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Strategies Exemplary Female Superintendents Use to Work with the Political Styles of School Board Members

Leisa Winston
Brandman University, leniwin@gmail.com

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Strategies Exemplary Female Superintendents Use to Work with the Political Styles of

School Board Members

A Dissertation by

Leisa Winston

Brandman University

Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

December 2019

Committee in charge:

Patricia Clark White, Ed.D., Dissertation Chair

Suzette Lovely, Ed.D.

Arthur J. "Skip" Roland, Ed.D.

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY
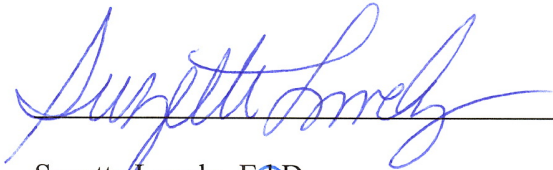
Chapman University System

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of Leisa Winston is approved.

_____, Dissertation Chair

Patricia Clark White, Ed.D.

_____, Committee Member

Suzette Lovely, Ed.D.

_____, Committee Member

Arthur J. "Skip" Roland, Ed.D.

_____, Interim Associate Dean

Douglas DeVore, Ed.D.

December 2019

Strategies Exemplary Female Superintendents Use to Work with the Political Styles of

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ABSTRACT

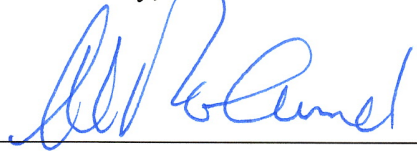Strategies Exemplary Female Superintendents Use to Work with the Political Styles of

School Board Members

by Leisa Winston

Purpose: The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to identify the

political styles of female superintendents and their school board members as perceived by

superintendents. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and explain the

political strategies female superintendents use to work with the different political styles

of board members.

Methodology: This study employed a sequential, explanatory mixed-methods design.

The quantitative data were collected through surveys to identify the political styles of

superintendents and their board members. The qualitative interview data explored the

political strategies used by each superintendent with the different political styles of board

members.

Findings: Exemplary female superintendents differentiate approaches based on board

members' individual needs, know their board members' agendas, and provide

information to develop understanding with all political styles of board members.

Conclusions: It was concluded that female superintendents who want to influence board

members must differentiate their approach based on the needs, interests, and political

style of each individual board member. They must build trust by demonstrating genuine

care and concern, listening and following through on board member interests, and

consistently honoring their agreements. In order to keep board members working

together toward organizational interests, female superintendents must maintain awareness

of the political context and understand the agendas of board members. Frequent and strategic communication should be used to gain board members' support for organizational goals. Female superintendents who work with challenger-style board members should exude confidence, communicate strategically, and include others when conflict arises.

Recommendations: Further research is recommended on the political strategies used exclusively by male superintendents, examining the similarities and differences in political styles based on gender, the impact of gender on the relationships between superintendents and board members, and political strategies used with different experience levels and in different regions of the United States.

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PREFACE

Following discussions and considerations regarding the opportunity to study

superintendent and board member political styles in multiple types of school districts, 10

doctoral students, in collaboration with two faculty members, developed a common

interest in exploring the strategies exemplary superintendents use to work with the

different political styles of their board members. This resulted in a thematic study

conducted by a research team of 10 doctoral students. This explanatory sequential

mixed-methods study was designed using the nine political styles identified in the

political styles framework from *The Politically Intelligent Leader* (White, Harvey, &

Fox, 2016). Each researcher administered a survey to five exemplary superintendents to

identify their own political style as well as the political styles of their board members.

The researcher then interviewed the same five superintendents who completed the survey

to identify the strategies they use with the different political styles and strategies that

work with all political styles. In order to ensure consistency and reliability across the

studies, the team of researchers collaboratively developed the purpose statement, research

questions, definitions of terms, survey instrument, interview questions, and study

procedures.

Throughout the study, the term *peer researchers* was used to refer to the

researchers who conducted the thematic study. My fellow doctoral students and peer

researchers studied exemplary superintendents with the following populations in

California school districts: Bradley D. Tooker, unified school district superintendents in

Northern California; Reggie Thompkins, unified superintendents in Southern California;

Jeffrey D. Tooker, high school superintendents in Northern California; Roni Jones, rural

superintendents in Northern California; Regina Green, Latino superintendents; Susan

Andreas-Bervel, small suburban elementary superintendents in Southern California;

Tammy Blakely, suburban unified superintendents in Southern California; Leisa

Winston, female superintendents in Southern California; Maura Murabito, female ROP

superintendents; and Chris Sinatra, small school district superintendents in Southern

California.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The intersection of politics and education has driven the need for transformational changes to the system of American public schools. Over the last 30 years, the effects of legislatively driven educational reforms, diversity of student needs, and availability of resources have created a high-risk environment for educational leaders making politically charged decisions (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Björk & Blasé, 2009; Björk, Browne-Ferrigno, & Kowalski, 2014; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

Beginning in the 1980s, states demanded greater control over curriculum and accountability for academic outcomes based on changing values regarding the purpose of the public educational system. More recently, the federal government, through the No Child Left Behind Act and its subsequent reauthorization, implemented strict accountability measures based on high-stakes testing and sanctions for noncompliance. In a report by the American Association of School Administrators (2005), school superintendents reported distress with the growing number of legislatively driven reforms that were not based on educational research or generated by local needs. These initiatives have limited the flexibility and authority of local educational leaders and spawned resistance to change by school staff. Educational reform initiatives have transformed the organizational needs of schools, creating a need for school leaders to exhibit new leadership skills in initiating systemic changes that are responsive to reforms and managing the resistance of stakeholders and the governing boards they represent (Annunziato, 2008; Aydin, Ozfidan, & Carothers, 2017; Björk et al., 2014; Malen & Cochran, 2014).

The needs of students served in the nation's public schools have become increasingly complex and diverse, further complicating the task of educating the nation's 56.6 million students. In 1986, 30% of public school students were non-White, but numbers increased sharply over the next 3 decades to over 50% by 2014 (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). The number of English language learners in American public schools increased from 5.1% in the 1993-1994 school year to 9.5% nationwide in 2015 (Meyer, Madden, & McGrath, 2004; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Research indicates that a racially diverse teacher workforce provides better outcomes for students, yet the existing workforce consists of teachers who are primarily White (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Public schools are also grappling with other types of student diversity such as sexual orientation and gender identity. States are divided on policies regarding the inclusion of LGBTQ+ content in public school curriculum, yet these students cope with significantly higher levels of bullying and physical and sexual violence than other students (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016; Moorhead, 2018). Traditional instructional practices and existing systems of support no longer address the needs of these diverse groups, driving a need for a systemic overhaul of public school programs (Aydin et al., 2017). Diversity on school boards may also present a political dynamic for the superintendent in prioritizing resources and actions for student support (Grissom, 2010, 2012).

The availability of resources, or lack thereof, triggers competition among stakeholders, which inevitably spawns political activity. Public school districts in at least 31 states received less funding in 2014 than in 2008 just before the Great Recession, and in 2016, at least 25 states were still providing less funding than in 2008, creating

competition for scarce resources (Leachman, Albares, Masterson, & Wallace, 2016).

Politics often drive policy decisions about school district revenues and expenditures as

districts contend with demands from interest groups on priorities such as class size,

employee compensation, and school closures. Special interest groups seek to influence

the board and superintendent through sometimes contentious means such as packing

board rooms, launching social media campaigns, and striking (Blumenreich & Jaffe-

Walter, 2015; Pampuro, 2019; Sanders, 2019; Stokes, 2019). As a result, school leaders

have limited resources to develop creative solutions to meet the needs of all students

while addressing competing interests from school board members, employees, parents,

and the community (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Grissom,

2010; Ikpa, 2016; Ogletree & Robinson, 2016; Rocksund, 2017).

The politics of public education challenge school leaders to close achievement

gaps, address issues of culture and diversity, and manage competition for resources to

achieve these causes. While superintendents are ultimately responsible for addressing

these issues, they must rely on their influence and relationships with stakeholders and the

board to accomplish transformational changes. Public education is experiencing dynamic

conditions in which school leaders must use an enhanced degree of political intelligence

to navigate value conflicts and competition for scarce resources (American Association

of School Administrators, 2005; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Hill & Jochim, 2018). More

information is needed on the political style and strategies used by successful

superintendents to work effectively with school boards on high-stakes issues like these.

Background

Politics has always existed because humans are political by nature and seek power based on individual or organizational interests (Aristotle, 1944; Tucker, 1995). Increasing division and conflict in the political climate, when combined with significant global economic and technological changes, can result in leaders using political strategies as a power grab for personal interests, rather than using strategic, statesman-like political strategies in support of the greater good. As political pressures increase and partisan divisions grow, the strategic use of politics is essential to balancing power structures and survival for those in leadership positions (Bolman & Deal, 2017; DeLuca, 1999; Duffy, 2006; Hill & Jochim, 2018; Hunter & Bowman, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2010, 2012, 2017, 2018; Tucker, 1995).

Researchers have noted leaders' initial perception of politics as inherently negative (Bolman & Deal, 2017; DeLuca, 1999; White, Harvey, & Fox, 2016). Some leaders are aware of the existence of politics and respond to political challenges as they occur but generally try to avoid involvement in political conflict, whereas others use a proactive approach and address challenges head on. While the level of comfort and use of political strategies by leaders varies, the literature strongly indicates that implementing apolitical strategies can increase conflict and negatively impact the success of leaders and their organizations (Annunziato, 2008; Björk & Lindle, 2001; Bolman & Deal, 2017; DeLuca, 1999).

The strategic use of power, politics, and ethics can help to address the effects of the changing environment and make the necessary adaptations needed at the organizational level (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Hart, 2018). White et al. (2016)

described this leadership skill as "political intelligence" (p. 3). Politically intelligent leaders are guided by a moral compass and consider the desires and readiness of stakeholders when using activities, strategies, or tactics to lead them.

Theoretical Background

Several theories contribute to understanding how leaders use politics and power within organizations, including elite theory, pluralist theory, rational choice theory, normative and empirical theory, social inequity theory, power theory, and political frames.

Elite theory describes power relationship by purporting that a minority with means or status receives more power and political benefit because of their position in society than those without such means or status (Higley, 2011). Conversely, pluralist theory proposes that all individuals have equal power, and outcomes represent the shared interests of society (Baskin, 1970; Dahl, 1978). Rational choice theory suggests that each individual's action is formulated by the consideration of costs and benefits (Coleman & Fararo, 1992; Scott, 2000).

Normative and empirical theories also relate to understanding the nature of power and politics. Normative theories support judgment or belief about what ought to occur, while empirical theories are based on fact and describe what is occurring (Adcock, 2010).

Social inequity theory suggests that individuals desire equity between their contributions to a situation and the outcomes that they receive against the perceived contributions of others and outcomes they receive (J. S. Adams, 1963).

Power theory describes organizations as power structures in which the strategic use of power and influence is the means to achieve intended results. Some leaders are

hesitant to share power and lead through authoritative structures, while others who share power lead through collaborative structures (Fairholm, 2009; Grenny, Patterson, Maxfield, McMillan, & Switzler, 2013; Pfeffer, 1992).

The political framework by Bolman and Deal (2017) assumes that organizations are made up of individuals with varying, and sometimes conflicting, interests. Coalitions form among individuals with shared interests, but power is needed to accomplish them. Bolman and Deal described networking and building coalitions as essential to using politics for organizational success and moving initiatives forward.

Theoretical Framework

White et al. (2016) provided an organizational politics and ethics model to demonstrate how politically intelligent leaders produce ethically and politically viable decisions that advance organizational goals. The model begins by ensuring that a leader has established superordinate goals that include vision and values. A politically intelligent leader demonstrates awareness of his or her values and principles that drive his or her actions, also known as a political style. A political style is a combination of the individual's goal allegiance and political initiative. This model suggests that politically intelligent leaders maintain ethical principles, consider their own political style as well as the style of those with whom they are working, and use specific political strategies that will have the greatest potential for influence when working with individuals, groups, and situations in the organization. Political strategies in the hands of a skilled and ethical leader ensure that ethical and politically viable decisions are made to serve the organization's interests.

Elements of Politics in Public Education

The American educational system has seen expanding political pressures on school district leaders. Over the last 3 decades, the realm of public education has faced increasing challenges and negative perceptions about its effectiveness, scarcity of resources, lack of community interest and responsibility, diverse needs of those served, and resistance to top-down educational reforms (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Björk et al., 2014; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Lindle & Mawhinney, 2003).

Kirst and Wirt (2009) noted the shift from public distrust in distant government and support of local government to increasing distrust in local agencies such as the local public school system. The uprising of teacher unions and collective bargaining also added political complications to the educational environment. The educational system in many places has transitioned from one that was guided by trusted professionals to one that is plagued by skepticism and conflict (Annunziato, 2008; Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

School District Governance

City government structure inspired the school board governance model in which elected board members set policy and hire and evaluate the superintendent, which presents school boards with a significant amount of power (Maranto, Trivitt, Nichols, & Watson, 2017). The functionality of the school board can contribute to moving the organization forward in its goals or cause it to fail. Effective school boards understand the role of members to create policy and set goals for a school district and ensure that competing initiatives do not interfere. Conversely, dysfunctional school boards focus on individual agendas or special interests rather than what is necessary to support student

achievement (Perreault & Lunenburg, 2002; Waters & Marzano, 2007; P. Williams & Tabernik, 2011).

Role of the School Board

School boards serve as the governing body of a school district by creating policies, supervising operations, and approving budgets and expenditures. In addition, school boards hire the superintendent as the chief executive officer of the district, an important decision that can impact student achievement (Björk et al., 2014; Eadie, 2003; Maranto et al., 2017; Sell, 2005; Waters & Marzano, 2007).

Highly effective school boards demonstrate an awareness of critical issues facing the district. They set goals, align resources with goals, and evaluate progress using data. Furthermore, effective boards develop positive working relationships with staff, including the superintendent (Devarics & O'Brien, 2011; Eadie, 2003; Johnson, 2012).

Conflict among school board members, the superintendent, and stakeholder groups is prevalent in research (Devarics & O'Brien, 2011; Grissom, 2010, 2012; Maranto et al., 2017; Mountford, 2004; Sell, 2005; Weiler, 2015). Groups such as teachers' unions and parent associations influence school board members to address their interests. When board interests clash with those of special interest groups, relationships can become strained (Björk et al., 2014; Grissom, 2010; Sell, 2005). An individual board member's agenda can also cause discord on the board when the member's self-interest challenges the will of the majority (Mountford, 2004; Weiler, 2015). School boards with strong governance protocols and evaluation processes manage and reduce conflict and demonstrate higher levels of student achievement (Devarics & O'Brien, 2011; Grissom, 2010, 2012; Maranto et al., 2017; Weiler, 2015).

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Role of the Superintendent

The evolution of politics in public education requires superintendents to focus on transformational leadership skills, moving beyond command and control to collaborative decision-making to effect change in mindset and behaviors, not solely to obtain compliance (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2010; Björk & Blasé, 2009). Björk et al. (2014) identified five roles that describe superintendents' responsibilities in leading school districts. They include the superintendent as a communicator, manager, instructional leader, political leader, and applied social scientist. Additional researchers outlined the numerous roles performed by superintendents and the qualities they must exhibit to be successful. Because of the nature and speed of changes in educational systems, superintendents can no longer focus solely on operational management in areas such as public relations and finances. Superintendents must be able to manage and resolve conflicts and the multiple agendas of stakeholders. These descriptions demonstrate the evolution of the superintendent position from the time when superintendents were hired to execute simple, straightforward operational tasks (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Hart, 2018; Perreault & Lunenburg, 2002).

In a conclusive meta-analysis of research on the effect of superintendent leadership on student achievement, Waters and Marzano (2007) found a significant correlation between five district-level leadership qualities and student academic achievement, which included using a goal-setting process, generating nonnegotiable goals for student learning, garnering school board support and alignment, monitoring goals, and using resources effectively. In addition, these authors noted an unexpected

finding that the longer tenure of the superintendent has a positive effect on student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2007). Since student achievement outcomes are the primary function of a school district, a superintendent must be able to manage political conflict by developing coalitions with interest groups, employee unions, and the board to further this goal (Björk et al., 2014; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Björk & Lindle, 2001; Fusarelli, 2006; Kowalski, McCord, Petersen, Young, & Ellerson, 2011).

Politics of the School Board and Superintendent

Superintendents in the 21st century serve in the role of chief instructional leader working under the direction of a group of elected community members, in addition to leading operational and managerial functions of a school district. Political factors have created increasing pressure on superintendents to lead their school districts through moral and ethical dilemmas while obtaining buy-in from the board and stakeholder groups and maintaining composure under criticism (Björk et al., 2014; Brierton, Graham, Tomal, & Wilhite, 2016; Kowalski, 2005).

Studies related to the evolution of the superintendency identified political challenges that currently exist for superintendents, the effect of such challenges on job longevity, and the effect the superintendent has on student achievement. With stakeholder groups and initiatives competing for priority, the resulting special interest groups and employee unions exert enormous political pressure to influence superintendents' decisions. Researchers concluded that a superintendent must be prepared to address the political aspects of the role and be armed with strategies to influence those in the organization (Björk, Glass, & Brunner, 2005; Björk & Lindle,

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2001; Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000; Grissom & Andersen, 2012; Hart, 2018; Hendricks, 2013; Ripley, Mitchell, & Richman, 2013; Waters & Marzano, 2007).

With the influx of educational reforms and conflict over resources, politics are frequently at play in the relationship between the school board and superintendent. Researchers have linked the relationships between superintendents and board members as a primary element in the effectiveness of the superintendent, the functioning of the board, and student outcomes (Annunziato, 2008; Fusarelli, 2006; Grissom & Andersen, 2012; Hill & Jochim, 2018; Jackson, 2016; Mountford, 2004; Nava, 2017; Tallerico, 1989; Waters & Marzano, 2007; P. Williams & Tabernik, 2011).

Several researchers have theorized that political conflicts impact superintendent turnover, and studies on this topic provided inconsistent results. Therefore, a conclusion cannot be reached as to whether or not increasing political pressures affect superintendent turnover. Alsbury (2003) found most superintendent turnover to be apolitical, consistent with subsequent findings from Grissom and Andersen (2012) that identified retirement and career advancement as primary reasons for turnover. Conversely, Tekniepe (2015) found that in rural districts, political factors predicted whether a superintendent was likely to leave the position prematurely. The relationship between the superintendent and board was consistently found to impact superintendent turnover, which is particularly notable considering researchers found that nearly half of superintendents turn over within 3 years, and sustained changes require at least 5 years of a superintendent's focused attention (Grissom & Andersen, 2012; Jutabha, 2017; Ripley et al., 2013; P. Williams & Tabernik, 2011).

Political Strategies Used by Superintendents

Superintendents face many challenges that impact their ability to make morally and ethically viable decisions while maintaining professional standing. Superintendents need to possess political strategies to manage the inevitable conflicts that are part of the modern educational system (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Annunziato, 2008; Björk et al., 2014; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Björk & Lindle, 2001; Fusarelli, 2006; Hill & Jochim, 2018; Vaughn, 2010). The ability to build relationships and develop coalitions was a primary theme identified in the research (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Alemán, 2002; American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Bowers, 2016; Girard, 2017; Hill & Jochim, 2018; Jackson, 2016; Petersen & Williams, 2005a). In addition, self-awareness of one's political style and the political styles of those with whom one interacts is critical in understanding the appropriate strategies to use (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

Bolman and Deal (2017) identified four key skills used by a politically astute leader: agenda setting, mapping the political terrain, networking and building coalitions, and bargaining and negotiating. In environments where leaders have built relationships, bargaining can take on a new and positive dimension. Bolman and Deal described bargaining not in traditional terms, but as a way to separate people from issues and focus on the shared interests rather than positions, and as a result, create solutions that bring value to both parties.

Female Superintendents

School board membership and senior-level district administration are fields dominated by men, despite the fact that about 75% of educators are women (Björk, 2000;

Hendricks, 2013; Kowalski et al., 2011; Mountford & Brunner, 2010; Robinson, Shakeshaft, Grogan, & Newcomb, 2017). Board member biases about female candidates for the superintendency and interest in and access to the superintendent career path have prevented more women from becoming superintendents. Women struggle with overcoming perceptions that they lack strength, are unprepared, and are unable to handle fiscal planning (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Eagly, 2007; Lemasters & Roach, 2012; Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, & Ballenger, 2007). Typical superintendent career paths have been generated by a male-dominated system that does not necessarily produce the highest quality superintendents (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Shakeshaft et al., 2007). Despite these biases and access issues, women with higher levels of political skill are more likely to obtain leadership positions than women with low levels of political skill in male-dominated organizations (Watkins & Smith, 2014).

Many female superintendents do not enjoy engaging in politics but acknowledge the need to do so in their roles and note that trust, communication, and relationships are significant factors in their political leadership (Brunner, 2000a; Heath, Flynn, Holt, & Faison, 2017; McNay, 2016). The literature pointed to some natural tendencies in female superintendents that serve them well politically. Women use more collaborative decision-making structures and demonstrate more frequent use of transformational leadership behaviors than men who are more likely to engage in transactional leadership (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Eagly, 2007; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003; Heath et al., 2017; Lemasters & Roach, 2012; Robinson et al., 2017). Robinson et al. (2017) noted that in the American Association of School Administrators 2015 Mid-Decade Survey, relationships with stakeholders and special interest groups were more

influential and valued by women superintendents as compared to men. Female superintendents are more likely to share power and influence with stakeholders than men who tend to exercise power over others (Brunner, 2000b).

Superintendents and school boards face challenging political dynamics in a changing environment. Female superintendents are often caught in a whirlwind of demands and conflicting priorities from interest groups and individual board members (Björk & Gurley, 2005). Political skills support a superintendent's ability to work effectively with his or her school board members (Annunziato, 2008).

Statement of the Research Problem

In a time of unprecedented educational reform efforts, changing demographics, and scarce resources, there is a need for leaders who can address the various desires and values of stakeholders in solving politically charged problems (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Björk et al., 2014). For superintendents, the majority of political conflict stems from the school board, parents, administrators, and employees (Annunziato, 2008; Ripley et al., 2013). With these stakeholder groups vying for their individual interests, understanding political styles and using political strategies is a critical skill for superintendents (White et al., 2016).

School board members have distinct motivations for wanting to serve on the board, but many have personal agendas they wish to address. Board members may pursue these positions for noble reasons or because they seek power over the decision-making process. When a group of board members has diverse interests and different ways they pursue those interests, a superintendent must work with each board member and the entire school board as a governance team to carefully balance which issues are

prioritized in combination with increased reform efforts (Devarics & O'Brien, 2011; Ford & Ihrke, 2016; Grissom, 2012; Jutabha, 2017; Mountford, 2004).

One of the most crucial relationships in the success of a school district is the one between the superintendent and school board, yet there is often conflict in the relationship (Richardson, 2005; Ripley et al., 2013; Weiss, Templeton, Thompson, & Tremont, 2015). Reasons for tension in board relations are well documented in the literature and include an inclination by the superintendent or board members to impose individual agendas, work outside their governance role, and obtain power over others (Dolph, 2016; Mountford, 2004; Tekniepe, 2015; P. Williams & Tabernik, 2011). A superintendent must be fully aware of his or her political style, and that of each board member, to perform effectively in a rapidly changing environment (Vaughn, 2010; White et al., 2016).

Several studies have identified the increasing complexity of politics in the role of school administrators, particularly for the superintendent (Alemán, 2002; Annunziato, 2008; Björk, Bell, & Gurley, 2002; Björk & Blasé, 2009; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Björk & Lindle, 2001; Dao & Cranston, 2018; Hart, 2018; Hunt, 1968; Lynch, 1993; McNay, 2016; Muhammed, 2012; Tremblay, 2014; Whitmarsh, 2014). The use of strategies not aligned to the board and community power structure or an avoidance of engaging in politics altogether increases conflict and negatively impacts the success of leaders and organizations (Björk & Lindle, 2001; White et al., 2016). The literature has clearly outlined the need for superintendents to use inclusive, collaborative decision-making processes with stakeholders (Hart, 2018; Ripley et al., 2013). Building trust using effective communication strategies and interpersonal relationships was an important skill

noted in the research as an effective way for superintendents to address conflicting interests with school board members and other stakeholders (Annunziato, 2008; Bowers, 2016; Jimenez, 2012; McNay, 2016; Petersen & Williams, 2005a, 2005b; Rohrbach, 2015; Vaughn, 2010; White et al., 2016). White et al. (2016) identified 19 external and 18 internal political strategies used by politically intelligent leaders. Girard (2017) conducted a study to identify which of these political strategies were used by principals of schools with dual-language programs. However, no studies have been identified that considered the political style and strategies of superintendents and board members.

While superintendents understand the need to engage in politics, more research is needed to understand how superintendents put political strategies into action with board members. Current research identifies the political roles played by the superintendent but does not explain how superintendents learn and use strategies to perform these roles with board members and other stakeholders (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Alemán, 2002; Annunziato, 2008; Hill & Jochim, 2018). Bowers (2016) and Vaughn (2010) noted the need for further exploration of the political dynamics and relationship between the superintendent and board members. Researchers also noted the need for more studies on women in educational administration, particularly in the use of political skills (McNay, 2016; Shakeshaft et al., 2007; Whitmarsh, 2014).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to identify the political styles of female superintendents and their school board members as perceived by superintendents. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and explain the

political strategies female superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members.

Research Questions

1. How do female superintendents perceive their own political style and the individual styles of their school board members?
2. What are the strategies female superintendents use to work successfully with the different school board member styles?

Significance of the Problem

Superintendents and school boards are functioning in a rapidly changing environment with fewer resources (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Björk et al., 2014; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Kirst & Wirt, 2009). These conditions exacerbate disagreements over personal agendas, role confusion, or relationship problems between the superintendent and the school board and may cause the superintendent to leave his or her position (Annunziato, 2008; Dolph, 2016; Grissom & Andersen, 2012; Jutabha, 2017; Moody, 2011; Mountford, 2004; Mountford & Brunner, 1999). Effective superintendents strategically use political skill to transform conflicts involving values and priorities of board members and stakeholders to achieve more productive outcomes (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Hill & Jochim, 2018).

While superintendents acknowledge the need to use political strategies, they often lack understanding of how to put political strategies into action (Alemán, 2002; Annunziato, 2008; Hill & Jochim, 2018; Vaughn, 2010). According to White et al. (2016), leaders struggle with using political strategies because they are shy or introverted,

fear those who are more politically savvy, believe that engaging in politics is unethical, focus on winning over achieving long-term goals, lack confidence and training, and lack strong role models who use political strategies ethically for the collective good. Since the inability to use effective political strategies can worsen conflict, superintendents must learn how to overcome these obstacles to proactively address politically charged issues and achieve success in their roles (Björk & Lindle, 2001; White et al., 2016).

Awareness of one's own political style and the political styles of key associates is critical in understanding the appropriate political strategies to use (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). White et al. (2016) identified nine political styles leaders must understand to be better prepared to deal effectively with stakeholders' needs, desires, and conflicts based on their goal orientation and political initiative. White et al. also defined 19 external and 18 internal political strategies used by politically intelligent leaders with the nine political styles. While studies have addressed the preferred leadership styles and strategies used by women, no studies have been conducted on the use of these political strategies by female superintendents with the various political styles of board members (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Lemasters & Roach, 2012). This study addresses this gap in the research.

Female administrators face greater barriers to the superintendency than their male counterparts, primarily because of gender bias and perceptions of women related to power and politics (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Eagly, 2007; Heath et al., 2017; Lemasters & Roach, 2012). While approximately 75% of educators across all levels are female, only 27% of superintendents are female (Kowalski et al., 2011; Mountford & Brunner, 2010). Once females access the superintendency, they view politics as a required part of the job

but are hesitant to engage in the use of political strategies (McNay, 2016). However, Watkins and Smith (2014) found that female leaders who develop their political skills are better able to overcome biases in male-dominated organizations. No studies have been conducted that identify the political styles of female superintendents and the board members with whom they work or the specific strategies they use with different board member styles. This study provides the research that is missing in this area.

The results of this study will support female superintendents in navigating politically charged situations with their board members and other stakeholders by identifying the political strategies used by exemplary female superintendents. This study will also provide research to state and national professional organizations, such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), that would be able to use the findings to develop workshops and training programs on political skills for female leaders. The information gained in this study will also produce research on the use of political strategies that may be useful for administrator preparation programs and related organizations such as the California Association of Professors of Educational Administration (CAPEA). Mentors are a critical support for superintendents, particularly female superintendents (Annunziato, 2008; Brunner & Kim, 2010; Connell, Cobia, & Hodge, 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014). This study provides mentors with research to support new or aspiring female superintendents in enhancing their political intelligence in working with board members or stakeholders.

Definitions

The following section defines terms as they are used in this study. These terms were collaboratively developed by a team of peer researchers studying political styles and strategies of superintendents as noted in the preface. The definitions are organized around the nine political styles matrix based on initiative and interests. The styles are listed as self-interest, blended interests, and organizational interest for each initiative: passive, engaged, and assertive.

Passive Political Styles

Analyst. Analysts are passive and oriented toward self-interest over organizational interest. They are primarily focused on tasks over relationships and will seek evidence, proof, and detailed analysis before risking a change (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Boulgarides & Cohen, 2001; DeLuca, 1999; Rowe & Boulgarides, 1992; White et al., 2016).

Adaptor. Adaptors are pragmatists who generally support organizational changes and team decisions, provided they do not perceive personal risk. An adaptor is one who presents a passive, cooperative, political style balanced between self-interest and organizational interests (Bobic, Davis, & Cunningham, 1999; Church & Waclawski, 1998; Kirton, 1976; White et al., 2016).

Supporter. Supporters are characterized as risk-averse, selfless, and passive devotees, backers, or advocates of the organization's visions and goals. Supporters seek harmony and hesitate to take sides, though they make decisions and provide resources that align with the organization's goals (California School Boards Association, n.d.; DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

Moderately Engaged Political Styles

Planner. Planners demonstrate modest initiative in political ventures and are typically focused on self-interests rather than organizational interests. Planners gather and analyze data for potential personal risks, putting constraints on decision-making (Hackman, 2002; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; White et al., 2016).

Balancer. Balancers blend self and organizational interests. Focused on the prevention of disequilibrium, balancers use their knowledge of the organization's culture to diplomatically shift their support when needed to maintain stability, harmony, and equanimity (Sheehan, 1989; White et al., 2016).

Developers. Developers work behind the scenes to coach or challenge others to build skills that can positively advance organizational interests to which they are fully committed. Developers exhibit a high level of self-awareness of their own knowledge and skill (DeLuca, 1999; Goleman, 2000; Rath, 2007; White et al., 2016).

Assertive Political Styles

Challenger. Challengers are characterized by self-interest, assertive behavior, and confidence in their own vision, ideas, and goals, which inspires a strong desire to lead and make decisions quickly. Challengers see themselves as movers and shakers, efficient, politically strategic, aggressive, and willing to confront the views of others in an attempt to influence outcomes (DeLuca, 1999; Jasper, 1997; Meyer, Jenness, & Ingram, 2005; Polletta, 2004; White et al., 2016).

Arranger. Arrangers use a political style in which they are assertive in pursuing their goals that are a blend of both organizational priorities and their own self-interests. They build a power base by connecting with many people. Arrangers will take risks to

advance their goals and are strategic in combining resources (DeLuca, 1999; Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014; White et al., 2016).

Strategist. Strategists are visionary, open to new ideas, and collaborative. They empower others and model the organization's values. Supporting the organizational interests over self-interests, they strategically use a variety of approaches to propose new initiatives, engage diverse stakeholders, elicit commitment, and make purposeful decisions (DeLuca, 1999; Dergel, 2014; White et al., 2016).

Other Definitions

Politics. Politics are the activities, actions, and policies through which people make, preserve, and amend the general rules under which they live and are used to achieve a desired outcome through reconciling differences and engaging others in dialogue. Politics also involves the use of power to influence or to improve organizational interests (Fairholm, 2009; White et al., 2016).

Power. Power is the ability to mobilize resources to accomplish organizational outcomes and influence others to overcome resistance (Emerson, 1962; Fairholm, 2009; Kanter, 1979; Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981, 1992).

Ethics. Ethics are moral principles of right and wrong, based on shared or agreed upon values, beliefs, and norms, that guide a leader's behavior (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Brierton et al., 2016; DeLuca, 1999; Duffy, 2006; White et al., 2016).

Political strategy. Political strategy is the approach or tactics a leader uses in pursuing a desired goal or objective. It considers both internal and external issues, situations, and changing dynamics in adapting a plan of action (DeLuca, 1999; Fairholm, 2009; White et al., 2016).

Political style. Political style is the way one's values, character, and beliefs are manifested into actions and behaviors to influence others and achieve desired outcomes. It is the way in which a leader uses power to engage with individuals, groups, and circumstances. It is the combination of an individual's commitment to organizational interests versus self-interests and the level of initiative and energy he/she devotes to pursuing those interests (DeLuca, 1999; Grenny et al., 2013; Petersen & Fusarelli, 2005; White et al., 2016).

Political intelligence. Political intelligence is a set of skills and ethical behaviors used to achieve organizational and/or personal goals. Political intelligence is the way that a leader negotiates policy, standards, rules, and regulations within organizational life, while considering the wants, needs, values, motivations, and emotions of all stakeholders to accomplish organizational goals (DeLuca, 1999; Fairholm, 2009; Tucker, 1995; White et al., 2016).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to five female exemplary school district superintendents located in Southern California. For purposes of this study, an exemplary school district superintendent is a school district leader who demonstrates at least four of the following criteria:

- Shows evidence of positive governance team relationships.
- Has a minimum of 3 years of experience as a superintendent in her current district.
- Is identified by the county superintendent as exemplary in working with board members.

- Is identified by a panel of experts who were knowledgeable of the work of superintendents.

- Has received recognition as an exemplary superintendent by a professional organization such as ACSA.

- Has received recognition by her peers.

- Has a membership in professional associations in her field.

- Has participated in CSBA Master's in Governance program training or other governance training with at least one board member.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter I provided an introduction of politics and the role of the superintendent and school board, background on theories and the study variables, the statement of the problem, the research purpose, the theoretical definitions, and the delimitations of the study. Chapter II presents a review of the literature surrounding the history of politics, theories influencing organizational politics, the role of organizational politics in school district governance, and political strategies used in organizational leadership. Chapter III explains the methodology of the study, including the procedures used to identify the study population and sample used for data gathering and analysis. Chapter IV presents the data analysis and research findings of the study. Chapter V summarizes the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research related to this topic.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II provides a comprehensive review of the literature, offering historical and theoretical context relevant to this study. The literature review is structured to provide a general history of organizational politics, theoretical background related to politics, the theoretical framework on which this study is based, elements of politics in education, the roles of the superintendent and school board, the politics of the school board and superintendent, political strategies used by superintendents, and female superintendents in particular. Each aspect provides a conceptual framework in which the purpose and research questions for this study are situated.

To understand the political styles and strategies required by superintendents in leading educational systems, a thorough literature review was conducted on the following topics:

1. an overview and evolution of politics and its impact on organizations and leaders;

2. theoretical background on theories related to politics and how the theories support the background of political intelligence, styles, and strategies;

3. literature related to White et al.'s (2016) nine political styles and political strategies effectively used with each style; and

4. a summary of the literature on politics as it relates to school boards and superintendents, including female superintendents.

A chapter summary is included at the conclusion of this chapter.

Politics

Definitions of politics have varied from the times of Aristotle and Plato to modern political theory, but all have included the interwoven concepts of interests, power, and

influence (Aristotle, 1944; Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Tucker, 1995). Political behavior

includes the intent on the part of an individual or group to act, a situation in which the

action may occur, and proficiency in the execution of the action. Motive to act, known as

political will, opportunity, or authority to act, and the likelihood for success increased by

political skill are required for the successful use of political strategies (Burns, 1978;

Cioffi-Revilla & Starr, 1995; Harris, Maher, & Ferris, 2016; Kapoutsis, Papalexandris,

Treadway, & Bentley, 2015; Mintzberg, 1983). This section reviews the literature

summarizing the long history and evolution of politics, the importance of political skill

and will, and the intersection of political behavior and leadership.

History of Politics

Politics is a topic with a history over centuries and with roots to the Greek

philosophers Aristotle and Plato. Aristotle (1944) stated that "man is by nature a political

animal" (p. 9), suggesting that engaging in politics is an innate characteristic of human

beings (Hochwarter, 2012). He theorized that politics exist to maintain the preeminent

interests of the group, regardless of size, and termed the polis as a political community

that existed to extoll happiness among the members based on principled actions.

Aristotle's (1944) view of politics focused on the development of higher order thinking

and moral righteousness to benefit the citizens of the polis also known as a city-state

(Cherry, 2012).

Similarly, Plato explained his concept of politics as the search for and

employment of power through persuasion and influence to advance the best interests of

the citizen community (Takala, 1998; Tucker, 1995; Williamson, 2008). Plato's view of

leadership suggested that some individuals possess the natural ability to lead while others

are more suitable to follow (Takala, 1998; Tucker, 1995; Williamson, 2008), in contrast to modern political scientists' view that individuals can acquire leadership skills (Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewe, 2005a, 2005b; Munyon, Summers, Thompson, & Ferris, 2015). Plato maintained that individuals in leadership positions or who hold political power must be educated, make rational decisions, and maintain high moral character (Burns, 1978; Takala, 1998; Williamson, 2008).

In addition to Aristotle and Plato, Machiavelli discussed the operative use of power in societies and institutions although from a different perspective than the Greeks (Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Tucker, 1995). During the Italian Renaissance, Machiavelli proposed a realistic theory in comparison to Aristotle's idealist theory, which posited that maintenance and security of a state should be prioritized at any cost, even if manipulation and untoward means are required to do so (Burns, 1978; Machiavelli, 1958). Machiavelli's position on politics was that he viewed people as objects to control and avoided emotional connection to evade identifying with their perspectives (Christie & Geis, 1970). Burns (1978) cautioned, "It is precisely that—identifying with the point of view of followers—that makes the transforming leader, in the long run, far more effective than manipulators" (p. 446).

Politics in modern times has developed a broader definition than that described by the Greek philosophers. In ancient times, the concept of politics focused on the immediate community by which leaders of the city-state engaged in power and influence. In modern society, references to politics exist across numerous settings: family, national, economic, and organizational (Cherry, 2012). Harold Lasswell (1950) referred to politics as "who gets what, when, and how," a concept about power that presents a broad

definition beyond a national perspective. He further described political individuals as those who emphasize power, command it for themselves, and maintain minimum skills in the use of power, often to control the actions of others (Lasswell, 1948; Tucker, 1995). Pfeffer (1981) and Mintzberg (1983) echoed Lasswell's (1948) concept of power and applied the ideas to organizational politics. Mintzberg (1983) suggested that to use power effectively, one must exert political will, or the proclivity to use influence, and political skill. Pfeffer (1981) defined the action-oriented nature of organizational politics known as political skill.

More recently, researchers continue to study the concepts, effects, and measurement of organizational politics and its role in leadership (Ferris et al., 2005a, 2005b; Ferris & Treadway, 2012). Expanding on research initiated by Pfeffer (1981) and Mintzberg (1983), contemporary researchers have focused on the development of political skill, although more recently studies have acknowledged the need to examine the factors contributing to political will, as both are necessary components for the effective use of political strategies (Harris et al., 2016; Kapoutsis et al., 2015; Treadway, Bentley, Williams, & Wallace, 2014).

Evolution of Politics

Over time, scholars have paid increasing attention to the role of conflict in politics. Plato did not believe conflict should exist in politics in an ideal situation; however, Machiavelli acknowledged the role it played in relationships among people (Burns, 1978; Takala, 1998). Disputes in priorities, values, role boundaries, and competition for resources rally individuals to act toward consensus or disagreements (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Burns, 1978). Recent research has found that conflict created as

a result of differing interests and scarce resources is expected and essential for innovation

and organizational growth (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Ferris & Treadway, 2012).

Individuals with aligned desires form groups known as interest groups. Interest

groups share a common characteristic, interact based on that characteristic, and assert

demands upon others to behave in a manner consistent with the shared characteristic or

attitude (Burns, 1978; Fairholm, 2009; Mintzberg, 1983). Dahl (2006) recognized the

intent or "motivations that drive people to change the status quo in order to achieve

greater political equality . . . cover a wide range from altruism, compassion, empathy to

envy, anger, indignation and hatred" (p. 37). When individuals with shared motivations

connect, there is a desire to influence those with decision-making power because interest-

based demands are "action-oriented" (Mathiowetz, 2011, p. 5). Political behavior is

essential to navigate the demands of individuals and interest groups and achieve personal

and organizational outcomes (Ferris & Treadway, 2012). Political behavior encompasses

intentionality and influence to negotiate and satisfy interests of individuals or groups

(Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1979; DeLuca, 1999; Ferris et al., 2005a,

2005b).

Political behavior in organizations is perceived as destructive and manipulative or

potentially valuable and beneficial, depending on the personal interests at stake (Baron,

Lux, Adams, & Lamont, 2012; Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010; Ellen, 2014; Ellen, Ferris,

& Buckley, 2013; Fairholm, 2009; Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Harris et al., 2016;

Hochwarter, 2012; Kanter, 1979; Lepisto & Pratt, 2012; Leslie & Gelfand, 2012; Pfeffer,

1981). Researchers noted the detrimental consequences of negatively situated political

behaviors on performance and increased stress in the work environment (Drory &

Vigoda-Gadot, 2010). Modern scholars have characterized politics as a necessary

component of human life and organizational effectiveness and not as innately positive or

negative (Allen et al., 1979; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Cherry, 2012; Drory & Vigoda-

Gadot, 2010; Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Harris et al., 2016; Pfeffer, 1992).

Importance of Political Skill and Will

In the national political realm, Americans have become less engaged in political

activity since the 1970s; researchers have noted a drastic decline in community-based

groups, union and church membership, and local clubs (Dahl, 2006; Ehrenreich, 2016).

Despite the 24-hour news cycles and instant information, the average citizen is less

knowledgeable about and engaged in political issues (Dahl, 2006). Society has

developed increasingly negative opinions about politicians, which is one of the least

trusted occupations (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Hochwarter, 2012). The overall lack of

social engagement has created a culture that is mistrustful of political leadership and with

an increased focus on individualism among citizens, indicating a general lack of national

political will (Ehrenreich, 2016).

The political environment in the 21st century has become more divisive and

polarized than ever before (Ehrenreich, 2016). Several factors have contributed to this

phenomenon—globalization, technology, and cultural shifts. Globalization, the rising

interdependence among the world's economies, cultures, and people, and downsizing as a

result of fewer lower skilled jobs have caused organizational operations to become more

complex and in a constant state of change, so different strategies are needed for the new

environment (Ferris et al., 2005a, 2005b; Kolb, 2018). New technologies, such as social

media, have muddled the boundaries among institutions and processes, such as

government, finances, and culture, by driving economic growth yet degrading public discourse and challenging the integrity of institutions (Ehrenreich, 2016; Hahn, 2019). Globalization has affected modern culture by accelerating interactions and more quickly transferring values between groups, resulting in changed human relations (Magu, 2015). The current political climate is increasing global dangers due to a lack of political vision, inaction from agency leaders, and a wide diversity of interests to reconcile (Beardsworth, 2018). Success in the 21st-century environment requires leaders to use social and political skills in addition to the technical functions of the job (Ferris et al., 2005a, 2005b).

The need for leaders of organizations to possess proficient political skill is evident in the literature. Organizations are becoming more political because of the need for leaders to analyze large amounts of information and make efficient decisions (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Bonabeau, 2003; Pfeffer, 1992). In addition, organizational leaders have avoided critical decisions, relied on bureaucratic resources, and failed to acknowledge the importance of political strategies to achieve outcomes (Burns, 1978; Gardner, 1990; Pfeffer, 1992). Movements toward decentralization have challenged traditional hierarchical leadership structures, which have left leaders with few other options than to use political strategies to accomplish organizational goals (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006). Political skill generates success for leaders who use it effectively, and it benefits the organizations they lead (Harris et al., 2016; Hochwarter, 2012; Munyon et al., 2015).

The literature has identified political skill as one component of effective power and influence techniques that individuals use to affect organizational change. Pfeffer

(1981) first coined the term *political skill* and identified it as a resource to be learned and developed. Political skill is defined as the awareness of and ability to adapt to the thoughts and emotions of individuals and groups in a manner that exudes trust and confidence to enhance organizational outcomes (Ferris et al., 2005a, 2005b; Ferris, Treadway, Brouer, & Munyon, 2012; Munyon et al., 2015). Political skill has four critical facets: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity (Ferris et al., 2005a, 2005b; Ferris & Treadway, 2012).

Political skill has many benefits for individuals. Using political skill counteracts workplace stressors by generating self-confidence through the perception of increased control and security (Ferris et al., 2012; Ferris et al., 2007). One of the most impactful outcomes of political skill is the contribution to a positive personal reputation developed through repeated interactions with others (Munyon et al., 2015). Individuals with elevated levels of political skill receive high ratings in their job performance (Jawahar, Meurs, Ferris, & Hochwarter, 2008; Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2004; Munyon et al., 2015).

Without the will to act, political skill alone is inadequate to achieve successful organizational outcomes (Ferris et al., 2005a, 2012, Harris et al., 2016; Mintzberg, 1983). Treadway (2012) defined political will as "the motivation to engage in strategic, goal-directed behavior that advances the personal agenda and objectives of the actor that inherently involves the risk of relational or reputational capital" (p. 533). Therefore, a leader's ability to successfully navigate situations requires a willingness to strategically use his or her network of relationships to achieve organizational outcomes in addition to possessing political skill and the authority to act (Harris et al., 2016; Kapoutsis et al.,

2015; Treadway et al., 2014). Political will, therefore, produces political behaviors and strategies that can be both self-serving and benevolent (Harris et al., 2016; Kapoutsis et al., 2015; Mintzberg, 1983; Treadway, 2012; Treadway et al., 2014).

Leadership and Politics

In general, leadership is a process focused on reciprocal relationships between leaders and followers to achieve shared goals. Definitions in the literature consistently reference the ability of leaders to influence others as a characteristic of effective political leadership (Burns, 1978; Ellen, 2014; Northouse, 2019; Tucker, 1995; Yukl, 2013). Burns (1978) indicated that political leadership is created by an individual's motivations and social experiences. Political skill is a vital leadership ability, because politically savvy leaders are more effective in obtaining outcomes, coping with stress, and engaging others (DeLuca, 1999; Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Ferris et al., 2012; Ferris et al., 2007; Wihler, Frieder, Blickle, Oerder, & Schutte, 2016).

Leadership in the context of change and innovation involves substantial political activity. Leaders navigate competing interests, scarce resources, and expectations to fulfill the desires of stakeholders while achieving successful outcomes for the organization (Ferris et al., 2005a). To effect positive organizational change, a leader must possess more than just the capacity to solve problems. Innovation and change initiatives challenge the status quo. Using organizational power and influence strategies provide opportunities for leaders to accomplish goals and achieve organizational success (Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1992).

Organizations include alliances of individuals and interest groups. Therefore, leadership is essential when stakeholders converge and desire action on their interest or

demand (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Leaders must recognize needs or requests from

stakeholders and mobilize support from individuals and groups to achieve outcomes

(Burns, 1978; Ellen, 2014; Ellen et al., 2013; Tucker, 1995; Yukl, 2013). A leader with a

solitary approach to decision-making may respond to situations as they happen but will

accomplish little without proactive influence and interaction (Bolman & Deal, 2017;

DeLuca, 1999; Pfeffer, 1992). Tucker (1995) stated,

> A person can act as a leader by advancing a definition of a public situation and a
>
> prescription for collective action to deal with it. But not unless he or she succeeds
>
> in mobilizing a following for the position thus taken does that individual become
>
> a leader. (p. 75)

Researchers described the construct of leader political support as representing a leader's

efforts to provide advocacy for or benefit to followers by using political behaviors (Ellen,

2014; Ellen et al., 2013; Ellen, Ferris, & Buckley, 2016). Leaders deliver desired

outcomes for followers using political skill, which may include negotiation, give and

take, and other informal measures (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Lepisto & Pratt, 2012).

DeLuca (1999) noted a high correlation between followers' perceptions of an individual's

leadership and the leader's political skill.

The mobilization of support, often referred to as influence, is consistently noted

across the literature as an essential leadership component. Influence describes the

communication between leaders and followers, and without it, leadership does not exist

(Grenny et al., 2013; Northouse, 2019; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017). Leaders use influence

strategically and with intentionality (Grenny et al., 2013). A politically skilled leader

evaluates the situation and proactively considers the action to take to achieve the desired outcome.

While political skill comes naturally to some individuals, researchers have found that political skill can be learned. Those individuals who lack political skill can develop it, and those who have found success can expand their skills in using it through training (Ferris et al., 2005a, 2005b; Munyon et al., 2015). Political skill can be honed by increasing self and social awareness, which increases one's ability to anticipate roadblocks in the organization and adapt responses to situations (Ferris et al., 2005a). According to DeLuca (1999), self-awareness of political style and that of others is an essential component to bolstering political skill.

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundation of politics has evolved separately from organizational theories. Political theorists generated normative perspectives about politics while organizational theory is absent of values. Organizational theorists have avoided focusing on concepts of power, politics, and external political forces impacting organizations (Farazmand, 1999). The following theories connect political and organizational ideas that influence the use of power and politics by leaders of organizations. From an extensive review of the literature, these major theories have emerged related to organizational politics: elite theory, pluralist theory, rational choice theory, normative and empirical theories, social inequity theory, power theory, and political frames.

Elite Theory

Elite theory rose from Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto whose ideas on politics as power based on class were considered a contrast to the ideas of Marx who favored the

idea of a classless state absent of power and politics (Tucker, 1995). Elite theorists

purport that in each society, a power-controlling minority regulate the majority who

submit through intimidation or ideological beliefs (Borchert, 2010; Tucker, 1995). The

tenets of elite theory state that governing should be conducted by the privileged members

of society who possess wealth and political capital, justified by religious and

philosophical ideologies (Dahl, 2006; Farazmand, 1999; Mills, 1956). However, elites do

not institute any desire they wish; rather, they acknowledge the right of the majority to

share opposing views and use influence tactics as means to mobilize support from

nonelites (Higley, 2010; Higley & Best, 2009).

Despite movements toward equality in modern times, researchers contend that

political elites continue to lead and govern institutions (Engelstad, 2010; Farazmand,

1999). Farazmand (1999) posited that organizations are "directed, controlled and

dominated by a few whose decisions and non-decisions not only affect the entire

organization and its members but also are in accordance with the politics and economic

elite's overall goals and directions" (p. 336). Elites are connected to networks of other

influential elite leaders (Pakulski, 2012; Yamokoski & Dubrow, 2008). Modern political

elite leaders use methodical and competent management tactics, possess charisma, are

perceived as likeable, and promote trust (Higley & Best, 2009; Pakulski, 2012;

Yamokoski & Dubrow, 2008).

Pluralist Theory

Pluralism is a philosophy directly opposed to elite theory. It acknowledges the

preservation of public order through a systematic decision-making process influenced

equitably by groups and individuals (Baskin, 1970). In organizations, pluralism is

viewed as individuals having autonomy under a centralized system of control (Dahl, 1978). Key ideas supported by pluralist theory include participation from all individuals, equality in voting, listening with open minds to explore other perspectives, and inclusion (Capper, Keyes, & Hafner, 1999; Dahl, 2006). Pluralist theory, a central concept in democracy, recognizes the importance of interest groups that influence leaders and institutions (Farazmand, 1999).

Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory operates on the premise that each individual makes logical choices by evaluating costs and benefits based on available options (Coleman & Fararo, 1992; Scott, 2000). Outcomes are considered the sum of rational choices of individuals. In relation to political interest groups, the benefits received by an individual must outweigh the expense to create or support an organized interest group (Hindess, 1984). Criticisms of rational choice theory include that it operates in hindsight and that it does not address emotions in decision-making (Goode, 1997; Nee, 1994). However, rational choice theory offers an explanation that leaders can consider when assessing politically charged situations and finding agreeable resolutions. Hindess (1991) explained, "The idea of rational conduct plays an important part both in our interpretations of the behavior of others (and of ourselves) and in the instrumental calculations of human individuals and other actors" (p. 225).

Normative and Empirical Theory

Normative theory prescribes moral standards for how individuals should make decisions such as theories that emphasize inclusion. Similarly, empirical theory suggests the use of verifiable data on which individuals should base decisions. Empirical theory

focuses on "what actually is" as compared to normative theory, which explains "what ought to be" (Bernard, 1950, p. 482). Normative and empirical theories can work in tandem. Normative theory poses stimulating and significant questions while empirical theory provides evidence to support or refute the queries (Morrell, 1999).

Social Inequity Theory

Social inequity theory describes the nature of individuals to desire equitable outcomes based on their contributions to a situation in relation to what they perceive others' outcomes to be based on others' contributions (J. S. Adams, 1963). Recent research has indicated that social inequities have become more developed and multifaceted, which has implications for politics and leadership. The politics of class and identity have shifted from broad classes, such as ethnicity and gender, to spectrums of deeper complexity, such as specific ethnic groups with varied cultures and nonbinary genders, resulting in potentially multiple identities to consider (Bradley, 2000).

Power Theory

Pfeffer (1992) defined power as the "potential ability to influence behavior, change the course of events, to overcome resistance, and to get people to do things they would not otherwise do" (p. 30). Politics and influence are the strategies through which power becomes actionable through political skill (Pfeffer, 1981, 1992). Similarly, Fairholm (2009) described power as the intentional use of tactics in a relationship to obtain a desired outcome even if the other party is opposed. While having control of resources, information, and personnel can contribute to positional power, personal traits such as charisma and flexibility are also sources of individual power (Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1992).

Power is situational to the extent that interdependence, divergent goals or methods, and scarce resources exist (Burns, 1978; Fairholm, 2009). Leaders and followers or interest groups differ in their desires; therefore, to address each interest creates a competition for finite resources (Burns, 1978). Power is exerted in these circumstances by individuals prepared to interact with each other in the conflict. If individuals are reluctant to engage power under the right conditions, organizations cannot grow and flourish (Pfeffer, 1992). Because power and leadership are measured by the outcomes achieved, an inability to use influence to implement ideas, decisions, and accomplish results can create severe political and financial costs in an organization (Burns, 1978; Fairholm, 2009; Pfeffer, 1992).

Political Frames

The idea of reframing, using mental models through which to view situations, by Bolman and Deal (2017) contributed to the literature on politics. Using frames allows leaders to generate reflective questions and potential resolutions to complex problems. Bolman and Deal described four frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. The political frame examines the moral and ethical issues surrounding the use of power and politics. Bolman and Deal acknowledged that all organizations have a political element because they contain individuals and groups with unique preferences and conflicting interests, both internally and externally, and they compete for scarce resources.

Politically Intelligent Leadership

School district superintendents serve as the chief executives of school districts and regularly navigate politically charged conflict with internal and external interest

groups in an environment with scarce resources (Björk et al., 2014; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Lindle & Mawhinney, 2003). The political nature of the superintendency and the rapidly changing educational context create a compelling case for superintendents to develop political intelligence (Björk & Gurley, 2005; Petersen & Williams, 2005b; Vaughn, 2010). Therefore, this study uses politically intelligent leadership, as described by White et al. (2016), as the theoretical framework on which this study is based.

Political intelligence, as used in this study, is a set of skills and ethical behaviors used to achieve organizational and/or personal goals. Political intelligence is the way that a leader negotiates policy, standards, rules, and regulations within organizational life, while considering the wants, needs, values, motivations, and emotions of all stakeholders to accomplish organizational goals (DeLuca, 1999; Fairholm, 2009; Tucker, 1995; White et al., 2016).

Politically skilled leaders use specific behaviors, both deliberate and unplanned, to influence others to achieve outcomes that address individual or organizational interests. Leaders may be motivated to influence others based on their ethical principles or to manipulate others to obtain their desired outcome (DeLuca, 1999). Politically intelligent leaders operate with ethical influence and use political strategies for noble purposes (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). White et al. (2016) defined a politically intelligent leader as "one who uses a moral compass to lead the organization in the right direction while considering the wants, needs, values, motivations and emotions of followers and stakeholders" (p. 3). Politically intelligent leadership requires the ability to understand and analyze a situation, use the effective strategies to influence outcomes,

readjust strategies that are ineffective, and use a moral compass to guide the organization for the greater good (White et al., 2016).

A leader's ability to thoroughly assess the political environment is a key skill to navigating internal and external organizational politics (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Orbell, Morikawa, & Allen, 2002; White et al., 2016). According to White et al. (2016), "Political intelligence requires that we not only make ourselves aware of the different communities that make up our environment, but also that we be mindful of their interests and their real and potential impact on our leadership" (p. 119). Politically intelligent leadership includes the element of social astuteness, the accurate perception of others' perspectives, capabilities, and networks to effectively influence others for the purpose of achieving outcomes (Ferris et al, 2005a; Yammarino & Mumford, 2012). This element allows leaders to anticipate those who hold or use power or will resist or support a decision, allowing the leader to determine the feasibility of an action. Additionally, social awareness provides leaders with the opportunity to evaluate possible coalitions or networks to enact influence (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Pfeffer, 1981, 1992).

Understanding one's own political style and the political style of the individual the leader is attempting to influence is fundamental to successfully using political strategies (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). A political style comprises the values, character, and beliefs of an individual and how they influence the way an individual reacts to others or circumstances (White et al., 2016). An individual can adjust his or her political style based on the situation or change his or her default style if desired through learning and training. DeLuca (1999) posited the existence of nine political styles based on an individual's action orientation and attitudes toward politics. White et al. (2016)

found that in the public sector and educational institutions, commitment to advancing

goals, or goal allegiance, was a stronger determinant of style than attitude toward politics.

According to White et al. (2016), goal allegiance describes an individual's

commitment toward advancing goals, whether it is based on self-interests or

organizational interests. Depending on the situation, most individuals vary along the goal

allegiance continuum (Figure 1).

Basis for Goals		
Self-Interests	Blended Interests	Organizational Interests
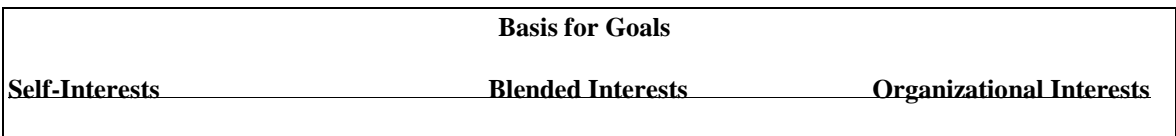
Figure 1. Goal allegiance continuum. From *The Politically Intelligent Leader* (2nd ed.) by P. C. White, T. R. Harvey, and S. L. Fox, 2016, p. 69 (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield).

The other component of political style is an individual's level of political

initiative (White et al., 2016). Some individuals are more willing to engage in risk, while

others are less likely to act in contentious situations. People on the passive end of the

political initiative continuum tend to protect the status quo and play a support role, while

those on the assertive end explicitly state opinions and push for change. Similar to goal

allegiance, an individual's political initiative can vary by situation but is generally the

level of initiative used in most situations (Figure 2).

Level of Initiative		
Passive	Moderately Engaged	Assertive
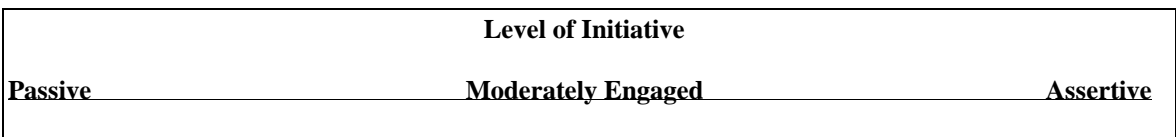
Figure 2. Political initiative continuum. From *The Politically Intelligent Leader* (2nd ed.), by P. C. White, T. R. Harvey, and S. L. Fox, 2016, p. 70 (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield).

These two components, goal allegiance and political initiative, taken together,

comprise an individual's political style. The political styles matrix (Table 1) developed

by White et al. (2016) represented nine political styles based on the preferences of individuals on the goal allegiance and political initiative continuums.

Table 1

Political Styles Matrix

| | Goal | | |
Initiative	Self-interests	Blended interests	Organizational interests
Assertive	Challenger	Arranger	Strategist
Engaged	Planner	Balancer	Developer
Passive	Analyst	Adaptor	Supporter

Note. From *The Politically Intelligent Leader* (2nd ed.) by P. C. White, T. R. Harvey, and S. L. Fox, 2016, p. 71 (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield).

Individuals tend to have one dominant style but may develop the ability to take on other styles depending on the situation, known as backup styles. Knowing one's political style allows a leader to be conscious of his or her automatic tendencies and intentionally identify the most effective political strategies to use in a given situation rather than unconsciously react (White et al., 2016).

A core component of politics and power is interdependence (Burns, 1978; Fairholm, 2009). In addition to understanding their own styles, politically intelligent leaders are also aware of the political styles of others to effectively anticipate reactions to proposed decisions and the type of resistance or support they may enact (White et al., 2016). The political styles of others can be determined by observation and experience with the other person's tendencies related to goal orientation, energy dedicated to goals, and behavior in politically charged situations (White et al., 2016). Leaders must be able to access a repertoire of strategies to enact with the variety of different styles.

There is extensive literature on political strategies that leaders can use to navigate political conflict in their organizations (Alemán, 2002; Bolman & Deal, 2017; DeLuca, 1999; Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010; Duffy, 2006; Fairholm, 2009; Ferris et al., 2005a; Girard, 2017; Grant, 2013; Grenny et al., 2013; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Leslie & Gelfand, 2012; White et al., 2016). However, the complexity of politics and human behavior often make political intelligence tacit knowledge, so leaders must use careful reflection and insight to effectively use political strategies based on the political styles of the players involved and the context of the situations in which the political conflict occurs (White et al., 2016). Despite the intricate process of using political strategies, political intelligence is a skill that can be learned and developed (Ferris et al., 2012; Munyon et al., 2015; White et al., 2016).

Building relationships and trust is at the core of all political strategies because politically intelligent leadership is a reciprocal process (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2019; White et al., 2016; Yukl, 2013). White et al. (2016) outlined 19 political strategies for use in external environments and 18 political strategies for use with internal environments outlined in Table 2.

In addition to selecting the effective strategies based on situational context and political style, a leader must also consider "the nature of the problem situation, the goals of the change effort, the cultural norms of the client target, and the expected degree of resistance" (Fairholm, 2009, p. 63). Ultimately, politically intelligent leaders decide which strategies to use "based on their conscious judgment of what's best for the overall situation" (DeLuca, 1999, p. 34).

Table 2

External and Internal Political Strategies

External political strategies	Internal political strategies
1. Build trust	1. Build trust
2. Create a political vision	2. Uncover the informal norms ASAP
3. You'll need to meet their needs, or they'll never meet yours	3. Do your homework
4. Simplify and clarify your message	4. Dig the well before you're thirsty
5. Never let 'em see you sweat	5. Link agendas
6. Do your homework	6. Management by walking around
7. Know each decision maker's agenda	7. Be open to their ideas
8. Be aware of political blind spots	8. Empower others
9. Coalition-building is a long-term and necessary strategy	9. Make use of the chit system
10. "Working the community" is usually neither interesting nor fun, but it's necessary	10. Expand the pie by with "out of the box" thinking
11. Don't wait to build networks 'til you need them	11. Many messengers--same message--bigger impact
12. Include all sides	12. Be aware of internal political blind spots
13. Positive responses to perceived dangers win support	13. Where snipers dwell, plan meticulously
14. Ability to compete, intention to cooperate	14. Go slow to go fast
15. Win-win solutions more than win-lose solutions	15. Benevolent environments yield risk-taking and creativity
16. Count how many natural constituents are voters	16. Knowing who trusts whom
17. Celebrate everything	17. Float the idea
18. The theory of small wins	18. Use the accordion process to increase involvement
19. Use conflict resolution techniques	

Note. Strategies are from *The Politically Intelligent Leader* (2nd ed.) by P. C. White, T. R. Harvey, and S. L. Fox, 2016, pp. 29-64 (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield).

Elements of Politics in Public Education

Effective leadership and governance are vital to address the intensifying effects of political action in the system of education. Legislated accountability requirements demanding improved academic outcomes for increasingly diverse students with complex needs and scarce resources have created dynamic conditions riddled with political interests competing for priority. These fast-moving changes are driven by the local, state,

and federal levels of political influence (Brierton et al., 2016; Duffy, 2006). Intertwined with these demands come an increasing lack of confidence in public institutions and technological and communication advances, including social media, which has stimulated and organized political activism among individuals and interest groups who desire to influence educational policy (Balz, 2014; Blumenreich & Jaffe-Walter, 2015; Glader, 2018; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Knight Abowitz, 2018).

The educational system in the United States has consisted historically of local institutions with management over their financial resources (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). The Constitution is silent on the provision of education because the framers believed it was a concept best left under the local control of the states. States delegate control of education to elected officials on local school district boards, which allocate resources for curricula, instructional programs, employees, and facilities. In addition, school districts consider local values in their decisions about how they distribute resources, which can create demand or support from constituents (Björk, 2005; Kirst & Wirt, 2009). Political conflict is generated in the educational system when a district receives competing stakeholder demands for which it lacks enough resources to meet, so the district must decide which to support and which to refuse (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). Considering the current state of education for which there is questionable public support, accountability for outcomes, insufficient resources, and increasing diversity and social needs, operating in the political realm in education is unavoidable (Björk, 2005; Björk et al., 2014; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Kowalski, 2013).

Changing Perceptions and Educational Reform

Negative perceptions about educational institutions is a phenomenon complicated by the changing relationship between local, state, and federal entities. Early in the history of the United States, local officials were entrusted with decisions about the education of the nation's children because citizens had such distrust of distant government institutions. Over the last several decades, federal and state governments have created increasing regulations and restrictions on local school boards as confidence in their ability to make decisions has deteriorated. Events beginning in the 1950s triggered a national response to perceived deficiencies in state and local board decision-making. In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case that racial segregation in schools was unlawful. Subsequently, an urgency to address reading deficiencies after a decline in teaching phonics and perceptions that the Soviet Union was surpassing the United States in technology and science led to increased governmental regulation of public education (Albert, 1962; Björk et al., 2014; Brierton et al., 2016).

In the 1960s, increased focus on social and equity issues in education rose to a national level with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965 (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). This was followed by courts overturning local decisions, resulting in increased regulations in the 1970s related to student due process rights and access to education for students with disabilities (Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Petersen & Williams, 2005b). In the 1980s and 1990s, the lack of confidence in local agency decisions continued with a 1983 report commissioned by President Ronald Reagan, *A Nation at Risk*, which called out the underachievement of American students (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Uncertainties about American students'

competitiveness with international opponents decreased confidence in local decisions as state and federal standards and programs were discussed and implemented (Björk, 2005; Björk et al., 2014; Björk, Kowalski, & Young, 2005).

The rise of state and federal control of the education system is most notably recognized in the educational reform movements over the last several decades. This regulation was precipitated by decreased confidence in the ability of local governing boards to achieve the educational outcomes needed for the United States to compare favorably with other nations. Educational reform mandates have changed the way superintendents and school boards lead their districts because states and the federal government dictate standards and require local schools to monitor achievement scores, equitable outcomes for all students, and teacher quality (Björk et al., 2014; Brierton et al., 2016; Malen & Cochran, 2014; Petersen & Williams, 2005b). Because of the increase in state and federal controls on schools, funding to address the state and federal accountability measures is often allocated through categorical programs, which decentralize the authority of local school boards. Federal and state categorical programs often prescribe the methods and outcomes required to receive funding, lessening the influence of local school officials, conflicting with the priorities of educational leaders, and heightening expectations of superintendents (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Björk et al., 2014; Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

In general, public trust in governmental institutions is declining, creating an increase in political division and dissatisfaction with the political system (Balz, 2014; Glader, 2018). Confidence in public schools was down from 62% in 1975 to 29% in 2018 (Gallup, n.d.). School district leaders are troubled by a lack of public engagement

in and support for educational institutions as they seek support for important educational initiatives. As community confidence declines and public criticism surges, new skills are required for superintendents and school boards to lead school districts through the discord that exists to accomplish organizational goals (Björk, 2005; Björk et al., 2014; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Kowalski, 2013).

Scarce Resources

School districts often grapple with a lack of resources to address their necessary obligations in addition to local priorities for student achievement. Political and economic shifts are changing school-funding models, and in some cases, states are providing fewer financial resources to school districts than in years prior (Brierton et al., 2016). Recent school funding patterns trend toward including improvements in equity; however, interest groups' intentions in many states to limit local property tax contributions have increased limitations on local control (California Department of Education, n.d.-e; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Petersen & Williams, 2005b). In California, the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 froze local property taxes at 1976 levels and shifted the allocation of most school funding to the state, the largest source of school budgets, which limited the ability of schools to raise revenue locally (Public Policy Institute of California, 2018). In the 1980s, state budgets contributed 48% of school funding, up dramatically from the 1930s when states provided only 17.3% (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). The state of California provides one of the lowest per pupil funding rates nationally, ranking 41st when adjusted for cost of living (Kaplan, 2017). Furthermore, the federal and state governments have created mandated programs for school districts, some of which are totally or partially unfunded. With states controlling the bulk of funding, legislated mandates have been used to force

compliance from local school districts, which sometimes results in conflict between local and state entities (Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Petersen & Young, 2004).

A lack of adequate funding for schools can result in increased class sizes, limited capacity to implement valuable instructional programs, and an inability to make necessary infrastructure improvements (Brierton et al., 2016). Consequently, funding issues force school leaders to make controversial and politically charged decisions such as school closures, elimination of special programs, and reductions in staff (Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Kowalski, 2013). With rising achievement expectations, inadequate funding, and diminishing levels of public support for education, school district leaders are expected to produce greater outcomes with fewer resources (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2005).

Diverse Student Needs

The school-age population is becoming increasingly ethnically, racially, culturally, and economically diverse, creating multifaceted political dynamics for superintendents and school boards to navigate (Aydin et al., 2017; Björk, 2005; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Brierton et al., 2016). According to the California Department of Education (n.d.-a), Hispanic or Latino students now make up the majority of student enrollment in California (see Table 3).

California also serves nearly 2,000,000 students designated as English learners, nearly 20% of its enrolled student population and about 41.8% of the enrolled population speaks a language other than English (California Department of Education, n.d.-d). Addressing the needs of students with various cultural backgrounds and language needs requires special instructional programs, highly qualified and trained staff, and recruitment

50

of teachers with diverse cultural backgrounds. These programs require resources to procure, and prioritization by school leaders often generates the potential for conflict among interest groups with competing priorities (Aydin et al., 2017; Brierton et al., 2016)**.**

Table 3

California Student Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity, 1998-2019

School year	Hispanic or Latino %	Asian %	White %
1998-1999	41.0	8.0	28.0
2008-2009	49.0	8.0	28.0
2018-2019	54.6	9.3	22.9

Note. From 2018-19 Enrollment by Ethnicity and Grade, by California Department of Education, n.d.-a (https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=00&agglevel =state&year=2018-19).

School-aged students in California and the nation are also facing higher levels of poverty than previously experienced (Brierton et al., 2016; California Department of Education, n.d.-c). During the 2017-2018 school year, 60.1% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals, a commonly used indicator to determine whether or not students are considered economically disadvantaged. This number has increased from 51.2% of students in 2007-2008 and 47.4% of students in 1997-1998 (California Department of Education, n.d.-c). The accountability measures as part of the educational reform movement have demonstrated that a significant achievement gap exists between economically disadvantaged students and their peers, and requires specialized training for staff, resources, and community engagement to support the learning of this growing number of students (Brierton et al., 2016; Payne, 2018).

In addition to complexities prompted by changing demographics, today's schools are experiencing other types of student diversity, including sexual orientation and gender identity. Mallory, Sears, Hasenbush, and Susman (2014) estimated that 3.2 million youth aged 8 to 18 identify as LGBT nationwide. School-aged LGBT students experience higher rates of bullying, sexual and physical assault, and exhibit substantially higher rates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). State curriculum mandates are highly disparate regarding the use of inclusive curriculum and instructional practices supportive of LGBTQ+ students and related issues (Moorhead, 2018; Strauss, 2019). Considering that 39% of respondents reported they would be uncomfortable learning that their child had a lesson on LGBTQ history in school and the variance in state-mandated curriculum on LGBTQ, this type of student diversity contributes another example of the politics involved in education and power struggles among individuals and decision-makers at the state and local level (The Harris Poll, 2019).

The increase and complexity of student diversity in schools can be a complicated and divisive political issue for education leaders to address (Kowalski, 2013). Students in impoverished or diverse communities face numerous challenges for which teachers are unable to respond through instruction appropriately and are often served in inadequate learning environments; therefore, these communities are challenged to attract and retain high-quality teachers, especially teachers whose racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds match the student populations (Aydin et al., 2017; Buck & Deutsch, 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018). Education leaders must develop research-based programs, such as cultural proficiency training programs, acquire more bilingual teaching staff, with a focus

on early education to address these disparities, and yet work collaboratively with stakeholders in the communities in which these issues exist (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Brierton et al., 2016; Kowalski, 2013). Programs developed to serve diverse student populations in schools are often controversial because they are responsive to value-based social and political issues, and the electorate does not always support the underlying values or additional funding required for these programs (Björk, 2005; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

Special Interest Groups

With the presence of limited resources, diverse student needs, accountability reform measures, and a dearth of confidence in public institutions, circumstances are opportune for special interest groups to advocate for their priorities, sometimes using adversarial means such as demonstrating at board meetings and blitzing social media platforms (Blumenreich & Jaffe-Walter, 2015; Pampuro, 2019; Sanders, 2019; Stokes, 2019; Strauss, 2019). Interest groups have historically been involved in public education but are increasing in intensity, usually identifying a single focus and making demands in pursuit of saving or assigning resources to that cause or defending specific social values (Blasé & Björk, 2010; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Brierton et al., 2016; Kirst & Wirt, 2009). Interest groups may be formed internally, such as employee unions, externally, such as parent groups or educational advocates, or by individual politicians or school board members themselves, but all demand participation in educational policy and decision-making based on their interests (Brierton et al., 2016; Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

Employee unions are an internal type of special interest group that contributes to the political nature of public education. Unions often desire a share of school district

resources to improve their members' compensation and often aim to influence

educational policy by providing financial support for the election of school board

members or other candidates who support their causes (Brierton et al., 2016; Grissom,

2010; Kirst & Wirt, 2009). When school boards' direction on salary negotiations or

policy does not comport with union objectives, political conflict can become especially

contentious and very public because union members fill board rooms and seek public

support for their causes to force school boards to meet their demands (Pampuro, 2019;

Stokes, 2019). As a result, Grissom (2010) noted that "union activity can negatively

impact the school board's ability to make effective governance decisions by promoting

division and disagreement among board members" (p. 622). Political conflict with

employee unions can trigger school boards, administration, and union leaders to behave

in a manner of questionable ethics by agreeing to demands that consequently cause a loss

of oversight such as when contentious negotiations result in lowering personnel

evaluation standards or increasing compensation at the expense of other necessary

programs (Duffy, 2006; Sell, 2005).

   With educational reform movements demanding greater accountability, the role of

parent involvement has been highlighted by educational advocacy groups as a necessary

component for achievement of educational outcomes. Advocacy groups or groups of

parents may assert disagreements about curriculum, instructional practices, and board

policies, causing conflict within the school board itself or between the board and parent

community (Brierton et al., 2016). These groups typically congregate when a school

district is considering a decision that will likely be unpopular or controversial, such as a

school closure or an instructional change laden with social values, or when the need to

reform policies to improve academic achievement is apparent (Plecki, McCleery, &

Knapp, 2006).

When school boards or superintendents initiate change to achieve positive student

outcomes, such acts are considered to be political and can create conflict with special

interest groups and individual stakeholders (Björk & Gurley, 2005; Duffy, 2006). Lindle

and Mawhinney (2003) noted that leaders tend to pursue agreement, which may

temporarily quell essential topics that need further exploration. Brierton et al. (2016) also

noted that domineering or inflexible behavior on the part of the organization's leaders can

perpetuate conflict. School board members and superintendents need to build

relationships with constituents, yet the decisions they ultimately make may continue to be

unpopular among some stakeholders (Hickey, 2006; Kowalski, 2013).

School District Governance

The literature on school district governance often centers on who is responsible

and accountable for outcomes situated in the context of state and federal mandates,

budget constraints, and political interest groups (California School Boards Association,

2017; Maricle, 2014; Plecki et al., 2006; Romans, Raynor, & Thompson, 2017).

However, school district governance is not administration because the role of chief

executive officer typically belongs to the superintendent (California School Boards

Association, 2017; Plecki et al., 2006). According to Plecki et al. (2006), "Governance

creates the framework through which high-quality leadership can be exercised throughout

the educational system" (p. 3). Because of the complexity and volatility in today's

educational environment, the school board and superintendent must develop coherent

systems of operation and role definition for the governance team to achieve its goals (California School Boards Association, 2017; Quinn & Dawson, 2019).

School district governance plays a significant role in the efforts to address school reform and improve student achievement outcomes (Johnson, 2012, 2013). Effective school governance does not occur without intentional efforts to establish an operating system and processes in the context of state and federal mandates, scarce resources, and special interests that can serve as a distraction from the work of school boards and superintendents (Grissom, 2010; Quinn & Dawson, 2019). The 2013 change to the California school funding model, the local control funding formula, and local control and accountability plans, requires school boards and superintendents to strategically align goals, activities, and outcomes with their budgets. This change elucidates the need for effective school governance dedicated to developing a vision for student achievement, explicit governance, and leadership roles and an efficient operational system to make data-informed, high-level decisions (California School Boards Association, 2017; Grissom, 2010; Johnson, 2013; Maricle, 2014; Quinn & Dawson, 2019).

While state and federal authority and involvement in public education have expanded, local school boards continue to maintain jurisdiction over many issues, and governance teams must manage the increasingly strained relations with local interest groups and the other levels of government (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). This conflict occurs when groups or individuals champion causes that may diverge from the mission and goals of the organization and potentially stimulate changes in the governance structure and operations (Björk & Blasé, 2009; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Williams & Tabernik, 2011). Effective school boards engage the community and maintain relationships with

their constituents to understand their expectations and actively convey the complex and challenging work of the governance team (California School Boards Association, 2017; Johnson, 2013; Maricle, 2014; Quinn & Dawson, 2019).

Role of the School Board

States have delegated the authority of school district oversight to local school boards modeled after city council structures with representative members elected from the community (Björk, 2005; Brierton et al., 2016; Maranto et al., 2017). The primary roles of school boards include policy development, hiring and evaluating a superintendent, and approving budgets and expenditures, which are all necessary responsibilities toward ensuring that all students are prepared for success in the post-K-12 world (Björk, 2005; Björk et al., 2014; Brierton et al., 2016; Eadie, 2003; Maranto et al., 2017; Maricle, 2014; Sell, 2005; Waters & Marzano, 2007). However, researchers have also identified the role that the school board structure and dysfunctional board member behavior plays in hindering the quality of the services provided to students (Brierton et al., 2016; Waters & Marzano, 2007; Williams & Tabernik, 2011). In addition, a common criticism of school board members is their lack of background knowledge in education, finance, or administration, yet they are responsible for the educational success of the community's students. The absence of expertise in the complexity and specialization of educational leadership places increased importance on the board's role in hiring a competent superintendent (Brierton et al., 2016; Maranto et al., 2017; Maricle, 2014).

Characteristics of Effective School Boards

Kirst and Wirt (2009) described school boards as "small political systems, reflecting the ever-present tension in a democracy from the demands of school values of

quality, equity, efficiency, and choice" (p. 135). An effective school board can positively impact student achievement (California School Boards Association, 2017; Maricle, 2014; Plecki et al., 2016; Waters & Marzano, 2007). The literature provides three overarching characteristics of successful school boards that support operations in a politically charged environment, including vision development, role clarification, and focus on outcomes (California School Boards Association, 2017; Devarics & O'Brien, 2011; Eadie, 2003; Johnson, 2013; Maricle, 2014; Quinn & Dawson, 2019).

Vision. Effective school boards work together to establish a shared vision of high-quality instruction and achievement for the district's students, which guides the mission and the strategies and tactics implemented by the superintendent (California School Boards Association, 2017; Eadie, 2003; Grissom, 2010; Johnson, 2013; Maricle, 2014; Quinn & Dawson, 2019). School boards with high levels of student achievement are more likely to establish goals and use data to monitor progress and make decisions (Devarics & O'Brien, 2011). Effective school boards perform at the policy level rather than the administrative level, providing direction to the superintendent and stating clear expectations for performance (Quinn & Dawson, 2019).

Clear roles. Effective school boards develop a positive working relationship with the superintendent and staff based on a collective duty to improve student achievement (California School Boards Association, 2017; Devarics & O'Brien, 2011). This relationship includes the explicit clarification of roles and responsibilities of the school board and superintendent. The concept of role clarification has been widely documented in the literature because it is a common cause of dysfunction in the relationship between the board and superintendent (Björk, 2005; Bowers, 2016; Devarics & O'Brien, 2011;

Grier, 2016; Jutabha, 2017; Plecki et al., 2016; Quinn & Dawson, 2019; Weiss et al., 2015). School boards that select the right leadership and commit to their role as individual members and a collective board are associated with improved student-achievement outcomes (Björk et al., 2014; Eadie, 2003; Ford & Ihrke, 2016; Grissom, 2012; Maranto et al., 2017; Maricle, 2014; Waters & Marzano, 2007).

Focus on outcomes. School boards dedicated to the achievement of the district's vision and mission by concentrating efforts to that end perform successfully (California School Boards Association, 2017; Quinn & Dawson, 2019). Effective boards focus their time and energy at the policy level in support of student achievement rather than becoming distracted by operational matters (Devarics & O'Brien, 2011; Quinn & Dawson, 2019). According to Quinn and Dawson (2019), effective boards prioritize discussion regarding progress toward outcomes, whether student needs are equitably addressed, how resources are utilized to support the outcomes, and obstacles impeding growth. Effective school boards have a strong understanding of the issues facing the district and regularly review systems-level data to inform their decisions, assign resources strategically, and ensure accountability for outcomes (Devarics & O'Brien, 2011; Johnson, 2013; Maricle, 2014).

School Board Conflict

Conflict produced within a school board has several internal and external contributing factors and significantly detracts from board effectiveness (Grissom, 2012). School boards typically consist of five to seven members with various ideologies, political styles, and motivations for seeking elected office (Blissett & Alsbury, 2017; Mountford, 2004; White et al., 2016). Although most school board members have a

balance of personal and altruistic motives for seeking office, those who present personal

agendas or single issues in a demanding or obstructive manner create greater board

conflict and contention with the superintendent (Mountford, 2004; Mountford & Brunner,

1999). School board membership is a difficult job even when members can put differing

philosophies aside and work together toward addressing the challenges in education

(Brierton et al., 2016). School boards often attempt to manage tasks that are not aligned

to their roles or try to focus on too many issues at once, which prevents the board from

making policy-level decisions that impact student achievement (Kirst & Wirt, 2009;

Quinn & Dawson, 2019).

Although school board members are closer geographically and serve fewer of

their constituents than elected officials in state and federal office, most of the public does

not understand the role of the school board. In addition, school board elections have

some of the lowest voter turnout (Brierton et al., 2016; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Maricle,

2014). Low public engagement in education creates an environment in which special

interest groups increase in power and may draw candidates aligned with these groups

(Brierton et al., 2016). The diversity and size of the community in which the district is

located also contribute to increased board conflict. Grissom (2010) found higher levels

of board conflict in large urban districts that serve a diverse community because of

increased levels of interest group activity.

Role of the Superintendent

Kowalski (2013) described the evolutionary role of the superintendent from

teacher-scholar, business manager, democratic leader, and applied social scientist, to

effective communicator. Early superintendents were considered to fill the role of

teacher-scholar, a basis on which superintendents were selected to lead based on their teaching ability. As the postindustrial revolution period necessitated increasing the size of schools and districts, business management became an increasing concern, and superintendents were sought for their ability to administer resources. By the 1940s, superintendents were expected to serve as democratic leaders and balance the roles of providing professional recommendations to the board yet satisfying the interests of the community at large. The role evolved to applied social scientists at a time when social sciences were considered the core of school leadership and dedicated research was conducted on school administration. Finally, through the provision of educational reform movements and accountability systems, modern-day superintendents are expected to communicate and involve stakeholders to inform decision-making effectively. The rapid pace of change in public education has altered the role of the superintendent from solely operational and managerial to navigating the often-contradictory interests of various individuals, special interest groups, and board member demands (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Hart, 2018; Kowalski, 2013).

In addition to addressing the interests of stakeholders, superintendents are tasked with daily decision-making related to instructional programs, operations, maintaining compliance with state and federal mandates, and developing strategies to implement the board's vision and goals, all of which impact internal and external stakeholders (Brierton et al., 2016; Kirst & Wirt, 2009). Waters and Marzano (2007) identified five district-level leadership qualities that correlated to student academic achievement, which included the use of a goal-setting process, generating nonnegotiable goals for student learning, aligning school board efforts and support, monitoring and evaluating goals, and

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using resources effectively. Superintendents perform the varied roles of communicator, manager, instructional leader, politician, and applied social scientist in leading school districts (Björk et al., 2014; Kirst & Wirt, 2009). The politically charged environment in which these responsibilities take place requires superintendents to use a transformational leadership approach to create sustainable, effective change in mindsets and behaviors beyond simply mandating compliance to directives (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2010; Björk & Blasé, 2009; Björk et al., 2014).

Researchers have found that the contemporary superintendency is not an easy career choice. Finnan et al. (2015) found that superintendents reported job stress, time commitment, and lack of funding as the most widely identified problems with the job. In addition, conflict with the board was one of the highest reported reasons for leaving a position (Finnan et al., 2015). Overall, superintendents report high levels of satisfaction with their career choice, but state and federal compliance requirements, school board members, and public relations generate increasing political pressure on superintendents (Finnan et al., 2015; Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

Politics of the School Board and Superintendent

The school board and superintendent each have an essential and interdependent role to play in leading school districts toward improved outcomes for student achievement. An effective school board establishes a shared vision, identifies outcomes for achievement, and creates policy in alignment with those outcomes. An effective superintendent develops and implements strategies and recommends resource alignment in support of the board's goals and policies. Subsequently, the board evaluates the

superintendent based on data-informed targets related to the outcomes (Eadie, 2003). These responsibilities, even when performed effectively, occur in a political context among pleas from the community for policy change, diverse student needs, union interest groups, and inadequate funding (Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

Most superintendents report that they have a positive working relationship with their board members despite reports to the contrary elevated in the media, typically from large urban districts (Finnan et al., 2015; Kirst & Wirt, 2009). Kirst and Wirt (2009) described four configurations of school board-superintendent relationships that often occur:

> 1) a strong superintendent, trusted by board members, dominates policymaking and administration; 2) a strong board that does not trust the superintendent dominates policymaking and administration; 3) a mixture where the superintendent and board members both cross over frequently into policymaking and administration; and 4) the textbook definition of separation of roles where each participant knows what is expected and abides by those understandings.
> (pp. 133-134)

Most research supports the latter textbook description of clarifying and maintaining separate roles in support of effective governance and improved student achievement outcomes (Quinn & Dawson, 2019; Sell, 2005).

When struggles arise over role clarification, special interests, or individual board member agendas, superintendents must rely on their own moral and ethical framework as they work with the school board and special interests (Brierton et al., 2016). Superintendents are experiencing more of this type of conflict due to increased diversity

and divergent expectations from factions of the community that seek to influence school policy with their agendas (Björk, 2005). Contradictory board member or superintendent philosophies about their roles, or even public perception of their roles, may cause dissension in the relationship (Smith, 1974). Interest group activity also creates discord and diverts time and energy away from high-level policy making and discussion about outcomes. Finally, individual board member agendas or caustic behavior on the part of a board member can contribute to conflict in the school board and superintendent relationship. Weiler (2015) posited,

> The lessons learned stress the importance of remaining united against a negative influence, consistently adhering to board policy, educating the public on what is occurring, and taking the requisite time to contain the potential damage a caustic board member can have on the primary goal of a school district, namely to educate children. (p. 18)

Political Strategies Used by Superintendents

In their roles as leaders of educational institutions, superintendents interface with board members and their individual agendas, special interest groups, and staff who often hold conflicting interests. Superintendents are tasked with making decisions in the best interest of the district's students, a challenge in the current politically charged climate where a wrong turn can result in community upheaval, loss of confidence by the board, or even the loss of their job. Therefore, superintendents need to use political strategies to address the unavoidable political conflicts that they will encounter in their careers (Alemán, 2002; American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Annunziato, 2008; Björk et al., 2014; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Björk & Lindle, 2001; Fusarelli, 2006;

Hill & Jochim, 2018; Vaughn, 2010). Several primary leadership strategies for navigating political contexts and overcoming opposition to change have been identified in the literature and summarized as trust, self-awareness of the political context, building alliances and coalitions, charisma, and agenda linking.

Trust

Trust is an essential component to leadership and influence of others in organizations and is the foundation of many political strategies. In order to develop social capital with board members and stakeholders, superintendents must be capable of performing their duties at a high level, build genuine and authentic relationships with others, and follow through on their word (Duffy, 2006; Ferris et al., 2005a, White et al., 2016). Researchers identified that successful leaders build trust with stakeholders through intentionally developing connections, differentiating strategies based on stakeholder interests, and following through (Annunziato, 2008; Bowers, 2016; Girard, 2017; Hill & Jochim, 2018; White et al., 2016).

Awareness of Political Context

A superintendent's awareness of his or her political style and that of others with whom he or she works is essential for developing political savvy (DeLuca, 1999, Petersen & Williams, 2005b; White et al., 2016). Mindfulness of the political context, which includes understanding one's political style and those of others, is key to using political strategies effectively. Leaders who are conscious of the values and interests of stakeholders are more successful in enacting transformational change and less susceptible to political blind spots (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2010; DeLuca, 1999, White et al., 2016). Because of the complex nature of information and human interactions

surrounding important decisions, effective superintendents identify the political context

by developing awareness of stakeholder motivations and networks of relationships

through listening and observation to determine the best strategy (Bolman & Deal, 2017;

Duffy, 2006; Ferris et al., 2005a; Girard, 2017; Petersen & Williams, 2005b; White et al.,

2016).

Building Alliances and Coalitions

According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is based on the

development of a shared vision, collaborative relationships, and understanding the

motivations of followers. When developing a strategy to address a politically charged

issue, building networks or partnerships with individuals with shared interests is a

political strategy identified in the research (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Alemán, 2002;

American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Bolman &

Deal, 2017; Bowers, 2016; Girard, 2017; Hill & Jochim, 2018; Jackson, 2016; Petersen &

Williams, 2005a). Superintendents, in particular, resolved conflicts or issues by

leveraging existing relationships, raising awareness of the situation, and using coherent

communication skills to build consensus and implement strategic action (Alemán, 2002;

American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Annunziato, 2008; Duffy, 2006;

Hart, 2018; Hickey, 2006; Hill & Jochim, 2018).

Charisma

Charisma is an attribute of politically savvy superintendents. Charismatic leaders

develop connections and impart confidence in their leadership skills, values, and

qualifications among followers. Leaders who demonstrate charisma garner enthusiasm

and support for their vision and goals, particularly when conflict exists in the

organization (Burns, 1978; Fairholm, 2009; Ferris et al., 2005a; Takala, 1998).

Superintendents use charisma strategically to navigate competing priorities and effect

transformational change in their organizations. They accomplish this by listening, being

visible and approachable, and motivating followers (Burns-Redell, 2013; Hill & Jochim,

2018).

Agenda Linking

Political conflict in school districts is generated by divergent values and desires of

stakeholders. Effective superintendents identify shared interests with groups or

individuals to establish an environment in which effective bargaining methods can take

place, resulting in the development of mutually beneficial outcomes (Bowers, 2016;

Ezarik, 2005; Hill & Jochim, 2018; H. P. Williams & Peters, 2018). The strategy of

linking agendas begins with building strong relationships, examining opportunities to

identify common interests, and finding resourceful ways to make connections among the

interests (Bolman & Deal, 2017; DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

Female Superintendents

While women have made strides in accessing the superintendency, a substantial

gender discrepancy continues to exist in the role. Female superintendents represent about

25% of all superintendents, which is disproportionate to the 75% of females working in

education (Björk, 2000; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Hendricks, 2013; Kowalski et al.,

2011; Mountford & Brunner, 2010; Robinson et al., 2017). The superintendency, in

general, continues to be dominated by White males, although women have achieved

greater access to the profession in large urban or suburban school districts (Finnan et al.,

2015; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Kowalski, 2013).

According to a study by Finnan et al. (2015), the mean and median age is somewhat higher for female superintendents because they begin their first superintendent position at a later age than their male counterparts. Female superintendents begin their first superintendent position at an average age of 47.1, in comparison to their male counterparts who begin their first position at an average age of 43, and 28.1% of women begin their first position between ages 30 and 49 as compared to 34.2% of men (Finnan et al., 2015; Robinson et al., 2017; see Table 4).

Table 4

Superintendents by Gender and Age

	Age						
Gender	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Total	*M*
Male	30 (4.9)	181 (29.3)	244 (39.5)	149 (24.1)	13 (2.1)	617 (100.0)	53.4
Female	8 (3.5)	56 (24.6)	113 (49.6)	49 (21.5)	2 (0.9)	228 (100.0)	53.7
Total	38 (4.5)	237 (28.1)	357 (42.3)	198 (23.4)	15 (1.8)	845 (100.0)	53.5

Note. From *Study of the American Superintendent: 2015 Mid-Decade Update* by L. A. Finnan, R. S. McCord, C. C. Stream, T. C. Mattocks, G. J. Petersen, and N. M. Ellerson, 2015, Table 2.1 (https://www.aasa.org/policy-blogs.aspx?id=39344&blogid=84002).

Barriers to the Role

Female administrators aspire to the superintendency but also face obstacles in accessing the profession. Brunner and Grogan (2007) established that 40% of females in central office administrative roles desired to become superintendents at some point in their careers. Despite the drive to lead school systems, women experience biases and negative perceptions based on gender roles and are more frequently employed in a career path that does not typically lead to the superintendency (Björk & Keedy, 2001; Brunner & Kim, 2010; Eagly, 2007; Lemasters & Roach, 2012; Shakeshaft et al., 2007).

Barriers to female access to the superintendency include the negative perceptions and preconceptions about female leaders based on gender role. Women must overcome impressions that they are not capable managers, particularly in the area of business services (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Shakeshaft et al., 2007). Women perceived that board members and other superintendents prevented them from accessing the position based on their perceived incapability to be strong leaders (Lemasters & Roach, 2012). As female administrators attempted to access promotional opportunities in greater numbers, training programs have suggested that they lead like men by suppressing their emotions and using an authoritarian leadership style because a collaborative approach would be perceived as ineffective (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

Women have not followed the typical career path to the superintendency in the same proportions as men, creating an additional barrier to accessing the position. Female superintendents have more classroom teaching experience than male superintendents and are more likely to follow curriculum and instructional career paths in central office positions, in contrast, to men who are more likely to access the superintendency through coaching and the high school principalship (Finnan et al., 2015; Brunner & Kim, 2010). Kowalski (2013) found that the increase in female superintendents between 1982 and 2010 was ascribed to the higher numbers of female doctoral students studying educational administration and the increased focus on student learning in schools. With the increased focus on student outcomes and accountability, female superintendents believed that they were hired because of their instructional leadership at a rate twice as likely as their male counterparts, particularly due to the career pathway through curriculum and instruction roles. On the other hand, male superintendents perceived that

their selection for the role was based on personal characteristics (Finnan et al., 2015; Kowalski, 2013; Kowalski et al., 2011).

Leadership Styles of Female Superintendents

The general perception of female leadership styles is represented differently from those of men in the literature (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Lemasters & Roach, 2012). Shakeshaft et al. (2007) found inconsistencies between qualitative and quantitative studies on differences in leadership styles between men and women, whereas other researchers have found that women are perceived as more likely than men to use transformational, collaborative leadership approaches (Eagly, 2007; Eagly et al., 2003; Robinson et al., 2017). Eagly et al. (2003) found that men were more likely than women to exhibit task-focused and autocratic leadership styles. Some researchers have determined that women consciously choose a more collaborative leadership style because they do not believe an authoritative, top-down leadership style would be perceived in a positive light (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Lemasters & Roach, 2012). Furthermore, because women have typically struggled with issues related to equity, they lead with a focus on social justice, and they emphasize diversity issues because their personal experiences have differed from those of their male counterparts (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Female leaders have been held to a higher standard because they are expected to balance both gender and superintendent roles by maintaining their feminine, collaborative communication methods, yet they must understand how to be heard in a masculine culture (Brunner, 1998, 2000b).

Politics and Female Superintendents

Women often neglect to appreciate the importance of politics in leadership and often avoid engaging in political activities because of a perceived and actual lack of confidence and aversion to politics (Mann, 1995). Female leaders tend to believe that they can achieve positive outcomes by following the rules, performing the job well, and leading collaboratively, and they are not inclined to engage in political approaches (Ferris et al., 2005a; Heath et al., 2017). This lack of political engagement can have dire consequences for female leaders by inhibiting career progression and encouraging negative gender stereotypes (Ferris et al., 2005a). However, even in male-dominated organizations, women who have developed and honed their political skill have experienced better outcomes than women with low levels of political skill (Watkins & Smith, 2014).

In school systems, female superintendents may perceive politics as a necessary but unappealing component of obtaining and succeeding in a superintendent role (Björk, 2000; Brunner & Grogan, 2007; McNay, 2016). Male superintendents reported more overt political action by special interest groups than female superintendents reported (Finnan et al., 2015). Robinson et al. (2017) posited that female leaders exhibit more collaborative leadership styles and are more likely to view interest groups as assets rather than obstacles, which may result in developing more effective coalitions with interest groups and experiencing less conflict.

Researchers have identified effective leadership characteristics of female superintendents that equate to political strategies but are not always identified as such. Female superintendents emphasize relationship development, coalition building,

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proactive community engagement, inclusion, and sharing credit as effective political

strategies that support their leadership success (Brunner, 2000b; Grogan & Shakeshaft,

2011; Robinson et al., 2017). Female leaders are more likely to use strategies grounded

in power that are shared or given to stakeholders rather than exerting power over

stakeholders (Brunner, 2000b; Pounder & Coleman, 2002).

Gaps in Research on Political Styles and Strategies

Research on political skill and leadership has become more abundant in the

context of the complex change, which includes globalization, technology, and cultural

shifts. The literature supports that the rapid pace of change creates resistance and power

struggles among individuals and groups competing for resources and support for their

values. The need for organizational leaders to use political will, skill, and strategies to

successfully navigate divisive political environments that involve changing

demographics, scarce resources, and increasing expectations from stakeholders and

special interest groups is well documented (Burns, 1978; DeLuca, 1999; Ferris et al.,

2005a, 2005b, 2007; Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Harris et al., 2016; Kapoutsis et al., 2015;

Mintzberg, 1983; Wihler et al., 2016).

There is limited research on job-specific political strategies related to the

politically intelligent leadership framework from White et al. (2016), which involves

establishing one's political style and the styles with which one interacts and using

specific political strategies with the particular styles. Girard (2017) conducted a

quantitative study on the political strategies used by principals of dual-language

programs. Research has primarily focused on the political context and leadership skills

related to communication, trust, community engagement, and superintendent-school

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board relationships but not on the specific political strategies used by superintendents to enact these leadership skills (Alemán, 2002; Asbjornsen, 2017; Bowers, 2016; Jackson, 2016; Jimenez, 2012; Jutabha, 2017; Kinsler, 2017; Muhammed, 2012; Nava, 2017; Rohrbach, 2015; Vaughn, 2010).

While research topics related to female superintendents have increased since 1980, research on female administrators is limited, particularly on the political aspects of leadership and board member relations (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Kowalski & Brunner, 2011; Shakeshaft et al., 2007). The existing literature predominantly relates to topics about women's personal lives, career pathways, and leadership skills (Kowalski, 2013; Kowalski & Brunner, 2011), and some relate to female superintendents' perception of political leadership (McNay, 2016). There is an absence of research on the political styles of female superintendents and the board members with whom they work and the specific political strategies they use with different board member styles.

Conclusions

Politics is an eternal theme in human history, and now more so than ever as the world is experiencing the acceleration of change, resulting in political conflict and divisiveness (Aristotle, 1944; Ehrenreich, 2016; Hahn, 2019; Tucker, 1981). Modern politics reflects the concept of power across organizational settings and how it is used to influence the behavior of others (Cherry, 2012; Lasswell, 1950; Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981). While most leaders' initial perceptions of politics are inherently negative, successful change in organizations requires leaders who strategically use political skills to respond to conflicts, balance power, and adapt to the changing environment while

guided by an ethical code and moral compass (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Bolman & Deal, 2017; DeLuca, 1999; Hart, 2018; White et al., 2016).

Political skill is well-documented as a necessary component for leaders to be able to process exceptional amounts of information and make efficient decisions in rapidly changing modern organizational climates (S. M. Adams & Zanzi, 2006; Bonabeau, 2003; Pfeffer, 1992). However, without political will, the desire to act, political skill alone is insufficient to achieve growth in organizations (Ferris et al., 2005a, 2012; Harris et al., 2016; Mintzberg, 1983). Skilled, motivated leaders who possess both political will and political skill strategically plan and use goal-directed behaviors and influence tactics to achieve success (Harris et al., 2016; Kapoutsis et al., 2015, Treadway, 2012; Treadway et al., 2014). In addition, politically intelligent leaders achieve this influence ethically, and their behaviors reflect motivation for noble purposes (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

In the educational context, school districts are experiencing greater political pressures due to negative perceptions, scarce resources, changing demographics, and mandated educational reforms (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Björk et al., 2014; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Lindle & Mawhinney, 2003). Superintendents require political intelligence to work effectively with the board, community members, and special interest groups in addressing the issues of change and traversing the values divide and competition for resources (American Association of School Administrators, 2005; Björk & Gurley, 2005; Hill & Jochim, 2018). Female leaders tend to favor a shared power approach and collaborative leadership styles, which may have implications for the political strategies female superintendents use with their board members (Ferris et al., 2005a; Heath et al.,

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2017; Robinson et al., 2017). Therefore, more information is needed to determine how female superintendents understand their political style and those of their board members and apply specific political strategies to further the work of educational institutions in a time of significant and rapid change.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Chapter III describes the selected research design and includes the key elements of the study's methodology. The chapter begins with an overview of the purpose statement and research questions. A description of the explanatory mixed-methods research design is provided followed by the population and methods used to select the sample for this study. The instrumentation section defines the process used to develop data collection instruments. Next, data collection methods and the approach to data analysis are discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the methodology.

Throughout this study, the term *peer researchers* is used to refer to the 10 Brandman University doctoral students who worked under the guidance of two faculty chairs in collaborating on the design and implementation of this study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to identify the political styles of female superintendents and their school board members as perceived by superintendents. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and explain the political strategies female superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members.

Research Questions

1. How do female superintendents perceive their own political style and the individual styles of their school board members?

2. What are the strategies female superintendents use to work successfully with the different school board member styles?

Research Design

The two common approaches to collecting and analyzing data to produce findings and conclusions include quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research utilizes objective measures and systematic procedures to establish relationships among variables (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patten, 2014). Qualitative research allows researchers to elucidate meaning by capturing the stories and experiences of multiple individuals in a particular environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). This study combined both approaches and utilized a mixed-methods research design to provide a more thorough inquiry into the topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to understand the various political styles of superintendents and board members and the political strategies used by superintendents, which aligned with an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach. In an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, the quantitative research is conducted and analyzed followed by qualitative research to provide a deep understanding and a comprehensive explanation of the topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative approach in this study provided descriptive data regarding the perceptions of superintendents' own political styles and those of their board members. The qualitative approach was emphasized in this study because it synthesized superintendents' individual experiences using political strategies with their board members (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). By using both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a mixed-methods study, the data first identified the political styles of superintendents and their board members and then provided rich

detailed explanations of the lived experiences of superintendents in using political

strategies with the varied political styles of board members.

Quantitative Research Methods

This study utilized a descriptive, nonexperimental approach to describe how

superintendents perceive their own political styles and those of their board members. A

descriptive research design offers a summary of an experience by characterizing

individuals or groups (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In order to understand the

political strategies used by superintendents with the political styles of various board

members, the first step included gathering a description of the political styles of

superintendents and styles of board members as perceived by superintendents for further

examination using qualitative methods. A survey was conducted using an instrument

(see Appendix A) designed using SurveyMonkey (http://www.surveymonkey.com),

which contained questions describing each of the nine political styles (White et al., 2016)

to elicit the descriptive data regarding the political style of the superintendent and each

board member as perceived by the superintendent. According to McMillan and

Schumacher (2010), surveys are commonly utilized to gather descriptive data by

describing the characteristics of a population. In this study, the quantitative data from the

survey were used to identify the political style of the superintendent and board members

as perceived by the superintendent to explore in greater details in a qualitative interview,

providing greater validity to the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research studies the meaning of people and their experiences, cultures,

or perspectives on particular issues using more flexible methods than quantitative

research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). Qualitative methods allow

researchers to collect data in natural settings and provide a holistic interpretation of the

complex issues under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

This study examined the perceptions of superintendents relative to their political styles

and those of their school board members and explored the political strategies

superintendents use with the different board member styles, which required in-depth

interviews with information-rich informants.

A phenomenological approach to qualitative inquiry emphasizes a phenomenon or

idea to be explored with a group of individuals who have experienced it (Creswell &

Poth, 2018). A phenomenological approach was chosen for the qualitative portion of the

study because it examined the meaning or "lived experience" of a person or group of

people (Patton, 2015, p. 115). Politics in the superintendent-board relationship is a

phenomenon experienced by all superintendents. Because a phenomenological approach

is best suited for a study when it is important to understand several individuals' common

or shared experiences of a phenomenon, it best aligns with the second research question

in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In-depth interviews are commonly used in phenomenological, qualitative studies

to understand the experiences of individuals who have lived through the phenomenon and

the circumstances that influenced their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this

study, qualitative data were gathered using face-to-face interviews with five female

superintendents to identify and understand the various political strategies they use with

the different political styles of board members. According to Creswell and Poth (2018),

documents and audiovisual materials, such as the board governance documents and

recordings of board meetings used in this study, are commonly used to supplement and corroborate interview data.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methods combine quantitative and qualitative inquiry to provide a more complete exploration of the subject and can differ based on the emphasis provided to each approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) described a mixed-methods approach as "both practical and intuitive in that it helps offer multiple ways of viewing problems" (p. 18). The peer research team selected a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design to first pragmatically collect quantitative descriptive data on the perceived political styles of superintendents and board members and subsequently collect qualitative data to allow subjects to expand on the quantitative findings leading to a more profound understanding of how superintendents successfully work with board members' various political styles.

Using the mixed-methods approach allowed the team of peer researchers to investigate different types of research questions and compensate for the limitations of using only a qualitative approach (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A mixed-methods approach allowed for more in-depth interviews focused on the superintendents' experiences in the political context with their board members. Without the quantitative element, each researcher would have spent valuable interview time explaining the political styles and asking each superintendent to select the political style that best described him or herself and each board member.

In this study, the researcher obtained quantitative data to describe the political styles of each superintendent and his or her board members as perceived by the superintendent using a survey instrument distributed electronically. Greater emphasis was placed on the qualitative approach because it was the purpose of this study to understand how superintendents successfully work with board members of varying political styles, which included in-depth interviews with superintendents, examination of artifacts that included governance documents, board handbooks, and agendas and observations of board meetings (see Figure 3).

SEQUENTIAL EXPLANATORY MIXED METHODS
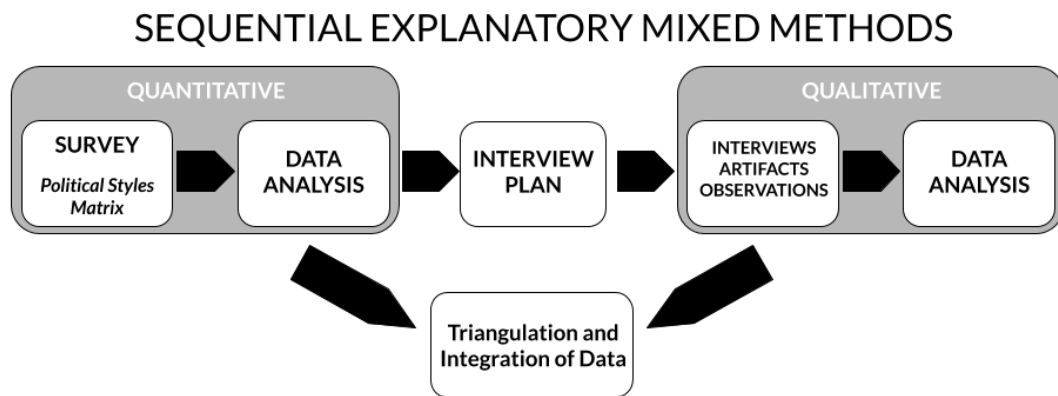
Figure 3. Sequential explanatory mixed-methods design.

Population

A population is a group of individuals who meet certain designated criteria to which the researcher intends to generalize the study results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). California superintendents have similar roles in working with governing boards of generally five to seven members, serve under similar fiduciary contexts, and are required to comply with California Education and Government codes. According to the California Department of Education (n.d.-b), the state has 944 elementary, high school, and unified public school districts, each of which is assumed to have a superintendent. Therefore, the

research population for this study included 944 superintendents of elementary, high

school, and unified school districts in the state of California (see Figure 4).

944	Population	California public school superintendents
75	Target Population	Female superintendents in Southern California
5	Sample	Exemplary female superintendents
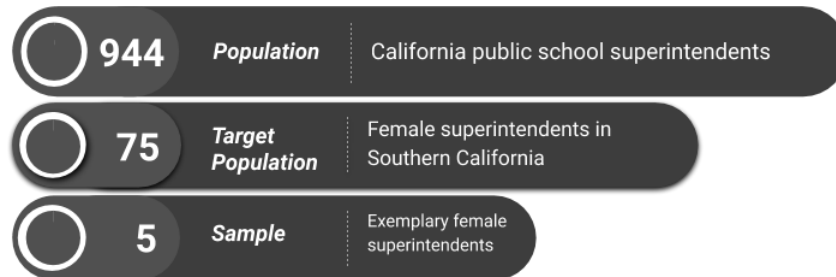
Figure 4. Population, target population, and sample of the study.

Target Population

The population was narrowed for this study to include female superintendents

located in Southern California public school districts. For purposes of this study,

Southern California is defined as eight counties: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange,

Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura. There are 260

elementary, high school, and unified public school districts within these counties, each of

which is assumed to have a superintendent (California Department of Education, n.d.-b).

EdSource (2007) found that 29% of California superintendents were female. Based on

this percentage, the projected target population for this study was 75 female

superintendents located in Southern California (see Figure 4).

Sample

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a sample is a group of

participants representative of the larger population from whom data are collected.

Nonprobability sampling is often used in educational research. Participants are selected

on the basis of accessibility and meeting established criteria (Creswell & Plano Clark,

2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Purposeful sampling, a type of nonprobability

sampling, is used to choose specific characteristics from the population that best

represents the topic of the study, including having experience with the phenomenon being

studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Purposeful sampling

was utilized for this study because the researchers sought information from exemplary

superintendents who successfully navigate the various political styles of their board

members, resulting in information-rich cases. Convenience sampling is often used in

cases where practical constraints, such as time, cost, and distance, impede the

researcher's access to conduct the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010). In addition, convenience sampling is often used when the purpose of

the study is to understand relationships (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study,

convenience sampling was employed by the researcher to select a sample of accessible

participants located in Southern California who met established criteria.

Qualitative research focuses on smaller sample sizes selected on the basis of

gathering specific, information-rich data rather than larger random samples selected for

generalization (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Creswell (2005) recommended a

minimum sample size between three and five for a mixed-methods research when the

focus of the research was on analyzing qualitative data. This smaller sample size

provided valuable information on this chosen topic (Myers, 2000). Further, the

importance of this purposeful sample was in the depth of knowledge, perceptions, and

experiences of superintendents working with board members with different political

styles. The importance of the data emerged from the comprehensive qualitative data

obtained rather than the total number of participants in the research (McMillian &

Schumacher, 2010). From the target population, five exemplary female superintendents were purposefully and conveniently sampled based on demonstrating at least four of the following criteria to allow for a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2015; see Figure 4):

- Shows evidence of positive governance team relationships.

- Has a minimum of 3 years of experience as a superintendent in her current district.

- Is identified by the county superintendent as exemplary in working with board members.

- Is identified by a panel of experts who were knowledgeable of the work of superintendents.

- Has received recognition as an exemplary superintendent by a professional organization such as ACSA.

- Has received recognition by her peers.

- Has a membership in professional associations in her field.

- Has participated in CSBA Master's in Governance program training or other governance training with at least one board member.

Instrumentation

This study was conducted using a custom survey and semistructured interviews designed by the 10 peer researchers (Appendices A and C) as part of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design. The survey was developed to obtain descriptive data and to address the quantitative research questions followed by qualitative interview questions to explore the quantitative results in further detail (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In-depth interviews conducted with exemplary female

superintendents served as the primary qualitative method of data collection in the study. These interviews were used to acquire perceptions of individuals and gather their interpretations, beliefs, and lived experiences on the research topic (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005; Patton, 2015). Data were triangulated using observations and artifacts collected from each superintendent's district or website to effect a multimethod strategy, which provided corroboration of data from different perspectives and increased the credibility of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patten, 2014).

Quantitative Instrumentation

The team of peer researchers created a survey to produce quantitative, descriptive data. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), "Survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 32). The survey instrument provided the superintendents in the study with definitions of each of the nine political styles outlined in *The Politically Intelligent Leader* (White et al., 2016). The instrument, which focused on the nine political styles, was developed by the peer research team in conjunction with faculty chairs. Using the survey instrument, superintendents selected the style that best described their political style as well as that of each of their board members. An alignment table was established to ensure that the survey aligned to the research questions and purpose of the study (Appendix B). Each peer researcher conducted a field test of the survey instrument with a participant who met the delimitation criteria. The field-test participant provided written feedback on the clarity and practicality features of the instrument. The peer research team met with faculty chairs to review feedback from

the pilot survey and adjusted the instrument based on the feedback. The survey

instrument was finalized for use with the five participants in this study (Appendix A) and

deployed using SurveyMonkey, which provided descriptive data from which the mean

and mode were analyzed.

Qualitative Instrumentation

The peer research team developed semistructured interview questions in

conjunction with faculty chairs to address the research questions and purpose of this

study. The same study participants from the quantitative phase of data collection were

also used for the qualitative phase because this exploratory sequential mixed-methods

study sought to explain the initial quantitative results and provide further insights from

participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A semistructured interview provided

consistent questions with explicit intent to elicit individual responses from each

participant but also allowed for standardized, additional probes for follow-up to obtain in-

depth information from participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015).

An alignment table, also known as an implementation matrix (Appendix B), was

created to ensure that the interview questions were aligned to the research questions and

the purpose of this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For this study, a panel of

experts reviewed the interview questions for consistency and relevance to the research

questions and the purpose of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interview

protocol was field tested with the same participant who met the delimited criteria and

who participated in the field test of the quantitative survey instrument. The team of peer

researchers, under the guidance of faculty chairs, adjusted the survey protocol based on

the feedback of the participant and expert panel. The interview protocol was then finalized for use with the study participants (Appendix C).

All five interviews were conducted with the approval of Brandman University's Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) and began with introductions and rapport-building conversation to establish a comfortable relationship (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Each recorded interview began with an overview of the study, its purpose, and an explanation of the procedural safeguards. All participants signed the BUIRB informed consent form and provided permission to be audio recorded. Each interview was conducted using the semistructured interview questions developed and field tested by the peer research team. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and coded using NVivo transcription and coding software.

Researcher as an Instrument

Patton (2015) stated that researcher credibility is essential in qualitative research because the researcher is the instrument of data collection and analysis. Qualitative research requires collection of data by a trained person who reflects on the researcher's responsibilities in the research process and designs and implements the intended interview procedures (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher facilitated each of the interviews in this study and gathered and reviewed other forms of data. Once the interviews were completed, the researcher provided each participant with an interview transcript to review for accuracy. At the time of this study, the researcher had worked in education for 20 years and in an educational leadership role for over 15 years. She had conducted over 200 interviews for hiring and investigative purposes as part of her administrative responsibilities.

Validity

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated that validity establishes "the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world" (p. 330). Researchers also enhance the applicability of the findings through confirming the validity and reliability of a study (Vakili & Jahangiri, 2018). The survey instrument, interview protocol, and questions were developed by a team of peer researchers under the guidance of faculty chairs. The research team collaborated to develop criteria for a reliable and valid study. Content for the survey instrument was based on the political styles described in *The Politically Intelligent Leader* (White et al., 2016), and the interview questions were developed by peer researchers and faculty chairs. The faculty advisors who assisted in the development and review of the instruments were experienced superintendents, had worked with CSBA in board governance training, written and presented nationally on politics, and had more than 50 years combined experience in research at the university. Member checking of the transcription of each interview added to the validity of the results. Alignment tables were used to demonstrate consistency between the survey and interview questions and the purpose and research questions in the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). An expert panel was utilized to formulate the final survey and interview protocols as part of the validation process. Multimethod strategies were employed to triangulate the quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Reliability

Quantitative Field Testing

Each peer researcher piloted the use of the quantitative survey instrument with an individual who met the delimited criteria for this study. Standardized procedures were developed for administration of the survey to reduce variation and increase validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015). Ten peer researchers conducted a pilot survey and subsequent interview with current or retired superintendents. Field test participants were provided the same introduction, instructions, questions, and demographic section of the survey using a confidential process (Appendix A). Each researcher received the results of the survey via the SurveyMonkey software application. Each participant provided written and verbal feedback to the researcher on the survey instrument (Appendix D), which was shared with the peer research team for refinement of the survey instrument. The survey was reevaluated by the peer research team and faculty chairs for validity and reliability before distribution to study participants. The final survey was utilized by the peer research team with 50 superintendents in the state of California.

Qualitative Field Testing

Field testing of the interview questions was conducted by each member of the peer research team. A field test provides an opportunity for testing the interview questions and adjusting the questions, procedures, or setting elements (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Griffee, 2005). Each peer researcher conducted a field test of the interview with an individual who met the same delimited criteria as the study participants.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), field testing is essential to evaluate for bias in the interview process. The researcher was accompanied by an expert during the field test of the interview to provide feedback regarding the tone and body language of the researcher and general recommendations. The expert had earned a doctoral degree and was experienced with mixed-methods research design. The participant and expert observer each provided written and verbal feedback to the researcher (Appendices E and F). The field-test interview was conducted before use with the study participants and in the presence of the expert who was not part of the research study. Peer researchers, under the guidance of faculty chairs, used feedback from the field-test participants and expert observers to adjust the interview procedures to ensure consistency and clarity with the actual study participants. The final interview questions were used by all peer researchers with 50 superintendents participating in this study.

Intercoder Reliability

Intercoder reliability procedures were applied to the qualitative data collection to provide reliable results. Intercoder reliability is the "extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion" (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Campanella Bracken, 2010, p. 2). A codebook was established and a researcher outside of the study reviewed 10% of the qualitative data to compare the data coding and themes developed by the researcher to determine whether the codes were consistently applied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). According to Lombard et al. (2010), a researcher should identify the minimum acceptable level of reliability. Creswell and Poth (2018) and Saldana (2013) recommended 80% agreement among researchers coding data and subsequently revising the codebook to further

distinguish defined codes. The Kappa coefficient was utilized to determine agreement because it is a highly regarded approach to establish reliability (Lombard et al., 2010; Saldana, 2013). The researcher and expert collaborated to review the independent analysis of the interview data and made adjustments to increase validity of the data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The findings that emerged from the data analysis are included in Chapter IV.

Triangulation

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), triangulation of data allows for "cross-validation among data sources, data collection strategies, time periods, and theoretical schemes" (p. 379). The research design was developed to provide methodological triangulation to reinforce the credibility of collected data (Patton, 2015). Triangulation of the survey and interview data for the sample was conducted by building evidence for themes using artifacts such as governance documents, board agendas, websites, news articles, and social media as well as observations of board meetings from participants in the study to provide several data types that increased validity of the survey and interview data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Griffee, 2005). At least one artifact was collected and one observation conducted for each participant.

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Data Collection

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According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), "Mixed-methods research provides more evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone" (p. 12) because it allows for use of a variety of data collection tools. A mixed-methods approach provides more comprehensive data, compensates for limitations of single methods, and allows for exploration of multifaceted research

questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Data collection was designed for an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study, which involved collecting quantitative data followed by qualitative data from the same individuals to provide more detail from those who participated in the quantitative aspect of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The researcher followed university requirements to maintain confidentiality of all participants in both the participants' current setting and from the general public reading the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Data collection occurred after the researcher completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) training program on protecting participants' privacy during the study (Appendix G). In addition, data collection did not begin until after the researcher obtained permission from BUIRB for which an application for Approval of Research Protocol was submitted and approved (Appendix H). IRBs require explicit disclosure of the study's design and data collection procedures and should include plans for both quantitative and qualitative phases of data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The application to IRB indicated the study's purpose, participants, research methods, and data collection procedures. It also explained potential risks to the study's participants, how such risks would be addressed, and how participants' rights would be protected (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Once BUIRB approval was received, the researcher queried potential participants who met the sample selection criteria and were nominated by experts in the field regarding their interest and availability to participate in the study. Contact information for participants was obtained from school district websites and the county office of education directories. The researcher collected informed consent forms from participants

and stored the documents in a locked file for the length of the study. Demographic data regarding participants is identified in Chapter IV, Research, Data Collection, and Findings.

Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected using a survey instrument developed by the team of peer researchers under the guidance of faculty chairs, field tested, and administered to five female superintendents. Individuals who agreed to participate in the study were provided a written invitation that included an informed consent form and a copy of the research Participant's Bill of Rights (Appendix I). The survey was distributed by e-mail using a link to the SurveyMonkey website. A unique code was provided to each participant to allow the researcher to link the participant's data between the survey and the interview. The initial e-mail provided an explanation of the purpose and identified the conditions of the study.

The researcher initially contacted potential participants using publicly available contact information that included e-mail addresses and phone numbers to explain the purpose of the study and discuss the quantitative and qualitative components. The researcher sent a follow-up invitation via e-mail (Appendix J) that described the purpose of the study and formally requested the individual to participate. The survey provided descriptive data analyzed to gather the mean and mode for the superintendents' political styles and the political styles of board members as perceived by the superintendents.

Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data were sought using semistructured interviews with the same participants who completed the survey. The semistructured interview protocol

(Appendix C) containing a series of scripted, open-ended questions was developed by the team of peer researchers under the guidance of faculty chairs. Interviews were scheduled based on the availability of participants and were conducted face to face in a location convenient to the participant. Prior to each interview, the researcher read a script that included a review of the purpose, explanation of procedural safeguards, and an overview of the interview process (Appendix C). Participants were provided a support document indicating their responses to the survey for reference during the interview (Appendix K).

Each semistructured interview was audio recorded using an electronic device and transcribed using the NVivo transcription service. The researcher also recorded detailed notes during each interview. Scripted questions were open ended in nature and supplemental probing questions provided enhanced qualitative data. Once participant statements were transcribed, each participant had an opportunity to review a transcript to ensure accuracy. Once transcripts were verified by participants, the transcripts were reviewed by the researcher using NVivo software. Each transcript and artifact document was uploaded into NVivo and scanned for statements based on the initial themes then expanded into specific codes.

Interviews and observations were conducted with approval from BUIRB. Audio-recorded interviews began with an overview, a summary of the purpose, and an explanation of the procedural safeguards. Each participant signed the BUIRB informed consent form (Appendix L) and granted permission for the researcher to audio record the interview (Appendix M). Transcribed interviews were provided for the participants' review before coding and theming occurred. Observations conducted for purposes of triangulation were documented with detailed field notes. Observation field notes and

artifacts were also coded and themed. Each participant received an e-mail with a gesture of appreciation for their participation.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

Mixed-methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative data within one study to integrate the elements of a topic (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). Mixed-methods data analysis is conducted by distinctly analyzing quantitative and qualitative data and then incorporating both sets of data and results in a mixed-methods analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For this study, an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach was utilized to collect quantitative and qualitative data that were separately analyzed and then triangulated using additional qualitative data from artifacts. Triangulation of the data as a validity strategy includes the use of different sources to build evidence for themes across all sources (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Shenton, 2004). In this study, the researcher analyzed the data using a quantitative method for surveys and a qualitative method for interviews. The collected data and analysis were stored securely on the researcher's hard drive with password protection. The next section provides an explanation of how the researcher analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data from the surveys and from participant interviews in this study.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative descriptive data were collected from five participants using an online SurveyMonkey survey instrument. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated that "descriptive statistics portray and focus on what is with respect to the sample data . . . and is indispensable in interpreting the results of quantitative research" (p. 149). The collection of the descriptive data from the participants assisted the researcher in

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identifying findings and drawing conclusions to answer the research question, "How do female superintendents perceive their own political style and the individual styles of their school board members?"

The surveys provided the researcher with timely data, which were reviewed and analyzed on an ongoing basis. Participant data were downloaded and displayed in tables during the study to allow the researcher to categorize and manage responses. Completed tables provided descriptive data organized by mean and mode to provide an overview of responses about the participants' perspectives of their own political style and that of their board members.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data analysis includes preparing, exploring, analyzing, and representing the data followed by interpreting the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative data gathered through audio-recorded interviews were transcribed using NVivo software and checked for accuracy by both the researcher and participants. Analytic memoing was utilized to explore tentative descriptions that would contribute to developing open codes responsive to the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015; Saldana, 2013). These initial memos were explored further in the data through axial coding to develop expanded codes to address the research question, "What are the strategies female superintendents use to work successfully with the different school board member styles?" After the axial coding process was completed, the codes and frequencies established in NVivo were identified and summarized in tables in Chapter IV.

<center>**Limitations**</center>

A limitation in a study "is the systematic bias that the researcher did not or could not control and which could inappropriately affect the results" (Price & Murnan, 2004, p. 66). There were four limitations in this study: sample size, instrumentation, time, and geography. Each of these limitations is described in the following subsections.

Sample Size

The size of the sample used for data collection was a limitation in this study. Five female superintendents completed a survey and participated in an in-depth interview. The sample size was suitable for a mixed-methods study (Creswell, 2005), but the size of the sample substantially limited generalization of findings to a larger population.

Instrumentation

Limitations exist on both quantitative and qualitative instruments used in this study. The quantitative survey instrument was administered using an online format, which created variance among the conditions in which participants took the survey and their understanding of the survey instructions. The survey asked participants to identify their own political style and that of their board members, which limited the data to the participant's perception of the styles.

The level of researcher involvement in qualitative research has been described as "a collaborative enterprise" between the researcher and the participant and "unique researcher attributes have the potential to influence the collection of empirical materials" (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012, p. 166). For this reason, precautions were taken to reduce researcher bias, including personal assumptions and subjectivity brought into the study during the interviews and data analysis. The researcher acknowledged her role

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as an educational administrator and the perspectives brought into the study and utilized a systematic procedure for data collection.

Time

Time was a limitation in this study, particularly in the qualitative data collection. Participants were limited to approximately a one-hour interview, which could have excluded relevant information to the study and restricted the depth of the interview. Superintendents typically have very busy schedules and significant day-to-day tasks. Interviews were scheduled at a time convenient to the participant; therefore, study results were dependent on the conditions that occurred when the interviews took place at varying times of the day.

Geography

The study was limited to the geographic location of the study participants. The study was delimited to Southern California, limiting the generalization of findings to exemplary female superintendents in the sample population. This limited access to additional exemplary female superintendents who could have also provided important data relevant to the study's research questions.

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Summary

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Chapter III reviewed the methodological elements of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study. Alignment of the study and its methodology was conveyed through a review of the purpose statement and research questions and an examination of data collection and analysis. This chapter reviewed the research design, population, sample, and instrumentation as well as the validity and reliability of the study. Data collection and analysis procedures were explained for the data gathered and analyzed.

Finally, limitations of the study were identified and discussed. In collaboration with a team of peer researchers in this study, the outcomes and findings of how exemplary superintendents use political strategies with the different political styles of their board members provide information that future researchers can use to reproduce this study. The outcomes and findings are discussed in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

As stated in Chapter I, this mixed-methods study identified the political styles of female superintendents and their board members as perceived by the superintendents, and identified political strategies used by the superintendents with their school board members. This chapter reestablishes the purpose of the study, the research questions, methods, and data collection process used in this study. Study participant demographics are summarized prior to a data analysis and summary of key findings that correspond to the study's research questions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to identify the political styles of female superintendents and their school board members as perceived by superintendents. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and explain the political strategies female superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members.

Research Questions

1. How do female superintendents perceive their own political style and the individual styles of their school board members?

2. What are the strategies female superintendents use to work successfully with the different school board member styles?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

In this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study, an initial survey was utilized to collect quantitative, descriptive data from five exemplary female superintendents

regarding their own political style and their perceptions of the political styles of each of their board members. The primary source of data was collected from qualitative in-depth interviews with each superintendent to provide detailed explanations of the lived experiences of the superintendents in using political strategies with the different political styles of their board members. Data collected from artifacts and observations were used to triangulate data collected in the survey and interviews.

The survey instrument (Appendix A) and semistructured interview questions (Appendix C) were developed by a team of peer researchers under the guidance of faculty chairs. The survey instrument was utilized to establish the political style of the superintendent and her perceptions of her board members' styles. The interview protocol contained five questions about the political styles of each board member, which were repeated to elicit information about each board member's political style and strategies the superintendent used with each board member. The protocol also contained four additional questions about the superintendent's political style and political strategies that worked well with particular styles or all of the styles. All five of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and lasted between 43 and 75 minutes, with an average interview duration of 56 minutes.

While the primary sources of data for this study were collected from the survey and in-depth interviews, additional data were sought to validate the data collected from primary sources. Five observations of board meetings, one for each participant, were conducted to gather information to triangulate data collected from the surveys and interviews. Observations ranged from 30 minutes to 3 hours and 30 minutes, with an average duration of 1 hour and 33 minutes.

Twenty-seven artifacts were collected from study participants and through the researcher's investigation of publicly available artifacts on news websites, social media accounts, and other websites. Artifacts included governance protocols or documents, newspaper articles describing superintendent or board member perspectives or actions, and social media postings by superintendents or board members relative to their political styles or strategies used. The artifacts were used to identify additional frequencies in the superintendents' descriptions of board members' political styles, the superintendents' political styles, and the strategies the superintendents used with the various political styles of the board members. Collection of these artifacts allowed the researcher to corroborate the information gathered from the surveys, interviews, and observations in this study.

Population

According to the California Department of Education (2019b), the state has 944 elementary, high school, and unified public school districts, each of which is assumed to have a superintendent. Therefore, the research population for this study included 944 superintendents of elementary, high school, and unified school districts in the state of California. From this population, the target population was narrowed to include female superintendents located in Southern California public school districts, defined as eight counties: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura. There are 260 elementary, high school, and unified public school districts within these counties, each of which is assumed to have a superintendent (California Department of Education, 2019b). Since an estimated 29% of California

superintendents were female (EdSource, 2007), the projected target population for this study was 75 female superintendents located in Southern California.

Sample

The team of peer researchers collaboratively developed criteria to define the exemplary superintendents that would be sought for this study. All study participants exhibited at least four of the following criteria:

- Shows evidence of positive governance team relationships.

- Has a minimum of 3 years of experience as a superintendent in her current district.

- Is identified by the county superintendent as exemplary in working with board members.

- Is identified by a panel of experts who were knowledgeable of the work of superintendents.

- Has received recognition as an exemplary superintendent by a professional organization such as ACSA.

- Has received recognition by her peers.

- Has a membership in professional associations in her field.

- Has participated in CSBA Master's in Governance program training or other governance training with at least one board member.

To narrow the target population to a study sample of five exemplary female superintendents in Southern California, the researcher gathered a list of potential participants nominated by former superintendents who are well recognized and networked in the field and remain active and current in related professional endeavors. This list of potential participants who met the sample selection criteria was narrowed to

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five participants after a final consultation with the dissertation committee. Creswell (2005) recommended a minimum sample size between three and five for a mixed-methods research when the focus of the research is on analyzing qualitative data, such as in this particular study. In addition, each member of the peer research team interviewed five participants in his or her desired population, resulting in 50 total study participants. Contact information for participants was obtained from school district websites, county office of education directories, or from the experts. Participants were contacted by e-mail regarding their interest and availability to participate in the study.

Demographic Data

Tables 5 and 6 describe the study participants by criteria match and demographics. The researcher maintained confidentiality of each participant by assigning a number to each participant. No names, schools, or districts were identified in this study.

All participants in the study exceeded the peer research team's established criteria for exemplary superintendents as noted in Table 5. One participant met all criteria. One of the participants met seven out of eight criteria, and another met six out of eight. Two participants met five criteria.

Table 6 summarizes the demographic data collected from each participant. All participants but one had served as superintendents for more than 6 years. Four of the participants were in the age range of 51 to 60, while one was in the 61 to 70 range. All participants held doctoral degrees. All participants had completed governance training. Four of the participants had completed training in governance with their boards

Table 5

Exemplary Criteria: Female Superintendents

Study Participant	Evidence of positive governance team relationships	Minimum 3 years in current district	Identified by county as exemplary	Identified by panel of experts	Recognition as exemplary by professional organization	Recognition by peers	Membership in professional associations	Participated in governance training
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
3	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓

Table 6

Study Participant Demographic Data

Study participant	Total years of service as superintendent	Age range	Gender	Terminal degree	Governance Training	Board member election method
1	9	51-60	Female	Ed.D.	CSBA	By area
2	11	51-60	Female	Ed.D.	External consultant	By area
3	2 years, 7 months	61-70	Female	Ed.D.	CSBA	At large
4	6	51-60	Female	Ed.D.	CSBA	By area
5	8	51-60	Female	Ph.D.	CSBA	At large

conducted by the California School Boards Association, while one completed training

with an external consultant. Three of the five participants reported that their board

members are elected by trustee areas and two participants' board members are elected at

large.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The findings discussed in this section were gathered from the survey instrument,

face-to-face interviews, observations, and collected artifacts, related to the political styles

of the superintendents and their perception of the political styles of their board members

as well as political strategies used with the different styles.

Data Analysis

Survey data were compiled from SurveyMonkey and summarized in a

spreadsheet, which reflected the frequency of the participants' perceived political styles

of themselves and their board members. The descriptive data collected from the survey

were placed in tables and analyzed to determine the mean and mode for the political

styles. This analysis provided information about the perceived political styles of exemplary female superintendents and their board members.

Transcripts of each interview were reviewed by participants for accuracy and then uploaded into NVivo software for computer-aided analysis of data. Coding of the interview data produced themes that reflected the political strategies used with each style. Upon completion of the coding process, frequencies were collected and analyzed to determine the strength of each theme. Analysis using the codes and frequencies of the codes provided information regarding the political strategies exemplary female superintendents use with their board members.

Reliability

Data collected from the in-depth interviews were triangulated with artifact and observation data, the results of which were reported for each research question. A peer researcher reviewed 10% of the qualitative data to compare the data coding and themes developed by the researcher to determine whether the codes were consistently applied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The peer researcher independently coded 10% of the data by coding one of the five interviews resulting in 85% agreement.

Research Question Results

Quantitative Data Results

The peer research team developed a quantitative survey deployed using SurveyMonkey with guidance from faculty chairs to provide descriptive data in response to the first research question: How do female superintendents perceive their own political style and the individual styles of their school board members? This question was answered through the analysis of the survey data, in which the superintendents identified

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their own political style and the perceived political styles of their board members. This analysis is summarized in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7

Political Styles of Female Superintendents

Initiative	Goal		
	Self-interests	Blended interests	Organizational interests
Assertive	Challenger 0% (0)	Arranger 0% (0)	Strategist 100% (5)
Engaged	Planner 0% (0)	Balancer 0% (0)	Developer 0% (0)
Passive	Analyst 0% (0)	Adaptor 0% (0)	Supporter 0% (0)

The five superintendents who participated in the survey identified their own political style, resulting in five responses identified in Table 7. The results from Table 7 indicate that all five superintendents who participated in the study identified their own political style as strategist.

Table 8

Political Styles of Board Members as Perceived by Female Superintendents

Initiative	Goal		
	Self-interests	Blended interests	Organizational interests
Assertive	Challenger 16% (4)	Arranger 16% (4)	Strategist 16% (4)
Engaged	Planner 0% (0)	Balancer 20% (5)	Developer 8% (2)
Passive	Analyst 4% (1)	Adaptor 12% (3)	Supporter 8% (2)

Each of the superintendents in this study worked with five board members for a total of 25 board members. The results from Table 8 show that the superintendents perceived the majority of political styles as balancers (20%). The next most common political styles identified were challenger, arranger, and strategist (16%), adaptor (12%), and developer and supporter (8%). One superintendent indicated on the survey that her board member was a developer, but during the interview process she reflected on the definition and determined the board member was a supporter, which is reflected in Table 8. Superintendents identified only one board member as an analyst (5%). Superintendents did not perceive any of their board members as planners (0%). Table 9 summarizes the political styles of board members as perceived by each study participant.

Four of the five balancers were identified by study Participant 1, as indicated in Table 9. Four of the five superintendents identified one board member that they perceived to possess a challenger style. Study Participant 4 perceived the most variety in political styles, as she identified each board member with whom she worked as using a different style. Study Participants 1, 3, and 5 perceived no board members with a passive style, while the majority of study Participant 4's board members possessed a passive style. Study Participant 2 perceived her board members to possess either assertive or passive styles, as she did not perceive any with an engaged style. Assertive styles accounted for 48% of all of the political styles identified by superintendents in this study.

Table 9

Board Member Political Styles by Study Participant

Study participant	Assertive styles			Engaged styles			Passive styles		
	Challenger	Arranger	Strategist	Planner	Balancer	Developer	Analyst	Adaptor	Supporter
1	1				4				
2	1	2						2	
3	1	1	1			1			1
4	1					1	1	1	1
5		1	3		1				
Totals	16% (4)	16% (4)	16% (4)	0% (0)	20% (5)	8% (2)	4% (1)	12% (3)	8% (2)

Qualitative Data Results

      The peer research team, with guidance from faculty chairs, developed an interview protocol (Appendix C) to answer the second research question: What are the strategies female superintendents use to work successfully with the different school board member styles? Through coding of interview data and artifacts, 69 themes and 484 frequencies of the identified themes related to strategies that female superintendents use to successfully work with the different political styles of board members. Figure 5 illustrates how many themes emerged for each of the different political styles.
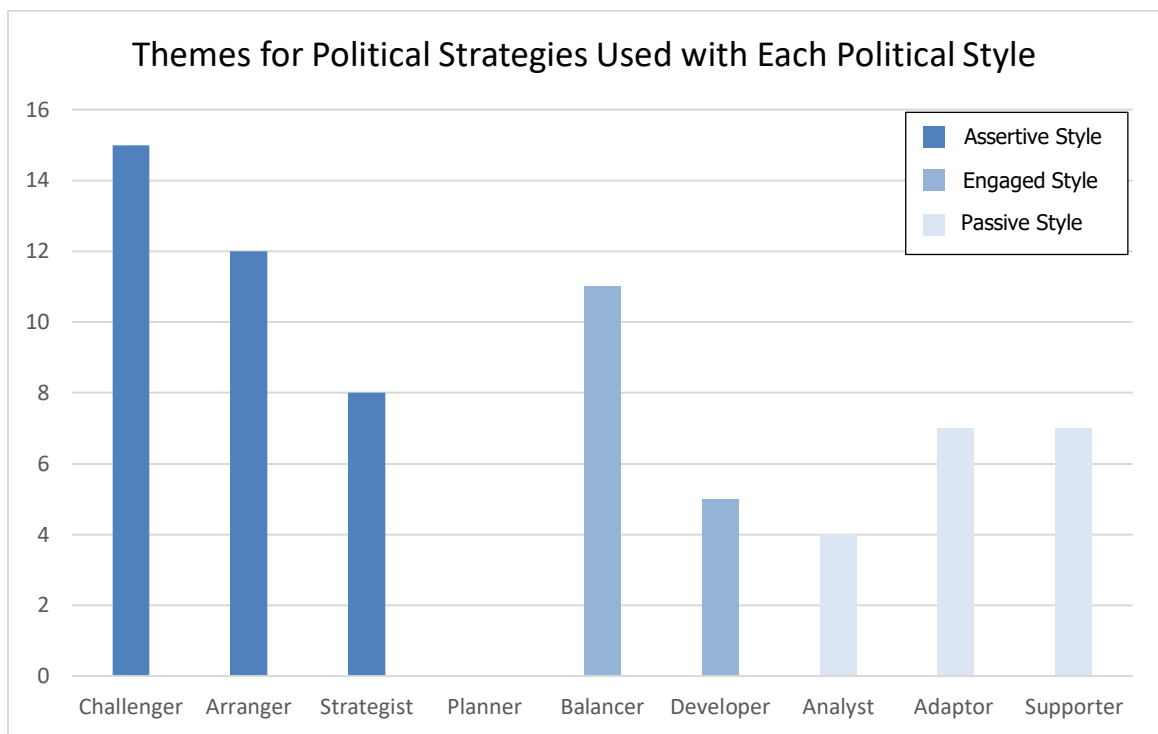
Figure 5. Themes for political strategies used for each political style.

      Themes describing the political strategies used by superintendents were identified for each of the nine political styles represented in Figure 5, except for planner. None of the superintendents identified any board members with a planner political style. The most themes were identified for the challenger style for which 15 themes were

established. The style with the next highest number of themes was arranger (12),

followed by balancer (11), strategist (8), supporter and adaptor (7), developer (5), and

analyst (4).

Subsequent to the identification of themes identified for the political strategies

used with each political style, the frequency of each theme was calculated from

transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts. Figure 6 demonstrates the frequency

of identified themes from all sources.
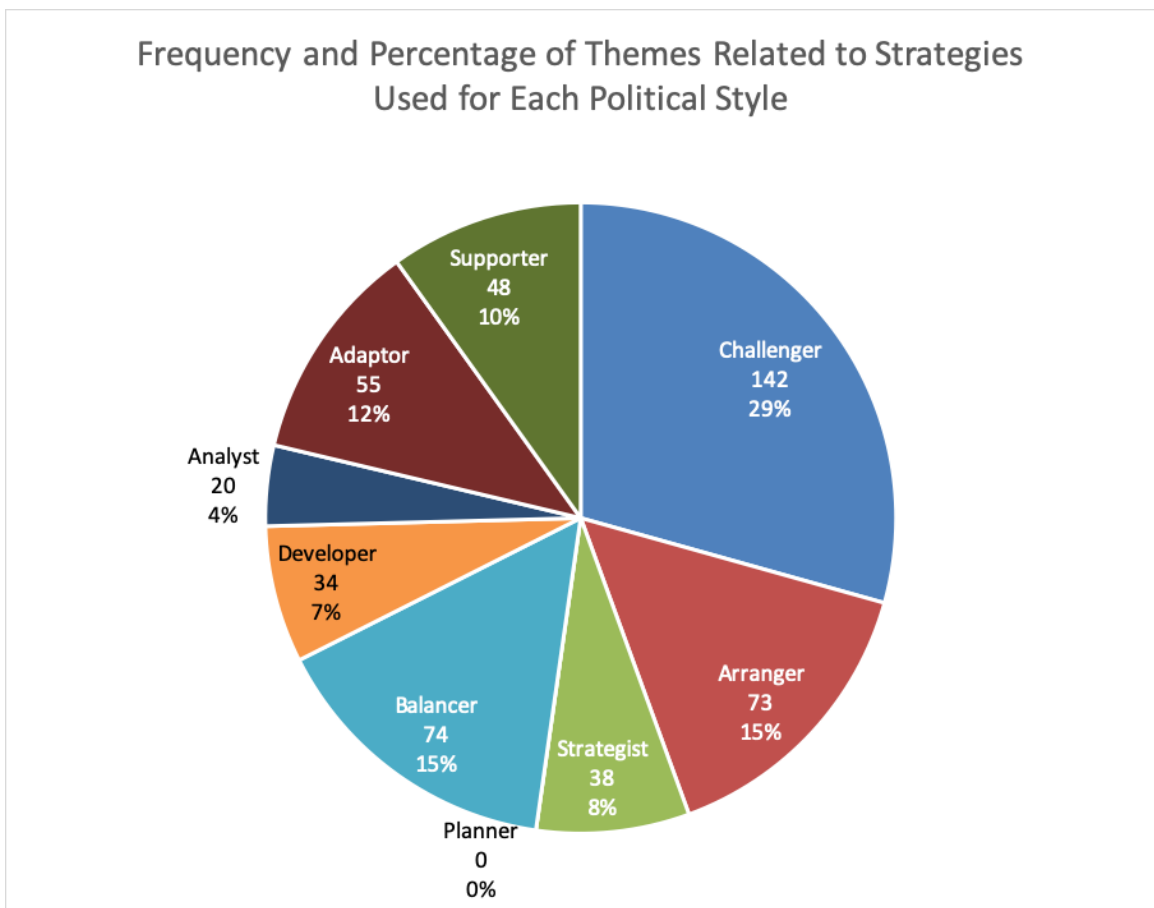
Figure 6. Frequency of political strategies used for each political style.

Figure 6 illustrates that strategies used with the challenger board member style

were referenced with the highest frequency of 142, or 29% of all frequencies, in addition

to having the greatest number of themes (15) as represented in Figure 5. While arranger

had a greater number of themes identified, strategies used with balancers were referenced

nearly the same in the data, 74 times, as compared to strategies used with arrangers at a

frequency of 73. Strategies used with adaptors were referenced 55 times in the data.

Strategies used with supporters accounted for 10% of the identified frequencies, while

those used with strategists represented 8%. The styles with the fewest number of

frequencies of strategies referenced were developer with 7% and analyst with 4%.

Planner received a frequency of zero since no board members were perceived to have that

political style. Table 10 demonstrates the sources of the identified frequencies by

political style.

Table 10

Frequency of Themes by Political Style and Source

| Political style | Sources and frequency | | | |
	Interview	Artifact	Observation	Total
Analyst	1	1	1	3
	50% (10)	20% (4)	30% (6)	20
Adaptor	2	3	2	7
	65% (36)	16% (9)	18% (10)	55
Supporter	2	5	2	9
	46% (22)	19% (9)	35% (17)	48
Planner	0	0	0	0
	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0
Balancer	2	3	2	7
	74% (55)	14% (10)	12% (9)	74
Developer	2	3	2	7
	47% (16)	24% (8)	29% (10)	34
Challenger	4	4	2	10
	65% (93)	4% (6)	30% (43)	142
Arranger	3	5	2	10
	74% (54)	11% (8)	15% (11)	73
Strategist	2	2	2	6
	60% (24)	10% (4)	30% (12)	40
Total for all styles	18	26	15	49
	64% (310)	12% (58)	24% (118)	486

Of the 486 total identified frequencies from all sources, 64% or 310 came from interview data, 24% or 118 from observations, and 12% or 58 from artifacts. The majority of frequencies were identified from interview data for the balancer (74%), arranger (74%), challenger (65%), adaptor (65%), and strategist (60%) styles. Half (50%) of the frequencies for the analyst style were identified from interview sources and the other half from artifacts (20%) and observations (30%). For the developer style, 47% of identified frequencies were found in interview data, while 24% were found in artifacts and 29% found in observations. Interview data provided 46% of the frequencies for the supporter style, followed by 35% in observations and 19% in artifacts.

Political Strategies Used by Superintendents With Board Members

The peer research team developed operational definitions for each of the political styles identified by White et al. (2016). On the survey, each superintendent was asked to identify her perceived political style for each board member based on the provided definitions. During the subsequent interview, superintendents were asked to share descriptions of each board member's style and the strategies that they use with that particular style. The interview data were triangulated using references from artifacts and observations. The themes and frequencies noted in tables are further described in the following sections, organized by the passive styles (analyst, adaptor, supporter), engaged styles (balancer and developer), and assertive styles (challenger, arranger, strategist). Each style's definition precedes the effective and ineffective strategies identified for each style.

Analyst. Analysts are passive and oriented toward self-interest over organizational interest. They are primarily focused on tasks over relationships and will

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seek evidence, proof, and detailed analysis before risking a change (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Boulgarides & Cohen, 2001; DeLuca, 1999; Rowe & Boulgarides, 1992; White et al., 2016).

  Effective strategies. During the interview process, the superintendent was asked about the strategies she used to work effectively with board members with an analyst style. During the coding process, four themes emerged related to the strategies used by one superintendent with a board member with an analyst style. Strategies for the analyst were referenced by one study participant a total of 20 times, which represented 4% of the responses. Table 11 identifies the four themes regarding strategies used with analysts.

Table 11

Effective Strategy Themes for Analyst

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Observation sources	Total sources	Frequency
Use concrete examples	1	1	1	3	8
Broken record	1	0	1	2	5
Go slow to go fast	1	0	1	2	4
Simplify messages	1	1	1	3	3
Total					20

  The theme that produced the greatest number of frequencies in describing the strategies used with a board member with an analyst political style was *use concrete examples*, referenced six times in one interview, artifact, and observation. The theme broken record was referenced twice in an interview and three times in an observation. *Go slow to go fast* was referenced four times in the interview and observation. The theme of *simplify messages* was identified once each in the interview, artifact, and observation.

The superintendent working with the analyst board member described how the board member is easily overwhelmed with information and unable to make a decision. Superintendent 4 described how she uses concrete examples with this board member:

I create analogies or like I went to the [white] board. I draw pictures. I try to simplify all this complexity. [She] is completely overwhelmed at the volume of this task. It's so much more complex than she thought. It's so much more important than she thought. It's so much harder just reading the materials. We do everything electronically. She cannot work electronically. So we're going back to a very old practice of producing all the documents in paper.

The strategy of using concrete examples was also evident in an observation of a board meeting. The superintendent provided a practical example of how layoffs impact employees without consideration of their skills or abilities.

Through trial and error, Superintendent 4 was able to identify an effective strategy by repeating her message using the *broken record* strategy:

I think the name of the game is lots of information and telling her really early. I'm starting to tell her now what I think is coming in 6 months because I think if she just chews on it and I keep telling her that it won't feel new.

The superintendent used the *broken record* strategy three times in the board meeting to maintain adherence to protocols.

Superintendent 4 also provided examples of how she learned to slow down to make sure the analyst board member had enough information to make her comfortable with the decision:

So when it was on the agenda, the fifth month, she said to me in our prep meeting,

"This is the first I've heard of this. How could I possibly make a decision so

quickly?" We've been talking about this for five months and I realize that to feel

comfortable, she has a need to understand everything about the decisions and

everything about the district, kind of, I would say not even at superintendent's

level but more like an assistant superintendent's level and sometimes at a

principal's level.

During the observation, the superintendent explained how the staff is focused on the

major board priorities and wants to proceed slowly before adding new initiatives.

   Ineffective strategies. The superintendent who identified a board member with an

analyst political style was asked about strategies that were not effective in working with

that individual. In working with an analyst board member with passive initiative,

Superintendent 4 identified one ineffective strategy, appealing to a superordinate goal: "I

think a strategy that's failing is trying to help her understand the organizational interests."

   Adaptor. The peer researchers described adaptors as pragmatists who generally

support organizational changes and team decisions, provided they do not perceive

personal risk. An adaptor is one who presents a passive, cooperative political style

balanced between self-interest and organizational interests (Bobic et al., 1999; Church &

Waclawski, 1998; Kirton, 1976; White et al., 2016).

   Effective strategies. During the interview process, each superintendent was asked

about the strategies she uses to work effectively with board members with an adaptor

style. During the coding process, seven themes emerged related to the strategies used by

superintendents with board members with an adaptor style. Strategies for adaptors were

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referenced by the study participants a total of 55 times, which represented 12% of the responses. Table 12 identifies the seven themes regarding strategies used with adaptors.

Table 12

Effective Strategy Themes for Adaptors

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Observation sources	Total sources	Frequency
Build trust	2	2	0	4	14
Superordinate goal	1	1	1	3	11
Meet their needs	2	1	0	3	7
Nurture and connect	2	1	1	4	7
Praise and recognition	2	1	1	4	7
Simple messages	2	1	1	4	6
Count your votes	1	0	0	1	3
Total					55

The theme *build trust* was referenced 14 times in two different interview sources and two artifacts. This theme produced the greatest number of frequencies in describing the strategies used with the adaptor political style, followed by *superordinate goal,* which was referenced 11 times in three different sources. The theme *meet their needs* was referenced seven times in two interviews and one artifact. The themes of *nurture and connect* and *praise and recognition* each had a frequency of seven in two interview sources, one artifact, and one observation. *Simple messages* was identified six times in four sources. The strategy *count your votes* was identified three times in one interview, but was not observed in board meetings nor identified in artifacts.

Superintendent 2 described how she built trust with her adaptor board members after their experience with the previous superintendent during which time protocol limited communication:

They were like, "We thought that was how we were supposed to act." No, it's making communication super hard. So now I meet with [board member] once a month. Another one, [board member], I had coffee with her. They felt like they were doing something illicit, to meet me somewhere, like we were cheating on the other board members or something. I do feel like we're at a place now, if they had an issue, they would call.

Superintendent 4 described how she uses the trusting relationship with her adaptor after a recent board membership change:

I think for me the strategy really becomes a deep education for her to help her understand she doesn't have any colleagues to lean on, to move the organization in the right direction. I've spent two years grounding her in belief systems that trustees need to have on behalf of children and that they need to be about culture, climate, and environment for kids for achievement. High-performing boards are always about those things and she wants to be on a high-performing board.

The governance documents from the two different boards referenced the need for trust between the board, superintendent, and the public.

Superintendent 2 identified focusing on the superordinate goal as an effective strategy in working with her adaptor board member:

One is trying to help her really know and understand what supporting the organization looks like. What is it that we're trying to accomplish, why is that important and acknowledging that you feel sensitivity about your personal risk. What I think about is how can I describe that sense of urgency and what it is that the organization needs so it's really pulling on the moral imperative.

The superordinate goal strategy was referenced in artifacts and observations. Each board's governance documents identified the higher order purpose of the board. During one board meeting observation, Superintendent 4 reminded the board on four occasions of how their actions related to their identified vision and mission.

The two superintendents with adaptor board members identified key ways to meet the needs of their adaptors to accomplish their goals. Superintendent 4 described how her adaptor board member needed to feel confident for a difficult upcoming board decision: "Preparing her for deeper knowledge, getting her to be able to be more grounded in her arguments at the meeting out loud, preparing her for when it's going to be hard in the meeting as opposed to an easy slide." Superintendent 2 also supported the idea of meeting the needs of her adaptors as an effective strategy:

> I think with this one in particular trying to cultivate, what do you need as a board
> member? These two [board members], it's more about organization and
> leadership and with these two it's more personal. That's made a big difference
> for both of them, that I'm attentive to them and that I'm listening and responding.

Both superintendents described strategies such as nurturing the adaptors and making concerted efforts to praise and recognize them for their efforts. Superintendent 4 identified the value of connection and praise with her adaptor:

> She is a person who needs to be loved and treated with respect and cajoled and
> believed in. Her minor approximations need a lot of positive reinforcement and
> that has served me much better. I have brought her in the tent and told her how
> proud of her [I am] and how much I value her.

Superintendent 2 described a situation in which she heard that her adaptor board member was upset because she thought the superintendent had overlooked her idea:

I went back and said, "Hey, what am I not doing? I definitely value your ideas." I think being able to just look her in the eye and say we really do value [you]. I think that has worked and I just have to be accountable for that and making sure that I'm doing that.

Superintendent 2 also identified that praise and recognition have served her well with the adaptor board member:

I think what works with her is praise and recognition. She did tell another board member that I don't listen to her and give her ideas credit the way that I give others' ideas credit and I think that's true. I've really tried to step up my game and say, okay, I really need to be in the moment when you're talking and listening.

Praise and appreciation were noted as recommended practices in a board governance document from Superintendent 4 and were identified in a board meeting observation during which this superintendent highlighted the adaptor's contribution to a site visit.

Superintendent 4 described her use of simple, recurring messages with her adaptor as an effective strategy: "My influence, my constant every other day phone calls to her, my reminding her about why these decisions are important. [I get] her really grounded in why." Superintendent 4 also identified the importance of this board member's vote on critical issues. She identified her adaptor as her third swing vote:

I can tell when we're 5-0, I can tell when we're 4-1 and I can tell when we're 3-2 and I'm going to really need her. I can read those tea leaves now. If anybody's

self-interests are truly getting in the way of the board being able to make

decisions on behalf of children and we can really see that it becomes imperative

that I have three yes votes, oftentimes this adaptor is my third.

One board governance document contained a simple, bulleted list of short norms for

board meeting behavior. On two occasions during a board meeting observation, the

superintendent summarized staff reports in a simple sentence.

Ineffective strategies. Each superintendent was asked about strategies that were

not effective in working with a board member with an adaptor political style. Each

superintendent offered a strategy that was ineffective with adaptors, using a harsh

approach, identified three times from one source, and not listening, referenced once by

one source. Superintendent 4 described the changing roles of board members when a

new majority was voted into office:

> What I regret is that at first when she was trying to create power with this brand
>
> new group and I could see that it was causing really negative impacts on the
>
> district, I bonded with the most veteran person and I was pretty harsh in the way
>
> that I was trying to get her attention. I used the power of our veteran to try to get
>
> her to realize what she was doing and it completely backfired. Being sort of
>
> irritated, pushing on her hard totally backfired.

Superintendent 2 shared that the only ineffective approach she has taken was to

not listen to her adaptor's ideas or concerns.

Supporter. Supporters are characterized as risk-averse, selfless, and passive

devotees, backers, or advocates of the organization's visions and goals. Supporters seek

harmony and hesitate to take sides, though they make decisions and provide resources

that align with the organization's goals (California School Boards Association, n.d.;

DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

Effective strategies. During the interview process, each superintendent was asked

about the strategies she uses to work effectively with board members with a supporter

style. During the coding process, seven themes emerged related to the strategies used by

superintendents with board members with a supporter style. Strategies for supporters

were referenced by the study participants a total of 48 times, which represented 10% of

the responses. Table 13 identifies the seven themes regarding strategies used with

supporters.

Table 13

Effective Strategy Themes for Supporters

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Observation sources	Total sources	Frequency
Build trust	2	2	1	5	13
Celebrate everything	2	4	2	8	9
Get perspectives one on one	2	1	0	3	9
Simple messages	1	0	1	2	7
Go slow to go fast	2	1	1	4	5
Superordinate goal	1	0	1	2	4
Problem-solving	1	0	0	1	1
Total					48

The theme *build trust* was referenced 13 times in five different sources. This

theme produced the greatest number of frequencies in describing the strategies used by

superintendents with the supporter political style, followed by *celebrate everything* and

get perspectives one on one, which were referenced nine times each from eight and three

different sources respectively. The theme *simple messages* was referenced seven times in

one interview and one observation. The theme *go slow to go fast* each had a frequency of five in two interview sources, one artifact, and one observation. *Superordinate goal* was referenced in one interview and one observation, while problem-solving was identified in one interview.

The two superintendents who worked with board members with a supporter style each described how they build trust with their supporters. Superintendent 4 intentionally sought more communication with a supporter:

I've increased my conversations. I'm going to call him, getting him ready to think about some stuff that's coming up, giving him the skinny on what's going on in the background cause no one else will call him.

The *build trust* strategy was evident in a board meeting observation for Superintendent 3 in which she presented information that was a follow-up from a supporter request. A trusting relationship between the board, superintendent, and community was referenced in a board governance document for Superintendent 4. A social media post depicting Superintendent 3 and the supporter meeting with a program leader demonstrated the superintendent's trusting relationship with the supporter.

The two superintendents described how they celebrate everything to reinforce confidence in the supporters' decisions. Superintendent 4 noted,

I continue to encourage him to trust his gut. I feel like after a few years he's going to get it. I think he knows what he doesn't know so he's just in that learning quiet learning mode. I keep reinforcing [he has] the most amazing intuition of anyone I've ever known.

In observations of both board meetings, the superintendents shared their appreciation of

the board's decisions that led to successful programs and initiatives. One governance

document for Superintendent 4 specifically highlighted the programs of which the board

was proud.

Both superintendents described the value of sharing perspectives with their

supporters in a smaller setting. Superintendent 3 sought advice from a supporter about

working with another challenging board member:

I was detecting some coldness with [a] board member. I detected something and

I'm like, that's kind of odd. So I called [the supporter]. I said, "What's going

on?" And he goes, "Well, let me tell you. She sent you an email, she had a

question about so-and-so and she didn't hear back from you." He said, "Even if

you have to send an email that says good question or whatever, I'll get back to

you by such and such a date, I will research this and I will get back to you." He

has learned how to navigate her. I will go to him for advice on how to work with

[her] and his advice is always spot on.

Superintendent 4 noted that she sought out her supporter one on one during a

break from a meeting to coach him into speaking up in the meeting in which the entire

board had stalled about making an important decision:

There was a moment where we took a break in a big working board meeting. We

[had] presented three options. I said [to him], look, here's what you're going to

do. I'm going to say, does anybody have an idea about which of these options

you like? I don't care which option you like, I don't care at all. Just pick one and

think of the three things you're going to say about why. Say it really loud and

strong, and he goes, "Oh, okay, I'll do that." He went back in and I said, does

anybody have a preference? He goes, "I have a preference for option two. It

sounds like it would be this, it would be this, it would be that. It's what the

executive team recommended anyway. They probably did the analysis and saw

that one is the best one too." Then it started to move.

One board governance document for Superintendent 4 described how board members

should address concerns with the superintendent in one-on-one meetings.

    Ineffective strategies. Each superintendent was asked about strategies that were

not effective in working with a board member with a supporter political style. Each

superintendent offered a strategy that was ineffective with supporters, dismissive,

identified four times from two sources. Superintendent 3 described how the supporter's

passive style might make it easy to dismiss their contributions:

    You can't dismiss this board member. You would, because he's a little laid back.

    He talks a lot and wants to tell stories, but you can't dismiss that. He's extremely

    bright and he has passion for learning. I can't ever dismiss his ability to be

    extremely intelligent about the budget and his viewpoints with education.

    Superintendent 4 described how leaving her supporter to his own initiative was

not effective in achieving positive outcomes: "It would be easy to just ignore him because

he'll always vote yes, but I think using him to help learn and support the others about the

dynamics [is effective]."

    Balancer. Balancers blend self and organizational interests. Focused on the

prevention of disequilibrium, balancers use their knowledge of the organization's culture

to diplomatically shift their support, when needed to maintain stability, harmony, and equanimity (Sheehan, 1989; White et al., 2016).

Effective strategies. During the interview process, each superintendent was asked about the strategies she uses to work effectively with board members with a balancer style. During the coding process, 11 themes emerged related to the strategies used by superintendents with board members with a balancer style. Strategies for balancers were referenced by the study participants a total of 74 times, which represented 15% of the responses. Table 14 identifies the 11 themes regarding strategies used with balancers.

Table 14

Effective Strategy Themes for Balancers

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Observation sources	Total sources	Frequency
Meet their needs	2	1	0	3	13
Build trust	2	2	1	5	12
Empower others	1	0	0	1	9
Go slow to go fast	2	1	1	4	8
Float the idea	1	0	1	2	8
Superordinate goal	1	3	2	6	6
Know each decision maker's agenda	1	0	1	2	6
Accordion process	1	0	0	1	3
Coaching	1	0	0	1	3
Simple messages	1	0	0	1	3
Agenda linking	1	0	0	1	3
Total					74

The theme *meet their needs* was referenced 13 times in two different interview sources and in one artifact. This theme produced the greatest number of frequencies in describing the strategies used by superintendents with the balancer political style,

followed by *build trust* which was referenced 12 times in five sources. The theme *empower others* was referenced nine times in one interview. The theme of *go slow to go fast* had a frequency of eight in four different sources. *Float the idea* was also referenced eight times, but in two different sources. *Superordinate goal* was identified six times in six sources and *know each decision maker's agenda* was referenced six times in two sources. The remaining four strategies, *accordion process, coaching, simple messages,* and *agenda linking* were each referenced three times in one interview.

Two superintendents noted the importance of meeting the needs of their balancers by providing information and spending time communicating with them. Superintendent 1 described the investment of time she makes to meet the needs of one of her balancers:

> She has thoughtful, but lengthy and numerous questions about everything. Whenever she has questions, I provide her with detailed answers about everything she wants to know about. She's very eager and doing a good job as a board member. She believes she needs to know every nuance of everything. So, it's front loading her and providing her with the information she needs on things she doesn't understand, and that takes a really long time.

Superintendent 1 devoted time to ensure that another balancer felt connected:

> My time that I spend with her is more about just giving her time to tell me about everything that's going on out there. Affording her the time so that she feels that she is connected to me is important to her.

One board governance document for Superintendent 1 also identified ways that the superintendent would work to meet the needs of board members.

Building trust was described by Superintendent 1 as an effective strategy with her four balancers:

Providing them with clear, concise and regular communication so that they feel very informed and they are in the know. Board members do not like to be in the community and not know something that's going on. They know how much I honor and respect them. I demonstrate and communicate honor and respect for them, their position and how much I appreciate what they do and that we're a team. We have a very deep connection that way.

Board governance documents for Superintendents 1 and 5 also referenced the agreement by the board members and superintendent to operate with trust and integrity. During an observation of a board meeting, two references to trust were evidenced by Superintendent 1 indicating she had followed through on the board's interests.

Superintendent 1 described how she empowered one of her balancers to work through difficult situations:

My goal in working with her is to really empower her and help grow her leadership skills as a board member. It takes them time to really learn how to do that and do it in a way that's inclusive and respectful of everyone involved and trying to acknowledge different points of view and how you bring people to consensus. My work with her is sometimes coaching behind the scenes to add some tools to her tool bag about how she might approach a difficult situation, what questions she might pose, or what approach we want to take together on something.

Superintendent 1 described how she took time to prepare one of the balancers for a recommendation with which she knew the board member would not agree:

> I started planting seeds and spending time before it happened. I spent a lot of time with her just knowing that it would be an issue and to bring her along over a period of time, and she still wasn't thrilled with my decision, [but] she voted for [it].

The *go-slow-to-go-fast* theme was also evident in a newspaper article about the district's facility improvement process, in which Superintendent 5 is quoted about the lengthy preparation for the change. The theme was also identified in a board meeting observation in which this superintendent shared details about upcoming instructional changes to build the knowledge base of board members before they would take action.

Front-loading, or floating an idea, was noted as an effective strategy with balancers by Superintendent 1:

> For example, this morning I called her to front-load her a little bit about what we're going to be dealing with [in a board meeting] so she doesn't get blindsided. She wants to know enough about something so that she can be thoughtful. But she's a very, she's a very neutral person. She doesn't tend to get too worked up, but it's giving her the knowledge, information, and facts, she needs to make a good decision.

One reference to floating the idea was observed in a board meeting during which Superintendent 1 mentioned prior information she had provided in her weekly update in advance of the board meeting.

Ineffective strategies. Each superintendent with a balancer was asked about strategies that were not effective in working with a board member with a balancer political style. Both superintendents with balancers offered strategies they found ineffective, lack of information, referenced twice in two interview sources, and controlling everything, identified once from one interview source. Superintendent 5 described her balancer's need to know information due to her interactions in many networks:

> She has a very strong need to know everything that's going on because she's
>
> talking to people every day, all the time in her business. If I have forgotten to tell
>
> her something and she walks into a situation where someone knows something
>
> that she doesn't, that makes her incredibly uncomfortable. When I take the time
>
> to make sure she knows everything she needs to know, she feels much more
>
> empowered to be out in the community and be the person in the know.

Developer. Developers work behind the scenes to coach or challenge others to build skills that can positively advance organizational interests to which they are fully committed. Developers exhibit a high level of self-awareness of their own knowledge and skill (DeLuca, 1999; Goleman, 2000; Rath, 2007; White et al., 2016).

Effective strategies. During the interview process, superintendents were asked about the strategies used to work effectively with board members with a developer style. During the coding process, five themes emerged related to the strategies used by superintendents with board members with a developer style. Strategies for developers were referenced by the study participants a total of 34 times, which represented 7% of the responses. Table 15 identifies the five themes regarding strategies used with developers.

Table 15

Effective Strategy Themes for Developers

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Observation sources	Total sources	Frequency
Build trust	2	1	1	4	15
Create a political vision	2	2	0	4	6
Go slow to go fast	1	1	1	3	6
Problem-solving	2	1	1	4	5
Agenda linking	1	0	0	1	2
Total					34

The theme *build trust* was referenced 15 times in two different interview sources, one artifact, and one observation. This theme produced the greatest number of frequencies in describing the strategies used by superintendents with the developer political style, followed by *create a political vision* and *go slow to go fast,* which were referenced six times each in four and three sources respectively. The theme *problem-solving* was referenced in two interviews, one artifact, and one observation. The themes of *agenda linking* was referenced in one interview.

Superintendent 3 described how she built trust with her developer by connecting to her personal life:

> I engage with her about her family. She's very close to her mom. She's very
>
> close to her sister. Those are my strategies, just maintain my connection with her.
>
> We share animal stories and we share family stories. She trusts me explicitly,
>
> very complimentary of me as a leader and I have a really strong relationship with
>
> her, really positive.

Superintendent 4 noted a similar experience: "We [are] really close. We have often said to each other, we will be friends for life. We have an extremely close

relationship and a personal relationship." Superintendent 3 also identified that measured, two-way communication was effective in building support with her developer over time:

> I listen a lot and I check in with her a lot. I don't interrupt her because she has to process with me verbally. So even though she's talking and I know it's not accurate, I don't stop her. I let her finish her thought and then I interject what actually happened and then she's fine.

One board governance document for Superintendent 1 referenced trust among the board, superintendent, and community. In a board meeting observation, Superintendent 3 referred to protocols regarding following up with information to board members.

Both superintendents also described how creating a political vision and meaning behind agenda items for the developers helped with achieving important decisions with other board members. Superintendent 3 stated,

> If there's a conflict with other board members, I try to get her to understand the different perspective and the different styles of the other board members, and that that other board member is never going to come around to her thinking.

> Superintendent 4 used a similar strategy: "I keep encouraging her to work with

the adaptor so that there's always that third vote, encouraging her to be more assertive in our meetings, and encouraging her to try to support [the supporter]." This theme is also referenced in a newspaper article in which Superintendent 3 is quoted as referring to the board's vision of school restructuring that had not been implemented up to that point, which she indicated in her interview was the result of certain board members' unwillingness to cope the political fallout that could have ensued.

The theme of *go slow to go fast* was evident in the same superintendent's attempt to reconfigure the programs available at each school and develop the board's confidence in her plan. She did so by convening a task force to develop a plan, which was referenced in a newspaper article, and met with the developer at each step along the way. In a board meeting observation, one superintendent discussed the lengthy process that would be required to develop new programs at the schools.

Ineffective strategies. Each superintendent was asked about strategies that were not effective in working with a board member with a developer political style. Superintendent 4 indicated that she had not experienced any ineffective strategies with her developer. Superintendent 3 found that not giving her developer enough time or cutting her off was ineffective.

Challenger. Challengers are characterized by self-interest, assertive behavior, and confidence in their own vision, ideas, and goals, which inspires a strong desire to lead and make decisions quickly. Challengers see themselves as movers and shakers, efficient, politically strategic, aggressive, and willing to confront the views of others in an attempt to influence outcomes (DeLuca, 1999; Jasper, 1997; Meyer et al., 2005; Polletta, 2004; White et al., 2016).

Effective strategies. During the interview process, each superintendent was asked about the strategies she uses to work effectively with board members with a challenger style. During the coding process, 15 themes emerged related to the strategies used by superintendents with board members with a challenger style. Strategies for challengers were referenced by the study participants a total of 142 times, which represented 29% of

the responses. Table 16 identifies the 15 themes regarding strategies used with

challengers.

Table 16

Effective Strategy Themes for Challengers

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Observation sources	Total sources	Frequency
Respond positively to danger	4	0	2	6	23
Ability to compete, intention to cooperate	4	0	2	6	20
Include all sides	4	4	1	9	15
Plan meticulously where snipers dwell	4	0	1	5	12
Broken record	2	0	1	3	12
Never let 'em see you sweat	3	0	2	5	11
Count your votes	2	0	2	4	8
Agenda linking	2	0	1	3	7
Simple messages	1	1	1	3	7
Do your homework	1	0	2	3	6
Limit communication	2	0	0	2	6
Many messengers	3	0	0	3	5
Win-win	1	0	0	1	4
Dig the well early	2	0	1	3	3
Don't meet alone	2	1	0	3	3
Total					142

The theme *respond positively to danger* was referenced 23 times in four

interviews and two board meeting observations. This theme produced the greatest

number of frequencies in describing the strategies used by superintendents with the

challenger political style, followed by *ability to compete, intention to cooperate,* which

was referenced 20 times in four interviews and two observations. The theme *include all*

sides was referenced 15 times in four interviews, four artifacts, and in one observation, followed by *plan meticulously where snipers dwell,* which was identified 12 times in five sources. *Broken record* was referenced 12 times in two interviews and one observation. The theme of *never let 'em see you sweat* was referenced 11 times in three interviews and two observations. *Count your votes* was referenced eight times in two interviews and two observations. The themes of *agenda linking* and *simple messages* were each referenced seven times in three sources. *Do your homework* and *limit communication* were referenced six times each, followed by *many messengers* (five times), *win-win* (four times), and *dig the well early* and *don't meet alone* (three times).

All four superintendents identified that responding positively to perceived dangers presented by challengers was an effective strategy. Superintendent 4 described how she directly attempted to change her challenger's thinking about their roles:

In his political view, he believes that his life's mission is to challenge power and authority. He saw that as me, he does not see power and authority as the board. I see power and authority as the board. At first, I remember we had these really challenging conversations in which he was very accusatory and he would say, "It's my job to challenge power and authority." I said, "Do you understand that you're my boss?" I really asked him that. "You're my boss and when you are speaking to me this way, it's upsetting to me as an employee."

Superintendent 1 identified that she maintains a positive and communicative, but not overly friendly approach with her challenger:

What I'm now doing that is working for me and I think maybe for her, is I keep a sense of neutrality with her. I maintain a very neutral approach with her. I'm

neither good nor bad. I think she appreciates information. Whenever she has

questions, I provide her with lots of detail and thoughtful kinds of responses to

her questions so that she can understand whatever the issue is that she has a

question about.

This strategy was also observed in two board meetings. In one board meeting, the

challenger attempted to convince the other board members to include more parent

outreach as part of one of their programs. Superintendent 4 responded positively by

acknowledging the recommendation and including the other board members in the

direction:

What I'm hearing is that it's a priority of a trustee that parent outreach is

important. Parent education is important and for parents to understand not only

what the choices are in [district] but also the pros and cons and what the research

shows. We are happy to make that our priority. If there is a request from the five

of you for more information or a study to be done we are going to need direction

from all five of you.

In another board meeting, the challenger questioned the expense of a new program

proposed by staff to address the board's vision. Superintendent 1 acknowledged the cost

and the questions posed by the challenger, and shared detailed research staff conducted

on the program and the benefits to students.

The theme of *ability to compete, intention to cooperate* was also described by all

four superintendents as an effective strategy in working with challenger board members.

This was represented by superintendents who did not automatically accommodate

challenger demands, but asserted a strong message in response. Superintendent 3

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described how it took time and developing protocols for her to develop the confidence to respond:

As a newbie, I think I let her get under my skin because I was judging my own effectiveness through her eyes. I didn't hit the mark with her. I would think that I did something wrong. It took me a while to understand because she had the ability to spin me. What I did, which really helped, I worked with an outside group and we developed protocols. I can always go back to those protocols. The other four hold her accountable. When she has questions and concerns, I will say, protocols that were voted on by the board on such and such a date. Number two says that when you have questions about if you're going to pull a consent item, you will give me a heads up that you're going to pull the item. If I don't get that, I go back to that protocol.

Superintendent 3 also described the need to include all sides and not be consumed by the interests of the challenger:

If I gave in to everything that this board member wanted me to do, my other four board members would be mad. I had one board member say to me once that [the challenger] was bullying me. That makes you reflect.

This strategy was also represented in a board meeting observation in which a challenger twice attempted to direct the staff to implement his desired solutions. Superintendent 4 responded by including the other board members: "It will be important to understand that that's direction from five of you," and "Is that something that the five of you want the team to be working on?" *Include all sides* was also referenced in

governance documents from three participants, which indicated that information and decisions should be shared by all five board members.

Superintendents also identified that methodically planning when danger is presented by the challenger is an effective strategy. Superintendent 1 described how she managed the manipulating behavior exhibited by her challenger: "The strategy that I'm having to really use with her now is I do not meet with her alone. I don't over-communicate. I don't get in the weeds or in the details too far with her." Superintendent 4 described how she came to terms with her limited influence with her challenger that has typically worked with her other board members:

I have never adopted a stay away from someone strategy, but I have with him. I stay away and I don't interact and I don't like that. I don't believe in that. I believe if I had more interaction I could convince them. But I have been counseled to really truly stay awake. He targeted me from day one, challenging me because he sees me in power. So I have used the board president. Everything that he does that's a violation of the protocol, she calls him and tells him. [She] has carried all the water, not nearly as effectively as I would have. However, it's so much better that he's not constantly angry at me.

This strategy was evident in a board meeting observation in which this superintendent did not directly attempt to influence the challenger but did attempt to positively influence the other board members by distributing information on highly successful school boards for them to reference during the meeting. Superintendent 2 mediated with other board members about their concerns with the challenger: "I'm trying to assuage everybody saying he's one board member that doesn't speak for the whole board."

Two superintendents described the *broken record* strategy of providing the same information repeatedly. Superintendent 3 stated, "Sometimes she has questions that have already been answered. There's a lot of processing and repeating and understanding that has to go into it." In a board meeting observation, one superintendent reminded the challenger three times that direction to staff needed to come from the entire board, not just one member.

Ineffective strategies. Each superintendent was asked about strategies that were not effective in working with a board member with a challenger political style. During the coding process, three themes emerged related to the ineffective strategies identified by superintendents in working with board members with a challenger style. Ineffective strategies for challengers were referenced by the study participants a total of 13 times.

The theme *attempting to influence* was referenced six times in two interviews. This theme produced the greatest number of frequencies in describing the ineffective strategies superintendents have tried to use with the challenger political style, followed by *providing corrective feedback,* which was referenced five times in three interviews and *ignoring*, which was referenced two times in two interviews.

Superintendents noted that using strategies to attempt to influence challengers' interests or approaches were ineffective. Superintendent 1 described how she tried to influence how the challenger saw her role as a board member:

> I was using a lot of meetings every week, regular emails, phone calls, excessive actually, to try to empower her with information to know and understand the role of a board member versus the role of the superintendent. We did a lot of work on role clarification, norms, and protocols to follow. I spent a lot of time with her in

education mode and it absolutely doesn't matter. That in the beginning is what I was doing. I'm not doing any of that now. The communication style that I use with the other ones is absolutely ineffective with her because she just does what she wants anyway.

Superintendent 4 avoids influencing the challenger's negative behaviors to prevent power struggles:

I would say less is more because he loves to debate. He loves to be disruptive and aggressive and argumentative and I just ignore, ignore, ignore. I try to think of it in terms of managing a need for attention and managing behavior and I can be an external processor. I avoid that. I try to be very concise. I try to choose the things that we talk about extremely carefully. I want to have a hundred conversations during the month, but I only speak to him during our one meeting in prep for the board meeting and I decide what the highest priority things to address are and I just let everything else go.

Three superintendents noted that providing corrective feedback to challengers was an ineffective strategy. Superintendent 1 described how she attempted to corral her challenger's negative behavior:

My attempts to share with her something she's done that may be inappropriate or ineffective in an attempt to say, let me share with you why maybe that that's not working or this, that's really not the best approach or that's not the way we're going to handle this—she absolutely doesn't like it. She responds in a way that she smiles and goes and does what she wants to do anyway.

Superintendent 2 also described her approach to addressing a challenger on why his tactics were not productive:

It's effective to be direct, but not negative, not corrective. I want to say, here was the impact. I also have to acknowledge his intent. When I don't do that and just say, now everybody in the [group] is really upset, he feels like he's getting his hand slapped.

Arranger. Arrangers use a political style in which they are assertive in pursuing their goals that are a blend of both organizational priorities and their own self-interests. They build a power base by connecting with many people. Arrangers will take risks to advance their goals and are strategic in combining resources (DeLuca, 1999; Effelsberg et al., 2014; White et al., 2016).

Effective strategies. During the interview process, each superintendent was asked about the strategies she uses to work effectively with board members with an arranger style. During the coding process, 12 themes emerged related to the strategies used by superintendents with board members with an arranger style. Strategies for arrangers were referenced by the study participants a total of 73 times, which represented 15% of the responses. Table 17 identifies the 12 themes regarding strategies used with arrangers.

The theme *build trust* was referenced 17 times in three interviews, two artifacts, and two observations. This theme produced the greatest number of frequencies in describing the strategies used by superintendents with the arranger political style, followed by*, know each decision maker's agenda,* which was referenced 13 times in three interviews and one observation. The theme *superordinate goal* was referenced nine times in six sources, followed by *political vision,* which was referenced seven times in

Table 17

Effective Strategy Themes for Arrangers

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Observation sources	Total sources	Frequency
Build trust	3	2	2	7	17
Know each decision maker's agenda	3	0	1	4	13
Superordinate goal	2	3	1	6	9
Political vision	1	1	0	2	7
Conflict strategies	3	0	0	3	5
Meet their needs	2	0	0	2	4
Sharing the right amount of information	2	0	0	2	4
Respond positively to danger	1	0	0	1	4
Agenda linking	1	0	0	1	3
Humor	1	0	0	1	3
Win-win	2	0	0	2	2
Ability to compete, intention to cooperate	1	0	0	1	2
Total					73

two sources. The theme of *conflict strategies* was referenced five times in three sources,

followed by *meet their needs, sharing the right amount of information, respond positively*

to danger, and *share the right amount of information,* which were each referenced four

times. *Agenda linking* and *humor* were each referenced three times, and *win-win* and

ability to compete, intention to cooperate were each referenced twice.

Three superintendents described ways they built trust with arranger board

members. Superintendent 3 discussed the collaborative relationship she shares with an

arranger, who is well-networked in the community:

[She] sends me something and I get back to her immediately, because it's usually

something to do with a meeting that she just came out of, a conversation she just

had with somebody else, and usually she's still standing there with that person.

Superintendent 5 described how she built trust with an arranger:

She can see the follow through on her ideas. We talk about a board workshop and

the board workshop happens, and it's all very highly planned and goes well. I can

think of a bunch of things that have been great ideas from this board that have

happened, and they should be very proud because you know, when you work

together with staff, great things can happen.

The theme of *build trust* was also evident in two board meeting observations.

Both superintendents' comments reflected follow up they had conducted for the board

member.

The theme of *know the decision maker's agenda* was referenced in three

interviews. Superintendent 2 identified an arranger board member as intellectual and

focused on the theoretical background on issues, so she focused on his interest in theory:

He's really smart. He reads a lot too, so I always try to connect with him on

something that's in the literature or something we've read. You know, give him

some additional information. He likes that a lot. And so whereas they don't all

want that level of information, he does. So if there's a summary report, you know,

I might say to him, hey, the full length is here.

Superintendent 5 shared appreciation for an arranger's knowledge and desire to

implement a particular program in the schools:

She's got a lot of expertise, so I definitely want to be able to learn from that

expertise and tap into it, and help her put that expertise to the best use. One in

particular that's very recent is our [program]. We actually this year are

implementing [this program] for the first time and this board member has been

very instrumental over the last several years in talking about [this program] and

really worked through getting some interest built in the community.

In a board meeting observation, Superintendent 5 provided a detailed response regarding

one board member's interest in an instructional program.

Superintendents also identified focusing on a *superordinate goal* as an effective

strategy with arrangers. Superintendent 3 described an arranger who wanted to support a

program at one of the schools that violated a school nutrition policy, so the

superintendent pointed out how the board member might be perceived as not supporting

what is best for students if she proceeded. Superintendent 5 helped another board

member by appealing to the higher goal of student success as a successful strategy:

Knowing that as a board member, she has her role that really is policy, vision, and

direction setting in a more removed way. In her other life, she's the worker bee,

she's the doer and she understands though that as a board member, that's not her

role. When she sees these ideas coming to life, she's so excited and so

supportive, but she views herself as not staff, and she'll say that I'm not a staff

member. She'll out loud talk about the fact that she is, she actually is an advocate

for the public.

Two participants' governing documents provided references regarding the board's

agreements on a higher order focus. Superintendent 5 was quoted in a newspaper article

and referenced the board's priorities for all students:

> [Superintendent 5] said the district's most important priority is student well-being
>
> and actions this year include approving a comprehensive school safety plan,
>
> hosting parent information nights on a variety of topics and offering a multi-tiered
>
> system of support for each child. "We are proudest of the work we do in making
>
> sure every child's needs are met and making sure every teacher and staff member
>
> is supported and every family feels welcomed," [Superintendent 5] said.

In one board meeting observation, Superintendent 5 referred to the board's higher order

goal when describing an instructional program aligned with the board's designated

outcomes.

Ineffective strategies. Each superintendent was asked about strategies that were

not effective in working with a board member with an arranger political style.

Superintendents described strategies they found ineffective with arrangers, which

included untimely communication, identified three times from three interview sources.

Superintendent 2 described how she engaged in a verbal power struggle with one

arranger during a board meeting:

> I did it in a board meeting recently. I know I can feel myself doing it, but I
>
> couldn't help it. We have very different philosophical ideas in many ways about
>
> how education should be delivered. He respects what I do and supports the
>
> leadership that I have around the curriculum and instruction, but doesn't
>
> understand why the traditional classroom from 30 years ago just doesn't work

today. We had this whole conversation about math instruction at the dais. We did a little back and forth and then finally I was like, okay, we're done. It's because I know I haven't completely got them and it frustrates me, so I'm learning it's okay if you don't make the final point.

Superintendent 3 stated that an arranger becomes frustrated if she doesn't get back to her immediately if she has a question or concern. Superintendent 2 described how she has to be efficient in her communication with the arranger: "Don't use more words than you need to when you're talking about something. Don't beat around the bush."

Strategist. Strategists are visionary, open to new ideas, and collaborative. They empower others and model the organization's values. Supporting organizational interests over self-interests, they strategically use a variety of approaches to propose new initiatives, engage diverse stakeholders, elicit commitment, and make purposeful decisions (DeLuca, 1999; Dergel, 2014; White et al., 2016).

Effective strategies. During the interview process, each superintendent was asked about the strategies she uses to work effectively with board members with a strategist style. During the coding process, eight themes emerged related to the strategies used by superintendents with board members with a strategist style. Strategies for strategists were referenced by the study participants a total of 38 times, which represented 8% of the responses. Table 18 identifies the eight themes regarding strategies used with strategists.

The theme *build trust* was referenced 11 times in two interviews, one artifact, and one observation. This theme produced the greatest number of frequencies in describing the strategies used by superintendents with the strategist political style, followed by *be open to their ideas,* which was referenced six times in two interviews and one

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observation. The theme *know the decision maker's agenda* was referenced five times in four sources, followed by *agenda linking*, which was referenced four times in two sources. The theme *dialogue* was referenced three times in two sources, followed by *respond positively to danger* and *simple messages,* which were each referenced twice.

Table 18

Effective Strategy Themes for Strategists

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Observation sources	Total sources	Frequency
Build trust	2	1	1	4	11
Be open to their ideas	2	0	1	3	6
Know the decision maker's agenda	2	0	2	4	5
Political vision	1	0	0	1	5
Agenda linking	1	0	1	2	4
Dialogue	2	0	0	2	3
Respond positively to danger	1	0	1	2	2
Simple messages	1	0	0	1	2
Total					38

Two superintendents working with strategist board members identified building trust as an effective strategy. Superintendent 3 described how communication and follow-through was important to her strategist board member:

You have to pay attention with him. You can't just blow smoke. You have to make sure that when something goes out or when I'm telling [another board member] something, he will follow up. He knows when he's asked a question and if I don't get to it, he'll re-ask it nicely, but you have to follow up with him.

This strategy was referenced in one artifact for Superintendent 5, which contained governance protocols referencing a trusting relationship. In a board meeting observation,

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Superintendent 3 cited the follow-up tasks she had performed in relation to a strategist's question.

Superintendent 5 shared how she is open to the strategist board member's ideas:

They have so much to offer, as far as how to go about things. I really listen when he talks about approaching something. I think listening to what they offer and then my job is to put it all together. I'll come with ideas and meet with them regularly, talk to them regularly and adding to what they bring to the table.

Superintendent 3 described how a strategist board member raised a legitimate concern about a lack of inclusivity in a district process, which changed the way the staff now looks at each process to ensure they are comprehensive. This was evident in a board meeting observation in which the staff had made a last minute change to an agenda item to ensure it reflected the inclusive language the strategist board member recommended.

Superintendent 5 described how she relies on asking thoughtful questions to focus her strategist board members on their overall political vision when they share ideas:

I'll say, let me run with that and then I'll come back to them. How does it complement the work that we're doing and what we're thinking about? What kind of visions are coming out with what they say? They're very connected with the community. They're very well respected by the community, and so that can really help us.

Superintendent 5, who works with three strategist board members, also noted that it was important for her to help them link agendas with the community's desires on the process of implementing new facilities:

They've been very present at all of our facilities meetings right now. We've got

meetings going on as we are designing and building new schools the kids need, so

we're moving the kids off campus. What happens to the children? Where do they

go? It's a lot. Those are big things for communities. There are always two board

members present at each one of those meetings. I just really want them involved

so they're hearing firsthand and not always a repeat from me. It's good for the

community to see them involved and actually present in the room.

Ineffective strategies. Each superintendent was asked about strategies that were

not effective in working with a board member with a strategist political style. One theme

was referenced, not using their influence, three times by Superintendent 5 as an

ineffective strategy. She explained that there may have been missed opportunities when

she could have used her strategists' influence to further the organization's goals:

As far as what doesn't work is if I misread how they could've influenced

something. I think they have such an ability to help with community. There are

probably times when I could have used that more and counted on that even more

than I did. I would say that's definitely something that a strategist brings to the

table.

Strategies used with all political styles. During each in-depth interview,

superintendents were also asked to share effective strategies used with all political styles.

During the coding process, nine themes emerged related to the strategies used by

superintendents with board members of all political styles. Strategies for all styles were

referenced by the study participants a total of 111 times. Table 19 identifies the nine

themes regarding strategies used by superintendents with board members of all political styles.

Table 19

Effective Strategy Themes for All Political Styles

Theme	Interview sources	Artifact sources	Observation sources	Total sources	Frequency
Differentiate based on need	5	4	0	9	26
Provide information to develop understanding	5	2	2	9	21
Know the decision maker's agenda	3	0	3	6	13
Establish norms and protocols	1	5	2	8	12
Value their role	3	1	1	5	10
Broken record	1	0	1	2	9
Predict their reactions	3	0	1	4	8
Never let 'em see you sweat	1	0	2	3	8
Coaching	3	1	0	4	4
				Total	111

The theme *differentiate based on need* was referenced 26 times in all five interviews and four artifacts. This theme was not noted in any observations, but produced the greatest number of frequencies in describing the strategies used by superintendents with board members of all political styles. *Provide information to develop understanding* was referenced 21 times in all interviews, two artifacts, and two observations. The theme *know the decision maker's agenda* was referenced 13 times in six sources, followed by *establish norms and protocols* which was referenced 12 times in eight sources. The theme of *value their role* was referenced 10 times in five sources, followed by *broken record,* which had a frequency of nine in two sources. *Predict their*

reactions and *never let 'em see you sweat* each had eight references, and *coaching* was referenced four times.

Each of the superintendents interviewed in this study described how they differentiate communication methods and interactions based on the strengths, needs, and styles of the board members. Superintendent 1 reflected on her learning since becoming a superintendent:

> I think over time, because I've been doing this now awhile, my most significant learning in this job is that when you have five bosses, they're not all the same. In the very beginning, I approached my work where I was really treating all of them [the same]. In superintendent school, they say you got to treat everybody equally, right, and everyone's got to have the same information. How you interact with them depending upon their style is what's brought me more success, so I've gotten much more strategic about that. The golden rule is treat people the way you want to be treated; the platinum rule is treat others the way they want to be treated.

Superintendent 5 shared how the diverse outlooks of her board members was an asset, "I've learned how different styles can complement one another, including my own, and the value in everybody coming with a different perspective, and how to take that all in and appreciate it." Four artifacts, which included governance documents from Superintendents 1, 2, 4, and 5, reflected the different methods for communication between the superintendent and the board members.

All superintendents in the study described how providing information to develop understanding was an effective strategy with all the board member styles. Superintendent 5 described how she decides what information to share:

> Listening well and communicating well. Letting them know what's going on from a board member perspective. I'm very strategic and very intentional about what I tell them, and I don't want them to be bogged down in things they don't need to know. I'm intentional about what I talk to them about and I talk to them a lot. I think regular communication, reinforcement of the things that they do that makes them high functioning, because they do some things that really are outstanding.

Superintendent 1 described her strategy for sharing information:

> They're not the superintendent and they don't know what we know, but they need to know enough so that they can feel like they have some sense of understanding about what's going on. As a team, my cabinet, we spend a significant amount of time providing them with facts, knowledge, information, and the things that they need to know to be successful and they all really appreciate it.

This theme was also noted in two governance documents from Superintendents 1 and 5 that referred to the need for board members to have information to make informed decisions. References to in-depth backup information provided by Superintendents 1 and 4 were identified in the two board meeting observations.

Three superintendents noted the need to know their board members' agendas. Superintendent 4 described how she approached this theme: "I am very intentional whenever I meet them to have deep and long conversations about why they became a

board member, and what gets them up every day about this. Then I try to keep getting underneath that." Superintendent 2 explained how she thinks about the board member's agenda differently:

> I think we get sort of in the box around board members and so I have to get out of the box and think about, you are a person who's coming here to do service and I've got to figure out what your talents and your abilities are. I think that's my biggest challenge is thinking of them as individuals.

This theme was identified in three board meeting observations, in which Superintendents 3, 4, and 5 directed comments or information to individual board members the superintendents had referenced during the interview.

Key Findings

Using the analysis of data collected from the survey, coded interview transcripts, artifacts, and observations, key findings were established to address the political styles of superintendents and their board members as perceived by superintendents, and the political strategies superintendents use to work with the various styles. Quantitative data provided the superintendents' perceptions of their own political style and those of their board members. Key findings identified from qualitative data were identified by assessing which themes were referenced at least 10 times by at least two superintendents and were supported by at least one observation or artifact. Based on the research the following key findings were identified.

Political Styles

1. All five female superintendents in this study (100%) perceived themselves as strategists.

2. Superintendents in this study perceived 48% of their board members as having assertive styles (challenger, arranger, and strategist).

3. Four out of five study participants (80%) identified one challenger board member.

Political Strategies for Specific Board Member Styles

4. The challenger political style was identified to have the most themes for strategies (15) and was referenced with the highest number of frequencies at 142, or 29% of all frequencies.

5. Study participants identified *building trust* as an effective strategy for use with 75%, or six of the eight political styles identified, including adaptor, supporter, balancer, developer, arranger, and strategist. This strategy was identified by all five superintendents (100%) and identified in 10 artifacts and seven times in observations.

6. *Meeting the needs* of a balancer political style was referenced by two superintendents, and identified in one artifact, with a total frequency of 13.

7. The strategies *positive responses to demands or arguments, ability to compete/intention to cooperate, including all sides, plan meticulously where snipers dwell, broken record*, and *never let 'em see you sweat* were perceived by study participants as effective with challenger styles as referenced by four superintendents (80%), identified nine times in observations, and in four artifacts.

8. *Know the decision maker's agenda* with an arranger style was referenced by three superintendents and identified in one observation with a total frequency of 13.

Political Strategies for All Board Member Styles

9. *Differentiating based on need* with all styles was referenced by five superintendents and identified in four artifacts with a total frequency of 26.

10. *Providing information to develop understanding* with all styles was referenced by

five superintendents and identified in two artifacts and two observations, with a total

frequency of 21.

11. *Knowing the decision maker's agenda* with all styles was referenced by three

superintendents and identified in three observations, with a total frequency of 13.

12. *Valuing their role* with all styles was referenced by three superintendents and

identified in one artifact and one observation for a total frequency of 10.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify the political styles of

female superintendents and their board members as perceived by the superintendents, and

identify political strategies used by the superintendents with their school board members.

A survey of five exemplary female superintendents provided quantitative, descriptive

data regarding the superintendents' own political styles and their perceptions of the

political styles of each of their board members. This chapter also provided a summary of

the 69 themes associated with the primary research question regarding the political

strategies used by superintendents with their board members. Data were summarized and

coded from the five interviews. In addition, coding and theming of 27 artifacts and five

observations was conducted, which validated the survey results and/or the descriptions

shared by participants during the interviews or observed by the researcher. Twelve key

findings were identified, which described the political styles of superintendents and their

perceptions of board member political styles, as well as the political strategies

superintendents use with the different political styles of their board members. Chapter V

offers a summary of major findings, conclusions, implications for action, and

recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study, the researcher identified the political styles of exemplary female superintendents, the political styles of board members as perceived by the superintendents, and the political strategies that superintendents use with board members of different political styles. Data generated from surveys, interviews of study participants, observations, and artifacts resulted in 12 key findings. Chapter V offers a summary of the study, including the purpose, research questions, and key findings. In addition, this chapter includes unexpected research findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research.

The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study was to identify the political styles of female superintendents and their school board members as perceived by superintendents. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify and explain the political strategies female superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members.

The following were the research questions for this study:

1. How do female superintendents perceive their own political style and the individual styles of their school board members?

2. What are the strategies female superintendents use to work successfully with the different school board member styles?

In this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study, an initial survey was utilized to collect quantitative, descriptive data from five exemplary female superintendents regarding their own political style and their perceptions of the political styles of each of their board members. The primary source of data was collected from qualitative in-depth

interviews with each superintendent to provide detailed explanations of the lived experiences of the superintendents in using political strategies with the different political styles of their board members. Data collected from artifacts and observations were used to triangulate data collected in the survey and interviews.

Major Findings

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods research study was to identify the political styles of exemplary female superintendents, the political styles of their board members as perceived by the superintendents, and the political strategies that superintendents use with board members of different political styles. The following major findings were developed from the key findings specified in Chapter IV:

1. Exemplary superintendents *differentiate approaches* to coincide with all individual board members' political styles.

2. *Building trust* was a political strategy used by the study participants with six of the eight political styles.

3. *Knowing the decision maker's agenda* was identified by the study participants as a top strategy for arrangers and an effective strategy for use with all political styles.

4. *Providing information to develop understanding* was referenced as an effective strategy for use with all styles by all study participants.

5. Four of the five study participants identified at least one board member with a challenger style. The most frequently identified effective strategies used with challengers were *responding positively to danger, ability to compete/intention to cooperate, including all sides, planning meticulously where snipers dwell, broken record*, and *never let 'em see you sweat.*

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Unexpected Findings

Two unexpected findings were identified in this study. The first related to the political styles of the female superintendents who participated in the study and the other related to the political strategy of agenda-linking. Each of the exemplary female superintendents in this study indicated that their primary political style was the strategist style. In addition, other peer researchers in the thematic study have also identified the primary political style of female superintendents as strategists. Strategists are visionary, open to new ideas, and collaborative. They empower others and model the organization's values. Supporting organizational interests over self-interests, they strategically use a variety of approaches to propose new initiatives, engage diverse stakeholders, elicit commitment, and make purposeful decisions (DeLuca, 1999; Dergel, 2014; White et al., 2016).

Strategists are assertive in taking initiative and use political will and skill to accomplish organizational goals. Treadway (2012) defined political will as "the motivation to engage in strategic, goal-directed behavior that advances the personal agenda and objectives of the actor that inherently involves the risk of relational or reputational capital" (p. 533). Strategists are willing to use their political skill to achieve the objectives of the organization. In addition to willingness to act, strategists use the elements of political skill (social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity) to attain their vision (Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Ferris et al., 2005a, 2005b). Political skill is a vital leadership quality, as politically savvy leaders are more effective in obtaining outcomes, coping with stress, and engaging others (DeLuca, 1999; Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Ferris et al., 2012; Wihler et al., 2016).

Barriers to accessing the superintendency require female superintendents to overcome perceptions and preconceptions that they are not strong leaders (Lemasters & Roach, 2012). Female leaders are generally hesitant to engage in politics due to a perceived and actual lack of confidence, and sometimes avoid using political strategies, due to a belief that they can affect positive outcomes by following the rules, performing the job well, and leading collaboratively (Ferris et al., 2005a; Heath et al., 2017; Mann, 1995). The exemplary female superintendents in this study did not attempt to exert power over others, but did invest in the relationships with their board members as an effective political strategy (Brunner, 2000b; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Pounder & Coleman, 2002; Robinson et al., 2017).

The second unexpected finding was related to agenda linking. Agenda linking was a strategy identified by study participants for use with board members with arranger, balancer, challenger, developer, and strategist styles. However, the frequencies were among the lowest in comparison to other strategies. Agenda linking was the least referenced theme for use with the balancer and developer styles. It was the fifth highest theme for strategists, the eighth highest for challenger, and the ninth highest for arranger. Agenda linking was not identified as a theme for strategies that work with all the political styles of board members.

Research has shown that agenda linking is a valuable political strategy for addressing the conflict created by opposing values or demands of groups or individuals by creating a structure that allows for the identification of shared interests and mutually favorable outcomes (Bowers, 2016; Ezarik, 2005; Hill & Jochim, 2018; Williams & Peters, 2018). When individuals look past another party's opinion and connect to a

shared interest or goal, they are more likely to accomplish their objective (White et al., 2016). The strategy of agenda linking is grounded in establishing trusting relationships, reflecting on common interests, and creatively identifying ways to create connections among those interests (Bolman & Deal, 2017; DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

Conclusions

As a result of the key findings, the following conclusions were reached regarding the political styles of exemplary female superintendents, the political styles of board members as perceived by the superintendents, and the political strategies used by the superintendents with the different political styles of board members.

Conclusion 1

Female superintendents who want to influence board members must build strong relationships by differentiating their approach based on the needs, interests, and political style of each individual board member

All five exemplary female superintendents in this study discussed how they approached each of their board members differently depending on the issue, the political style of the board member, and expectations of each individual in order to accomplish the organization's goals. The superintendents valued the different strengths their board members brought to their role and used those assets strategically. The superintendents in this study adapted their responses to board members' individual needs and desires, understanding the need to proactively influence and engage them to maintain organizational interests as a focus. Due to the rapid pace of change in education, the contemporary superintendent must navigate the varied and often conflicting demands and interests of board members (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Hart, 2018; Kowalski, 2013).

Political intelligence is crucial for leaders to traverse through required organizational standards and expectations, while considering the individual perspectives and motivations of others to accomplish organizational goals and outcomes (DeLuca, 1999; Fairholm, 2009; Tucker, 1995; White et al., 2016). A politically intelligent leader understands his or her own political style and the political style of the individual the leader is attempting to influence. Recognizing political styles is crucial to determine the appropriate strategy and how it will affect the individual's response, and what adjustments may need to take place (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). Leaders use thoughtful reflection to determine appropriate tactics while also considering the context of the situation (White et al., 2016).

The survey, interviews, observations, and artifacts supported the following:

1. The exemplary female superintendents in this study emphasized the importance of differentiating their approaches based on the individual needs of their board members, regardless of political style. Differentiating based on need was the most frequently identified political strategy used with all political styles of board members.

2. The exemplary female superintendents in this study exhibited politically intelligent leadership by differentiating their responses to the wants, needs, values, motivations, and emotions of board members, which allowed them influence with each board member to achieve outcomes aligned with organizational interests.

Conclusion 2

Female superintendents must build trust with board members by demonstrating genuine care and concern, listening and following through on their interests, and consistently honoring their agreements.

The exemplary female superintendents in this study developed high levels of trust with their board members, specifically those with adaptor, supporter, balancer, developer, arranger, and strategist political styles. These styles use goal orientations focused on blended or organizational interests. Trust is the cornerstone of all political strategies (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2019; White et al, 2016; Yukl, 2013). Building trust allowed board members to feel they could share concerns or issues directly with the superintendent and created a reciprocal relationship in which the superintendent could positively influence board members to engage as high-performing governance teams working toward successful organizational outcomes. The superintendents in this study built trust by learning about the personal lives of their board members, listening and following up on the issues important to them, and providing responsive, regular communication.

Trust is a fundamental element of leadership and is necessary to influence others in organizations. Building trust is an important component of successful relationships between superintendents and board members, particularly when competing interests emerge (Bowers, 2016; Jimenez, 2012). Successful leaders build trust with others by deliberately establishing personal connections, differentiating strategies based on individual interests, and being responsive to the concerns of others (Annunziato, 2008; Bowers, 2016; Girard, 2017; Hill & Jochim, 2018; White et al., 2016). In order to network and develop relationships with board members, superintendents must competently perform their duties, create genuine connections with others, and collaborate with others in their decision-making (Duffy, 2006; Ferris et al., 2005a; McNay, 2016; White et al., 2016). Female superintendents must often overcome perceptions that they

are not capable leaders; however, they tend to emphasize relationships, coalition building, inclusion, and shared credit in their leadership qualities, which are components of trust-building (Brunner, 2000b; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Lemasters & Roach, 2012; Robinson et al., 2017).

Interviews, observations, and artifacts demonstrated the following:

1. Exemplary female superintendents in this study emphasized building trust as an effective approach with their board members, particularly those with political styles that focused on blended or organizational interests.

2. Exemplary female superintendents built trust with their board members by demonstrating genuine care and concern, listening for their interests and following through on them, and consistently honoring their agreements.

Conclusion 3

In order to keep board members working together toward organizational interests, female superintendents must maintain awareness of the political context and understand the agendas of board members.

The exemplary female superintendents in this study acknowledged that knowing each of their board member's motivations and interests was essential to moving the organization forward. They recognized these motivations by maintaining an awareness of the political context internally and externally to the organization beyond just listening to what the board members openly shared. The superintendents observed the relationships held by board members, which included identifying the individuals within their networking circles. The superintendents deeply reflected on their one-on-one conversations with board members to make implicit connections about their underlying

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interests and predicted strategies or tactics that could be effective in achieving a particular outcome in support of the organization's priorities.

Politically intelligent leadership requires leaders to assess a situation and use the effective strategies to influence outcomes, readjust strategies that are ineffective, and use a moral compass to guide the organization for the greater good (White et al., 2016). Politically intelligent leaders are also aware of the political styles of others to effectively anticipate reactions to proposed decisions and the type of resistance or support they may encounter (White et al., 2016). Effective leaders are conscious of the values and interests of others, and as a result are less vulnerable to political blind spots and more successful in achieving transformational results (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). Successful superintendents detect the political context by maintaining awareness of others' motivations and networks of relationships through listening and observation, which allows them to determine the best strategy (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Duffy, 2006; Ferris et al., 2005a; Girard, 2017; Petersen & Williams, 2005b; White et al., 2016).

Through interviews, observations, and artifacts, the following was determined:

1. Exemplary female superintendents in this study developed and maintained awareness of the political context by identifying the motivations and interests of their board members through listening and observation of each board member's networks. Knowing the decision maker's agenda was the third highest referenced effective strategy for all board member styles, the second highest for board members with an arranger style, and the third highest for board members with a strategist style.

2. Exemplary female superintendents in this study used the knowledge they obtained through political awareness and understanding individual agendas of board members to develop strategies and tactics to achieve organizational outcomes.

Conclusion 4

Frequent and strategic communication should be used by female superintendents to gain board members' enthusiasm and support for organizational goals.

Understanding and using the most effective communication methods for each board member was identified as an essential component of successful relationships among the exemplary female superintendents in this study and their board members. The superintendents indicated that keeping their board members informed was fundamental to maintaining a trusting relationship, but it was also important to do so in a manner that was intentionally calculated to each board member's strengths, needs, and interests. Most of the superintendents in this study indicated that they regularly met one on one with most of their board members. During these conversations, the superintendents deliberately shared information relevant to the particular board member's interests, reinforced board member behavior that supported organizational goals, and prepared board members for potential conflict, particularly those with a passive style. The superintendents in this study used their communication with board members to influence outcomes aligned with the organization's mission and goals.

Leaders use influence, the strategic and intentional communication between leaders and followers, to achieve organizational outcomes (Grenny et al., 2013; Northouse, 2019; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017). A politically skilled leader assesses the situation and uses coherent communication skills to build consensus and implement

strategic action. Using strategic communication is an effective tool for superintendents to address conflicting interests with school board members and other stakeholders (Annunziato, 2008; Bowers, 2016; Jimenez, 2012; McNay, 2016; Petersen & Williams, 2005a, 2005b; Rohrbach, 2015; Vaughn, 2010; White et al., 2016).

While many female superintendents prefer to avoid politics, they understand the importance of communication as a significant factor in their political leadership (Brunner, 2000a, 2000b; McNay, 2016). For female leaders, strategic communication must be used not only for influencing others to achieve organizational outcomes but also in consideration of board member perceptions of communication based on gender roles. Female leaders balance both gender and superintendent roles by determining when to use their feminine, collaborative communication approaches and when to consider other approaches to achieve influence in a traditionally masculine role and culture (Brunner, 1998, 2000b).

Interviews, observations, and artifacts provide evidence of the following:

1. Exemplary female superintendents in this study used frequent and strategic communication with board members to influence board members' willingness to support initiatives or approaches that would achieve organizational outcomes. Providing information to board members to develop their understanding of issues related to the organizational interests was the second most frequently referenced theme used with all political styles of board members.

2. Exemplary female superintendents in this study used a variety of communication methods to achieve their influence, including sharing information relevant to board

member interests, praising board member behavior aligned to achieving

organizational outcomes, and preparing board members for potential conflict.

Conclusion 5

Working with board members with a challenger style requires female

superintendents to exude confidence, communicate strategically, and include others when

conflict arises.

The exemplary female superintendents in this study conveyed the most conflict

with board members with a challenger political style and identified the most themes for

strategies used with this style. They expressed that the strategies used with challenger

board members were often contrary to those that worked with other board members,

given that the self-interest goal orientation and assertive initiative level of the challengers

were so distinct. The superintendents explained that their attempts to influence and

appeal to organizational interests were futile with the challenger board members.

Superintendents in this study behaved confidently, as if a challenger's assertive demeanor

and self-interests were not disconcerting to them, and stressed the importance of

responding to challengers in a straightforward, self-assured manner. The study

participants often avoided meeting one on one with challenger board members and

preferred to share only essential information and/or include other board members in their

meetings to prevent manipulation of the communication and to thwart potential power

struggles.

School board members come to the table with diverse ideologies, political styles,

and motivations for seeking elected office (Blissett & Alsbury, 2017; Mountford, 2004,

White et al., 2016). Board members who present personal agendas or single issues in a

demanding or obstructive manner create greater board conflict and contention with the superintendent (Mountford, 2004; Mountford & Brunner, 1999). School board members may attempt to manage tasks not aligned to their roles or try to focus on too many issues at once, which prevents the board from making policy-level decisions that impact student achievement (Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Quinn & Dawson, 2019). When individual board members assert their agendas, superintendents must rely on their own moral and ethical framework as they work with the school board (Brierton et al., 2016).

The superintendents in this study identified approaches often considered to be part of a masculine stereotype, such as demonstrating a self-assured, authoritative manner, to work successfully with challenger board members. This approach was described by study participants as unnatural. Female superintendents characteristically exhibit collaborative leadership styles and emphasize relationship development, coalition building, proactive community engagement, inclusion, and sharing credit as effective political strategies (Brunner, 2000b; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Robinson et al., 2017). Despite the superintendents in this study recognizing this approach as atypical, they found it to be effective with challengers.

They also found that leaders who use charisma are able to obtain enthusiasm and support for their vision and goals, particularly when conflict exists in the organization (Burns, 1978; Fairholm, 2009; Ferris et al., 2005a; Takala, 1998). Superintendents used charisma strategically to navigate competing priorities and effect transformational change in their organizations by exuding self-confidence, maintaining a strong vision, and demonstrating resilience (Burns-Redell, 2013; Hill & Jochim, 2018).

Interviews, observations, and artifacts supported the following:

1. Exemplary female superintendents in this study exhibited a self-assured, knowledgeable approach in the face of potential conflict with board members with a challenger style. Superintendents presented a confident attitude, holding firm on their moral imperative focused on organizational interests. The strategies of *respond positively to danger* and *ability to compete/intention to cooperate* had the highest frequencies for strategies used with challengers. The strategy of *never let 'em see you sweat* had the sixth highest frequency for this style.

2. Exemplary female superintendents in this study included other board members in meetings and conversations with challenger board members to increase the diversity of the perspectives, avoid one dominant voice from controlling a decision, and allow the board members to monitor themselves in accordance with their policies. *Including all sides* was the third most frequently referenced strategy.

3. Exemplary female superintendents in this study used strategic communication methods with challenger board members. They limited the frequency of meetings and/or the breadth of information shared with challengers, and often included other board members in communication to prevent manipulation. Careful planning to anticipate conflict and using broken record strategies the fourth and fifth highest frequently identified strategies for use with challenger styles.

Implications for Action

This research provided insight on how exemplary female superintendents use political strategies with the different political styles of their board members. The findings of this study, in addition to supporting literature on politics and political intelligence, deliver a richer understanding of the influential relationships among superintendents and

their board members. The following implications from this study provide actions to enhance the political intelligence of individuals and groups by describing the strategies that exemplary female superintendents use with the different political styles of board members:

1. Superintendent professional development programs, such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Superintendents' Academy and American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Aspiring Superintendents Academy for Female Leaders, should include this research as part of their program content to build political knowledge and confidence in female leaders and aspiring superintendents.

2. School districts with internal leadership development programs should include content from this research related to the specific political strategies that could be effective with other stakeholders.

3. University and county-sponsored administrator preparation programs, and related organizations, such as the California Association of Professors of Educational Administration (CAPEA), should use this research as part of the course content for school administration courses to ensure that each participant has the political intelligence to effectively work with stakeholders and board members. By preparing female leaders with knowledge and understanding of political awareness and effective political strategies, they may demonstrate politically intelligent leadership skills that enable them to overcome the gender bias and perceptions that can serve as a barrier to the role of superintendent.

4. Consulting firms and professional organizations that offer mentoring for new or aspiring female superintendents should encompass the elements of political intelligence as part of their mentorship programs, including prompts for discussion related to effective political strategies used with different political styles.

5. Superintendents and board members should participate in training, in such programs as those offered by the California School Boards Association (CSBA), to enhance their understanding of political styles and the effective strategies they can use to work with each other and external stakeholder groups.

6. Superintendent search firm consultants should use this research with school boards to consider hiring criteria or interview questions related to political intelligence in prospective candidates, which may contribute to the successful placement of superintendent candidates in communities that may have challenges with special interest groups or board members with specific agendas.

7. A book should be written specifically for superintendents or school leaders to expand on the research of White et al. (2016) by including the lived experiences of the study participants from all the peer researchers' studies on this topic. The book should describe the specific political strategies superintendents used with the various political styles of their board members.

8. The researcher should submit proposals to professional organizations for conferences at the local, state, or national level such as ACSA or AASA. This study in particular should be considered for submission at female leadership conferences.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the research conducted for this study, additional research should be conducted to further explore political styles and strategies used by superintendents and other school leaders. Additional research is recommended in the following nine areas:

- This study focused on female superintendents' lived experiences related to the political strategies they use with the different political styles of their board members. Research should be conducted on the lived experiences of male superintendents, possibly those who identify themselves as having a strategist political style, which could be compared to the findings of this study.

- All of the exemplary female superintendents in this study identified themselves as having a strategist political style. Additional research should be conducted on the political styles of superintendents, examining the similarities and differences in the styles based on gender.

- This study found that building trust was an effective political strategy used by superintendents with six out of the eight political styles identified. Further research should be conducted on how superintendents outside of California build trust with their board members.

- There is limited research on the political strategies used with board members of different genders and the role gender plays in superintendent and board relations. Prospective or current female superintendents must overcome gender biases board members may hold. Additional research should be conducted on the impact of gender on the relationships between superintendents and board members.

- Four out of five exemplary female superintendents who participated in this study were in the age range of 51 to 60 and one superintendent's age was in the 61 to 70 range. Several of the participants indicated they would have felt vulnerable using strategies they use in their current situations when they were new in their roles. Additional research should be conducted on the political strategies used by superintendents to determine if different strategies are used at other age and experience ranges.

- The superintendents in this study referenced the most strategies about board members with a challenger style. Therefore, a study on the impact of board members with a challenger political style should be conducted.

- The thematic dissertation team conducted studies with a variety of superintendent populations such as female, Latino, suburban unified districts, high school districts, small suburban school districts, and regional occupation programs (ROP). A meta-analysis study of the thematic dissertations should be conducted to determine the effective political strategies used across populations.

- This study's population was limited to the eight counties in Southern California: Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Imperial. Future studies should be conducted with superintendent populations in other areas of the United States.

- This study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach to understand the political styles of superintendents and their board members as perceived by the superintendents, and the political strategies superintendents use with the different political styles of their board members. A qualitative, case study approach could be

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utilized to conduct future research on the political strategies used by a superintendent in a school district community that experienced high levels of political pressure by special interests or a turnover of the board majority.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

I close this chapter with concluding remarks and my reflections on the process of conducting this research. Earlier in my career, I avoided identifying myself as aspiring to the superintendency, primarily due to my perceptions of the political challenges involved. I observed several well-intentioned superintendents attempt to navigate the various special interest groups and board member agendas with varying degrees of success. Through the progression of my research, I learned how politics and political strategies can be used to further the positive impact that superintendents with high levels of political intelligence can have on the educational system as a whole and with their interactions with their board members. The learning I gleaned from this process has made me a more reflective, confident leader and has contributed in deep and meaningful ways to my preparation for a superintendency.

The female superintendents I interviewed for this study instilled in me that as a female leader, I can assertively address what is right for the organization and still maintain a collaborative approach to leadership. These five strong women demonstrated tremendous character in challenging circumstances and leading with purpose and an unwavering focus on their core values. I am honored to have met each of them and will continue the work necessary to increase access to the superintendency and other leadership roles for women by expanding my networks and through mentorship and service to others.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Thank you for sharing your time, experience and expertise in creating a better understanding of the political strategies that superintendents use in working with school board members.

The purpose of this sequential mixed methods study is to understand the political styles of superintendents and school board members as perceived by superintendents. In addition, it is the purpose to identify and describe the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members.

You have been selected for participation because of your expertise in working with your governance team. The results of this study will assist superintendents to manage the decision-making process with school board members. The political framework used in this study was taken from the book: The Politically Intelligent Leader; White, Harvey & Fox, 2016.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Click on the agree button that you have received and read the informed consent form and Participants Bill of Rights document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

If you do not wish to participate in this survey, you may decline participation by clicking on the disagree button.

The survey will not open for responses unless you agree to participate.

The survey will not open for responses unless you select agree to participate.

○ AGREE: I acknowledge receipt of the informed Consent packet and "Bill of Rights." I have read the materials and give my consent to participate in this study. You have been provided a code that must be entered in the box below. This code insures the security and privacy of the information that you provide.

○ DISAGREE: I do not wish to participate in this survey.

Demographic Information

* Please choose the code provided to you by the researcher from the dropdown list below.

[   ]

* Total years of service as a superintendent (in any district)

[   ]

* Years of service as superintendent in this district

[   ]

* Years of experience in this district

[   ]

* Gender

○ Female

○ Male

○ Non-binary

* Your current age

[   ]

* Level of your terminal degree

○ M.A./M.S.

○ Ed.D.

○ Ph.D.

Tell us about governance training you have participated in.

* Indicate which governance training you have participated in.

- [ ] CSBA governance training

- [ ] Governance training using an external consultant

- [ ] Other governance training

- [ ] None

* Board members in this district are elected...(select one)

[   ]

Directions: For purposes of identification and confidentiality assign each of your board members a number 1-7. Please read the definitions carefully prior to completing the survey. You may use the definitions sent to you as part of your information packet as a reference while completing the survey.

DEFINITIONS

The following section defines terms as they are used in this study. These terms were collaboratively developed by a team of peer researchers studying political styles and strategies of superintendents. The definitions are organized around the nine political styles matrix based on initiative and interest. The styles are listed as self-interest, blended interests and organizational interest for each initiative: passive, engaged and assertive. For purposes of this study political style is defined as the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people.

Passive Political Styles

- **Analyst.** Analysts are passive and oriented toward self-interest over organizational interest. They are primarily focused on tasks over relationships and will seek evidence, proof, and detailed analysis before risking a change (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Boulgarides & Cohen, 2001; DeLuca, 1999; Rowe & Boulgarides, 1992; White et al., 2016).

- **Adaptor.** Adaptors are pragmatists who generally support organizational changes and team decisions, provided they do not perceive personal risk. An adaptor is one who presents a passive, cooperative political style balanced between self-interest and organizational interests (Bobic, Davis, & Cunningham, 1999; Church & Waclawski, 1998; Kirton, 1976; White et al., 2016).

- **Supporter.** Supporters are characterized as risk-averse, selfless, and passive devotees, backers, or advocates of the organization's visions and goals. Supporters seek harmony and hesitate to take sides, though make decisions and provide resources that align with the organization's goals (CSBA, 2016; DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

Moderately Engaged Political Styles

- **Planner.** Planners demonstrate modest initiative in political ventures and are typically focused on self-interests rather than organizational interests. Planners gather and analyze data for potential personal risks, putting constraints on decision making. (Hackman, 2002; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; White et al., 2016).
- **Balancer.** Balancers blend self and organizational interests. Focused on the prevention of disequilibrium, balancers use their knowledge of the organization's culture to diplomatically shift their support, when needed to maintain stability, harmony, and equanimity. (Sheehan, 1989; White et al., 2016).
- **Developer.** Developers work behind the scenes to coach or challenge others to build skills that can positively influence advance organizational interests to which they are fully committed. Developers exhibit a high level of self-awareness of their own knowledge and skill (DeLuca, 1999; Goleman, 2000; Rath, 2007; White et al., 2016).

Assertive Political Styles

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- **Challenger.** Challengers are characterized by self-interest, assertive behavior and confidence in their own vision, ideas, and goals, which inspires a strong desire to lead and make decisions quickly. Challengers see themselves as movers and shakers, efficient, politically strategic, aggressive, and willing to confront the views of others in an attempt to influence outcomes (DeLuca, 1999; Jasper, 1999; Meyer, Jenness, & Ingram, 2005; Polletta, 2004; White, et al., 2016).
- **Arranger.** Arrangers use a political style in which they are assertive in pursuing their goals that are a blend of both organizational priorities and their own self-interests. They build a power base by connecting with many people. Arrangers will take risks to advance their goals and are strategic in combining resources (DeLuca, 1999; Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014; White et al., 2016).
- **Strategist.** Strategists are visionary, open to new ideas, and collaborative. They empower others and model the organization's values. Supporting organizational interests over self-interests, they strategically use a variety of approaches to propose new initiatives, engage diverse stakeholders, elicit commitment and make purposeful decisions (DeLuca, 1999; Dergel, 2014; White, et al., 2016).

Instructions: Decide what style best matches your preferred political style and that of each board member . Use the definitions as a reference point for making your decision about each board member's placement in the Styles Matrix. All of your responses are coded and confidential.

Style Matrix

* Indicate the style that best matches your preferred political style and that of each board member. If you
   work with five board members, leave numbers 6 and 7 blank. Please keep a separate record of which
   board member corresponds to each number below for use during the interview.

	Challenger	Arranger	Strategist	Planner	Balancer	Developer	Analyst	Adapter	Supporter
Superintendent (self)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Board member 1	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Board member 2	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Board member 3	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Board member 4	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Board member 5	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Board member 6	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Board member 7	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Thank you for your participation. I look forward to talking with you about the strategies you use to work with board members of different political styles.

APPENDIX B

Alignment Table

Research Questions	Survey Item/ Interview Question(s)	Analytical Technique
Research Question 1: How do female superintendents perceive their own political style and the individual styles of their school board members?	1. Decide which style best matches your preferred political style and that of each board member.	Data tabulated, mean and mode scores measured and analyzed, then charted and graphed. Descriptive statistics: mean, mode. Information presented in tables, charts, and figures.
Research Question 2 What are the strategies female superintendents use to work successfully with the different school board member styles?	1. Board Member (#). Has a style identified as _____. Can you share a story about a time when this Board Member demonstrated some of the characteristics of this style? ○ ALTERNATE: Board Members #__ and #__ have been identified as _____. Can you share a story about a time when Board Member #__ demonstrated some of the characteristics of this style and then share a story for Board Member #__? What strategies did you use to work with this style? 2. On occasions that posed a potential conflict with this Board Member, either with you or other Board Members, what strategies did you use	Data include transcribed audio recordings. Analytic memoing utilized to explore tentative descriptions that would contribute to developing open codes. Axial coding to develop expanded codes. Codes and frequencies established in NVIVO summarized and presented in tables, charts and figures.

	before, during or after the conflict?	
	3. What strategies did you use that were not effective with this Board Member?	
	4. Having worked with this Board Member through different governance issues, what would you say is the most effective strategy you have used to reach a successful outcome?	
	5. You identified your political style as _____. What have you learned about your own political style in working with your Board? What are the strategies that have worked extremely well with all the Board Member styles? What are the strategies that are only effective with certain Board Member styles?	
	6. Are there any other ideas you have about strategies you have used with your Board that you would like to share?	

Interview Protocol

"My name is _____ and I *(brief description of what you do).* I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I am a part of a team conducting research to understand the political styles of superintendents and identify strategies exemplary superintendents use to work with different political styles of board members. The nine political styles used in this study are depicted by White, Fox, and Harvey's (2016) framework of politically intelligent leadership, which you have already used in a survey to identify the political styles of your board members.

Political styles, as used in this research, are composed of a set of values, preferences, and priorities that are reflected in leader behaviors and attitudes in working with individual board members. Political strategies are actions or methods used to influence the behavior of others.

I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview on political strategies and participating in our electronic survey prior to this interview. This interview is intended to explore further information which you provided in the electronic survey. For your reference, I am providing you with the matrix of political styles showing where you placed yourself and your board members and a description of the different political styles for your reference that you may use at any point during the interview.

Our team is conducting approximately 50 interviews with leaders like yourself. The information you share, along with the others, will hopefully provide a clear picture of the thoughts and strategies exemplary superintendents use to work with different political styles of board members in their organizations and will add to the body of research currently available.

The questions I will be asking are the same for everyone participating in the study. The reason for this is to try to guarantee, as much as possible, that all interviews with participating superintendents will be conducted in a consistent manner.

Informed Consent

I want to remind you any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to any individual(s) or any institution(s). For ease of our discussion and accuracy, I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent sent to you via email. I will have the recording transcribed to a Word document and will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure that I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas. The digital recording will be erased following review and approval of the transcription.

Did you receive the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either document? If so, would you be so kind as to sign the hard copy of the IRB requirements for me to collect?

We have scheduled an hour for the interview. At any point during the interview, you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the conversation altogether.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let's get started, and thanks so much for your time.

Important Note for the Interviewer: To ensure validity and reliability, please ask each question for every Board Member and the Superintendent.

Questions

To ensure validity and reliability in our data collection, I will repeat some questions for each of the styles you have identified on your Board.

Strategies and Styles

1. Board Member (#). Has a style identified as _____. Can you share a story about a time when this Board Member demonstrated some of the characteristics of this style?

   ○ ALTERNATE: Board Members #__ and #__ have been identified as _____. Can you share a story about a time when Board Member #__ demonstrated some of the characteristics of this style and then share a story for Board Member #__?

2. What strategies did you use to work with this style?

Conflict and Strategies

3. On occasions that posed a potential conflict with this Board Member, either with you or other Board Members, what strategies did you use *before, during or after the conflict?*

Effectiveness

4. What strategies did you use that were not effective with this Board Member?

Effective Political Strategies

5. Having worked with this Board Member through different governance issues, what would you say is the most effective strategy you have used to reach a successful outcome?

After you have asked questions about each board member:

1. You identified your political style as _____. What have you learned about your own political style in working with your Board?
2. What are the strategies that have worked extremely well with all the Board Member styles?
3. What are the strategies that are only effective with certain Board Member styles?
4. Are there any other ideas you have about strategies you have used with your Board that you would like to share?

Prompts can be used at any point that you feel that the answer was not sufficient in detail. You may not ask any of them but they are there to be used if needed.

1. "What did you mean by …"
2. "Do you have more to add?"
3. "Would you expand upon that a bit?"
4. "Why do think that was the case?"
5. "Could you please tell me more about …"
6. "Can you give me an example of …"
7. "How did you feel about that?"
8. "Why do you think that strategy was so effective?"

Political Styles (White et al., 2016)

Nine Political Styles

Goal / Initiative	Self-Interests	Blended Interests	Organizational Interests
Assertive	Challenger	Arranger	Strategist
Engaged	Planner	Balancer	Developer
Passive	Analyst	Adaptor	Supporter

White et al. (2016) Politically Intelligent Leader Framework

2 Continuums: Goals + Initiative

Self-Interest	Blended-Interests	Organizational

Goal Allegiance Continuum

Passive	Engaged	Assertive

Initiative Continuum

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Political Style Definitions

The following section defines terms as they are used in this study. These terms were collaboratively developed by a team of peer researchers studying political styles and strategies of superintendents, as noted in the Preface. The definitions are organized around the nine political styles matrix based on initiative and interest. The styles are listed as self-interest, blended interests and organizational interest for each level of initiative: passive, engaged and assertive.

Passive Political Styles

Analyst. Analysts are passive and oriented toward self-interest over organizational interest. They are primarily focused on tasks over relationships and will seek evidence, proof, and detailed analysis before risking a change (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Boulgarides & Cohen, 2001; DeLuca, 1999; Rowe & Boulgarides, 1992; White et al., 2016).

Adaptor. Adaptors are pragmatists who generally support organizational changes and team decisions, provided they do not perceive personal risk. An adaptor is one who

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presents a passive, cooperative political style balanced between self-interest and

organizational interests. (Bobic, Davis, & Cunningham, 1999; Church & Waclawski,

1998; Kirton, 1976; White et al., 2016).

Supporter. Supporters are characterized as risk-averse, selfless, and passive devotees,

backers, or advocates of the organization's visions and goals. Supporters seek harmony

and hesitate to take sides, though make decisions and provide resources that align with

the organization's goals (CSBA, 2016; DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

Moderately Engaged Political Styles

Planner. Planners demonstrate modest initiative in political ventures and are typically

focused on self-interests rather than organizational interests. Planners gather and analyze

data for potential personal risks, putting constraints on decision making. (Hackman,

2002; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; White et al., 2016).

Balancer. Balancers blend self and organizational interests. Focused on the prevention

of disequilibrium, balancers use their knowledge of the organization's culture to

diplomatically shift their support, when needed to maintain stability, harmony, and

equanimity.   (Sheehan, 1989; White et al., 2016).

Developer. Developers work behind the scenes to coach or challenge others to build

skills that can positively advance organizational interests to which they are fully

committed. Developers exhibit a high level of self-awareness of their own knowledge and skill (DeLuca, 1999; Goleman, 2000; Rath, 2007; White et al., 2016).

Assertive Political Styles

Challenger. Challengers are characterized by self-interest, assertive behavior and confidence in their own vision, ideas, and goals, which inspires a strong desire to lead and make decisions quickly. Challengers see themselves as movers and shakers, efficient, politically strategic, aggressive, and willing to confront the views of others in an attempt to influence outcomes (DeLuca, 1999; Jasper, 1999; Meyer, Jenness, & Ingram, 2005; Polletta, 2004; White, et al., 2016).

Arranger. Arrangers use a political style in which they are assertive in pursuing their goals that are a blend of both organizational priorities and their own self-interests.   They build a power base by connecting with many people. Arrangers will take risks to advance their goals and are strategic in combining resources (DeLuca, 1999; Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014; White et al., 2016).

Strategist. Strategists are visionary, open to new ideas, and collaborative. They empower others and model the organization's values. Supporting organizational interests over self-interests, they strategically use a variety of approaches to propose new initiatives, engage diverse stakeholders, elicit commitment and make purposeful decisions (DeLuca, 1999; Dergel, 2014; White, et al., 2016).

APPENDIX D

Field Test Survey Validation Feedback

As a doctoral student and researcher at Brandman University your assistance is so appreciate in designing this survey instrument. Your participation is crucial to the development of a valid and reliable instrument.

Below are some questions that I appreciate your answering after completing the survey. Your answers will assist me in refining both the directions and the survey items.

You have been provided with a paper copy of the survey, just to jog your memory if you need it. Thanks so much.

1. How many minutes did it take you to complete the survey, from the moment you opened it on the computer until the time you completed it?_____

2. Did the portion up front that asked you to read the consent information and click the agree box before the survey opened concern you at all? _____
   If so, would you briefly state your concern _____
   _____

3. Was the Introduction sufficiently clear (and not too long) to inform you what the research was about? _____ If not, what would you recommend that would make it better? _____
   _____

4. Were the directions to, and you understood what to do? _____
   If not, would you briefly state the problem _____
   _____

5. Were the brief descriptions of the rating scale choices prior to your completing the items clear, and did they provide sufficient differences among them for you to make a selection? _____ If not, briefly describe the problem_____
   _____

6. As you progressed through the survey in which you gave a rating of # through #, if there were any items that caused you say something like, *"What does this mean?"* Which item(s) were they? Please use the paper copy and mark those that troubled you? Or if not, please check here:____

Thanks so much for your help

APPENDIX E

Field Test Participant Feedback Questions

While conducting the interview you should take notes of their clarification request or comments about not being clear about the question. After you complete the interview ask your field test interviewee the following clarifying questions. **Try not to make it another interview; just have a friendly conversation**. Either script or record their feedback so you can compare with the other two members of your team to develop your feedback report on how to improve the interview questions.

Before the brief post interview discussion, give the interviewee a copy of the interview protocol. If their answers imply that some kind of improvement is necessary, follow up for specificity.

1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe what you do as a leader when working with your team or staff?

2. Did you feel the amount of time for the interview was ok?

3. Were the questions by and large clear or were there places where you were uncertain what was being asked? *If the interview indicates some uncertainty, be sure to find out where in the interview it occurred.*

4. Can you recall any words or terms being asked about during the interview that were confusing?

5. And finally, did I appear comfortable during the interview… (I'm pretty new at this)?

Remember, the key is to use common, conversational language and very user friendly approach. Put that EI to work☺

NOTE: Red font is for your eyes and support info only

APPENDIX F

Field Test Observer Feedback Form

Conducting interviews is a learned skill set based on experience and feedback. Gaining valuable insight about interview skills and affect with the interview will support the collection of data gathering when interviewing actual participant. As the interview observer you should reflect on the questions below after the interview is finished. You should provide independent feedback at the conclusion of the interview field test. As observer you should take notes that will assist the interviewer to be successful in improving their interview skills.

1. How long did the interview take? _____ Did the time seem appropriate?

2. Did the interviewer communicate in a receptive, cordial, and encouraging manner?

3. Was the introduction of the interview friendly with the use of commonly understood language?

4. How did the interviewee feel during the interview?

5. Was the interviewer prepared and relaxed during the interview?

6. Did the interviewee understand the interview questions or did they require clarification?

7. What parts of the interview went smoothly and why?

8. What parts of the interview seem to struggle and why do you think that was the case?

9. Did the interviewer maintain objectivity and not interject value judgements or lead the interviewee?

10. Did the interviewer take opportunity to discuss or request artifacts that support the data gathered from the interview?

11. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how would you suggest changing it?

12. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

APPENDIX G

National Institutes of Health Certificate of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Leisa Winston** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Date of Completion: 05/14/2018

Certification Number: 2817680

NIH National Institutes of Health
Office of Extramural Research

Approval of Research Protocol

BRANDMAN
University

Leisa Winston <lwinston@mail.brandman.edu>

BUIRB Application Approved As Submitted: Leisa Winston

MyBrandman   Fri, Sep 6, 2019 at 11:42 AM
Reply-To: webmaster
To: "lwinston
Cc: "White, Patricia"   , buirb   , "Smith Salazar, Vikki"

Δεαρ Λεισα Ωινστον,

Χονγρατυλατιονσ, ψουρ ΙΡΒ αππλιχατιον το χονδυχτ ρεσεαρχη ηασ βεεν αππροπεδ βψ τηε Βρανδμαν Υνιπερσιτψ Ινστιτυτιοναλ Ρεπιεω Βοαρδ. Τηισ αππροπαλ γραντσ περμισσιον φορ ψου το προχεεδ ωιτη δατα χολλεχτιον φορ ψουρ ρεσεαρχη. Πλεασε κεεπ τηισ εμαιλ φορ ψουρ ρεχορδσ ασ ιτ ωιλλ νεεδ το βε ινχλυδεδ ιν ψουρ ρεσεαρχη αππενδιξ.

Ιφ ανψ ισσυεσ σηουλδ αρισε τηατ αρε περμανεντ το ψουρ ΙΡΒ αππροπαλ, πλεασε χοντατχ τηε ΙΡΒ ιμμεδιατελψ ατ BUIRB≡ Βρανδμαν.εδυ. Ιφ ψου νεεδ το μοδιφψ ψουρ ΒΥΙΡΒ αππλιχατιον φορ ανψ ρεασον, πλεασε φιλλ ουτ τηε Απ πλιχατιον Μοδιφιχατιον Φορμ∀ βεφορε προχεεδινγ ωιτη ψουρ ρεσεαρχη. Τηε Μοδιφιχατιον φορμ χαν βε φουνδ ατ τηε φολλοωινγ λινκ: ηττπσ://ιρβ.βρανδμαν.εδυ/Αππλιχατιονσ/Μοδιφιχατιον.πδφ .

Βεστ ωισηεσ φορ α συχχεσσφυλ χομπλετιον οφ ψουρ στυδψ

Τηανκ ψου,
Doug DeVore, Ed.D.
Προφεσσορ
Οργανιζατιοναλ Λεαδερσηιπ
ΒΥΙΡΒ Χηαιρ
ddevore≡ Βρανδμαν.εδυ
ωωω.βρανδμαν.εδυ

APPENDIX I

Participants' Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs, or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects, or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressure when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Invitation to Participate

Invitation to Participate

DATE:

Dear …

My name is Leisa Winston, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Education at Brandman University. I am participating in a thematic dissertation with nine other researchers. This letter serves as an invitation for you to participate in a research study.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this thematic, mixed-method explanatory sequential study is to understand the political styles of superintendents and school board members. In addition, it is the purpose of this study to identify and explain strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members. Results from this study will be summarized in a doctoral dissertation.

PROCEDURES: If you choose to participate in this study, you will be invited to participate in a questionnaire and a 60 minute, one-on-one interview. I will ask a series of questions designed to allow you to share your experience as an exemplary female superintendent in a unified school district. The survey questions will assess variables of goal allegiance and interest to identify political styles. The interview questions will assess specific strategies used to work with the different political styles of board members. The interviews will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes.

RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no major risks to your participation in this research study. The interview will be at a time and place, which is convenient for you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participating; nonetheless, a potential benefit may be that you will have an opportunity to identify strategies to inform best practice with different political styles of board members. The information for this study is intended to inform researchers and leaders of strategies used by exemplary leaders to work successfully with the different board member political styles.

ANONYMITY: If you agree to participate in the survey and interview, you can be assured that it will be completely confidential. No names will be attached to any notes or records from the survey or interview. All information will remain in locked files, accessible only to the researchers. No employer will have access to the interview information. You will be free to stop the survey or interview and withdraw from the study at any time. You are also encouraged to ask any questions that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. Feel free to contact the principal investigator, Leisa Winston, at xxxxxxxx@xxxx.xxxxxxxx.xxx or by phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx, to answer any questions or concerns you may have. If you have questions, comments, or concerns about the study or your rights as a participant, you may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, 949-341-7641.

Sincerely,

Leisa Winston

APPENDIX K

Sample Interview Support Document

Interview (LW1)
DATE

BOARD MEMBER #1: DEVELOPER

Developer. Developers work behind the scenes to coach or challenge others to build skills that can positively advance organizational interests to which they are fully committed. Developers exhibit a high level of self-awareness of their own knowledge and skill.

BOARD MEMBER #2: BALANCER

Balancer. Balancers blend self and organizational interests. Focused on the prevention of disequilibrium, balancers use their knowledge of the organization's culture to diplomatically shift their support, when needed to maintain stability, harmony, and equanimity.

BOARD MEMBER #3: ANALYST

Analyst. Analysts are passive and oriented toward self-interest over organizational interest. They are primarily focused on tasks over relationships and will seek evidence, proof, and detailed analysis before risking a change.

BOARD MEMBER #4: DEVELOPER

Developer. Developers work behind the scenes to coach or challenge others to build skills that can positively advance organizational interests to which they are fully committed. Developers exhibit a high level of self-awareness of their own knowledge and skill.

BOARD MEMBER #5: CHALLENGER

Challenger. Challengers are characterized by self-interest, assertive behavior and confidence in their own vision, ideas, and goals, which inspires a strong desire to lead and make decisions quickly. Challengers see themselves as movers and shakers, efficient, politically strategic, aggressive, and willing to confront the views of others in an attempt to influence outcomes.

SUPERINTENDENT: STRATEGIST

Strategist. Strategists are visionary, open to new ideas, and collaborative. They empower others and model the organization's values. Supporting organizational

interests over self-interests, they strategically use a variety of approaches to propose new initiatives, engage diverse stakeholders, elicit commitment and make purposeful decisions.

APPENDIX L

Informed Consent Release

Informed Consent

INFORMATION ABOUT: The strategies used by exemplary female superintendents to work effectively with the different political styles of board members.

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Leisa Winston

PURPOSE OF STUDY:
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Leisa Winston, a doctoral candidate from the School of Education at Brandman University. The purpose of the study is to understand the political styles of superintendents as school board members as perceived by superintendents. In addition, it is the purpose of the study to identify and explain the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and will include an interview with the identified student investigator. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete and will be scheduled at a time and location of your convenience. The interview questions will pertain to your perceptions, and your responses will be confidential. Each participant will have an identifying code, and names will not be used in data analysis. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

I understand that:
    A. The researcher will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying code safe-guarded in a locked file drawer or password protected digital file to which the researcher will have sole access.
    B. My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide not to participate in the study, and I can withdraw at any time if I so choose. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.
    C. If I have questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Leisa Winston via email at xxxxxxxx@xxxx.xxxxxxxx.xxx or by phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx; or Dr. Patricia White (Chair) at xxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.
    D. No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent, and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of data is to be changed, I will be so informed and consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research.
    E. If I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, 949-341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Bill of Rights." I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

_____   Date:_____
Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

_____   Date:_____
Signature of Principal Investigator

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Audio Release Form

AUDIO RELEASE FORM

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: A Mixed Method Study: Political Styles and Strategies of Exemplary Female Superintendents

> **BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY**
> **16355 LAGUNA CANYON ROAD**
> **IRVINE, CA. 92618**
>
> **RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR:** Leisa Winston

I authorize Leisa Winston, Brandman University Doctoral Candidate, to record my voice. I give Brandman University and all persons or entities associated with this study, permission or authority to use this recording for activities associated with this research study.

I understand that the recording will be used for transcription services, and the identifier-redacted information obtained during the interview may be published in a journal or presented at meetings and/or presentations. I will be consulted about the use of the audio recordings for any purpose other than those listed above. Additionally, I waive any rights or royalties or other compensation arising from or related to the use of information obtained from the recording.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have completely read and fully understand the above release and agree to the outlined terms. I hereby release any and all claims against any person or organization utilizing this material.

_____   Date:_____
Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

_____   Date:_____
Signature of Principal Investigator—Leisa Winston