

NEW YORK STATE SUPERINTENDENT JOB SATISFACTION
IN AN ERA OF REDUCED RESOURCES AND INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY

A Doctoral Research Project
Presented to
Professor Emerita Ann P. Myers, Ed.D.
Doctoral Research Chair
Esteves School of Education
The Sage Colleges

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
In Educational Leadership

John J. Bell
September 24, 2015

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Professor Emerita, Educational Leadership
Doctoral Research Committee Chai

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate New York State school superintendent job satisfaction and the potential contributing factors to their job satisfaction in an era of reduced resources and increased accountability. This survey was sent to 684 superintendents throughout New York State and completed by 280 superintendents.

Sharp, Malone and Walter (2002) created a 49-item survey entitled the Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey and used it in a three-state study (Indiana, Illinois and Texas) that found increasing job satisfaction. Padalino (2009) used the same instrument and found increasing superintendent job satisfaction in New York State. The Padalino (2009) study, with a 75% superintendent job satisfaction rating, served as the baseline for this study. In this study, superintendent job satisfaction was only measured at 60%. This is a 15% decrease in 6 years.

This study used the 49-item survey and added five new questions related to current issues confronting New York State superintendents. These questions asked superintendents their feelings toward: working with the Board of Education, the property tax levy cap, the Gap Elimination Adjustment, the rollout of the Common Core standards, and the new Annual Professional Performance Review. Working with the Board of Education was strongly positive while the other four were viewed as strongly negative. However, only working with the Board of Education had a significant correlation to superintendent job satisfaction.

Approximately 81% of respondents had positive feelings about working with the Board of Education. Almost exactly the same 81% of respondents said yes they would aspire to the superintendency if starting their careers over. Thus, superintendent-Board of

Education relations were far more important to superintendent job satisfaction than any external factors measured in this study.

Suggested Keywords: superintendent, job satisfaction, school district leadership, superintendent-school board relations, superintendent motivation.

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I am very proud of the independent research on the superintendency that culminated with this dissertation. I love the superintendency and admire those who serve in this role. It truly is much more than a job; it is a calling. I owe a debt of gratitude to all the superintendents I have worked for over the years especially John Xanthis at Port Jervis.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Glass, Bjork & Brunner (2000) said superintendents of public schools districts hold one of the toughest jobs in the nation. Carter & Cunningham (1997) said, “Nowhere is there a job with higher expectations and so little trust and confidence. (p. 4)” These statements were made before the No Child Left Behind legislation was passed in 2001, the Great Recession of 2008 occurred and the Common Core State Standards were adopted in 2012. Thus, there has been great change in the first fifteen years of this century that has added new pressures to the education system in New York State.

With the increasing demands of the job comes increasing stress on the office holder. Faeltton & Diamond (1998) found that stress in the superintendency can pose serious mental and physical health consequences for the superintendent. While school employees of all types can experience stress, superintendents tend to experience the highest levels of stress due to their role as leader of the entire organization and the face of the district to the outside world (Unzicker, 2007).

Problem Statement

Public education has played a pivotal role in America’s growth from its early years as a small, agrarian country to becoming a leader in world affairs. The 20th century has often been called the “American Century” (Luce, 1941) due to the country’s ascension to world leader in politics, business, education, entertainment and military affairs. However, the 21st century has been a difficult one for America with two recessions, two wars and a growing chorus of dissatisfaction with government in general and the public education system in

particular (Jones, 2014; Howell, Peterson & West, 2009). When a system is under attack, the leaders receive the greatest criticism.

A review of literature in the first decade of the 21st century pointed to increasing job satisfaction among school superintendents. (Sharp, Malone & James, 2002, and Padalino, 2009). However, in recent years, pressures on superintendents have grown with increased accountability, reduced resources, and implementation of federal and state policy initiatives. Thus, it was important to learn if this trend of increasing job satisfaction continued or reversed itself. Job satisfaction could affect superintendent longevity and the quality of candidates in future superintendent searches. Therefore, it was important to the field of education to learn more about the current state of the superintendency as it has implications to the future leadership of school districts.

Furthermore, improving superintendent leadership will help America's public schools improve. This can be accomplished by studying superintendent job satisfaction and the potential contributing factors then making changes accordingly to the superintendency.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate New York State school superintendent job satisfaction and the potential contributing factors to their job satisfaction in an era of reduced resources and increased accountability. The instrument used in this study was a survey sent to New York State superintendents, excluding New York City superintendents.

Sharp, Malone & Walter (2002) created a 49-item survey entitled the Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey and used the survey in a three-state study (Indiana, Illinois

and Texas) that found increasing superintendent job satisfaction. Padalino (2009) used the same instrument when studying superintendent job satisfaction in New York State. The Padalino study (2009), which also found increasing superintendent job satisfaction, served as a baseline for this new study.

In light of reduced resources and increased accountability in the field of education in New York, this new study explored the job satisfaction of today's superintendents and compared these percentages to previous rates as measured in the Padalino study.

One of the many stressors facing superintendents today is a reduction in resources due to federal and state policy changes, which have directly affected the financial well-being of school districts. The decrease in state aid to school districts, called the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), under Governor Patterson in 2010 (New York State Budget, 2010) caused districts to lose millions of dollars. This resulted in thousands of layoffs in school districts across the state (New York State School Boards Association, 2013) . In addition, Governor Cuomo signed into law the property tax levy cap (often referred to as the 2% tax cap) in 2011 (New York Governor's Office, 2011) thereby limiting the amount of revenue a district could raise locally through property taxes. Furthermore, the federal education funding of \$3.3 billion to New York under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) only lasted from 2009 to 2011 (New York State Education Department, 2009). Thus, federal and state funding both decreased at the same time that local property tax increases were capped causing a significant financial strain on school district budgets.

Additionally, superintendents faced increased accountability measures as a result of federal Race to the Top (RTTT) regulations. Under RTTT, participating states were awarded

large grants from the U.S. Education Department and were required to adopt new state policies that coincided with new federal policies. The implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) for teachers and principals occurred during the 2012-13 school year (New York State Education Department, 2013). These two complex initiatives were implemented simultaneously as a result of New York being awarded \$700 million in federal RTTT funds (U.S. Education Department, 2010). Student performance on the new CCSS-based grades 3-8 mathematics and English/language arts exams decreased significantly in 2013 (New York State Education Department, 2013). These new, lower passing rates were used in the new teacher and principal APPR, which incorporated student performance in staff evaluations for the first time. The new APPR was a great stressor on school employees including superintendents from the creation of the plans through the long awaited final scores more than a year later.

Measuring superintendent job satisfaction and comparing it to previous studies is typically of interest to researchers. In light of this era of great change with reduced resources and increased accountability, a new study measuring current job satisfaction was timely. These five research questions provided a foundation for the study:

Research Questions

1. Given the increased stress and pressures inherent to the position, was there a downward trend in superintendent job satisfaction among New York State superintendents?
2. What factors most contributed to superintendent job satisfaction and dissatisfaction?
3. What motivated current superintendents to pursue the superintendency?

4. What percentage of superintendents would aspire to the position again if starting their careers over?
5. What differences were there in responses to the key policy issues in survey question 7 from new superintendents (1-5 years) and veteran superintendents (6 or more years)?

Significance of the Study

It is often difficult to compare studies on job satisfaction when using different instruments. Using the same or similar instrument to replicate a previous study allows for comparison between studies. This study used the same instrument as the Padalino (2009) study with five additional questions to survey superintendents across New York State. To address the current reforms and stresses that superintendents may face, four questions about four current policy issues currently confronting superintendents (CCSS, APPR, GEA and 2% property tax cap) and one question about a long-standing issue (superintendent-school board relations) were added to the survey.

This research may be of interest to current and aspiring superintendents, school boards, state superintendents' organizations and state school boards' associations. The four current policy issues and superintendent-school board relations may help determine superintendent job satisfaction and longevity. State superintendents' and school boards' associations are the key leaders in professional development that can foster better relations and improve superintendent job satisfaction. Therefore, this study's results may assist these organizations in developing future staff development offerings for superintendents and school board members.

The results of this study may also be of interest to federal and state legislators and policy makers. The impact of the four key policy issues on superintendent satisfaction and dissatisfaction could help spur legislative changes in both Albany and Washington.

Prior Studies

Based on recent history, it appears that the role of the superintendent will continue to become more difficult and stressful. Hanks (2010), Houston (2006), Nykl (2009), and Scheichter (2011) noted the difficulty of being a superintendent with increasing accountability and changing demographics. The role of superintendent has evolved from a manager to an educational leader with a focus on student achievement (Brunner et al., 2002; Dillon, 2010; Houston, 2007; Karbula, 2009; Kowalski & Brunner, 2005; Nykl, 2009). Superintendents are under pressure to meet the demands of No Child Left Behind and RTTT while also dealing with the public's concern toward CCSS and the new principal and teacher APPR.

Since the Great Recession of 2008, superintendent job stress has increased. Terranova et al. (2012) "Snapshot of the Superintendency" study reported that 75% of New York State superintendents found the job more stressful than expected compared to just 56% in the 2009 iteration of this triennial study.

Job Satisfaction.

There are several widely used definitions of job satisfaction. Locke (1976) crafted one of the more widely used definitions of job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (p.1304). Hulin and Judge (2003) found that job satisfaction has three components: cognitive, affective and

behavioral. Spector (1997) defined it as how content an individual is with his or her job and whether he or she likes it or not.

Job satisfaction can be described as a general attitude that employees have about their job (Robbins, 1996; Newby, 1999). Job satisfaction is a psychological construct based on one's own opinion (Miceli & Lane, 1991; Scarpello et al., 1998). Gortner et al. (1989) found those in leadership and have the most access to information are most likely to be satisfied.

Superintendent Job Satisfaction.

Malanowski's (1999) study of New Jersey urban superintendents found them to be generally satisfied in their positions with intrinsic satisfaction scoring higher than extrinsic satisfaction. Studies in the first part of the 21st century showed strong superintendent job satisfaction. Crane's (2006) study of public school superintendents in Idaho found more than 75% had a high level of job satisfaction. The study found intrinsic motivators to be more important than extrinsic motivators. It also found increasing levels of job stress related to finances and accountability.

Kuncham (2008) conducted research on overall job satisfaction, intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction in Long Island, New York. Kuncham found the superintendents to be greatly satisfied with all three aspects of job satisfaction.

Studies showed the pressures of the superintendency as a deterrent to potential applicants. Cunningham & Burdick (1999) found micromanagement by school boards as the top reason why qualified candidates do not apply for the superintendency followed by time demands and stress of the job. Cooper (2000) found the complexity of the job increased while the number of applicants decreased. A study of New York State assistant

superintendents found only one-third to be definitely interested in seeking the top job (Leach, 2009). Terranova et al. (2012) identified the scope of the role, having school-aged children and loss of job security as the leading factors to cause candidates to hesitate to apply for a superintendency.

This review of the literature has attempted to address the major theories of job satisfaction and the research studies related to superintendent job satisfaction. The factors of increased accountability, reduced resources and job stress play an important role in the job satisfaction of current school superintendents. This study stems from the need to study the current satisfaction of superintendents because these factors have taken on an increased significance in recent years.

Methodology

This quantitative study used survey methodology. To gauge job satisfaction across New York State with superintendents from all types of districts, the use of a survey provided an effective and efficient way to garner such necessary information.

The Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey (Sharp et al., 2002) was selected as the survey instrument because it has been used in multiple studies (Sharp et al., 2002 and Padalino, 2009) and in multiple states (Illinois, Indiana, Texas and New York) to measure superintendent job satisfaction. Using this survey specifically in New York in the past (Padalino, 2009) and again in this 2015 study allowed a comparison of responses across different time frames. The original 49-question survey was amended to add five new questions regarding current issues in education in New York State.

While there have been various studies of superintendent job satisfaction over the years, few have been conducted in New York State. With the many changes to the education landscape in New York State since the Padalino study of 2009, this study provides a gauge of the level of job satisfaction of New York State school superintendents.

Delimitations of the Study

All New York State school superintendents, with the exception of those in New York City, were asked to participate through an initial email. The New York State Education Department provided a list of email addresses for 684 public school superintendents in the state. A follow-up email was sent to all 684 superintendents 10 days later to garner greater participation. The 280 respondents completed the 54-question survey anonymously online. In this study, there were no face-to-face interviews or opportunities to ask follow-up questions.

Limitations

One limitation was the sample size based on the voluntary survey return rate of 40.9%. While this is a good return rate, it is not the total population so generalizability to all superintendents is limited. A second limitation was that the study was limited to New York State superintendents only. Therefore, the results may not be applicable to other states. A third limitation could have been researcher bias since this researcher was a school superintendent at the time of the study, although not in New York State.

Definitions of Terms

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) - commonly referred to as the Stimulus or The Recovery Act, was an economic stimulus package enacted by the Congress in 2009. (New York State Education Department, 2009)

Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) – the annual teacher and principal evaluation system used in New York State. (New York State Education Department, 2012).

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) - state education chiefs and governors in 48 states came together to develop the Common Core, a set of clear college- and career-ready standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English/language arts and mathematics. (New York State Education Department, 2012).

Extrinsic satisfaction – satisfaction derived from factors/reinforcers in the work environment that are extraneous to the work itself such as salary (Malanowski, 1999).

Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) - the Gap Elimination Adjustment was first introduced for the 2010-11 fiscal year by former Gov. David Paterson as a way to help close New York's then \$10 billion budget deficit. The GEA has remained in place in order to help the state address its own budget challenges and priorities other than education. In the four state budgets from 2010-11 through 2013-14, New York's schools collectively lost nearly \$8.5 billion in anticipated aid due to the GEA (Questar BOCES, 2014).

Intrinsic satisfaction – satisfaction derived from factors/reinforcers in the work environment that are inherent in the work itself such as achievement (Malanowski, 1999).

Job dissatisfaction – a present or past oriented affective state that results when educators evaluate their work roles as being negative or not enjoyable (Miskel & Ogawa, 1988).

Job satisfaction – a present or past oriented affective state that results when educators evaluate their work roles as being positive or enjoyable (Miskel & Ogawa, 1988).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) - a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2001; supports standards-based education reform based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. The goal was for 100% of American students to be proficient by 2014. (U.S. Education Department, 2001).

Property tax levy cap - The New York State tax cap law establishes a limit on the annual growth of property taxes levied by local governments and school districts to two percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less; commonly referred to as the 2% tax cap. (New York Governor's Office, 2011).

Race to the Top (RTTT) - \$4.35 billion federal initiative that started in 2012 to encourage states to improve curricula standards and assessments, overhaul teacher evaluations systems, build student performance data systems and turnaround the lowest performing schools. (U.S. Education Department, 2010).

Regents Reform Agenda – New York State’s plan to implement RTTT after being awarded \$700 million from the U.S. Education Department. (New York State Education Department, 2012).

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the study, the purpose of the study, the research questions answered, the significance of the study, definitions of terms used in the study, and the organization of the study. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature on the current state of the superintendency, job satisfaction and the future appeal of the superintendency. The potential contributing factors to superintendent job satisfaction and possible future implications to the position were also included. Chapter Three provides the methodology used in the study including the participants, sample size, instrumentation, design, data collection and statistical approaches used in the analysis of data. Chapter Four discusses the results of the data analysis as it relates to each of the research questions posed in this study. Chapter Five is a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Public schools in America are under scrutiny from all directions. Local taxpayers have fought against higher school taxes, state governments have reduced funding to school districts and the federal government's role in education has grown dramatically in recent years. At the same time, politicians are advocating for charter schools and vouchers while the media remains fixated on America's less than stellar standing on international tests. Teachers in many states feel under attack due to the new teacher evaluation systems implemented under the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) requirements. Many parents and conservative groups across the country are vehemently against the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which has been a key component of RTTT.

In 2010, New York State was awarded approximately \$700 million in RTTT funds from the U.S. Education Department (U.S. Education Department, 2010). The Regents Reform Agenda is New York's plan for implementing RTTT. The agenda includes three major areas: the implementation of the New York State P-12 Common Core learning standards, teacher and leader effectiveness, and data-driven instruction (engageny.org, 2015).

These education policy changes on the federal and state levels have created a period of great change in public education. At the same time, education funding in New York State has undergone major changes as well. In terms of reduced resources, the decrease in state aid to school districts, called the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), under Governor Patterson in 2010 (New York State Budget, 2010) caused districts to lose millions of dollars in state aid. This resulted in thousands of layoffs in school districts across the state. In addition, Governor Cuomo signed into law the 2% property tax cap in 2011 (New York Governor's

Office, 2011) thereby limiting the amount of revenue a district could raise locally through property taxes.

While the job satisfaction of New York State superintendents has been measured before (Padalino, 2009), it was prior to the federal and state education policy changes, and the state school finance policy changes outlined above. In light of these changing conditions in the field of education in New York State, a new study was warranted to gauge the job satisfaction levels of today's superintendents and to compare these levels to previous levels as measured in the Padalino study.

This study investigated New York State school superintendent job satisfaction in an era of reduced resources and increased accountability. Specifically, it examined whether job satisfaction decreased in recent years and what factors most contributed to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In addition, the study investigated what motivated superintendents to pursue the position initially and whether they would seek the position again if starting over. The literature and research behind this study's thesis was explored in three sections: the current state of the superintendency, job satisfaction research in education and other fields, and the future appeal of the superintendency.

The current state of the superintendency

Today's superintendents are stuck between two competing forces – increased accountability and reduced resources. The phrase “do more with less” is very appropriate for this time in education. “The education world is facing transformational forces and challenges that are unprecedented in its history” said Brandon Busteed, executive director of Gallup Poll Education (2013, p. 3). American Association of School Administrators (AASA) executive

director Dan Domenech said, “The superintendent’s job is one of the most difficult jobs in America and one of the most important” (2014, p.42). Carter & Cunningham (1997) said, “Nowhere is there a job with higher expectations and so little trust and confidence. (p. 4)”

Recent educational research has emphasized the importance of effective leadership by district leaders (Marzano & Waters, 2009). A meta-analysis of district leadership and student achievement studies from 1970 to 2005 identified 27 studies that included data from 2,817 school districts across the country. Marzano & Waters found a correlation between district leadership and student achievement of 0.24 with 0.05 being significant. Thus, a district with leadership that has increased one standard deviation from the average would raise student achievement from the average of 50% to 59.5%. Thus, their research says leadership does matter.

Several other studies have found a relationship between the superintendent and student achievement (Bredeson, 1995; Brunner et al., 2002; Hoyle et al., 2005; Kowalski & Brunner, 2005). Multiple studies found a correlation between district office staff and student achievement as well (Elmore, 2005; Fullan, 2008; Honig, 2012, 2013; Iver, 2010; Leon, 2008; Reeves, 2002).

Increased accountability and reduced resources have placed a strain on school district employees, in general, and superintendents, in particular. This strain creates stress on educational leaders which can lead to shorter superintendent tenures. Shorter tenures can wipe away the positive effects of district leadership on student achievement as cited by Marzano & Waters (2009).

Conversely, the recently released Brookings Institution report, “School Superintendents: Vital or Irrelevant?” called into question the relationship between the superintendent and student achievement. “Superintendents account for a small fraction of a percent (0.3 percent) of student differences in achievement. This effect, while statistically significant, is orders of magnitude smaller than that associated with any other major component of the educational system” (Chingos, Whitehurst & Lindquist, 2014, p. 1). The Chingos et al. study did cite the school district itself as a key factor of which the superintendent is the leader. It also stated that superintendents “occupy one of the American school system’s most complex and demanding positions” (2014, p. 13). The Chingos et al. study was based on Florida and North Carolina countywide school districts from 2000 to 2010.

Based on recent history, it appears that the role of the superintendent will continue to become more difficult and stressful. Hanks (2010), Houston (2006), Nykl (2009), and Scheichter (2011) noted the difficulty of being a superintendent with increasing accountability and changing demographics. The role of superintendent has evolved from a manager to an educational leader with a focus on student achievement (Brunner et al., 2002; Dillon, 2010; Houston, 2007; Karbula, 2009; Kowalski & Brunner, 2005; Nykl, 2009). Superintendents are under pressure to meet the demands of No Child Left Behind and RTTT while also dealing with the public’s concern toward CCSS and the new principal and teacher APPR.

Increased accountability.

Public education has seen several key periods of increased accountability in the last 60 years. First, Americans were alarmed to hear the news of Sputnik, a Soviet satellite, orbiting the Earth in 1957. This event led to a call for increased attention to math and science in the public schools and the National Defense Education Act of 1958 in an effort to keep the country competitive. It also started the “Space Race” between the United States and the Soviet Union which led to America’s quest to put a man on the moon. In the 1960s, President Johnson’s “War on Poverty” caused increased superintendent and school district accountability through the passage of the first Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965.

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* was published and lambasted America’s public education system, identifying a host of reforms to make our country more competitive (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). It called for increased accountability and an increased role of the federal government in education. It also made the connection between student achievement and the future success of the American economy, power and influence (Houston, 2007; Karbula, 2009; NCEE, 1983; O’Rourke, 2011; Ravitch, 2010). This connection placed a great deal of pressure on educators to not let their country down. According to Elmore (2004), there was little evidence that the reforms outlined in *A Nation at Risk* made any significant improvements to the educational system.

There were additional reforms including when President George H.W. Bush called all 50 governors to a first-ever, educational summit in 1989. In 1994, President Clinton signed legislation entitled Goals 2000: Educate America Act (U.S. Education Department, 1994),

which was based on many of the outcomes from the 1989 summit. This started standardized testing across the country in grades four, eight and once in high school that were tied to more rigorous standards.

In 2001, President George W. Bush signed into law a major revision to the ESEA which included a name change to “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) (U.S. Education Department, 2001). NCLB required every state to establish an accountability system that would evaluate all schools and identify those that were repeatedly underperforming. It also called for annual testing in grades 3-8 and once again in high school in reading and mathematics, as well as other testing measures to hold schools accountable for overall student performance and for racial, ethnic and economic sub-groups.

This accountability system, with its strong punitive measures, increased stress on teachers, students and administrators. NCLB brought attention and pressure on school districts from the government, media and public to improve student achievement on standardized tests (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Fullan, 2010; Hanks, 2010; Johnston et al., 2009). The ramifications of possible school choice, closure or takeover were unprecedented levels of federal and state accountability interventions.

Under President Obama, the Race to the Top (RTTT) competition began with \$4.35 billion in federal funds available to states that agreed to adopt rigorous learning standards, craft new principal and teacher evaluation systems that included student performance as a factor, create a complex student data system and turn around the lowest performing schools to name the key initiatives of the competition (U.S. Education Department, 2009). Through the first three rounds of awards, 19 states obtained RTTT grants and 48 states signed on to

some form of Common Core standards. The Regents Reform Agenda is the name of New York's plan to implement RTTT (New York State Education Department, 2012).

Reduced resources.

In the Fall of 2008, the American economy suffered a financial meltdown on Wall Street as the housing bubble burst. This led to the federal government's intervention to save banks, investment firms, insurance companies, and major automakers with large finance departments, all of whom had large investments in mortgage-backed securities. This financial meltdown subsequently had a negative impact across almost every state and industry. This economic recession, sometimes referred to as the "Great Recession", caused state governments to lose billions in revenue. With a large loss of revenue, states were forced to cut expenses including education funding.

Since New York State had a great reliance on the Wall Street financial industry to generate state budget revenue, the recession caused steep budget cuts. In order to balance the state budget in 2010, New York State reduced funding to schools by \$1.5 billion (New York State Budget, 2010). This financial move was known as the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). The total amount of GEA funds lost by school districts from 2010 to 2013 amounted to more than \$8 billion (New York State School Boards Association, 2013). The state also froze the state aid formula for multiple years at the same time that the GEA was implemented.

Next, New York State implemented the property tax levy limit, more commonly known as the 2% property tax cap (McMahon, 2011). After the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding ended and state aid to schools was drastically

reduced, the New York State Legislature capped the amount of revenue that could be raised through local property taxes. To exceed the tax cap, a school district would have to garner 60% of the vote as opposed to the traditional one vote more than 50%. Since all three areas of revenue (federal, state and local) were either reduced or capped, school districts had no choice but to reduce expenditures. In a labor intensive business like education, this meant thousands of administrative, instructional and support positions were eliminated across the state. Approximately 300,000 education jobs have been lost since 2008 across the country (Oliff & Leachman, 2011).

The ARRA, which amounted to \$3.3 billion in education funding, was awarded by the federal government to New York State (New York State Education Department, 2009). This was a two-year, stop-gap measure. However, since the economy had not recovered within two years, it simply postponed the eventual education job cuts that were forced to be made due to ongoing reduced resources.

The latest state initiative is the “property tax freeze credit”. The property tax freeze credit is a new, two-year tax relief program that reimburses qualifying New York State homeowners for increases in local property taxes on their primary residences (New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, 2014). In order for taxpayers to qualify for the rebate, school districts must present a budget to the public that does not exceed the tax cap. This two-year initiative for 2014 and 2015 has all but ended any district’s consideration of exceeding the tax cap index.

As mentioned previously, New York State was one of 19 states to be awarded approximately \$700 million in RTTT funding. Half of the money was designated for use at

the state education department and half was slated for school districts use. However, New York State superintendents claimed that the amount of RTTT funds that were passed along to districts would not cover their expenses for implementing RTTT (NYSCOSS, 2011). Thus, in an era of already reduced resources, an extremely important academic mandate was placed on districts without the appropriate funding.

Job stress.

New tougher academic standards, complex new teacher evaluation systems and decreased public support for public education overall combined to make the role of superintendent more stressful. In addition, all of the fiscal issues in New York State only compounded the situation. According to research sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), Glass's (2000) "Study of the American Public School Superintendent" indicated that stress levels were increasing in the superintendency due to under-financing, high-stakes testing and special interest groups. Cooper's (2000) "Career Crisis in the School Superintendency?" found a shortage of applicants for the superintendency because many found it unappealing, too great of a time commitment or too stressful. These findings were prior to the Great Recession of 2008.

Since the Great Recession, superintendent job stress has increased. Terranova et al. (2012) "Snapshot of the Superintendency" study reported that 75% of New York State superintendents found the job more stressful than expected compared to just 56% in the 2009 iteration of this triennial study. This is a significant change in only three years. This time frame would take into account many of the financial issues facing New York State

superintendents but was prior to implementation of RTTT. Thus, a new study taking into account both the increased accountability and reduced resources issues was needed.

Job stress is nothing new to superintendents. Carver (2000) found the greatest stress for a superintendent was his or her relationship with the school board. Patterson (2001) found dealing with continuous change and change in school board expectations to be great stressors. Maslach (2003) found the areas of stress that create burnout include work overload, lack of control, inadequate compensation, breakdown in the community, unfair treatment and conflicting values. Chapman (1997) identified job related stressors for first-time superintendents as high visibility, diverse constituents, incompetent employees and political groups. Faelton and Diamond (1988) identified four factors top executives face that cause stress including helplessness caused by restraints, uncertainty of facts related to an issue, number of tasks that need attention in a day, and overall workload.

With the increasing demands of the job comes increasing stress on the office holder. Superintendents, because of their job responsibilities, have placed themselves in a possible position of great stress (Sternberg, 2001). Faelton & Diamond (1998) found that stress in the superintendency can pose serious mental and physical health consequences for the superintendent. While school employees of all types can experience stress, superintendents tend to experience the highest levels of stress due to their role as leader of the entire organization and the face of the district to the outside world (Unzicker, 2007).

The confluence of declining student enrollments and decreasing numbers of taxpayers due to relocation can be stressors on the educational system and its leaders. A period of reduced resources often leads to decisions to increase class sizes and even to close schools.

A declining population leads to a smaller tax base. From 1990 to 2010, New York State population declined by 800,000 people while the average age increased by 6.6 years.

Counter to the national trend, the population of children and teenagers decreased in New York between 2000 and 2010, after growing at less than one-eighth the national rate during the previous 10-year period (McMahon, 2012).

Increased accountability, reduced resources and job stress are all major issues confronting those willing to serve in the school superintendency today. Many of today's superintendents have learned to live with these growing pressures over time. A major concern is whether the next generation of potential superintendents will choose to enter the arena or not.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction research dates back almost 100 years. It has been widely researched with more than 5,000 studies on the topic (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). To improve job satisfaction going forward, it is important to understand its origins. One of the earliest and most well-known studies of job satisfaction was the Hawthorne study (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939) conducted at Western Electric's Hawthorne plant in Illinois. This series of studies conducted in the 1920s and 1930s examined the effects lighting and other conditions on worker productivity. These studies found that workers increased productivity more because of being observed and not because of lighting and other conditions that were changed. Thus, the Hawthorne effect refers to improvement or modification of aspects of workers' behavior in response to awareness of being observed. This 1930s finding led to a wave of further research on the topic of job satisfaction that has continued to modern day.

There are several widely used definitions of job satisfaction. Locke (1976) crafted one of the more widely used definitions of job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (p.1304). Hulin and Judge (2003) found that job satisfaction has three components: cognitive, affective and behavioral. Spector (1997) defined it as how content an individual is with his or her job and whether he or she likes it or not. Spector believed job satisfaction was assessed both on the overall satisfaction level and on specific facets of the job. He identified fourteen common facets: appreciation, communication, co-workers, fringe benefits, job conditions, nature of work, organization, personal growth, policies and procedures, promotion opportunities, recognition, security, and supervision.

Job Satisfaction Theories.

Many theories of job satisfaction have been espoused over the past 50 years. Some of the most widely accepted theories are the discrepancy theory, equity theory and fulfillment theory. Locke’s (1976) range of affect theory is one of the most well-known models and measures satisfaction based on a discrepancy between what one wants in a job and what one has in a job. This is an updated version of Locke’s (1969) original discrepancy theory. Locke’s range of affect/discrepancy theory takes into account two important aspects of job satisfaction: a) the many facets of job satisfaction and b) that each worker will value each facet differently. Thus, two workers working side by side with all the same facets in place can have different levels of job satisfaction. Zelenzik, Christensen & Roethlisberger’s (1958) equity theory measures one’s job satisfaction based on his or her compensation compared to other people’s compensation for doing like work. Schaffer’s (1953) fulfillment theory is based on how much a person’s personal needs are being fulfilled by work.

In the second half of the twentieth century, there was controversy over whether job satisfaction and dissatisfaction were on the same continuum or on two different continua. Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman (1959) in their two-factor theory, also known as the motivator-hygiene theory, believed that satisfaction and dissatisfaction were driven by different factors on two different continua. This theory has been used in several superintendent satisfaction studies (Malanowski, 1999; O'Malley, 2004; Soloman, 2004).

While Herzberg is one of the more well-known and respected theorists of the twentieth century, other researchers have had difficulty proving this model. It does not account for individual differences but rather assumes all people would react the same to a particular circumstance. Thus, usage of the two-factor theory is controversial when studying job satisfaction today. Young & Davis (1983) found that both motivators and hygienics contributed to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Herzberg believed only motivators contributed to job satisfaction and only hygienics contributed to job dissatisfaction. Examples of motivators include achievement, recognition and promotion opportunities. Hygiene factors include pay, company policies, supervisory practices and other working conditions.

A series of studies in the 1970s and 1980s looked for a connection between job satisfaction and other factors. Schmitt & Mellon (1980) studied the relationship between job satisfaction and satisfaction with life in general. The results showed satisfaction with life in general led to job satisfaction. Kahn (1973) found that the higher the occupation level, the more satisfied was the employee. Smelser (1981) suggested that prestige plays a larger role in job satisfaction than pay or working conditions. Quinn & Baldi deMandelovitch (1975) found that people with more education were consistently more satisfied with their jobs than workers with less education. However, Reely (1976) found no significant relationship

between education level and job satisfaction when studying Air Force military education faculty.

Kowalski (1999) delineated the differences between Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. Theory X superintendents were seen as top-down managers while Theory Y superintendents were considered more facilitative. Bishop (2009) described Theory X as best used with workers that lacked ambition and needed to be led. Bishop described Theory Y as the better method with workers who had goals and were not resistant to change. Both McGregor (1960) and Argyris (in Bolman & Deal, 1997) believed organizations did not treat their employees as responsible adults but rather like children.

Job satisfaction can be described as a general attitude that employees have about their job (Robbins, 1996; Newby, 1999). Job satisfaction is a psychological construct based one's own opinion (Miceli & Lane, 1991; Scarpello et al., 1998). Gortner et al. (1989) found those in leadership and have the most access to information are most likely to be satisfied.

Superintendent Job Satisfaction.

While there have been many general job satisfaction studies, the number of studies done relating to education-related jobs is fewer and mostly focused on teachers and principals (Malanowski, 1999). There are far fewer job satisfaction studies relating to the school superintendency.

Srivasta et al. (1977) found a significant negative correlation between job satisfaction and job turnover. Chand (1982) studied job satisfaction with 1,531 superintendents across the country. Three variables associated with job satisfaction were: status, achievement and renewal of employment contract. District size, age, race, marital status, gender, degree

attainment and experience did not result in any significant differences. Whitesell (1987) conducted job satisfaction research of 866 Texas superintendents. He found that satisfaction was derived from the ability to do things for others, to do things that did not go against personal values, and the feeling of accomplishment. The least satisfying contributors were possibility of advancement, praise received, salary, and skill of the board.

Malanowski's (1999) study of New Jersey urban superintendents found them to be generally satisfied in their positions with intrinsic satisfaction scoring higher than extrinsic satisfaction. The superintendents were most satisfied with the chance to help other people, to do something that makes use of their abilities, to do different things, being able to keep busy, the freedom to use their own judgment, the chance to try their own methods to do the job, the feeling of accomplishment, and the chance to be somebody in the community. District size, age, gender, education and experience were not significantly related. Only tenure for those who had it was significantly related. Superintendent tenure was phased out in New Jersey starting in 1991.

Studies in the first part of the 21st century showed strong superintendent job satisfaction. Crane's (2006) study of public school superintendents in Idaho found more than 75% had a high level of job satisfaction. The study found intrinsic motivators such as ability utilization, achievement, creativity, and independence to be more important than extrinsic motivators such as advancement, compensation, recognition, and supervision. It also found increasing levels of job stress related to finances and accountability.

Kuncham (2008) conducted research on overall job satisfaction, intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction in New York. The study involved 125

superintendents in Nassau and Suffolk counties on the Long Island section of New York State. Kuncham found the superintendents to be greatly satisfied with all three aspects of job satisfaction. There was no significance for age, gender, salary level, experience, education level or district size.

Unzicker (2012) replicated the Nelson (1987) study of job satisfaction of Nebraska superintendents. Unzicker found increased levels of overall job satisfaction of superintendents in 2012 compared to 1987. Salary was the lone variable that appeared to have any significance in the study while gender, age, experience and education did not have significance.

Sharp, Malone & Walter (2002) asked 25 superintendents that were members of the Indiana Public School Study Council to write about what they liked about being a superintendent. The members' responses were then edited and used as questions in the Sharp et al. (2002) three-state study of the positive aspects of the school superintendency. In this study, 119 superintendents from Illinois, Indiana and Texas responded to the survey. The top five positive aspects were: I have substantial input into the direction of the district, I have an opportunity to impact students, I have an opportunity to build a team of educators, I always have daily challenges in this job, and I am able to utilize the skills that I have. The bottom five aspects were: I like the high visibility that this job has, I am well paid for this job, I can influence community decisions, I am in control of my daily schedule, and I enjoy working with the board of education. Overall, 41.2% said that their job satisfaction was "very high" with another 45.4% saying it was "high". Thus, 86.6% rated their job satisfaction as high or very high. Conversely, only 1.6% rated their job satisfaction as "low"

or “very low”. In addition, 93.2% of superintendents said they would seek the position again if starting their careers over.

Padalino (2009) used the Sharp et al. instrument to survey New York State superintendents. The top five aspects related to job satisfaction were: having substantial input into the direction of the district, having an opportunity to build a team of educators, having an opportunity to impact students, always having daily challenges in this job, and the ability to utilize the skills that I have. These are the same top five positive aspects as in the Sharp survey although in a slightly different order. The bottom five were: can influence community decisions, in control of my daily schedule, enjoy the status of the job, like the high visibility of the job, and able to work in a twelve-month job not a separate summer job. Three of the bottom five from the Padalino survey match the Sharp et al. survey. Among the superintendents polled by Padalino, 75.6% stated that they had a high or very high level of job satisfaction. This is 11% lower than in the 2002 Sharp survey. Approximately 84% of superintendents surveyed said they would enter the superintendency again compared to 93.2% in the 2002 Sharp et al. survey.

The future appeal of the superintendency

Having studied the current state of the superintendency and the history of job satisfaction and its related studies, it is now time to turn attention to the third area, the future appeal of the superintendency. Cochran (1976) called for more research on school superintendent job satisfaction in hopes of attracting better talent to the position. He also believed that by defining the factors attributed to superintendent job satisfaction and

dissatisfaction, it could help create more job satisfaction and subsequently more stability in the profession.

More than twenty years later, Malanowski (1999) claimed the majority of research in the field of job satisfaction was still focused on teachers and principals. While the research on the school superintendent job satisfaction is not extensive (Cooper, 2000; Malanowski, 1999; Padalino, 2009; Sharp et al., 2002), examining the current research regarding the talent pool and superintendents' views about the position may help pave a direction for future research, pre-service education programs and policy.

Talent pool.

Fewer people are applying for superintendent positions for a variety of reasons. Glass (2001) surveyed 30 practicing search consultants and found the superintendent applicant pool to be decreasing in both size and quality. O'Connell (2000) found that principals and central office administrators did not aspire to the superintendency for fear of negative impacts to their family and personal lives. Fusarelli, Cooper & Carella (2003) identified a diminishing pay differential of superintendents compared to other administrators and veteran teachers to be an economic disincentive. These researchers also found the job to be viewed as too demanding of time and energy in the eyes of many potential candidates.

Studies showed the pressures of the superintendency as a deterrent to potential applicants. Cunningham & Burdick (1999) found micromanagement by school boards as the top reason why qualified candidates do not apply for the superintendency followed by time demands and stress of the job. Cooper (2000) found the complexity of the job increased while the number of applicants decreased. A study of New York State assistant

superintendents found only one-third to be definitely interested in seeking the top job (Leach, 2009). Terranova et al. (2012) identified the scope of the role, having school-aged children and loss of job security as the leading factors to cause candidates to hesitate to apply for a superintendency.

Leach (2009) cited assistant superintendents' ability to see firsthand how the demands of the job have adversely affected superintendents as a discouragement. Cetorelli (1997) found poor quality of life and loss of privacy as compelling factors. Volp et al. (2006) noted the next generation of superintendent candidates appeared to place less importance on advancement. In New York State, a wave of superintendent retirements coupled with increased expectations of office holders has created a shortage of qualified candidates (Kamler, 2009).

The number of superintendent openings per year is increasing. Hall & Difford (1992) found the national annual turnover rate for the superintendency to be 13.5%. Glass (2007) found it had climbed to 16% by the 2005-06 school year. Kranz (2004) reported superintendents were retiring in record numbers while the number of applicants per opening was shrinking. Terranova et al. (2012) found that approximately one-third of all New York State superintendents will retire by 2016.

In summary, the talent pool is shrinking for both professional and personal reasons. Professionally, superintendent pay, job insecurity and school board relations are detractors. Personally, job stress, hours required to perform the job and time away from family deter candidates from applying.

Superintendents' views on the superintendency.

Superintendents' views on the superintendency are moving in a negative direction. Terranova et al. (2012) found that only 55% of New York superintendents would encourage a son or daughter to pursue the superintendency down from 68% in 2009. Padalino (2009) found approximately 84% of superintendents surveyed said they would enter the superintendency again compared to 93.2% in the 2002 Sharp et al. survey. Glass & Franceschini's (2007) national study found that only 80% of superintendents in districts with less than 1,000 students would choose the career again.

Terranova et al. (2012) identified a desire to take on a greater challenge and having a greater influence on the lives of children as the strongest incentives for applying for their first superintendency. The greatest barriers identified were having school-age children, the scope of the role and loss of job security. Kowalski et al. (2011) in "The American School Superintendent 2010 Decennial Study" found 69% of superintendents were satisfied with their career choice but only 63% would definitely become a superintendent again if starting over.

Malanowski (1999) called for training school boards on the factors leading to greater superintendent job satisfaction. With this knowledge, school boards could improve their recruiting, interviewing, evaluation and retention of superintendents. Malanowski also called for better board member training on the technical aspects of serving effectively on a school board.

Summary

This review of the literature has attempted to address the major theories of job satisfaction and the research studies related to superintendent job satisfaction. The factors of

increased accountability, reduced resources and job stress play an important role in the job satisfaction of current school superintendents. Additional study was needed in the area of job satisfaction of superintendents because these factors have taken on an increased significance in recent years. It was this researcher's hypothesis that the increased accountability, reduced resources and job stress caused a decrease in New York State superintendent job satisfaction compared to the similar Padalino study conducted in 2009. Some of the major stressors during this time period included the rollout of the Common Core State Standards, new teacher APPR, the 2% property tax cap and the state aid to education cuts known as GEA. So much has changed in New York State over recent years that it was important to study the effect of these changes.

Padalino (2009) found high levels of superintendent job satisfaction in New York State. However, Terranova et al. (2012) found dramatically increased levels of stress on New York state superintendents compared to a similar study in 2009. This research study intended to measure job satisfaction, identify the sources of decreased job satisfaction and make recommendations to improve the appeal of the superintendency going forward.

Chapter three outlines the methodology of the quantitative study emailed to all New York State superintendents. It provides information about the survey used by Sharp et al. (2002) and Padalino (2009), and how it was adapted to measure job satisfaction in this era of great change. Chapter four details the survey data and the accompanying analysis of superintendent job satisfaction in an era of increased accountability and reduced resources. Chapter five provides a summary of the research study and recommendations for further study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate New York State school superintendent job satisfaction and the potential contributing factors to their job satisfaction in an era of major policy changes that led to reduced resources and increased accountability. The following research questions guided the study:

1. Given the increased stress and pressure inherent to the position, was there a downward trend in superintendent job satisfaction among New York State superintendents?
2. What factors most contributed to superintendent job satisfaction and dissatisfaction?
3. What motivated current superintendents to pursue the superintendency?
4. What percentage of superintendents would aspire to the position again if starting their careers over?
5. What differences were there in responses to the current policy issues in survey question 7 from newer superintendents (1-5 years) and veteran superintendents (6 or more years)?

This researcher's null hypothesis is that the four current policy issues listed in survey question 7 would result in decreasing job satisfaction.

Research Design

This quantitative study used survey methodology. To gauge job satisfaction across New York State with superintendents from all types of districts, the use of a survey provided an effective and efficient way to garner such necessary information (Creswell, 2012). From an effectiveness standpoint, the use of an online survey provided access to many

superintendents from districts of varying size, location and demographics. In terms of efficiency, the survey method accomplished the goal of gathering extensive data rather quickly (Creswell, 2012).

The Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey (Sharp, Malone & Walter, 2002) was selected as the survey instrument because it has been used in multiple studies (Sharp et al., 2002 and Padalino, 2009) and in multiple states (Illinois, Indiana, Texas and New York) to measure superintendent job satisfaction. Using this survey specifically in New York in the past (Padalino, 2009) and again in this 2015 study allowed a comparison of responses across different time frames. Superintendent job satisfaction was the dependent variable in this study while the contributing factors served as the independent variables.

While superintendent job satisfaction has been studied before (Padalino, 2009; and Sharp et al., 2002), the increased stressors of the last few years have changed the position in many ways. Public scrutiny toward and the accountability of public schools have increased (Rasmussen Reports, 2015; American Institutes for Research, 2011). The recession that began in 2008 caused many fiscal issues for school districts (Luhby, 2011). During this time, many new academic policy initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards, Regents Reform Agenda, Race to the Top and a new teacher Annual Professional Performance Review created many changes in the New York State education system starting with the 2012-13 school year.

Population

All New York State superintendents, except those in New York City, were asked to participate in the study through an initial email. The New York State Education Department

provided the list of email addresses for all public school superintendents in the state. This created an initial pool of 684 superintendents. New York City was not included in this study because of their dissimilar governance structure.

Sample and Sampling

An initial email sent to 684 superintendents resulted in 15 emails being undeliverable (Appendix A). A follow-up email was sent approximately 10 days after the initial email in an effort to bolster the response rate (Appendix B). A total of 280 responses out of a possible 684 were obtained for a response rate of 40.9%. This compares favorably to the Padalino (2009) study which only invited every third superintendent to participate and obtained 90 respondents from a pool of a possible 233 for a response rate 38.6%. A high response rate creates a stronger claim in generalizing results (Creswell, 2012).

New York State is a large, diverse state with many urban, suburban and rural school districts. School districts vary in size from less than 100 students to more than 20,000. Therefore, conducting the study in this state provided data on many types of districts. New York is also home to Wall Street and the financial sector which suffered significant losses in the Great Recession of 2008. Approximately 20% of New York State's budget revenue is derived from Wall Street business activity (New York State Budget, 2010). Thus, the recession's fiscal impact on New York State schools was perhaps more significant than in any other state. For all of these reasons, New York made for an interesting state to study superintendent job satisfaction and compare it to previous years.

Instrumentation

In the initial study (Sharp et al., 2002), the members of the Indiana Public School Study Council, a group of 25 school superintendents, were asked to write out what they liked about being a superintendent as a pilot. These responses were then edited and formed the basis for the statements placed in the survey used in the subsequent 2002 three-state study. The primary data source for the study came from a selected sample of superintendents in Illinois, Indiana and Texas. In the results of that study, 41.2% of respondents rated their job satisfaction as “very high” and another 45.4% labeled it as “high”.

In a follow-up study Padalino (2009) used the Sharp survey to explore superintendent job satisfaction with New York State superintendents. In this study, the survey was emailed to 233 superintendents and 90 completed the surveys for a response rate of 38%. These results showed job satisfaction levels of respondents at 24.4% “very high” and 51.2% “high”.

When comparing the Sharp et al. (2002) survey results to the Padalino (2009) results, the percentage of respondents that rated job satisfaction “very high” or “high” decreased from 86.6% to 75.6%. Of particular note, the percent of respondents that selected “very high” decreased from 41.2% to only 24.4%. The year 2009 was near the beginning of the economic recession. Since then, school finances have become far more challenging. In addition, the academic policy changes and the resulting pressures started in 2012. Thus, it was important to study superintendent job satisfaction in 2015 to see if significant changes in job satisfaction occurred over time.

In this study, the Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey (Sharp et al., 2002) was used to determine the current levels of superintendent job satisfaction (Appendix C). This

researcher received permission from Dr. Malone via email in November 2014 to use and adapt this tool (Appendix D). The survey also asked superintendents to identify aspects of the job that they like the most and least. In addition, the survey explored what motivated current superintendents to pursue the position and whether they would seek the position if starting their careers again.

The survey used a Likert scale of one to five for most questions with one being a weak reason and five being a strong reason for liking the job. The survey had twenty-two questions around the theme of “What do you like about being a superintendent?”, seventeen questions pertaining to the theme “What motivated you to become a superintendent in the first place?” and ten demographic questions. This researcher added five questions about potential job stress related to five current issues in New York education. They were connected to four policy issues: Common Core State Standards, new APPR, Gap Elimination Adjustment and 2% property tax cap, and one governance issue: superintendent-school board relations.

Validity and Reliability

The survey instrument was developed, piloted and tested for reliability and validity by Drs. William Sharp, Bobby G. Malone and James K. Walter. and used in their research: *The School Superintendency: A Three-State Study of the Positive Aspects* (2002). The five new questions developed by this researcher and added to the survey were field tested with recently retired New York State superintendents. These five questions were deemed reliable because they were specific and clear to the respondents in the field test. The questions were

also valid based on the responses of field test participants when asked “what they were thinking when answering the five questions” (Creswell, 2012, p.162).

Data Collection

Data collection was initiated after approval from the Institutional Review Board of Sage College (Appendix E). In order to collect data from as large an audience as possible, the superintendent of each New York State district was contacted via email. In the email, superintendent participation was requested. Participation was voluntary. Superintendents were informed of the purpose of the study, the method of data collection, and the anonymity of both data and district participation. The link to the online survey through Survey Monkey was included and accessible through the email. All superintendents were sent a follow-up email approximately ten days after receiving the first email to help maximize the survey response rate. The survey was open for data collection for three weeks.

The participants were informed that they could decline participation, stop at any time or choose not to answer some of the questions. If the superintendent agreed to participate, that constituted informed consent. The survey took approximately five minutes to complete.

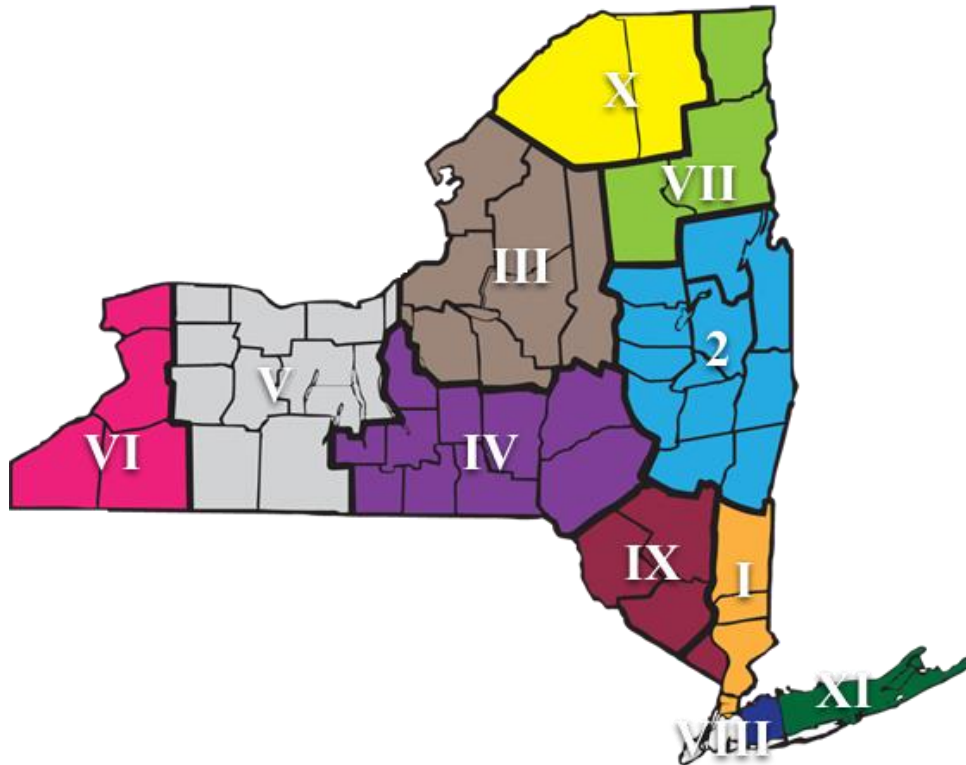
The data was transferred from Survey Monkey to SPSS for analysis. The only people with access to the data were the principal investigator and doctoral candidate. No individually identifiable data were used or published in any of the reports generated from this study. These reports were only reported in aggregate form. The researcher used the option within Survey Monkey which prevents the IP addresses of the participants from being disclosed. Therefore, the researcher did not have access to the identity of the individuals completing the survey. The data was stored on the researcher’s computer, which was

password protected. Once the study was completed, the data was destroyed. All hard copies of the data were shredded. All electronic versions of the data were deleted and then emptied from the trash.

Data Analysis

The unit of analysis was the 684 New York State public school superintendents, excluding those in New York City. The data collected in Survey Monkey was exported to SPSS software where analysis was conducted. The descriptive statistics from this raw data provided information on the current state of superintendent job satisfaction. It also provided demographic information about the superintendents who participated. In addition, gender, age, size of district and region of the state statistics were available.

In this study, regions of the state were defined using the New York State Public High School Athletic Association's (NYSPHSAA) process of dividing the state into "sections". This method was used because a superintendent would certainly know what section his or her district participated in. The sections were then combined to form "regions" with clear boundaries as follows:



Western Region – Sections 5 & 6

Central/Southern Tier Region – Sections 3 & 4

Adirondacks/North Country Region – Sections 7 & 10

Capital District Region – Section 2

Hudson Valley Region – Sections 1 & 9

Long Island Region – Sections 8 & 11

The data were subjected to frequency analysis and independent t-testing using SPSS software. An independent sample t-test was used to help analyze differences between newer and veteran superintendents' responses to the five questions added by this researcher. Pearson coefficient correlations were conducted in an attempt to identify what factors had statistically significant correlations to superintendent job satisfaction (Salkind, 2014).

Bias

Response bias occurs when the responses do not reflect the views of the sample or population (Creswell, 2012). One form of bias would be if the response rate is very low yet the researcher made broad generalizations based on this limited response. A second bias could be that this researcher is a current superintendent with a “very high” level of job satisfaction. Distributing a survey via email in which all respondents are anonymous helped reduce bias. The absence of face-to-face interaction between researcher and respondent also reduced bias.

Summary

While there have been various studies of superintendent job satisfaction over the years, few have been conducted in New York State. With the many changes to the education landscape in New York State since the Padalino (2009) study, this survey provides a measure of the levels of satisfaction of New York State school superintendents.

This study used the Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey (Sharp et al., 2002) to determine the current levels of superintendent job satisfaction. The 49-question survey was used with permission from the authors. This researcher amended the survey to add five questions about job stress related to five current issues in public education in New York State.

Using the Sharp et al. (2002) survey also allowed for a historical analysis as a similar methodology was used in a prior study (Padalino, 2009) to gauge superintendent job satisfaction in New York State. The survey asked superintendents to identify aspects of the job that they like the most and least, explored what motivated current superintendents to

pursue the position and whether they would seek the position if starting their careers again. This online, anonymous survey was emailed to all New York State superintendents, except those within New York City, in hopes of garnering a rich data set. Chapter Four discusses the results of the data analysis for all 54 survey questions as they relate to each of the research questions posed in this study.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

With major education policy changes on the state and federal levels in recent years, schools and school leaders have been forced to adapt to an increasingly dynamic policy environment. As policy has been constricting district operating resources and driving performance accountability, the impact these demands were having on superintendent job satisfaction was unknown. The purpose of this study was to investigate superintendent job satisfaction in an era of reduced resources and increased accountability.

The Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey (Sharp et al., 2002) was used to determine the current levels of superintendent job satisfaction. Using this tool also allowed for a historical analysis as a similar methodology was used in a prior study (Padalino, 2009) to gauge superintendent job satisfaction in New York State. The survey asked superintendents to identify aspects of the job that they like the most and least, explored what motivated current superintendents to pursue the position and whether they would seek the position if starting their careers again. This researcher amended the survey to add five questions about job stress related to five current issues in public education in New York State. Data was collected regarding four policy issues: Common Core State Standards, new Annual Professional Performance Review, Gap Elimination Adjustment and the real property tax levy limit law commonly referred to as the 2% property tax cap, and one governance issue: superintendent-school board relations.

This chapter presents the findings of this study based on the survey considering the five research questions:

1. Given the increased stress and pressures inherent to the position, was there a downward trend in superintendent job satisfaction among New York State superintendents?
2. What factors most contributed to superintendent job satisfaction and dissatisfaction?
3. What motivated current superintendents to pursue the superintendency?
4. What percentage of superintendents would aspire to the position again if starting their careers over?
5. What differences were there in responses to the current policy issues in survey question 7 from new superintendents (1-5 years) and veteran superintendents (6 or more years)?

Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

A total of 684 superintendents across New York State, excluding those in New York City, were sent an introductory email requesting their participation in this study. A sample of 280 respondents (40.9% response rate) participated in the study. Not all respondents answered every question so the number who did complete each question, n, varied slightly from question to question.

The demographics of the sample showed great diversity among respondents in terms of length of service as a superintendent, years in education, number of superintendencies held, gender and age. The same can be said about the characteristics of the districts where the superintendents served, as the sample was diverse with regard to student enrollment, socioeconomic status and location in New York State.

Based on survey response (n=271), the average number of years respondents served as a superintendent was 7.6. More than 50% of responding superintendents were in their first six years and more than 75% were in their first 10 years (Table 1). The average number of superintendencies held by respondents was 1.5 (n=271). Approximately 70 percent of the respondents were male and 30 percent were female.

As a comparison, *Snapshot 2012* (Terranova et al., 2012) found the average tenure of New York State superintendents to be 7.3 years, average number of superintendencies held was 1.5 and percentage of female superintendents was 30.9%. When comparing *Snapshot 2012* to this study, the results were very similar giving credibility to this study in terms of being generalizable to New York State as a whole.

Table 1

Years as a Superintendent

Years	Percent	Frequency
1	8.1%	22
2	13.3%	36
3	9.2%	25
4	5.9%	16
5	8.1%	22
6	8.9%	24
7	6.6%	18
8	3.7%	10
9	7.7%	21
10	4.4%	12
11	6.3%	17
12	1.8%	5
13	3.3%	9
14	1.8%	5
15	2.2%	6
16	1.5%	4
17	0.7%	2
19	1.1%	3
20 - 25	2.6%	6
26 – 29	1.5%	4
30 – 36	1.5%	4

n = 271

In terms of age of the survey respondents, more than 60% were between the ages of 46 and 60. Three respondents (1%) were under the age of 35, eight were between the ages of 36 and 40 (3%) while 20 (7%) were over the age of 65. The age group representing the largest percentage of the sample was ages 51 – 55 with (22.5%) of the respondents in this group. Terranova et al. (2012) found the New York State superintendent average age to be similar at 52.6 years. Table 2 details the age groups of all survey respondents (n=280).

Table 2

Superintendent Age

Age Group	Percent	Frequency
Under 35	1.07%	3
36 – 40	2.86%	8
41 – 45	12.86%	36
46 – 50	20.00%	56
51 – 55	22.50%	63
56 – 60	18.57%	52
61 – 65	15.00%	42
Over 65	7.14%	20
		n = 280

Table 3 showed that the school district student enrollment of respondents (n=279) represented a wide range of sizes with 47 districts (16.85%) having less than 500 students and 19 districts (6.81%) having 6,000 or more students. The largest enrollment group was 1,000 – 2,499 students with 30.82% (n=86). More than 70% of the districts (n=196) had less than 2,500 students. In comparison, the National Center for Educational Statistics (2014) listed 69.7% of New York State districts having less than 2,500 students.

Table 3

School District Size

Enrollment	Percent	Frequency
Less than 500	16.85%	47
500 – 999	22.58%	63
1,000 – 2,499	30.82%	86
2,500 – 3,999	12.90%	36
4,000 – 5,999	10.04%	28
6,000 or more	6.81%	19
n = 279		

The respondents reported student demographic factors including the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch. This provided a snapshot of the relative socioeconomic status of the districts in this study (see Table 4). The largest number of respondents (34.78%; n=96) reported that 40 – 59% of their students were receiving free and reduced lunch. Both extremes (0-19% and 80-100% students receiving free and reduced lunch) were represented. Although, the highest range only accounted for approximately 1% of the respondents (n=3). Less than 25% of all districts represented in this survey had a free and reduced lunch percentage in the 0 – 19% category. Students in the other 75% of school districts were poorer in terms of the percentage receiving free and reduced lunch. Approximately 53% of all students in New York State received free and reduced lunch in the 2014-15 school year (New York State Education Department, 2015).

Table 4

Percent of District Students on Free and/or Reduced Lunch

Percent of Students	Percent	Frequency
0 – 19	23.55%	65
20 – 39	26.45%	73
40 – 59	34.78%	96
60 – 79	14.13%	39
80 – 100	1.09%	3
n = 276		

Table 5 (n=278) shows that the survey respondents provided representation from across the state throughout the pre-established regions. To clearly identify the regions for the respondents, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association's method of dividing the state into sections was used (www.nysphsaa.org, 2015). Since every respondent would know what athletic section their schools participated in, this prevented different interpretations by the respondents in terms of self-identifying district region. The western (21.94%; n=61) and central (18.71%; n=52) regions contributed the largest portion of respondents. The Adirondack region had the fewest respondents (12.59%; n=35).

Table 5

Superintendent Participation by Region of New York State

Region	Percent	Frequency
Western (sections 5 & 6)	21.94%	61
Central (sections 3 & 4)	18.71%	52
Adirondacks (sections 7 & 10)	12.59%	35
Capital District (section 2)	16.19%	45
Hudson Valley (sections 1 & 9)	14.75%	41
Long Island (sections 8 & 11)	15.83%	44
		n = 278

In summary, the descriptive analysis above revealed that superintendents from all regions of the state, a variety of district sizes as determined by student enrollment and various socioeconomic levels as determined by students enrolled in free and reduced lunch were represented in this study. It also showed that superintendents of various ages and levels of experience were represented in this study. With more than 40% of all New York State superintendents participating, this study was able to obtain a significant sample of superintendents from New York State. In addition, the comparison data from *Snapshot 2012* (Terranova et al., 2012) on the superintendency and the National Center for Educational Statistics (2014) on school district size showed similar overall statistics compared to the statistics in this study; thus, lending credibility to this research study.

Most of the superintendents who responded to the survey were male (70%) and were between the ages of 46 and 60 (61%). The largest percentage worked in a district with less than 2,500 students (70%) and had been a superintendent for six years or less (53%).

Research Question One: Trends in Superintendent Job Satisfaction

Given the increased stress and pressure inherent to the position, was there a downward trend in superintendent job satisfaction among New York State superintendents? Overall superintendent job satisfaction decreased more than 15% since the Padalino (2009) study. In addition, all four current policy initiatives were identified as being negative in the opinion of respondents: the rollout of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) and the 2% property tax cap. The one governance issue, working with Board of Education, was identified as being positive by the respondents.

Of the superintendents who responded to the questions related to job satisfaction (n=279), 60.21% (n=168) rated their overall job satisfaction as high or very high (Table 6). From a historical perspective, this was a lower rate of job satisfaction than the Padalino (2009) study of New York State superintendents in which 75.6% felt that way. This was a decrease of 15.39% over a six-year time span.

Table 6

Overall Superintendent Job Satisfaction

	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High
Percentage	2.87%	10.04%	26.88%	40.50%	19.71%
Frequency	8	28	75	113	55
n = 279					

This study also asked superintendents if their overall job satisfaction had changed since first becoming a superintendent (Table 7). Approximately 25% of the respondents (n=70) indicated that their job satisfaction had remained the same while the percentages that

indicated their job satisfaction had increased (37.86%; n=106) and decreased (37.14%; n=104) were very similar. In sum, 62.14% (n=174) of respondents have not seen an increase in job satisfaction since first entering the role.

Table 7

Change in Superintendent Job Satisfaction Since First Entering the Role

	Decreased Dramatically	Decreased Some	Remained the Same	Increased Some	Increased Dramatically
Percentage	8.57%	28.57%	25.00%	29.29%	8.57%
Frequency	24	80	70	82	24
n = 280					

Five new questions were added to the original survey (Sharp et al., 2002) to gauge superintendent feelings in five current areas (see Table 8). In this study, the purpose of the new questions were to gauge superintendent feelings about these issues and the impact of the current issues on superintendent job satisfaction. The response choices were: decreased dramatically, decreased some, remained the same, increased some and increased dramatically. Four of these questions addressed policy issues implemented in New York State since the Padalino (2009) study. They were the rollout of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) and the 2% property tax cap. The fifth item, working with the board of education (BOE), was a governance issue. Only working with the BOE was positive while the other four items were resoundingly negative.

Working with the board of education (n=280) was identified by 81.43% (n=228) of the respondents as being somewhat positive or very positive while only 18.57% (n=52) rated

it as neutral, somewhat negative or very negative. Superintendent-board relations have in the past been a common reason for a superintendent's departure from a district (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Cooper et al., 2000; Houston, 2006). Thus, this researcher felt it was important to ask this question in the current climate.

Conversely, dealing with the GEA (n=280) was identified by 93.22% (n=261) of the respondents as feeling somewhat negative or very negative while only 6.78% (n=19) rated it as neutral, somewhat positive or very positive. The state's rollout of the CCSS (n=279) was identified by 77.06% (n=215) of the respondents as feeling somewhat negative or very negative while only 22.94% (n=64) rated it as neutral, somewhat positive or very positive. Implementing the new APPR (n=280) was identified by 76.43% (n=214) of the respondents as feeling somewhat negative or very negative while only 23.57% (n=66) rated it as neutral, somewhat positive or very positive. Operating under the 2% property tax cap (n=279) was identified by 75.54% (n=228) of the respondents as feeling somewhat negative or very negative while only 24.47% (n=52) rated it as neutral, somewhat positive or very positive. There was overwhelming consensus from the respondents as to their negative feelings about all four policies as they relate to job satisfaction.

Table 8

Superintendent Feelings About Five Current Issues as They Relate to Role as Superintendent

Key Issue	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Neutral	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive
Working with BOE Frequency n=280	2.86% 8	9.64% 27	6.07% 17	21.43% 60	60.00% 168
2% Tax Cap Frequency n=278	39.93% 111	35.61% 99	17.63% 49	5.76% 16	1.08% 3
GEA Frequency n=280	76.43% 214	16.79% 47	5.71% 16	0.36% 1	0.71% 2
New APPR Frequency n=280	39.29% 110	37.14% 104	10.00% 28	12.86% 36	0.71% 2
CCSS Rollout Frequency n=279	37.99% 106	39.07% 109	8.60% 24	13.26% 37	1.08% 3

Despite the strong feelings of the superintendents on these five current issues, only one of the five issues showed a significant correlation to superintendent job satisfaction. This issue was “working with the board of education” ($r = .461$). Table 9 shows that while superintendents have strong negative feelings regarding the four policy issues, there was not a significant correlation between any of these four issues and superintendent job satisfaction.

Table 9

Correlation between Superintendent Job Satisfaction and Five Current Issues in Rank Order

	Overall Superintendent Job Satisfaction	
	r	n
Working with BOE	.461	279
CCSS Rollout	.169	278
New APPR	.113	279
2% Property Tax Cap	.084	277
Gap Elimination Adjustment	.054	279

In summary, overall superintendent job satisfaction decreased more than 15% since the Padalino (2009) survey. In addition, four current policy initiatives were identified as having a negative effect on their position as superintendent: the 2% property tax cap, the Gap Elimination Adjustment, the new APPR and the rollout of the CCSS. With ratings between 75% and 93% negative, the survey respondents overwhelmingly disapproved of these policy issues. However, the Pearson coefficient did not show a significant correlation between the superintendents' feelings on these four issues and superintendent job satisfaction. Working with the Board of Education was found to have a significant positive correlation to superintendent job satisfaction.

According to Salkind (2013), if $r = +.80$ or higher there is a very strong positive relationship. If $r = +.60$ to $+.79$, a strong positive relationship exists. If $r = +.40$ to $+.59$, a moderate positive relationship exists. If $r = +.20$ to $+.39$ means a weak positive relationship and $.00$ to $+.19$ means no or a negligible relationship.

Research Question Two: Factors that Contributed to Superintendent Job Satisfaction

What factors most contributed to superintendent job satisfaction and dissatisfaction? Specifically, the survey asked superintendents, “What do you like most about being a superintendent?” The respondents were asked to rate the items using five possible choices: very weak, weak, neutral, strong or very strong.

Table 10 lists all 17 survey items with the combined percentages of strong and very strong responses. Six items received more than 90% of respondents’ votes for strong or very strong reasons for liking the superintendency. They were: “an opportunity to impact students”, “substantial input into direction of the school district”, “opportunity to build a team of educators”, “make a difference in teaching and learning”, and “have daily challenges in the job”. Four items had combined strong and very strong reasons for liking the superintendency of less than a 50% signaling a weak like or perhaps a dislike about these aspects of the job. They included: “in control of my daily schedule”, “enjoy the status of my job”, “able to work a twelve-month job”, and “like the high visibility of the job”. In addition, Table 8 lists the four current policy issues in which the respondents had negative feelings as they relate to their roles as superintendents.

Table 10

All 17 Factors that Contributed to Superintendent Job Satisfaction Ranked by the Combined Strong and Very Strong Percentages

Item	Combined Strong and Very Strong Percentages
1. An opportunity to impact students	97.43%
2. Substantial input into direction of school district	95.97%
3. Opportunity to build a team of educators	94.14%
4. Able to utilize the skills I have	94.13%
5. Make a difference in teaching and learning	92.28%
6. Have daily challenges in this job	91.18%
7. Can interact with a wide variety of people	87.18%
8. Enjoy the school district culture	78.31%
9. Opportunity to work with people I like	76.29%
10. Enjoy being the CEO, making final decisions	69.79%
11. Can influence community decisions	66.54%
12. Enjoy working with the Board of Education	63.37%
13. Well paid for this job	53.41%
14. In control of my daily schedule	47.06%
15. Enjoy the status of the job	44.12%
16. Able to work twelve-month job, not a separate summer job	36.53%
17. Like the high visibility of the job	30.89%

Providing more information on the factors contributing to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, Table 11 lists the top three items in rank order based on mean scores and Table 12 lists the bottom three items in rank order based on mean scores. Table 11 lists the

top three items in rank order using mean scores with the majority of the respondents identifying these five items as strong or very strong.

Table 11

Three Highest Rated Factors that Contributed to Superintendent Job Satisfaction in Rank Order by Mean Score

Item	Mean Score
I have an opportunity to impact students. n=272	4.58
I have substantial input into the direction of the district. n=273	4.55
I have an opportunity to build a team of educators. n=273	4.47

The top three highest rated factors in Padalino (2009) were as follows: substantial input into the direction of the district (mean score of 4.67), opportunity to build a team of educators (4.5), and always have daily challenges in this job (4.34).

Table 12 lists the bottom three items in rank order using mean scores with the majority of the respondents identifying these five items as neutral, weak or very weak. All three of these items had mean scores above the neutral point (3.0). Thus, these items can be classified as neutral or slightly likable but would not be considered weak or very weak factors.

Table 12

Three Lowest Rated Factors that Contributed to Superintendent Job Satisfaction in Rank Order by Mean Score

Item	Mean Score
I am in control of my daily schedule. n=272	3.36
I am able to work on a twelve-month job, not a separate summer job. n=271	3.15
I like the high visibility of the job. n=272	3.14

The three lowest rated items in Padalino (2009) were as follows: enjoy the status of the job (mean score of 3.4), like the high visibility of the job (3.05), and able to work on a 12 month job, not a separate summer job (2.99).

Table 13 shows the correlation between superintendent job satisfaction as measured in question 8 and the 17 factors superintendents were asked to rank from very weak to very strong in question 11. “Enjoy working with the Board of Education” had the highest rating of $r = .474$. This compares to the earlier question where “Working with the Board of Education” scored $r = .461$. The next four items in terms of correlation were “enjoy the status of the job”, “enjoy the school district culture”, “an opportunity to impact students” and “opportunity to build a team of educators”. In fact, 13 of the 17 items had a higher correlation than any of the four current issues listed in Table 9.

According to Salkind (2013), if $r = +.80$ or higher there is a very strong positive relationship. If $r = +.60$ to $+.79$, a strong positive relationship exists. If $r = +.40$ to $+.59$, a moderate positive relationship exists. If $r = +.20$ to $+.39$ means a weak positive relationship and $.00$ to $+.19$ means no or a negligible relationship.

Table 13

Correlation between Superintendent Job Satisfaction and 17 Factors in Rank Order

	Overall Superintendent Job Satisfaction	
	r	n
Enjoy working with the Board of Education	.474	272
Enjoy the status of the job	.340	271
Enjoy the school district culture	.322	271
An opportunity to impact students	.299	271
Opportunity to build a team of educators	.299	272
Opportunity to work with people I like	.291	269
Substantial input into direction of school district	.275	272
Make a difference in teaching and learning	.262	271
Well paid for this job	.235	263
Like the high visibility of the job	.215	271
Can interact with a wide variety of people	.209	272
Can influence community decisions	.208	268
Able to utilize the skills I have	.207	272
Enjoy being the CEO, making final decisions	.155	272
Able to work twelve-month job, not a separate summer job	.125	270
Have daily challenges in this job	.121	271
In control of my daily schedule	.097	271

Table 14 addresses the respondents' answers to the question: what are the top three reasons why you like your job as superintendent? By asking the respondents (n=271) to

narrow their focus from all 17 items down to their top three allowed the respondents to identify their key reasons for liking their jobs.

Table 14

The Three Most Liked Positive Aspects of the Job in Rank Order

Item	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Frequency
Opportunity to impact students	115	56	23	194
Substantial input into direction of the district	70	43	46	159
Make a difference in teaching and learning	36	60	48	144

n = 271

In summary, the three highest ranked aspects of being a superintendent are easily distinguishable against the larger pool of 17 items. The “opportunity to impact students” received the highest response (n=194), “having substantial input into the direction of the district” was the second highest response (n=159) and “making a difference in teaching and learning” was the third most popular response (n=144). An “opportunity to build a team of educators” was the fourth highest response (n=97) and “able to utilize the skills I have” placed fifth (n=43) both had far lower frequencies than the top three items.

Research Question Three: Motivations to Pursue the Superintendency

What motivated current superintendents to pursue the superintendency? The respondents were asked to rate 12 items using five possible choices: very weak, weak, neutral, strong or very strong. Table 15 ranks all 12 items when combining the strong and very strong percentages. Only three items scored above 90% - “I thought I could make a

difference”, “the job enabled me to provide leadership”, and “the job would allow me to move the district forward”. I had “paid my dues” finished in last place with only 5.27%.

Table 15

Motivating Factors to Pursue the Superintendency Ranked by the Combined Strong and Very Strong Percentages

Item	Combined Strong and Very Strong Percentages
1. I thought I could make a difference	96.65%
2. The job would enable me to provide leadership	93.33%
3. The job would allow me to move the district forward	91.08%
4. The job would give me a broader span of influence	76.96%
5. The job was a logical progression in my career	73.50%
6. I wanted to be all that I could be	64.93%
7. I wanted to go beyond the building administrator level	64.55%
8. I thought I could do a better job than those who came before me	48.51%
9. The job would provide me with financial security	38.80%
10. Other superintendents I knew or worked for seemed to enjoy their work	38.79%
11. I thought I would like working with the people in the district office	27.34%
12. I had “paid my dues”	5.27%
	n = 270

Tables 16 lists the 12 items in rank order based on mean scores. The highest mean score was “I can make a difference” with a mean of 4.58. “I had paid my dues” had the lowest mean score of 1.88.

Table 16

Reasons for Liking the Job of Superintendent Ranked by Mean Score

Item	Mean Score
I can make a difference. N=269	4.58
The job would enable me to provide leadership. n=270	4.32
The job would enable me to move the district forward. n=269	4.21
The job would give me a broader span of influence. n=269	3.92
The job was a logical progression in my career. n=268	3.90
I wanted to be all that I could be. n=268	3.79
I wanted to go beyond the building administrator level. n=268	3.66
I thought I could do a better job than others that came before me. n=268	3.40
Other superintendents I knew or worked for seemed to enjoy their work. n=268	3.16
The job would provide me with financial security. n=268	3.15
I thought I would like working with the people in the district office. n=267	2.99
I had “paid my dues.” n=266	1.88

Tables 17 addresses superintendents’ answers to the question: what are the top three reasons that motivated you to become a superintendent? By asking the respondents to narrow their focus from all 12 items down to their top three, the frequencies of three items were dramatically higher than the rest. Those three were: “I thought I could make a difference” (n=158), “the job would allow me to move the district forward” (n=157), and “the job would enable me to provide leadership” (n=148). The fourth highest ranked item, “the job would give me a broader span of influence”, was far behind in terms of frequency (n=80).

Table 17

The Top Three Reasons That Motivated You to Become a Superintendent in Rank Order

Item	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Frequency
I thought I could make a difference	64	46	48	158
The job would allow me to move the district forward	76	47	34	157
The job would enable me to provide leadership	50	62	36	148
				n = 270

In summary, the three leading motivators of becoming a superintendent are easily distinguishable against the larger pool of 12 items. When looking at the highest number of first, second and third place selections separately from the overall frequency, different results occurred albeit among the same three choices. “The job would allow me to move the district forward” was the most selected item as the number one reason for becoming a superintendent (n=76) even though it had the second highest overall frequency. “The job would enable me to provide leadership” was the most popular number two reason (n=62) even though it was third overall in frequency. “I thought I could make a difference” was the most popular number three choice (n=48) for becoming a superintendent despite having the highest overall frequency.

Research Question Four: Likelihood of Seeking the Superintendency Again

What percentage of superintendents would aspire to the position again if starting their careers over? Of the respondents in this study (n=278), 81.29% (n=226) responded yes while 18.71% (n=52) responded no. This is a slight decrease from the Padalino (2009) study of

New York State superintendents in which approximately 84% responded in the affirmative that they would again aspire to the superintendency if starting their career over.

Table 18

If I had to do it all over again, would I become a superintendent? – Question 10

Response	Percent	Frequency
Yes	81.29%	226
No	18.71%	52
n = 278		

It was interesting to find that more than 80% of the respondents said they would seek the superintendency again despite their extremely negative responses to the four policy initiatives currently confronting them in their roles. As detailed in Table 8, the respondents had very strong negative feelings about the two key financial policies (2% tax cap and GEA) as well as the two key academic policies (new APPR and the CCSS rollout). Therefore, it appears these outside forces have not deterred current superintendents from seeking the position again if starting their careers over.

A large majority of respondents in this study (81.43%) felt positive about working with the Board of Education. A similar number (81.29%) said yes to the question: “If I had to do it all over again, would I become a superintendent?” Further analysis showed that those who felt positive in terms of working with the board of education were the same people who said they would be a superintendent again if starting over. Thus, superintendent-school board relations is far more important to superintendent job satisfaction than any outside factors such as Common Core, APPR, 2% tax cap or the GEA.

Research Question Five: Comparison of New and Veteran Superintendents' Views on Current Issues

What differences were there in responses to the key policy issues in survey question 7 from new superintendents (1-5 years) and veteran superintendents (6 or more years)? The five current issues in question 7 were: working with the board of education (BOE), 2% property tax cap, Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), and rollout of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Table 19, which is a variation of Table 8, is shown below to detail the overall responses.

Table 19

Superintendent Feelings about Five Current Issues – Question 7

Key Issue	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Neutral	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive
Working with BOE	2.86%	9.64%	6.07%	21.43%	60.00%
2% Tax Cap	39.93%	35.61%	17.63%	5.76%	1.08%
GEA	76.43%	16.79%	5.71%	0.36%	0.71%
New APPR	39.29%	37.14%	10.00%	12.86%	0.71%
CCSS Rollout	37.99%	39.07%	8.60%	13.26%	1.08%

Table 20 presents the aggregate information from Table 8 sorted into two groups of superintendents. The new superintendents' group had 1–5 years of experience while the veteran superintendents' group had 6 or more years of experience in the position. In calculating the mean, the following values were attached to the descriptors as such: very negative (1.0), negative (2.0), neutral (3.0), somewhat positive (4.0) and very positive (5.0).

Table 20

Superintendent Feelings on Five Current Issues – Comparing New and Veteran Superintendents

Key Issue	Years as Superintendent	n	Mean	S.D.
Working with BOE	6 or more years	150	4.20	1.09
	1 – 5 years	121	4.30	1.17
2% Tax Cap	6 or more years	148	1.86	1.86
	1 – 5 years	121	1.99	1.99
GEA	6 or more years	150	1.28	1.28
	1 – 5 years	121	1.34	1.34
New APPR	6 or more years	150	1.98	1.98
	1 – 5 years	121	2.00	2.00
CCSS Rollout	6 or more years	149	1.95	1.95
	1 – 5 years	121	2.07	2.07

In summary, the new and veteran superintendents groups agreed that their feelings about working with the board of education were positive. Both groups also agreed that their feelings toward the four current policy items were negative. The new superintendents' group had a higher mean score on all five questions. Thus indicating that on average they were slightly more positive than the veteran superintendents' group about working with the board of education and slightly less negative than the veteran superintendents' group on the other four items.

Summary

More than 40% of superintendents across New York State participated in this study representing all regions, district sizes and socioeconomic levels. The overall job satisfaction

of the participating superintendents was 60.21% when the high and very high ratings were combined. This was more than a 15% decrease compared to the Padalino (2009) study of New York State superintendents.

When asked what factors most contributed to superintendent job satisfaction, four factors were clearly indicated by a large majority of respondents in this order: “the opportunity to impact students” (mean score of 4.55 out of 5), “having substantial input into the direction of the district” (4.47), “an opportunity to build a team of educators” (4.36), and “making a difference in teaching and learning” (4.31). The five weakest rated job factors included: “I like the high visibility of the job” (3.14), “I am able to work a twelve-month job” (3.15), “I am in control of my daily schedule” (3.36), “I enjoy the status of the job” (3.42), and “I am well paid for this job” (3.52).

Five new questions were added to this adapted survey to gauge superintendent feelings on current policy issues confronting them at this time. “Working with Board of Education” was rated as positive or very positive by more than 81% of the superintendents. However, the other four current issues were identified as causing negative feelings from superintendents in relation to job satisfaction. The 2% property tax cap, the new APPR and the rollout of the Common Core Standards all scored more than 75% negative when combining somewhat negative and very negative responses. The Gap Elimination Adjustment received the highest negative response with a score of more than 93% negative. While superintendent feelings were strong in this study, the only significant correlation between superintendent job satisfaction and these five items was a positive one with “working with the Board of Education”. The other four issues elicited strong feelings but not strong correlations.

The data was analyzed to look for differences among new (1-5 years) and veteran (6 or more) superintendents with regards to the five new questions added to the survey. Both groups were very positive about working with the Board of Education and both were very negative about the other four current issues. While the new superintendents' group was slightly more positive about working with the Board of Education and slightly less negative about the other four issues, the results were very similar across the two groups.

The three leading motivators for becoming a superintendent identified in this survey were: "I thought I could make a difference" (mean score of 4.58 out of 5), "the job would enable me to provide leadership" (4.32), and "the job would allow me to move the district forward" (4.21). The three factors with the lowest mean scores were: "I had paid my dues" (1.88), "I thought I would like working with the people in the district office" (2.99), and "the job would provide me with financial security" (3.15).

The superintendents in this survey were asked: if I had to do it over again, would I become a superintendent? More than 81% said yes they would aspire to the superintendency again. This is a similar response to the approximately 84% who said yes in the Padalino (2009) study.

In summary, superintendent job satisfaction as measured in this survey was lower than in a similar study done six years ago (Padalino, 2009). Four current policy issues that were not present in 2009 but have more recently confronted New York State superintendents include the 2% property tax cap, the GEA, new APPR and the CCSS rollout. All four of these issues had strong negative feelings among the superintendents surveyed but not a strong correlation to superintendent job satisfaction. Working with the Board of Education

elicited strong positive feelings from the respondents and a significant correlation to superintendent job satisfaction.

Chapter Five: Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

A review of the literature in the first decade of the 21st century pointed to increased job satisfaction among school superintendents (Sharp et al., 2002; Padalino, 2009). While the job satisfaction of New York State superintendents has been measured before (Padalino, 2009), it was prior to several major federal and state education policy changes, and state school finance policy changes. In light of these changing conditions in the field of education in New York State, a new study was warranted to gauge the job satisfaction levels of today's superintendents and to compare these levels to previous levels as measured in the Padalino study.

As these federal and state policies constricted district operating resources and drove performance accountability, the impact these demands were having on superintendents was unknown prior to this study. Research was limited on both these new policies and their implications.

The purpose of this study was to investigate New York State school superintendent job satisfaction in an era of reduced resources and increased accountability. Five research questions were developed to better understand superintendent job satisfaction and the potential factors contributing to their job satisfaction:

1. Given the increased stress and pressures inherent in the position, was there a downward trend in superintendent job satisfaction among New York State superintendents?
2. What factors most contributed to superintendent job satisfaction and dissatisfaction?
3. What motivated current superintendents to pursue the superintendency?

4. What percentage of superintendents would aspire to the position again if starting their careers over?
5. What differences were there in responses to the key policy issues in survey question 7 from new superintendents (1-5 years) and veteran superintendents (6 or more years)?

The Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey (Sharp et al., 2002) was used to determine the current levels of superintendent job satisfaction. Using this tool allowed for a historical analysis as a similar methodology was used in a prior study (Padalino, 2009) to gauge superintendent job satisfaction in New York State. The survey asked superintendents to identify aspects of the job that they liked the most and least, explored what motivated current superintendents to pursue the position and whether they would seek the position if starting their careers again. This researcher amended the survey to add five questions about job stress related to five current issues in public education in New York State.

A total of 684 superintendents across New York State, excluding those in New York City, were sent an introductory email requesting their participation in this study. New York City was not included in this study because of its dissimilar governance structure. From the pool of 684 superintendents, 280 (40.9%) respondents participated in the survey.

This chapter is divided into three sections: summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Summary of Findings

Demographic information: The demographics of the sample showed great diversity among respondents in terms of length of service as a superintendent, years in education, number of superintendencies held, gender and age. The same can be said about the

characteristics of the districts where the superintendents served, as the sample was diverse with regard to student enrollment, socioeconomic status and location in New York State.

Most of the superintendents who responded to the survey were male (70%) and between the ages of 46 and 60 (61%). The largest percentage worked in a district with less than 2,500 students (70%) and had been a superintendent for six years or less (53%). Based on survey response, the average number of years as a superintendent was 7.6. More than 50% of superintendents were in their first six years and more than 75% were in their first 10 years. The average number of superintendentcies held was 1.5. Approximately 70 percent of the respondents were male and 30 percent were female.

As a comparison, *Snapshot 2012* (Terranova et al., 2012) with 462 respondents found the average tenure of New York State superintendents to be 7.3 years, average number of superintendentcies held was 1.5 and percentage of female superintendents was 30.9%. When comparing *Snapshot 2012* to this study, the results were very similar giving credibility to this study in terms of being generalizable to New York State as a whole.

Research Question 1: Superintendent job satisfaction.

Given the increased stress and pressure inherent to the position, was there a downward trend in superintendent job satisfaction among New York State superintendents? Yes. Of the superintendents who responded to this question related to job satisfaction, 60.21% rated their overall job satisfaction as high or very high. From a historical perspective, this was a lower rate of job satisfaction than the Padalino (2009) study of New York State superintendents in which 75.6% felt that way. This was a decrease of 15.39% over a six-year time span.

Five new questions were added to the original survey (Sharp et al., 2002) to gauge superintendent feelings in five current areas. Four of these addressed new policy issues in New York State since the Padalino (2009) study. They were the rollout of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) and the 2% property tax cap. The fifth item, working with the board of education, is not a new issue but still very important to superintendents. Only working with the board of education produced positive superintendent feelings (81.43%) while the other four items were resoundingly negative.

Superintendent-board relations have in the past been a common reason for a superintendent's departure from a district (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Cooper et al., 2000; Houston, 2006). Thus, respondents feeling resoundingly positive about working with the board of education is welcomed news especially during an era of great change.

In summary, overall superintendent job satisfaction decreased more than 15% when compared to the Padalino (2009) survey. In addition, four current policy initiatives were identified as being negative in the opinion of respondents: the Gap Elimination Adjustment (93.22%), the rollout of the CCSS (77.06%), the new APPR (76.43%), and the 2% property tax cap (75.54%).

While superintendents had strong negative feelings regarding the four policy issues, there was not a significant correlation between any of these four policy issues and superintendent job satisfaction when using the Pearson correlation coefficient. A significant positive correlation was identified between "working with the board of education" and

superintendent job satisfaction. While there was a 15% decrease in superintendent job satisfaction, the cause was not discerned in this study.

Research Question 2: Contributing factors to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Specifically, the survey asked superintendents, “What do you like most about being a superintendent?” Respondents were asked to rank 17 items ranging from very weak to very strong on a five-point scale.

Six items received more than 90% of respondents’ votes as strong or very strong reasons for liking the superintendency. They were: “an opportunity to impact students”, “substantial input into direction of the school district”, “opportunity to build a team of educators”, “make a difference in teaching and learning”, and “have daily challenges in the job”. Four items had less than a 50% score signaling a weak like or perhaps a dislike about the job. They included: “in control of my daily schedule”, “enjoy the status of my job”, “able to work a twelve-month job”, and “like the high visibility of the job”.

These findings were consistent with Padalino (2009) in New York State, who had similar findings using the Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey (Sharp et al., 2002). The top three items in this study were: opportunity to impact students (mean score of 4.58), substantial input into the direction of the district (4.55), and opportunity to build a team of educators (4.47). The top three highest rated factors in Padalino (2009) were as follows: substantial input into the direction of the district (4.67), opportunity to build a team of educators (4.5), and always have daily challenges in this job (4.34).

The bottom three items in this study were: in control of my daily schedule (mean score of 3.36), able to work on a twelve-month job, not a separate summer job (3.15), and

like the high visibility of the job (3.14). The three lowest rated items in Padalino (2009) were as follows: enjoy the status of the job (3.4), like the high visibility of the job (3.05), and able to work on a 12 month job, not a separate summer job (2.99).

Crane (2006) found that intrinsic factors played a larger role in job satisfaction of school superintendents than extrinsic factors. Johnson (1998) found increased visibility was a negative aspect of the position. Cunningham & Burdick (1999) identified high visibility and public scrutiny as reasons for the reduced pool of superintendent applicants.

Research Question 3: Motivation to seek the superintendency.

Cochran (1976) called for more research on school superintendent job satisfaction in hopes of attracting better talent to the position. He also argued that by defining the factors attributed to superintendent job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, it could help create more job satisfaction and subsequently more stability in the profession.

More than twenty years later, Malanowski (1999) claimed the majority of research in the field of job satisfaction was still focused on teachers and principals. While the research on school superintendent job satisfaction is not extensive (Malanowski, 1999; Cooper, 2000; Sharp et al., 2002; Padalino, 2009), examining the current research regarding the talent pool and superintendents' views about the position may help pave a direction for future research, pre-service education programs and policy decisions.

The survey asked superintendents, "What motivated you to pursue the superintendency?" The respondents were asked to rate 12 items ranging from very weak to very strong on a five-point scale.

The three leading motivators for becoming a superintendent were easily distinguishable against the larger pool of 12 items with more than 90% of respondents selecting them as strong or very strong reasons. “The job would allow me to move the district forward” was the most popular choice, “the job would enable me to provide leadership” was the second most popular choice, and “I thought I could make a difference” was the third most popular choice for becoming a superintendent.

The four lowest ranked items were: “the job would provide me with financial security” (38.80%); “other superintendents I knew or worked for seemed to enjoy their work” (38.79%); “I thought I would like working with the people in the district office” (27.34%) and “I had paid my dues” (5.27%).

Understanding what motivated current superintendents to seek the superintendency offers insight for those interested in the superintendency in the future and for superintendent search consultants. A study of New York State assistant superintendents found only one-third to be definitely interested in seeking the top job (Leach, 2009). Terranova et al. (2012) identified the scope of the role, having school-aged children and loss of job security as the leading factors to cause candidates to hesitate to apply for a superintendency. This study did not measure these factors.

Leach (2009) cited assistant superintendents’ ability to see firsthand how the demands of the job had adversely affected superintendents as a discouragement. Cetorelli (1997) found poor quality of life and loss of privacy as compelling factors. Volp et al. (2006) noted the next generation of superintendent candidates appeared to place less importance on advancement. In New York State, a wave of superintendent retirements coupled with

increased expectations of office holders had created a shortage of qualified candidates (Kamler, 2009).

In summary, a purpose of this study was to examine the motivation of current superintendents to aspire to the role and inform those who might consider it in the future. While this study did not survey prospective superintendents, the results may reduce the hesitancy on the part of potential superintendents.

Research Question 4: Likelihood of seeking the superintendency again.

Respondents were asked, “Would you aspire to the superintendency again if starting your career over?” Of the respondents in the study, 81.29% responded “yes” while 18.71% responded “no”. This is a slight decrease from the Padalino (2009) study in which approximately 84% responded in the affirmative that they would aspire to the superintendency if starting their career over.

It was interesting to find that more than 80% of the respondents said they would seek the superintendency again despite their extremely negative responses to the four policy initiatives currently confronting them in their roles. As stated above, the respondents had very strong negative feelings about the implementation of major New York State policies: two financial policies (2% tax cap and GEA) and the two academic policies (APPR and the CCSS rollout). Therefore, while these policies elicited strong negative feelings, it did not appear to have deterred current superintendents from seeking the position again if starting their careers over.

Job stress is nothing new to superintendents. Carver (2000) found the greatest stress for a superintendent was his or her relationship with the school board. Patterson (2001)

found dealing with continuous change and change in school board expectations to be great stressors.

A large majority of respondents in this study (81.43%) felt positive about working with the Board of Education. A similar number (81.29%) said yes to the question: “If I had to do it all over again, would I become a superintendent?” Further analysis showed that those who felt positive in terms of working with the board of education were the same people who said they would be a superintendent again if starting over.

Thus, superintendent-school board relations is far more important to superintendent job satisfaction than any outside factors such as Common Core, APPR, 2% tax cap or the GEA. In addition, the fact that almost 20% of current superintendents would not seek the position again may have negative ramifications for future applicant pools. Subordinates might be less likely to seek the top job if their boss had a negative view of the superintendency.

Research Question 5: Comparing new and veteran superintendents’ views.

The final research question asked: what differences were there in responses to the five current issues in survey question 7 from new superintendents (1-5 years) and veteran superintendents (6 or more years)? The five current issues in question 7 were: working with the board of education, 2% property tax cap, Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), and rollout of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The new and veteran superintendents groups agreed that their feelings about working with the board of education were positive. Both groups also agreed that their feelings toward

the four policy issues were negative. The new superintendents' group had a higher mean score on all five questions; thus, they were slightly more positive than the veteran superintendents' group about working with the board of education and slightly less negative than the veteran superintendents' group on the other four items.

Conclusions

Conclusion #1: Superintendent job satisfaction in this era of increased accountability and reduced resources, as measured in this survey, decreased more than 15% since the Padalino (2009) survey completed six years ago. Unhappy leaders will less effectively lead organizations. Four policy issues that were not present in 2009 but have more recently confronted New York State superintendents included the CCSS rollout, new APPR, the GEA and the 2% property tax cap. All four of these issues had strong negative ratings from the superintendents surveyed. However, a significant correlation between each of these issues and superintendent job satisfaction was not found.

Policy makers on both the state and federal levels should take note of this job satisfaction decline over the past six years. In addition, superintendents need to take an active role in advocacy efforts relating to these four issues. With educational issues currently in the forefront in Washington and Albany, now more than ever the voices of superintendents need to be heard to help shape legislation and regulations.

Conclusion #2: Despite the extremely negative results pertaining to the four current policy issues identified in this survey, more than 81% of the respondents rated "working with the board of education" as a positive experience. Furthermore, those respondents who felt positive about working with the board of education were the same people who said they

would be a superintendent again if starting over. Thus, superintendent-school board relations is far more important to superintendent job satisfaction than any outside factors such as Common Core, APPR, 2% tax cap or the GEA. Perhaps having such strong, negative external forces such as these helped the superintendents and school board members work together against the common enemy of certain government policies.

Conclusion #3: When respondents were asked to rank their reasons for liking the job of superintendent, the highest ranked items were factors that were more intrinsic in nature (opportunity to impact students, substantial input into the direction of the district, and opportunity to build a team of educators). Meanwhile, the lowest ranked items were more extrinsic factors (enjoy the status of the job and like the high visibility of the job). Most educators have a strong desire to help others when entering the profession. Still possessing this intrinsic motivation later in their careers shows that despite the many external pressures, superintendents still strive to make a difference in the lives of children.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Superintendents and Boards of Education.

Superintendents identified working with the board of education as a crucial element to superintendent job satisfaction. Therefore, a healthy superintendent-board of education relationship is important. Setting agreed-upon annual goals, having the board evaluate the superintendent on those goals and having honest dialogue in executive session will help further this relationship. Clearly defined roles for both the superintendent and the board of education are essential to prevent confusion and conflict. Superintendents should also look

for opportunities to involve their administrative teams in positive activities with boards of education which may help bolster the pool of superintendent candidates in the future.

Superintendents and Change.

Long-standing research about the negative impact of superintendent-school board relations were challenged by the findings in this study, which were overwhelmingly positive. Conversely, superintendents in this study had very negative feelings about the four current policy issues of CCSS rollout, APPR, GEA and 2% tax cap. Superintendents should play a key role in advocating for the proper course of action as it relates to educational policies.

Superintendents need training in leading an organization through a period of great change. It is unlikely that the rate of change will slow in the coming years. Thus, the superintendents need to develop the skills necessary to be successful in this environment. The overwhelmingly negative feelings of superintendents in this study toward these four change initiatives supports the need for training in the change process.

Policy Makers.

Superintendents in this study indicated very negative feelings toward the four policy issues. New York State's rollout of the Common Core and implementation of the new APPR yielded negative ratings of 77.06% and 76.43%, respectively. State legislators should consider these findings and encourage the state education department to make future changes only after: a) canvassing the state to obtain broad stakeholder input and b) developing an implementation plan that the state education department has the capacity to deliver to the field.

New York State's budget-cutting plan of the GEA and implementation of the 2% property tax cap yielded negative ratings of 93.22% and 75.54%, respectively. The GEA was implemented when New York State was operating in a deficit. This past year, New York State had a surplus for the first time in many years. Therefore, the state legislators should pledge to increase school district funding so that the GEA is completely eliminated. The 2% property tax cap was recently renewed without any changes to the original language. The 2016-17 budget cycle is forecasting far less than 2% increases for local school districts. There is concern that the cap might be at 0% or even negative based on stagnant economic factors. State legislators need to study this issue very closely.

Administrative preparation programs and professional organizations.

Administrative preparation programs could use this study to reflect on their current coursework and compare how it aligns with the respondents' answers. Based on the findings of this study, more attention needs to be devoted to two major areas: cultivating a positive relationship between superintendents and school boards, and training in leading system change.

The New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) and the New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS) are statewide organizations that advocate for their members. This study only increases the need for their partnership in educating school board members and superintendents in fostering the behaviors necessary to build a strong leadership team. A professional development program on superintendent-board relations that is offered jointly by the two organizations and available throughout the state on a regular basis would be a worthy endeavor.

Recommendations for Future Study

First, there is a downward trend in superintendent job satisfaction when comparing this study to Padalino (2009). A 15% decline over six years is significant. While this study was able to identify negative feelings toward state policies, it was not able to make a correlation between these policies and superintendent job satisfaction. Further study to identify the causes of this decline in superintendent job satisfaction would be warranted.

Second, this study focused solely on superintendents across New York State. With a 40.9% response rate, results were gathered with some level of certainty that they were generalizable to the entire state. Further research could be conducted as follows:

1. The Sharp et al. survey could be used with superintendents in other states to identify similarities and differences to this New York State study.
2. Survey current school administrators, excluding superintendents, to gauge their reasons for aspiring or not aspiring to the superintendency.
3. Survey current school administrators, excluding superintendents, to determine their job satisfaction.
4. Survey current board of education members about the current state of the superintendent-board relationship in their respective districts and how it could be improved.

Closing Statement

This study found that superintendent job satisfaction had decreased by more than 15% since the last similar study was conducted in 2009. This study also identified four current policy issues that elicited extremely negative feelings from the respondents. This researcher

argues that the increased accountability and reduced resources confronting school districts in New York State has made the superintendency more stressful but this study was unable to find a correlation between the current issues and the decrease in job satisfaction.

There were two major bright spots found in this study. The first was that the superintendents' feelings toward working with boards of education were very positive and showed significant correlation to superintendent job satisfaction. Thus, this study identified an important subject, superintendent-board relations, which can be improved upon at the local level with no state or federal government involvement required. The second piece of positive news was that more than 80% of the respondents would seek the superintendency again if starting their careers over. This is important because a superintendent's feelings about his or her job can have a positive or negative impact on other administrators who might seek the superintendency.

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Appendix A

Initial Email to Superintendents

Dear NYS Superintendents:

My name is John Bell and I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership program at Sage College in Albany. I am also a school superintendent. **I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study designed to investigate New York State superintendents' job satisfaction** and the contributing factors in an era of reduced resources and increased accountability.

The information gathered from this study will help inform leaders such as school boards and government agencies on the positive and negative aspects of the role of the superintendent. It will also provide recommendations to improve the role for current superintendents and make the role more attractive for the next wave of potential superintendents.

The online survey will take approximately 5 minutes and will be completely anonymous. You can access the survey at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XLFMCTQ>

The researcher will not have access to the identity of any individual completing the survey. After completion of the dissertation, all of the data will be destroyed. The results of the research will be reported in aggregate form and may be published in a professional journal or presented at professional meetings. I would be happy to share a copy of the results with you. Participation is voluntary. You may at any time during the survey stop or choose not to answer some questions with which you are not comfortable. If you decide to participate, that will constitute informed consent.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at bellj4@sage.edu or my doctoral chairperson, Dr. Ann Myers, at myersa1@sage.edu. This research has received the approval of the Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board, which functions to insure the protection of the rights of human participants. If you, as a participant, have any complaints about this survey, you may contact Dean Lori Quigley, Ph.D. of the Esteves School of Education at l.quigley@sage.edu.

I thank you for your consideration and hope you will choose to be a part of this important study of the Superintendency. To do so, please click on this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XLFMCTQ>

Sincerely,

John J. Bell

Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership Department
The Sage Colleges, Albany, NY

Superintendent of Schools
Delaware Valley School District
Milford, PA

Appendix B

Follow-up Emails to Superintendents

(Sent 10 and 21 days after original survey was sent)

Second Request – For NYS Superintendents Only

Dear NYS Superintendents,

Approximately ten days ago (or substitute three weeks), you received an email requesting participation in a 5 minute survey related to my doctoral research about the job satisfaction of New York State school superintendents in this era of great change.

If you have already completed the study, thank you very much! If not, please take a few minutes to complete it. *I truly believe this research has value to our roles as superintendents.* To improve the state of the superintendency, we must first understand the positive and negative aspects of the job. This survey will do just that.

Click here to take the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XLFMCTQ>

Sincerely,

John J. Bell

Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership Department
The Sage Colleges, Albany, NY

Superintendent of Schools
Delaware Valley School District
Milford, PA

NYS Superintendent Job Satisfaction in an Era of Change

Part Three: What Do You Like Most About Being a Superintendent?

11. What do you like most about being a superintendent? Please rate each statement below in terms of how much you LIKE that aspect of the job.

	Very Weak	Weak	Neutral	Strong	Very Strong
I have substantial input into the direction of the school district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have an opportunity to build a team of educators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have an opportunity to impact students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy the school district culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy working with the Board of Education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy the status of the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get the opportunity to work with people I like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can make a difference in teaching and learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can interact with a wide variety of people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to utilize the skills I have.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to work on a twelve-month job, not a separate summer job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy being a CEO, making final decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always have daily challenges in this job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can influence community decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the high visibility that the job has.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am in control of my daily schedule.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am well paid for this job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

NYS Superintendent Job Satisfaction in an Era of Change

12. While you may feel that several of these items are reasons why you like your job as superintendent, please select ONLY THE TOP THREE reasons and RANK THEM 1-3 below.

	1	2	3
I have substantial input into the direction of the school district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have an opportunity to build a team of educators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have an opportunity to impact students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy the school district culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy the working with the Board of Education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy the status of the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get an opportunity to work with people I like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can make a difference in teaching and learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can interact with a wide variety of people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to utilize the skills I have.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to work a twelve-month job, not a separate summer job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy being a CEO, making final decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always have daily challenges in this job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can influence community decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the high visibility that the job has.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am control of my daily schedule.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am paid well for this job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

NYS Superintendent Job Satisfaction in an Era of Change

Part Four: What Motivated You to Become a Superintendent in the First Place...

13. What motivated you to become a superintendent in the first place? Please rate the statements below in terms of how much they motivated you to become a superintendent.

	Very Weak	Weak	Neutral	Strong	Very Strong
I wanted to go beyond the building administrator level.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job would provide me with financial security.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job would allow me to move the district forward.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job would enable me to provide leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other superintendents I knew or worked for seemed to enjoy their work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job would give me a broader span of influence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I thought I could do a better job than others who came before me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job was a logical progression in my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I thought I would like working with the people in the district office.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wanted to be all that I could be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I thought I could make a difference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had "paid my dues".	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify).					

14. From all of the choices below, select ONLY THE TOP THREE reasons that motivated you to become a superintendent and RANK them 1-3.

	1	2	3
I wanted to go beyond the building administrator level.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job would provide me with financial security.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job would allow me to move the district forward.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job would enable me to provide leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other superintendents I knew or worked for seemed to enjoy their work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job would give me a broader span of influence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I thought I could do a better job than I had seen done before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job was a logical progression in my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I thought I would like working with people in the office.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wanted to be all that I could be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I thought I could make a difference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had "paid my dues".	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

NYS Superintendent Job Satisfaction in an Era of Change

Part One: Demographic Information

1. Career Information

My number of years as a superintendent

My number of years in education

The number of superintendencies I have held

2. Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

3. Age Group

☐ Under 35

☐ 36 - 40

☐ 41 - 45

☐ 46 - 50

☐ 51 - 55

☐ 56 - 60

☐ 61 - 65

☐ Over 65

4. School District Enrollment

☐ Less than 500

☐ 500 - 999

☐ 1,000 - 2,499

☐ 2,500 - 3,999

☐ 4,000 - 5,999

☐ 6,000 or more

NYS Superintendent Job Satisfaction in an Era of Change

5. Free & Reduced Lunch Percentage

- ☐ 0 - 19
- ☐ 20 - 39
- ☐ 40 - 59
- ☐ 60 - 79
- ☐ 80 - 100

6. Region of New York State

(as denoted by NYSPHSAA athletic sections)

- ☐ Western (sections 5 & 6)
- ☐ Central/Southern Tier (sections 3 & 4)
- ☐ Adirondacks/North Country (sections 7 & 10)
- ☐ Capital District (section 2)
- ☐ Hudson Valley (sections 1 & 9)
- ☐ Long Island (sections 8 & 11)

NYS Superintendent Job Satisfaction in an Era of Change

Part Two: Job Stressors in an Era of Change

7. Please rate how you feel about each of these issues as it relates to your role as a superintendent.

	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Neutral	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive
Working with the Board of Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2% Property Tax Cap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rollout of the Common Core State Standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Please rate your overall job satisfaction as of today.

	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High
Today, I would rate my overall job satisfaction as a superintendent as:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Please rate your overall job satisfaction over time.

	Decreased Dramatically	Decreased Some	Remained the Same	Increased Some	Increased Dramatically
Since first becoming a superintendent, I would say my overall job satisfaction has:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Yes or No?

	Yes	No
If I had to do it all over again, would I become a superintendent?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

John Bell

From: Bobby Malone <bmalone41@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 03, 2014 11:52 AM
o: John Bell
Subject: Permission to use survey

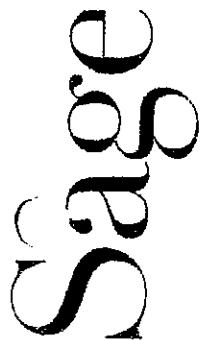
John,

Thank you for taking the time to seek permission to use our survey; you have used good judgment and observed proper protocol in doing so. It is an honor that you consider our work worthy of further use in research and I enthusiastically give my permission for the use of the instrument in your dissertation. Dr. Sharp and I spent several wonderful years working together in conducting research that we felt was a contribution to our profession. I project that your work will add to that body of knowledge and want to encourage you. The dissertation is a separating work for many students and over the years I was often confronted with students who would say, "I am so close to completing my program; all I lack is the dissertation." In my experience those students were not close because the dissertation is such an exacting experience. There are far more students who did not complete their programs because they did not complete the dissertation than those who persevered through to program completion. Don't be one of those who doesn't finish. Persevere and complete the program; you owe it to yourself and to those of us who have made a contribution to you and your work.

Good luck in your academic pursuits,

Sincerely,

Bobby G. Malone, Ed.D. (retired)



Sage Graduate Schools

INSTITUTIONAL
HEALTH SCIENCES
MANAGEMENT

School of Health Sciences Deans Office

65 1st Street

Troy, NY 12180

<http://www.sage.edu/academics/health-sciences/>

February 9, 2015

John Bell
101 Valley Forge Road
Milford, PA 18337

IRB PROPOSAL # 229-2014-2015

Reviewer: Susan C. Cloninger, Chair

Dear John:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application and has approved your project entitled "New York State School Superintendent Job Satisfaction in an Era of Reduced Resources and Increased Accountability." Good luck with your research.

Please refer to your IRB Proposal number whenever corresponding with us whether by mail or in person.

When you have completed collecting your data you will need to submit to the IRB Committee a final report indicating any problems you may have encountered regarding the treatment of human subjects

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Susan C. Cloninger, PhD
Chair, IRB

SCC/nan

CC: Dr. Anne Myers