impact my performance greatly. Here lately its really been impacted because they made an emotional decision, I feel, in not extending my contract. And it was based on a lie. I mean clearly, and I don't know how you can write this, but the scores were changed. The ink and handwriting shows this.

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer A-3

I think that it's when I become challenged and I know that it's a challenge or I've been informed that there's a set-up coming – better watch out - or something like that. I try to stay calm and think this is just not happening, but then if it turns out to be, that's when I recognize that or I see that there is an increase in my emotions. Or when I see board members are acting out in front of a crowd so to speak, such as the case if you remember back; my CFO said something, the board member to my left kind of snapped at him. I thought to myself, give me a break, this is the way we've done it every year. Last year we provided them with so much information, it was like OK, so they didn't really want it all. And so its do you want it or not? What do you want? Give us a procedure and stick with it. Because we've gone from providing heavy duty notebooks with tabs and things to OK – you left that all on the desk, its obvious that you didn't want it and appreciate it so we'll just wait to see what you want, and then we give them a bunch of information. For example, I did a survey to see how many districts around have an assistant at the elementary level. Because we conducted a staffing study and the study showed too many employees, and that was three years ago. So I've been kind of whittling away, looking into areas, and trying to make informed decisions that way. With the elementary again I have some people say other Elementaries don't have assistants so we can stay right there, then I have other board members saying yeah but were not broke...not yet. So I think to sum that up, my emotions increase when their agendas are in front of staff.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer A-4

When people employees/constituents complain. And if the squeaky wheel gets to them and tells their story, and color it to the point that the board member believes everything that they've just been told, then that just increases their emotional state. And then if I've made a decision or if I've done something and forgot to inform them, there's been times when...nothing major, but if its something small and insignificant in my book to me and I go on and think that I'll tell them this in a little bit or in a mail-out, but maybe it's the end of the day or next day. And then I think, Oh my goodness I forgot to tell them such and such, and its going to be a big deal for one of the board members, then their emotions get out of whack. When they think I'm trying to hide something from them, and I'm not. I don't have that in my nature to just hide that. They don't need to know, I don't do that. But if they believe that themselves, then they get just out of sorts, I mean way out of sorts. That drives their emotions a lot.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer A-5

When I'm calm, when I have time to think and evaluate and reflect. When I have time to research things. Look at the pros and cons, talk to myself, sit down and involve administrators or my assistants. Whatever the case may be, if I need a team of teachers or something like that, then that's when I make my best decisions. And when I know that

I have support or trust from the board or everything is running smoothly, that's when I make my best decisions. When I make my worst decisions its just the opposite. When there's turmoil, and things like that, pressure, then sometimes I feel that I've rushed into a decision.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer A-6

I think it's the same, when things are calm. When they have research and data from me. When they have the specs from me, even when they talk to other administrations and have a different view from them. I think still its when they are calm, taken their time, when we've researched, evaluated, reflected, they've had time to dialogue and talk to each other, I think that's when they make their best decisions. I recall a time when I first started, we didn't have a lot of dialogue about agenda items. I believe there were four line items on the agenda itself. It would be consideration, action, recommendation, and maybe any kind of attachment, but it wasn't detailed. But now I've added a lot of items like comments that have been given to me, fiscal impact, dates due, to show where you cover a lot of information on one agenda item. I've asked them to send me questions about agenda items-if they have questions, ask me before the board meeting. Call me, email me, text whatever, so that I have time to find the answers. And that's helped us a lot to make better decisions. Because I have a couple of board members, they will write me and go thought the entire board packet and if they have questions will send them to me, if they have 5 they send 5, if they have 1 they send 1, if they have 10 they send 10, and they'll send them to me before the board meeting, and not the day before, but they'll

send them so that I have time to get the answers for them. Then I'll copy their questions, I'll answer and make copies for every board members. That way if they didn't think of that question and someone else did then here's some more information about that agenda item. And so that has helped the board in making better decisions also. It's me giving them more information about the agenda items and about what's going on that might impact their decision to vote for or against something that's on the agenda.

Question 7 unique to respondent A

Can you think of a time, or an activity, or a decision that made your board happy, collectively?

Answer A-7

Yeah...we've had...we had a complaint from a citizen that had to do about ADA, you may have heard a little about that at the meeting you attended. Basically, they were pleased that I went out and found someone to do a facilities study on ADA. And again we had a lot of time to think about it, to talk about it. They were happy when, a couple of years ago, no my first year, we hired a hot-shot principal. And whenever I brought information from that person they were pleased.

The dynamic with that person, I learned later, is that would call them on the phone and that I was going to explain it to them later. So by the time I called them they had already heard it, they were pleased. Systemic planning, when I brought that to them and talked to them about the changes were making (in the) district, they were happy about that. Happy and pleased when I talked with them after the fires in September about paying the people that actually worked that week, they were all in favor of that. They're always in favor of the things I bring to them about employees. They like to promote employees in the

district. They were happy and pleased when we hired the athletic director that they had actually...already four of them had already told the person “oh you got the job,” (laugh).

Respondent B

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer B-1

Emotion does not impact my decisions. I base my decisions, as a superintendent, on data. As a district we are data driven. There is no place for emotion in decisions.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer B-2

Audio lost

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer B-3

Again, I do not let myself become emotionally involved in board decisions.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer B-4

The board becomes emotional when they do not have the information to make the decision. They also become emotional when anyone questions their decisions. The last superintendent did this and was asked to leave three months into the school year.

Although the superintendent thought he was doing the right thing by questioning the board about their decisions, they did not want to be “handled”.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer B-5

I need time to think, to reflect. The board is the same.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer B-6

I need time to think, to reflect. The board is the same.

Respondent C

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer C-1

I don't believe that I allow emotions to impact my decisions rather I rely on my ethical core, board policy, and advice from peer superintendents or our legal counsel. I try to make dispassionate decisions and do not think that emotions inform my decisions. The more difficult the decision, the less likely that emotion would be involved because I seek guidance from the districts core beliefs and my own ethical core with students at the center of my decision-making.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer C-2

I have a very experienced board with a deep sense of their corporate responsibility. Since they are aware that may act only as a corporate body and within the guidelines of their Board Ethics Framework, they also make decisions, based on an ethical framework not an emotional one. We train all year long on ethics and responsibilities and that keeps the emotions out of our/their decisions.

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer C-3

In personnel decisions when people will lose their jobs, there is an emotional awareness. However, that does not and has not changed my mind in any situation over the past 10-12 years of upper administration. I have stayed the course, made the hard calls, and have let people go, including a very difficult RIF.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer C-4

This board is so even keeled that it is hard to pinpoint an exact case. When I remain calm and in control, that translates to confidence from the Board. We have had several student grievances and there was an increased “concern” over the student’s well being, but it was not overtly emotional or even heightened emotions.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer C-5

My best decisions occur when I have time to research board policy and time to process all the possibilities. I am also far better when I have time to confirm my actions with legal counsel. I usually tell the attorney what I want as an outcome and then ask him/her how I can achieve that result.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer C-6

Our board does their best work when they have a broad-based informational background with options. They do best when I give them options and pros/cons of the options. Also I give them historical background of what they or the district has done in a similar situation in the past. I believe that is encouraging to them and to me as it keeps us following the community's vision, based on the past boards. It also builds continuity in the system and parents know what to expect.

Respondent D

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer D-1

I'm not sure I know how to answer this question. My emotions do not interfere with or impact my ability to maintain ethics in my decision-making. I generally look to policy and law to confirm/support decisions I have to make.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer D-2

I tend to be more cautious in the way I ask/answer questions or address issues.

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer D-3

Dealing with and managing stressful situations, such as personnel matters. When things don't get done, or when staff does not have the same sense of urgency to address critical issues, my emotional state tends to increase.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer D-4

While I have not observed this with my current board yet, I have observed an increased emotional state in other boards that I've worked with when difficult decisions were required to be made. Decisions that prompted push-back from parents and community constituents as well as politically charged decisions often times generated negative emotional states with the board.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer D-5

When I am schooled on the topic and prepared with the appropriate information, I am confident in my decision-making. I'm also big on striking a balance. "All work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy." I do believe in taking time for myself. My outlet is running. When I exercise, watch what I eat, and get a good night's sleep (which for me is about 5-6 hours), I feel refreshed and confident in my decision-making.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer D-6

When they are fully informed regarding matters before them.

Question 7 unique to respondent D

I would also like for you to reflect on your first few months as a new superintendent. Have you found the transition to be emotionally supportive or challenging?

Answer D-7

The newness of the job has been both exciting and challenging. Coming from a larger district, I feel well equipped to handle this job. I am fortunate to have a cohesive, support board, which makes my job so much more enjoyable. The challenge for me is managing the many tasks required for state and federal compliance matters and not having the resources or staff to cover all these areas. Much of this, then, falls to the superintendent, and it's quite daunting. Information overload is where I am right now!

Respondent E

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer E-1

Emotion impacts me personally but does not sway me from making decisions that must be made. I perceive myself as having very strong values, beliefs, and assumptions about ethical behavior, a certain moral code. My desire to make a decision that is fair and ethical outweighs my desire to be liked and accepted. I believe this attitude sustains me during times of difficult decisions. If I perceive myself as being particularly emotional about a decision I will wait 24 hours before making that decision. I strive to be as objective as possible.

I'm not sure I know how to answer this question. My emotions do not interfere with or impact my ability to maintain ethics in my decision-making. I generally look to policy and law to confirm/support decisions I have to make.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer E-2

A wise superintendent once told me a superintendent serves at the leisure of the board. My job is to present both sides of any argument to the board; to be certain the board has considered the impact of any decision they make. Once I've given my input, like it or leave it, the decision is the board's to make. My job is to accept the decision and carry out their wishes to the best of my ability. Sometimes that's easier said than done

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer E-3

When I'm feeling frustrated with a particular board member(s). This usually happens when board members jump to conclusions before hearing the entire circumstances.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer E-4

When an individual board member is being confronted in the community about a certain issue or social media postings make the rounds, I notice some board members behaving more emotionally.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer E-5

When I have given thought and careful consideration to an issue, looking at all sides and factors without injecting my personal feelings into the decision.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer E-6

When they have taken time to thoroughly discuss an issue and consider what is best for the majority of the students we serve.

Respondent F

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer F-1

As a superintendent, I make ethical decisions based on what I believe to be “right.” And certainly, a person’s beliefs are emotional – a strong sense of right and wrong drives such decisions. I worked for a superintendent that told me, If you are going to get fired, then get fired for doing the right thing – then you will be able to sleep at night.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees’ impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer F-2

I also know that board members are often passionate, so I sit back and listen and give them time to state what they believe. I work hard to remember that the District is theirs and I make every effort not to take disagreements personally.

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer F-3

My emotional state intensifies when I am blind-sided by a board member. Just as they don’t like surprises, neither do I. If a board member has heard of a problem, I want to know about it before a board meeting, so I can gather information. I do not like the feeling of being attacked.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer F-4

My board gets emotional about dress code, athletics and spending money – so I anticipate those nights and try to provide enough information to calm the situation and sometimes I realize they need more, so I remind them that most decisions can wait and they can have time to think.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer F-5

I probably make my best decisions under pressure.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer F-6

They need adequate information and time to discuss. I like to have a workshop sometimes for issues, so that they can talk.

Respondent G

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer G-1

I always try to do what I perceive as “right.” Emotion does not stop me from doing that, but at times, I become more stressed because I do not think that the board agrees with what I think. So, I do what is “right” anyway, but with added emotional stress on myself.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees’ impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer G-2

I believe that boards like legislators respond much more to emotion when making their decisions than they do to logic. I have a perfect example of a decision my board made out of emotion, impacting my job performance. We had a custodial employee that was not performing. He is also mentally deficient to a certain extent. He had several instances where he had a traffic mishap, and lied about it to his supervisor and to me. The last time, he let a truck run into our HS cafeteria. Luckily, there were no students in the truck’s path. Because he was an At-Will employee, I released him from his job. He filed a grievance and the Board overturned my decision. They “knew not what they did.” Anytime a decision such as that is overturned, it has an undermining effect on some of the other employees. I have summarized this, if you want more info, feel free to call me.

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer G-3

I have been a superintendent for over 27 years now. In the beginning, I spent lots of sleepless nights. I rarely do anymore. I do realize when I am feeling anxious.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer G-4

I read their body language.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer G-5

I make my best decisions after gathering the facts, thinking through the problem, and then executing the decision without Board interference.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer G-6

They need lots of information and they very seldom make a hasty decision. Often we must bring it to the table several times.

Respondent H

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer H-1

Ethics and integrity are always in place when making decisions for the district.

Unfortunately, some of those decisions affect other people and not always in a positive way. When these ethical decisions must be made, it does affect me emotionally, yet I must move beyond the emotion and remind myself of what is best for the students and the district. This does cause several sleepless nights.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer H-2

Being a female in a male dominated world is difficult in and of itself and often times very emotional. The decisions I make on the part of the board are based on policy and procedures. This does remove the emotional decision-making but does not remove the emotional results.

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer H-3

I tend to become more emotional when I am not treated fairly because I am a woman and women lead differently than men. I am not considered a "Good old boy." This hurts and it takes a strong woman to overcome the comments, innuendos, and treatment by some

people because of being a women. I also get emotional when I see a child succeed when they have been struggling to accomplishment something.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer H-4

The board gets emotional when it comes to kids. They can't stand for a child to not have the opportunities that other children have. Their emotions guide many of their decisions, especially when it affects their own child(ren).

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer H-5

I make my best decisions when I can make the decision based on black and white policy. It is when the areas become gray and emotion is involved that the decisions are harder to make. The emotional decisions usually involve people.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer H-6

The board makes the best decisions when their children are not involved. This removed the emotional component and they can base their decisions just on facts.

Question 7 unique to respondent H

Was the most recent board election contentious? Were there multiple community members running for the open positions?

Answer H-7

There were six candidates running for two positions. The two candidates running took information from a board meeting that was said by the superintendent, turned it around, and spread false information to the tax payers in order to gain votes. All of our positions are at large.

Respondent I

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer I-1

Over time, I have conditioned myself to base my decisions analytically on the 1) district's policy, 2) financial impact, 3) what is best for our young people and faculty, 4) community's values, 5) will a precedent be set, and 6) what is the right thing and best for children and long term impact on the district. After determining the analytical impact from the previously mentioned areas, I make my decision with my emotions or "gut" feeling. When I haven't gone with my "gut", I usually didn't have the best results.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer I-2

All of the board of Trustees graduated from this ISD, their spouse graduated from the ISD, their children graduated from the ISD, and/or currently attend the schools in the ISD. This is important and at times challenging because their emotional ties and history impact their decisions. At times I have struggled when their decisions were based on their personal relations, perceptions, and/or emotions instead of the facts.

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer I-3

I recognize my own increased emotional state when I am either tired or rested. When conditions are directed personally my emotional state increases. When others don't consider the facts and emotional impact on others, I recognize my emotional state changing.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer I-4

Negatively speaking- Board members' emotional state increases when they are tired, do not believe they are informed, or others do not agree with their decisions.

Positively speaking- Board members' emotional state increases when they feel they have made a very good decision, positively recognized, and/or the majority agree with them personally.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer I-5

I make my bet decisions when I am rested, have reviewed the factual and emotional impact, and know I have collaborated with others to understand the levels my decision impacts.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer I-6

My board members' make their best decisions when they are rested, are not hungry, when their favorite chocolate candy is available, are not stressed from their personal jobs or families, feel they have made a very good decision, are positively recognized, and/or the majority agree with them personally.

Question 7 unique to respondent I

Was the most recent board election contentious? Were there multiple community members running for the open positions?

Answer I-7

Yes, the most recent board election was contentious. Multiple community members ran for the two open positions.

Respondent J

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer J-1

When everything is smooth and the emotional state is carefree, decisions and communication about decisions are also more smooth. Decisions about personnel, especially impacting job security weigh heavily impacting me emotionally.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer J-2

If the board is uptight about something and acting emotionally, I see my performance increase in both communication frequency and amount. I am working with the board more closely so that they have accurate and rationalized facts for their decisions.

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer J-3

Decisions that impact quality of life for staff or students is stressful. My emotional state is heightened when people come to the discussion ill prepared. If I've spent time preparing, then they should as well. It goes to the statement "you can't fix stupid" Given time, I generally deescalate and come to understand that the only one I can change is me...I can make or break the day. I choose to make the day.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer J-4

Board members become emotional when their pet issues are discussed. Board members that are parents are more emotional when decisions affect their child's campus or activities. And even though we work to differentiate board responsibilities from parent responsibilities, I still see it as an issue. I also see board members become emotional when their questions are not answered...when staff try to answer by bending the facts or manipulating the information to support a pre intended outcome. Most board members want the truth whether it supports staff initiatives or not.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer J-5

I make my best decisions under two conditions. The first is a crisis situations: I can be firm and direct which exudes confidence and staff/students/subordinates will follow. The second is with complete information/data/facts and really honest dialogue regarding the options.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer J-6

Board makes it's best decisions when the leadership on the board is confident and informed. This current board tends to follow the president and secretary. Rarely are there split votes with this current board.

Question 7 unique to respondent J

Do all of your board meetings proceed as they did tonight; little dialogue and concise in time?

Answer J-7

Most board meetings run smoothly, since we had a long closed session ahead I think that the action items were not controversial and therefore we could move through them quickly. I can't tell you about the decisions in the closed session, but we did have a lot of discussion behind closed doors.

APPENDIX F

Responses to Interview Questions by Question

Question 1

In what ways does emotion impact the ethical decisions you make as a superintendent?

Answer A-1

Okay what I found is, when emotions come to play they can negatively impact some of your decisions. Based on the fact that I was tired of being badgered, I guess being pressured from a board member that was our past president. I had actually consulted with our attorney about an employee, an assistant principal, some irrational behavior and decisions he had made, and you know what, we just don't need this we're going to get into a lawsuit or something.

Answer B-1

Emotion does not impact my decisions. I base my decisions, as a superintendent, on data. As a district we are data driven. There is no place for emotion in decisions.

Answer C-1

I don't believe that I allow emotions to impact my decisions rather I rely on my ethical core, board policy, and advice from peer superintendents or our legal counsel. I try to make dispassionate decisions and do not think that emotions inform my decisions. The more difficult the decision, the less likely that emotion would be involved because I seek guidance from the districts core beliefs and my own ethical core with students at the center of my decision-making.

Answer D-1

I'm not sure I know how to answer this question. My emotions do not interfere with or impact my ability to maintain ethics in my decision-making. I generally look to policy and law to confirm/support decisions I have to make.

Answer E-1

Emotion impacts me personally but does not sway me from making decisions that must be made. I perceive myself as having very strong values, beliefs, and assumptions about ethical behavior, a certain moral code. My desire to make a decision that is fair and ethical outweighs my desire to be liked and accepted. I believe this attitude sustains me during times of difficult decisions. If I perceive myself as being particularly emotional about a decision I will wait 24 hours before making that decision. I strive to be as objective as possible.

Answer F-1

As a superintendent, I make ethical decisions based on what I believe to be "right." And certainly, a person's beliefs are emotional – a strong sense of right and wrong drives such decisions. I worked for a superintendent that told me, If you are going to get fired, then get fired for doing the right thing – then you will be able to sleep at night.

Answer G-1

I always try to do what I perceive as "right." Emotion does not stop me from doing that, but at times, I become more stressed because I do not think that the board agrees with what I think. So, I do what is "right" anyway, but with added emotional stress on myself.

Answer H-1

Ethics and integrity are always in place when making decisions for the district.

Unfortunately, some of those decisions affect other people and not always in a positive

way. When these ethical decisions must be made, it does affect me emotionally, yet I must move beyond the emotion and remind myself of what is best for the students and the district. This does cause several sleepless nights.

Answer I-1

Over time, I have conditioned myself to base my decisions analytically on the 1) district's policy, 2) financial impact, 3) what is best for our young people and faculty, 4) community's values, 5) will a precedent be set, and 6) what is the right thing and best for children and long term impact on the district. After determining the analytical impact from the previously mentioned areas, I make my decision with my emotions or "gut" feeling. When I haven't gone with my "gut", I usually didn't have the best results.

Answer J-1

When everything is smooth and the emotional state is carefree, decisions and communication about decisions are also more smooth. Decisions about personnel, especially impacting job security weigh heavily impacting me emotionally.

Question 2

How does your perception of the emotional decision-making on the part of the board of trustees' impact your job performance as a superintendent?

Answer A-2

Some, it depends on the circumstance, because if they make a decision that is made because of a lack of trust in me, or just because this is what "we want," I feel like they do not value my opinion or my knowledge or the facts of the research or whatever it is.

Their opinions and their decisions impact my performance greatly. Here lately its really been impacted because they made an emotional decision, I feel, in not extending my contract. And it was based on a lie. I mean clearly, and I don't know how you can write this, but the scores were changed. The ink and handwriting shows this.

AnswerB-2

Audio lost

Answer C-2

I have a very experienced board with a deep sense of their corporate responsibility. Since they are aware that may act only as a corporate body and within the guidelines of their Board Ethics Framework, they also make decisions, based on an ethical framework not an emotional one. We train all year long on ethics and responsibilities and that keeps the emotions out of our/their decisions.

Answer D-2

I tend to be more cautious in the way I ask/answer questions or address issues.

Answer E-2

A wise superintendent once told me a superintendent serves at the leisure of the board. My job is to present both sides of any argument to the board; to be certain the board has considered the impact of any decision they make. Once I've given my input, like it or leave it, the decision is the board's to make. My job is to accept the decision and carry out their wishes to the best of my ability. Sometimes that's easier said than done

Answer F-2

I also know that board members are often passionate, so I sit back and listen and give them time to state what they believe. I work hard to remember that the District is theirs and I make every effort not to take disagreements personally.

Answer G-2

I believe that boards like legislators respond much more to emotion when making their decisions than they do to logic. I have a perfect example of a decision my board made out of emotion, impacting my job performance. We had a custodial employee that was not performing. He is also mentally deficient to a certain extent. He had several instances where he had a traffic mishap, and lied about it to his supervisor and to me. The last time, he let a truck run into our HS cafeteria. Luckily, there were no students in the truck's path. Because he was an At-Will employee, I released him from his job. He filed a grievance and the Board overturned my decision. They "knew not what they did." Anytime a decision such as that is overturned, it has an undermining effect on some of the other employees. I have summarized this, if you want more info, feel free to call me.

Answer H-2

Being a female in a male dominated world is difficult in and of itself and often times very emotional. The decisions I make on the part of the board are based on policy and procedures. This does remove the emotional decision-making but does not remove the emotional results.

Answer I-2

All of the board of Trustees graduated from this ISD, their spouse graduated from the ISD, their children graduated from the ISD, and/or currently attend the schools in the ISD. This is important and at times challenging because their emotional ties and history impact their decisions. At times I have struggled when their decisions were based on their personal relations, perceptions, and/or emotions instead of the facts.

Answer J-2

If the board is uptight about something and acting emotionally, I see my performance increase in both communication frequency and amount. I am working with the board more closely so that they have accurate and rationalized facts for their decisions.

Question 3

Under what conditions do you recognize your own increased emotional state?

Answer A-3

I think that it's when I become challenged and I know that it's a challenge or I've been informed that there's a set-up coming – better watch out - or something like that. I try to stay calm and think this is just not happening, but then if it turns out to be, that's when I recognize that or I see that there is an increase in my emotions. Or when I see board members are acting out in front of a crowd so to speak, such as the case if you remember back; my CFO said something, the board member to my left kind of snapped at him. I thought to myself, give me a break, this is the way we've done it every year. Last year we provided them with so much information, it was like OK, so they didn't really want it all. And so its do you want it or not? What do you want? Give us a procedure and stick with it. Because we've gone from providing heavy duty notebooks with tabs and things to OK – you left that all on the desk, its obvious that you didn't want it and appreciate it so we'll just wait to see what you want, and then we give them a bunch of information. For example, I did a survey to see how many districts around have an assistant at the elementary level. Because we conducted a staffing study and the study showed too many employees, and that was three years ago. So I've been kind of whittling away, looking into areas, and trying to make informed decisions that way. With the elementary again I have some people say other Elementaries don't have assistants so we can stay right there, then I have other board members saying yeah but were not broke...not yet. So I think to sum that up, my emotions increase when their agendas are in front of staff.

Answer B-3

Again, I do not let myself become emotionally involved in board decisions.

Answer C-3

In personnel decisions when people will lose their jobs, there is an emotional awareness. However, that does not and has not changed my mind in any situation over the past 10-12 years of upper administration. I have stayed the course, made the hard calls, and have let people go, including a very difficult RIF.

Answer D-3

Dealing with and managing stressful situations, such as personnel matters. When things don't get done, or when staff does not have the same sense of urgency to address critical issues, my emotional state tends to increase.

Answer E-3

When I'm feeling frustrated with a particular board member(s). This usually happens when board members jump to conclusions before hearing the entire circumstances.

Answer F-3

My emotional state intensifies when I am blind-sided by a board member. Just as they don't like surprises, neither do I. If a board member has heard of a problem, I want to know about it before a board meeting, so I can gather information. I do not like the feeling of being attacked.

Answer G-3

I have been a superintendent for over 27 years now. In the beginning, I spent lots of sleepless nights. I rarely do anymore. I do realize when I am feeling anxious.

Answer H-3

I tend to become more emotional when I am not treated fairly because I am a woman and women lead differently than men. I am not considered a “Good old boy.” This hurts and it takes a strong woman to overcome the comments, innuendos, and treatment by some people because of being a women. I also get emotional when I see a child succeed when they have been struggling to accomplishment something.

Answer I-3

I recognize my own increased emotional state when I am either tired or rested. When conditions are directed personally my emotional state increases. When others don’t consider the facts and emotional impact on others, I recognize my emotional state changing.

Answer J-3

Decisions that impact quality of life for staff or students is stressful. My emotional state is heightened when people come to the discussion ill prepared. If I’ve spent time preparing, then they should as well. It goes to the statement “you can’t fix stupid” Given time, I generally deescalate and come to understand that the only one I can change is me...I can make or break the day. I choose to make the day.

Question 4

Under what conditions do you recognize an increased emotional state of the board of trustees?

Answer A-4

When people employees/constituents complain. And if the squeaky wheel gets to them and tells their story, and color it to the point that the board member believes everything that they've just been told, then that just increases their emotional state. And then if I've made a decision or if I've done something and forgot to inform them, there's been times when...nothing major, but if its something small and insignificant in my book to me and I go on and think that I'll tell them this in a little bit or in a mail-out, but maybe it's the end of the day or next day. And then I think, Oh my goodness I forgot to tell them such and such, and its going to be a big deal for one of the board members, then their emotions get out of whack. When they think I'm trying to hide something from them, and I'm not. I don't have that in my nature to just hide that. They don't need to know, I don't do that. But if they believe that themselves, then they get just out of sorts, I mean way out of sorts. That drives their emotions a lot.

Answer B-4

The board becomes emotional when they do not have the information to make the decision. They also become emotional when anyone questions their decisions. The last superintendent did this and was asked to leave three months into the school year.

Although the superintendent thought he was doing the right thing by questioning the board about their decisions, they did not want to be "handled".

Answer C-4

This board is so even keeled that it is hard to pinpoint an exact case. When I remain calm and in control, that translates to confidence from the Board. We have had several student grievances and there was an increased “concern” over the student’s well being, but it was not overtly emotional or even heightened emotions.

Answer D-4

While I have not observed this with my current board yet, I have observed an increased emotional state in other boards that I've worked with when difficult decisions were required to be made. Decisions that prompted push-back from parents and community constituents as well as politically charged decisions often times generated negative emotional states with the board.

Answer E-4

When an individual board member is being confronted in the community about a certain issue or social media postings make the rounds, I notice some board members behaving more emotionally.

Answer F-4

My board gets emotional about dress code, athletics and spending money – so I anticipate those nights and try to provide enough information to calm the situation and sometimes I realize they need more, so I remind them that most decisions can wait and they can have time to think.

Answer G-4

I read their body language.

Answer H-4

The board gets emotional when it comes to kids. They can't stand for a child to not have the opportunities that other children have. Their emotions guide many of their decisions, especially when it affects their own child(ren).

Answer I-4

Negatively speaking- Board members' emotional state increases when they are tired, do not believe they are informed, or others do not agree with their decisions.

Positively speaking- Board members' emotional state increases when they feel they have made a very good decision, positively recognized, and/or the majority agree with them personally.

Answer J-4

Board members become emotional when their pet issues are discussed. Board members that are parents are more emotional when decisions affect their child's campus or activities. And even though we work to differentiate board responsibilities from parent responsibilities, I still see it as an issue. I also see board members become emotional when their questions are not answered...when staff try to answer by bending the facts or manipulating the information to support a pre intended outcome. Most board members want the truth whether it supports staff initiatives or not.

Question 5

Under what conditions to do make your best decisions?

Answer A-5

When I'm calm, when I have time to think and evaluate and reflect. When I have time to research things. Look at the pros and cons, talk to myself, sit down and involve administrators or my assistants. Whatever the case may be, if I need a team of teachers or something like that, then that's when I make my best decisions. And when I know that I have support or trust from the board or everything is running smoothly, that's when I make my best decisions. When I make my worst decisions its just the opposite. When there's turmoil, and things like that, pressure, then sometimes I feel that I've rushed into a decision.

Answer B-5

I need time to think, to reflect. The board is the same.

Answer C-5

My best decisions occur when I have time to research board policy and time to process all the possibilities. I am also far better when I have time to confirm my actions with legal counsel. I usually tell the attorney what I want as an outcome and then ask him/her how I can achieve that result.

Answer D-5

When I am schooled on the topic and prepared with the appropriate information, I am confident in my decision-making. I'm also big on striking a balance. "All work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy." I do believe in taking time for myself. My outlet is

running. When I exercise, watch what I eat, and get a good night's sleep (which for me is about 5-6 hours), I feel refreshed and confident in my decision-making.

Answer E-5

When I have given thought and careful consideration to an issue, looking at all sides and factors without injecting my personal feelings into the decision.

Answer F-5

I probably make my best decisions under pressure.

Answer G-5

I make my best decisions after gathering the facts, thinking through the problem, and then executing the decision without Board interference.

Answer H-5

I make my best decisions when I can make the decision based on black and white policy. It is when the areas become gray and emotion is involved that the decisions are harder to make. The emotional decisions usually involve people.

Answer I-5

I make my best decisions when I am rested, have reviewed the factual and emotional impact, and know I have collaborated with others to understand the levels my decision impacts.

Answer J-5

I make my best decisions under two conditions. The first is a crisis situations: I can be firm and direct which exudes confidence and staff/students/subordinates will follow. The second is with complete information/data/facts and really honest dialogue regarding the options.

Question 6

Under what conditions does your board make the best decisions?

Answer A-6

I think it's the same, when things are calm. When they have research and data from me. When they have the specs from me, even when they talk to other administrations and have a different view from them. I think still its when they are calm, taken their time, when we've researched, evaluated, reflected, they've had time to dialogue and talk to each other, I think that's when they make their best decisions. I recall a time when I first started, we didn't have a lot of dialogue about agenda items. I believe there were four line items on the agenda itself. It would be consideration, action, recommendation, and maybe any kind of attachment, but it wasn't detailed. But now I've added a lot of items like comments that have been given to me, fiscal impact, dates due, to show where you cover a lot of information on one agenda item. I've asked them to send me questions about agenda items-if they have questions, ask me before the board meeting. Call me, email me, text whatever, so that I have time to find the answers. And that's helped us a lot to make better decisions. Because I have a couple of board members, they will write me and go thought the entire board packet and if they have questions will send them to me, if they have 5 they send 5, if they have 1 they send 1, if they have 10 they send 10, and they'll send them to me before the board meeting, and not the day before, but they'll send then so that I have time to get the answers for them. Then I'll copy their questions, I'll answer and make copies for every board members. That way if they didn't think of that question and someone else did then here's some more information about that agenda item. And so that has helped the board in making better decisions also. It's me giving

them more information about the agenda items and about what's going on that might impact their decision to vote for or against something that's on the agenda.

Answer B-6

I need time to think, to reflect. The board is the same.

Answer C-6

Our board does their best work when they have a broad-based informational background with options. They do best when I give them options and pros/cons of the options. Also I give them historical background of what they or the district has done in a similar situation in the past. I believe that is encouraging to them and to me as it keeps us following the community's vision, based on the past boards. It also builds continuity in the system and parents know what to expect.

Answer D-6

When they are fully informed regarding matters before them.

Answer E-6

When they have taken time to thoroughly discuss an issue and consider what is best for the majority of the students we serve.

Answer F-6

They need adequate information and time to discuss. I like to have a workshop sometimes for issues, so that they can talk.

Answer G-6

They need lots of information and they very seldom make a hasty decision. Often we must bring it to the table several times.

Answer H-6

The board makes the best decisions when their children are not involved. This removed the emotional component and they can base their decisions just on facts.

Answer I-6

My board members' make their best decisions when they are rested, are not hungry, when their favorite chocolate candy is available, are not stressed from their personal jobs or families, feel they have made a very good decision, are positively recognized, and/or the majority agree with them personally.

Answer J-6

Board makes it's best decisions when the leadership on the board is confident and informed. This current board tends to follow the president and secretary. Rarely are there split votes with this current board.

Question 7 unique to respondent A

Can you think of a time, or an activity, or a decision that made your board happy, collectively?

Answer A-7

Yeah...we've had...we had a complaint from a citizen that had to do about ADA, you may have heard a little about that at the meeting you attended. Basically, they were pleased that I went out and found someone to do a facilities study on ADA. And again we had a lot of time to think about it, to talk about it. They were happy when, a couple of years ago, no my first year, we hired a hot-shot principal. And whenever I brought information from that person they were pleased.

The dynamic with that person, I learned later, is that would call them on the phone and that I was going to explain it to them later. So by the time I called them they had already heard it, they were pleased. Systemic planning, when I brought that to them and talked to them about the changes were making (in the) district, they were happy about that. Happy and pleased when I talked with them after the fires in September about paying the people that actually worked that week, they were all in favor of that. They're always in favor of the things I bring to them about employees. They like to promote employees in the district. They were happy and pleased when we hired the athletic director that they had actually...already four of them had already told the person "oh you got the job," (laugh).

Question 7 unique to respondent D

I would also like for you to reflect on your first few months as a new superintendent. Have you found the transition to be emotionally supportive or challenging?

Answer D-7

The newness of the job has been both exciting and challenging. Coming from a larger district, I feel well equipped to handle this job. I am fortunate to have a cohesive, support board, which makes my job so much more enjoyable. The challenge for me is managing the many tasks required for state and federal compliance matters and not having the resources or staff to cover all these areas. Much of this, then, falls to the superintendent, and it's quite daunting. Information overload is where I am right now!

Question 7 unique to respondent H

Was the most recent board election contentious? Were there multiple community members running for the open positions?

Answer H-7

There were six candidates running for two positions. The two candidates running took information from a board meeting that was said by the superintendent, turned it around, and spread false information to the tax payers in order to gain votes. All of our positions are at large.

Question 7 unique to respondent J

Do all of your board meetings proceed as they did tonight; little dialogue and concise in time?

Answer J-7

Most board meetings run smoothly, since we had a long closed session ahead I think that the action items were not controversial and therefore we could move through them quickly. I can't tell you about the decisions in the closed session, but we did have a lot of discussion behind closed doors.

APPENDIX G

District Policy Review Data

School District ~A~ Policy Review

School district A has a total of 31 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review it was determined that following policies were unique among all participant districts' local policies: BBE(LOCAL) (2009); CFB(LOCAL) (2000); CKE(LOCAL) (1993); DEA(LOCAL) (2012); EB(LOCAL) (2000); FEE(LOCAL) (2002); FFFD(LOCAL) (1987).

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent's tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy.

DEA(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent A: "It was a result of the fires. The fact that some of the employees, well after the work was over and everything settled down. And then I believe it was my business manager who said someone's asked if they were going to get paid, no it was someone who didn't get paid because they weren't here. That's what it was, it was one of the maintenance workers did not come in to work and could have, but because I said on the TV, on the radio, on the internet and everywhere else saying schools are closed due to the fires we want our faculty staff and students to be as safe as possible blah-blah-blah-blah, that meant don't (come to) work to some employees. Well our principals, a couple of principals went to check on things at the schools to make sure that everything I was saying was true; like the schools are not in danger, the fires are out, there's so much smoke – you cant breathe. I had a meeting with all administrators and called them in to

work...they came in to work and these are people on contract, they're going to get paid anyway. But the one maintenance worker that "I could have worked but I..." but chose not to, and others came in to work because they knew they had to get in their days, even those maintenance work all the time anyway, the question was raised. And then I started calling around to other superintendents like Leander (ISD) and other places that had experienced the fires to see what they were doing. And some of them were actually saying that their people were being paid because this was something that they could not control. And so I talked with the attorney, this is the situation: I have these two maintenance employees who were here everyday

Because I was, and we were riding out into the areas where the fires were and then coming (back) talking about what was destroyed and what wasn't. What could we do today? Could we start school or can we not? And everyday we did that. So I knew that those two has worked. So we had some discussion and dialogue with the attorneys and other schools, with our board, and that's how that policy came about. It was those of us that actually came in and worked at a time when the conditions they really can't. Then those people were paid extra and above. For the salary for that week, school was closed down but we weren't, you were going to get paid regardless, but you got an extra check if you came in and worked two days, you got paid for those two days. If you didn't come in and you were in maintenance or whatever, you were paid for that or you were allowed to comp it out so that there was no question that, "I came in and didn't get anything."

School District ~B~ Policy Review

School district B has a total of 23 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review it was determined that following policies were unique among all participant districts' local policies: BE(LOCAL) (2005); CDA(LOCAL) (2011); CE(LOCAL) (2011); EIA(LOCAL) (2012); EIC(LOCAL) (2012); FDA(LOCAL) (2007); FFCA(LOCAL) (2003).

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent's tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy.

EIA(LOCAL) (2012):

Superintendent B: "OK, that had a very sound basis to it. We have a lot of Dual Credit classes at the high school. And we operate with the NCTC calendar and so we've been finishing the first semester before Christmas. And then the second semester is the semester that begins when we come back in January. And so what has happened to us is that the fall semester has become very short, like 80 days. Compared to our spring semester, at about 100 days. And so when we were trying to get three six weeks grading periods out of the fall term, we were really getting five week, and a five week, and a six week. And then seven weeks in the spring. So we felt like if we could go to four grading periods instead of six it would be more logistically sound. That's all that was."

EIC(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent B: "That again was logistics. And it was equity based to make it as fair as possible. If you were in band for four years you were getting the benefit of four years of fine arts. But if you were in athletics, you weren't getting that. And it leveled the

playing field more for students to only have your four core areas. Like if somebody was taking a pre-AP class or AP class or a dual credit class and someone else was taking maybe an art class, or maybe a theater class, it was not, they didn't have the same opportunity. So to judge the students, it was to rank, not to judge, but to rank those students based only on those subjects that would be the same was the most equitable and so that's why we went with that. It is a change, but it was not based on the board, or emotion. It was from me and the assistant superintendent and the principal at the high school."

CE(LOCAL) (2011)

Superintendent B: "The only thing that has been added about fund balance in the recent past is the line about, that all expenditures from fund balance would be board approved. But this part on here about the budget amendments, or the fund balance purpose, none of that been added in the recent past. So this came from TASB, we didn't put all of this in about the five separate classifications of fund balance. The non-spendable, restricted, committed, and the assigned and unassigned. None of that was put in by us. So I don't know why the other districts wouldn't have that. But at any rate this was not an unusual, it was not anything special for us."

CDA(LOCAL) (2011)

Superintendent B: "Straight from TASB."

School District ~C~ Policy Review

School district C has a total of 39 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review it was determined that following policies were unique among all

participant districts' local policies: BE(LOCAL) (2009); BP(LOCAL) (2009); CFD(LOCAL) (2012); CNA(LOCAL) (2011); DCB(LOCAL) (2012); DEE(LOCAL) (2012); DMD(LOCAL) (2001); FB(LOCAL) (2012); FD(LOCAL) (2010); FFAA(LOCAL) (2012); FFB(LOCAL) (2012); FL(LOCAL) (2012); FN(LOCAL) (2012); FNCA(LOCAL) (2012); FO(LOCAL) (2011); GE(LOCAL) (2005).

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent's tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy.

Superintendent C: "All of these policies were part of an administrative and board policy review that occurred in July 2011. We did not have emotional reaction to the policies. Our board discussed the policies over a 4-5 hour period and had good exchange and review. I do not recall any policy that was contentious or emotional. Our board was in agreement with suggested changes and no board member was outside the parameters of the policies. Most of the policies are steeped in legal policy and even local differences are clear, logical, and based on good practice and historical success in our district."

DCB(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent C: "No emotion, because we do not hire staff who are not certified. In the rare case that we must, we have a clear contract that outlines the staff members obligation to test, the dates, and the employee's responsibility. Also the guidelines and contract are clear that failure to fulfill contract will result in loss of contract. We educate staff and board on these issues."

DEE(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent C: “No emotion, because we have clear guidelines for travel expenses, reimbursement processes, and we educate our staff/board on these policies.”

EI(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent C: “No emotion, our board was united in this decision and believed that this was the correct policy. There was not fall out except from one parent in the community in 2008 when we adopted this policy. The board was united and quire firm in their decision.”

FFB(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent C: “This was not an emotional topic for anyone.”

FL(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent C: “No emotion, we designate our principals as the custodian of records for enrolled students.”

FO(LOCAL) (2011)

Superintendent C: “Our board continues to support corporal punishment and we only use that with parental permission. We discussed this at length when a parent allowed it last year and the child’s buttock was bruised. Even in that situation, the board was dispassionate about the parents’ complaint against the principal. The board felt the parent agreed to the punishment and bruising could occur.”

School District ~D~ Policy Review

School district D has a total of 40 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district.

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent's tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy. The superintendent of district D is new and has had no review or revision of policy during her tenure. No policies were discussed.

School District ~E~ Policy Review

School district E has a total of 18 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review it was determined that following policies were unique among all participant districts' local policies: CNA(LOCAL) (2007); DC(LOCAL) (2008); DMA(LOCAL) (2004); EIA(LOCAL) (2004); FDA(LOCAL) (2006); FEB(LOCAL) (2004).

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent's tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy.

FEB(LOCAL) (2004)

Superintendent E: "I began my service as superintendent in 2007. I am unable to comment on the internal workings of the board in 2004."

School District ~F~ Policy Review

School district F has a total of 26 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review it was determined that following policies were unique among all participant districts' local policies: BED(LOCAL) (2006); DFE(LOCAL) (2010);

DH(LOCAL) (2012); DK(LOCAL) (2004); FMF(LOCAL) (2006); GKC(LOCAL) (2007).

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent's tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy.

DFE(LOCAL) (10)

Superintendent F: "There was a time when XXX ISD had a lot of resignations, and the board wanted to know why – for documentation against a administrator, I believe. That was before me. We have a low turnover rate now and have had years when at least one campus had no new staff members."

DH(LOCAL) (12)

Superintendent F: "The board is very conservative about student and staff dress code. There have been a couple of employees that the board thought looked unprofessional, so dress code was revised to reflect their expectations for staff."

DK(LOCAL) (04)

Superintendent F: "The board feels strongly that spouses should not supervise each other – this reflects a problem long before me – my spouse is not a school employee (thank goodness)."

School District ~G~ Policy Review

School district G has a total of 55 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review it was determined that following policies were unique among all participant districts' local policies: BDD(LOCAL) (2006); CDG(LOCAL) (1985);

CFEA(LOCAL) (2005); CO(LOCAL) (1983); CPAB(LOCAL) (2002); CV(LOCAL) (2011); CW(LOCAL) (2010); DFFA(LOCAL) (2012); DFFB(LOCAL) (2012); DGA(LOCAL) (2004); DMC(LOCAL) (2004); DNA(LOCAL) (2011); EED(LOCAL) (2003); EHDA(LOCAL) (2011); FEC(LOCAL) (2009); FEF(LOCAL) (2003); FFC(LOCAL) (2005); FMD(LOCAL) (1985); GBAA(LOCAL) (2007); GKA(LOCAL) (2008); GKB(LOCAL) (2005).

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent's tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy.

BDD(LOCAL) (2006)

Superintendent G: "We had board members who called the attorney and ran up our bill without the knowledge of the business office or the superintendent."

CPAB(LOCAL) (2002)

Superintendent G: "We are a small town, and I can't remember a specific instance, but at times, those outside the system would use the system to send out information that was not school related. We have also had to correct employees for putting out political information."

CW(LOCAL) (2010)

Superintendent G: "A past superintendent named a street and library after someone in the community. When we did our bond, the board wanted to make sure they had a policy for naming."

DMC(LOCAL) (2004)

Superintendent G: "This was put in as a teacher incentive."

EED(LOCAL) (2003)

Superintendent G: “We have a lot of seniors who do not stay all day (much to my dismay). If they stay for five, we can count them a full day in PIEMS. It is a money issue”

EHDA(LOCAL) (2011)

Superintendent G: “Many years ago, when we first all started remediating in summer school, there were students who did not come. The administrators asked for this policy and we worked with our district lawyer to put it in place.”

FEC(LOCAL) (2009)

Superintendent G: “We put this in because they were holding the meetings so late that the students did not have time to make up the work.”

FMD(LOCAL) (1985)

Superintendent G: “Note the words school sponsored. Several years ago, a student was burned badly when a can of gas that she threw and the fire came back on her. For a time, there were not school-sponsored bonfires. This was before me time. The athletic booster club came to me and asked that they ask the Board if they could sponsor one. I got the lawyer to way in on this and he highly recommended they the board not approve a bonfire. Emotion ruled. The board approved that the athletic boosters could hold the bonfire. It is held on school property and students attend. This is one that is against my better judgment.”

GBAA(LOCAL) (2007)

Superintendent G: “No emotion to my knowledge and I am in my 11th year as superintendent of AISD.

GKA(LOCAL) (2008)

Superintendent G: “This came into affect before I came here. I have no background on this one.”

School District ~H~ Policy Review

School district H has a total of 24 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review it was determined that following policies were unique among all participant districts’ local policies: CH(LOCAL) (2007); CNA(LOCAL) (2008); CRE(LOCAL) (1999); DNA(LOCAL) (1997); FFH(LOCAL) (2012).

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent’s tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy.

CH(LOCAL) (2007)

Superintendent H: “No emotion in this policy decision.”

CNA(LOCAL) (2008)

Superintendent H: “This is not emotional because we do not allow students to be transported in personal vehicles. If an employee does this, it is at their own risk and the district is not responsible.”

CRE(LOCAL) (1999)

Superintendent H: “Because of the emotional aspect of a person who is injured missing work and thus jeopardizing income, XXX ISD has a sick leave pool that allows other employees to donate to an individual with a catastrophic illness/injury. This is an emotional decision that was made by the district to help other employees.”

DNA(LOCAL) (1997)

Superintendent H: “I think the staff appreciates this just because they still view the observation as a measuring tool for punishment and not as a tool to inform the principal about improving instruction. The principal’s do get unscheduled data from walkthroughs.”

FFH(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent H: “Just a TASB update.”

School District ~I~ Policy Review

School district I has a total of 26 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review it was determined that following policies were unique among all participant districts’ local policies: DMA(LOCAL) (2010); EI(LOCAL) (2011); FM(LOCAL) (2010).

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent’s tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy.

DMA(LOCAL) (2010)

Superintendent I: “Policy DMA was emotionally positive for faculty and staff. The rationale was based on comp time or swap days. In a 2A district it is challenging to meet the professional development needs and desires of all faculty and staff. Policy DMA allows faculties’ professional needs to be met on their time.”

FEC(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent I: “Policy FED (LOCAL) was slightly emotions for some. The rationale was to deter the number of student absences, increase attendance, and increase students’ academic success by being present in school and learning.”

School District ~J~ Policy Review

School district J has a total of 39 policies that are unique or worded specifically for this district. Upon review it was determined that following policies were unique among all participant districts’ local policies: BBG(LOCAL) (2005); DBA(LOCAL) (2010); DEE(LOCAL) (2008); DFAA(LOCAL) (2012); DFBA(LOCAL) (2000); DGBA(LOCAL) (2012); EHAD(LOCAL) (2005).FFAA(LOCAL) (2005); FOC(LOCAL) (2010); GKDA(LOCAL) (2008); GNC(LOCAL) (2005).

Local policies conceived or amended during the current superintendent’s tenure served as a question to the superintendent regarding the level of emotion involved in inclusion of the local policy.

DBA(LOCAL) (2010)

Superintendent J: “Use of PAKS to highly qualify paraprofessionals – not emotional.”

DFAA(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent J: “Suspension with Pay – this was not an emotional issue – practical decision.”

DGBA(LOCAL) (2012)

Superintendent J: “District uses four levels of parent grievance. This is not emotional except that maybe a previous superintendent recommended the four tiers so that she did not have to get involved too soon, allowing other staff to intercede and end the grievance before it got to superintendent or board.”

FOC(LOCAL) (2010)

Superintendent J: “Authority to recommend DAEP – policy indicates that hearing officer decision (board designee) is final and cannot be appealed. Not emotional.”

GKDA(LOCAL) (2008)

Superintendent J: “Superintendent can approve distribution of literature on campuses...different than many districts who leave this decision up to the principal...not emotional...its just that we are a small district and can be consistent with the superintendent making decisions.”