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

A Dissertation by

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Irvine, California

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

December 2019

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December 2019

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

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I would like to thank all the school board members for whom I have worked. All of their political styles are aligned to serving the Placer Union High School District, their communities, and most importantly, the students. They have been an inspiration to me. They have also been very supportive of my career and my pursuit of a doctorate of education. Thank you Debbie Brannam, Kathleen Geary, Lynn MacDonald, Ron Oates, David Underwood, and Maureen Ward.

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ABSTRACT

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

by Jeffrey Tooker

Purpose: The purpose of this mixed methods study was to understand the political styles of high school district superintendents and school board members as perceived by superintendents. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to identify the political strategies high school district superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members.

Methodology: Through an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study design, an electronic survey was utilized to collect quantitative data. Following quantitative data collection, in-depth qualitative data was collected through one-on-one interviews with exemplary high school district superintendents in California. The results of the quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews were then analyzed.

Findings: Analysis of data from both the survey and interviews of five exemplary high school district superintendents resulted in several major findings: (a) Superintendents should work in the interest of the organization when working with school board members; (b) Superintendents work with all political styles of school board members; (c) Exemplar superintendents utilize effective communication strategies when working with the various political styles of school board members; (d) Managing the decision making process through various strategies is crucial when working with school board members; and (e) Exemplar superintendents use effective strategies in conflict resolution when working with school board members.

Conclusions: It can be concluded, based on the findings of this study that high school district superintendents must be prepared to work with school board members with various political styles. Further, superintendents must learn a variety of effective strategies to work with all nine political styles.

Recommendations: It is recommended a future study collect data from superintendents and board members to add to the breadth and depth of the data collected. A better narrative understanding of the perspective of board members would add powerful information to the existing framework.

PREFACE

The framework for this dissertation is found in the book *The Politically Intelligent Leader* (White, Harvey & Fox, 2016). Ten peer researchers working with two Brandman University faculty advisers, applied the political style matrix used in *The Politically Intelligent Leader* to school superintendents and school board members. The intent was to identify the political styles of school board members and effective strategies superintendents use in working with the various styles. There is a lack of resources and support for superintendents who need to be politically savvy in order to be successful in the increasingly complex arena of public education.

“Peer researchers” refers to the other researchers and myself who conducted this thematic study. My fellow peer researchers and I studied exemplar superintendents in public education. While I focused my research on exemplary high school district superintendents, other peer researchers studied exemplary superintendents for other types school districts including: suburban unified, small rural, Latino superintendents, small suburban southern California, female suburban unified, Regional Occupation Program, and county offices of education.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Politics have been discussed and analyzed since ancient Greece. From Socrates to Plato, Marx to Mills, political thought and theories have been used to make sense of how human beings interact with each other (Tucker, 1995). Politics provides structures and systems that bring order to groups of people living within the same society (Burns, 1978; Machiavelli, 1513; Tucker, 1995). Politics transcends all organizations and agencies including the public school system.

Public education is not immune to politics. In a democratic society, public education is pinned to politics in nearly everything (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001). External factors often attempt to influence public schools such as interest groups, local elections and community activists. This, in turn, impacts the leaders of public schools adding to the complexity of the job. Both micro-politics and macro-politics influence the work of public school superintendents (L. Bjork & Blase, 2009). Crucial to the success of superintendents is their ability to work collaboratively with their school board. However, superintendents often lack the training and understanding of how to navigate the politics of the school board. Being politically intelligent is critical as superintendents work with their governing bodies (DeLuca, 1999; White, Harvey, & Fox, 2016).

A politically intelligent leader leads their organization while considering the wants, needs, values, motivations, and emotions of the internal and external communities (White et al., 2016). For a superintendent, no group is more important to lead than a school board. School board members have different reasons for wanting to serve on a board and come to the position with different levels of commitment to the school district (White et al., 2016). A gap in research shows that there is a lack of literature exploring

the political sophistication of superintendents, and their ability to use political strategies necessary to work with their school boards effectively (Alemán, 2002; Peterson & Short, 2001).

Background

History of Politics

Political thought began more than 2,500 years ago. In ancient Greece, philosophers Socrates and Plato were among the first to discuss politics and its purpose (Tucker, 1995). Through their dialogues, politics was defined as the pursuit and exercise of power in the interest of those who pursue and exercise it (Tucker, 1995). The understanding and application of politics evolved over time. In ancient Athenian cities, natural law was defended by the leaders. It stated that those with greater power will impose their will on the weak in order to rule the populace. Socrates believed politics to be a form of art and a way to improve the soul; through the art of persuasions, known as rhetoric, a statesman will do what is good for men. Additionally, Plato considered politics the art of giving direction to an entire community to manage common affairs with the goal of improving all of their souls. Subsequently other social philosophers developed other schools of thought. Machiavelli introduced the concept of politics as power. Karl Marx added the politics of class-struggle. C. Wright Mills developed elite theory (Tucker, 1995).

Among other theorist were Machiavelli and Hobbes who believed the importance of politics was in the security it provided for societies (Burns, 1978; Machiavelli, 1513). Additionally, Aristotle and John Locke asserted the importance of politics was that it allowed for diversity and freedom. Moreover, Plato and Rousseau saw the

importance of politics that is built community, unity, and vision (Burns, 1978; Tucker, 1995). Ultimately, what ties these theories together is that politics permeate all societies and organizations and directly impacts the role of the leader (DeLuca, 1999; Tucker, 1995; White et al., 2016).

Leadership and Politics

Plato equated politics with leadership (Tucker, 1995). Whereas in the 20th century, Max Weber defined explained politics as the leadership of a human community (Weber, 2003). In contrast, James Burns explains leadership as a process of human interactions where individuals attempt to excerpt influence over others. Leaders will induce followers to achieve the same goals to satisfy the collective wants and needs of the society. To build on political leadership, Lester Seligman identified four types of relationships to a leader: (a) leading within particular structures, (b) relations with leaders of other structures, (c) relations between leaders and followers with in the same structure, and (d) relations between leaders and followers from other structures (Seligman, 1950). In summary, White, Harvey, and Fox (2016) define politics as the strategies, activities, and tactics leaders use to bring others to their point of view. Politics permeate all organizations and are rooted in theoretical foundation.

Theoretical Foundations

Elite theory. Elite theory was explained by Mills (1956) in his book *The Power Elite*. The focus of this theory is how the elite use their positions of power to influence others through the structure of organizations and society. Higley, Burton, and Field (1990) builds on this definition by stating that elite theory is a macro theory that focuses on small numbers of people who impact political change within an organization. Mills

further explains the dichotomy between power and powerlessness, and he conceives of all political problems as intellectual problems. Likewise, Tucker (1995) asserts that, according to elite theory, a separation exists between a small contingency of those who hold a majority of power, and the majority who become submissive to them because of coercion. Mill's work had significant influence over the course of American social thought (as cited in Gillam, 1975). Other political scientists built on Mill's work. Elite theory was modernized when other researchers recognized it as the theory that best explains the flow of modern political history and contemporary events (Gillam, 1975).

Pluralist theory. Elite theory evolved to pluralism also known as the ideal of American politics (Gunnell, 1969). Unlike elite theory which focus on power within a group, pluralist theory examines the balance of power between different groups within a society. Numerous researchers use pluralist theory to explain the how groups such as religious, economic, ethnic, and geographical all overlap each other and create a system of balance (Gunnell, 1996; O'Connell, 1969; Polsby, 1985). Although each group has specific sets of values and beliefs, there are shared values that are broad and allows disagreement to happen within the same system. Furthermore, pluralist theory examines the politics of conflict and compromise between various groups that leads to solutions (Gunnell, 1996; O'Connell, 1969; Polsby, 1985).

Rational choice theory. Unlike pluralist theory, rational choice theory's primary focus is economics (Ulen, 1999). This theory is based on the assumption that people make prudent and logical decisions. Ulen (1999) further explains rational choice theory that consumers have preferences between commodities and seek to maximize the usefulness that they derive from those preferences. The motivation behind these

decisions is to attain the highest amount of personal benefit and satisfaction while leveraging limited resources such as income (Ulen, 1999). When choices are presented to an individual, they will take the option that is in their self-interest. Many mainstream economic theories are based on rational choice theory (Goode, 1994; Hindess, 1984; Nee, 1994; Petracca, 1991).

Normative and empirical theory. Whereas the primary focus of rational choice theory is economics, political theorists use the relationship of normative and empirical thinking to analyze societal phenomena (Q. Skinner, 1978). Empirical questions will ask what happened and why? Normative questions will ask what should have happened (Q. Skinner, 1978). Using empirical questions, social scientists will compete over their interpretations of past societal events. Normative theorists will analyze the values systems and moral judgements of a society within the context of historical events (Morrell, 1999; Q. Skinner, 1978, 2006; Taylor, 1994). Stears (2005) emphasizes that the two theories work together. The absence of one or the other will fall short of a full examination of the event being studied (Stears, 2005).

Social inequity theory. Unlike the other political theories, social inequity theory is what can lead to revolutions. Social inequality is the existence of unequal opportunities and rewards for different social positions or statuses within a group or society (Hall, 1958). Social inequity is what led to the writings of Karl Marx (Tucker, 1995). Marx' class-struggle doctrine describes the state's coercive use of power to benefit the few. This socioeconomic structure is what has led to many rebellions. Although different in their methods, reform leaders include Vladimir Lenin, Gandhi, and Ayatollah Khomeini (Tucker, 1995).

Political frames. The political frame describes an organization that competes within their group for limited resources and time. It is made up of assorted individuals with several different and opposing beliefs, interests, and perceptions of the group and its current standing. These varied views and needs create a desire for power in order to satisfy conflicts (Keren, 2001). Using political framing, leaders build their agenda to influence others as to how decisions should be made. It is also how political groups will build their platform of what they believe the priorities of a society should be (DeLuca, 1999; Keren, 2001; White et al., 2016).

Theoretical Framework

There are multiple political frameworks with the purpose of creating a typology of the various types of board members. According to White et al. (2016), understanding of these typologies could be a useful tool to improve a superintendent's political intelligence. One political framework is the political style grid developed by DeLuca (1999). This framework identifies nine political styles based on two continuums. One continuum is politics which can be viewed as negative, neutral or positive. The other continuum is the action orientation where an individual either initiates, predicts or responds to the politics within an organization (DeLuca, 1999).

A different framework from DeLuca's is the political style matrix. White et al. (2016) created this matrix to identify the political styles of board members based on continuums of goal allegiance and political initiative. Like DeLuca, this framework identifies nine political styles; however, the continuums are quite different. The goal allegiance continuum identifies the motivation behind the goals of an organization. The motivation ranges from self-interests to organizational interests. The other continuum is

level of political initiative. This continuum varies from passive to moderately engage to assertive (White et al., 2016). Research shows that the level of political intelligence for superintendents will improve if they have a level of understanding of frameworks such as these (Caruso, 2004; DeLuca, 2002; Peterson & Short, 2001; White et al., 2016).

Politics and public education. Public education is not immune to politics. In a democratic society, public education is pinned to politics in nearly everything (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001). Trying to influence public schools are interest groups, local elections, and community activists. The superintendency was a product of the industrial revolution. Numerous researchers agree that at the onset, superintendents were at the nexus of political interactions. Unlike the first half of the 19th century when rural farming created the original role of the schoolmaster, the American economy evolved and shaped the public schools (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). Public education has become very political with elected officials at the state and federal levels adopting new reform legislation (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009). This phenomenon also can be seen at the local level and further signifies the importance of school district governance.

In order to maintain a democratic form of government, there must be public participation in defining the problems of the community. Governments create agencies to support the values and goals of a society. From time to time problems occur in diverse communities where new policies must be designed, implemented, and monitored. The department of education is one such agency (Tucker, 1995). At a more micro level, the system of local school districts governed by an elected board of citizens was designed and implemented across America (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009; T. J. Kowalski, 2013).

Additionally, McCarty and Ramsey (1971) observed the politics of the school board is reflected by the politics of the community they represent. The more political the community, the more political the school board. McCarty and Ramsey identified four types of community political structures (dominated, factional, status congruent, and sanctioned), and assert the superintendent will need to work with their board of education to match the level of politics.

Politics of the Superintendent and School Board

Citizen oversight of local government is paramount to maintain democracy in America (Campbell & Greene, 1994). For nearly 100 years, citizens representing communities are elected to have oversight of their public schools (Beckham & Wills, 2019). Research has affirmed the significant impact the role of the school board has in regards to student achievement and making policy (Waters & Marzano, 2006). School boards are the leaders of local school systems, and these board members govern school systems that have become increasingly complex. Even though the role of the school board seems clearly defined, there is much confusion as to the scope of their duties (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009; Campbell & Greene, 1994; T. J. Kowalski, 2013).

School board members are a significant group of people who hire and evaluates the superintendent. A superintendent's survival depends on being politically intelligent with their governing body (White et al., 2016). School board members have different motivations for being a board member and different levels of engagement. There are multiple political styles of school board members. This makes the political intelligence of the superintendent that much more important as they navigate the varying styles of their school board members (White et al., 2016). Research makes it clear that

superintendents must not disregard when working with school board members the need to operate politically and should adopt different leadership styles when needed (Alemán, 2002).

The relationship of the superintendent and school board is critical to the operation of a school district (Peterson & Short, 2001). The school board is responsible for the hiring, firing and accountability of the superintendent (Campbell & Greene, 1994). Often the relationship between the school board and superintendent becomes strained. One reason for this strained relationship is a result of confusion between the roles of the school board and superintendent, motivation for serving on the board, and varying levels of engagement of individual board members (Mountford, 2004; White et al., 2016).

The Superintendent and Effective Leadership

During the past several decades, superintendent leadership has emerged an important element to school reform and success. The superintendent must contend with external politics while managing the interests of the internal community (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009). The effective leadership of a superintendent not only includes building and sustaining relationships with others, it also depends on the ability to see the need for change and being prepared to lead it (Anderson, 2001; McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnston, 2008). Effective leadership by superintendents has also been shown to have a positive influence on student achievement. Those superintendents who can effectively articulate district goals with the school board and monitor results tend to see higher student achievement results (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Interestingly, research shows that the longevity of the superintendent is linked to improved student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

Political Strategies Used by Superintendents

While research shows that leaders who do better in their careers when they are politically savvy, most leaders do not have the skill or understanding of how to use political strategies (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; White et al., 2016). There is limited support in properly training educators to be superintendents. An educator can be promoted from teacher to various administrative roles, and become a superintendent with virtually no understanding of the relationship with the board members (Russell, 2014).

Superintendents need to know how to build harmonious relationships with the school board. The relationship between the superintendent and school board members is vital in determining the continued employment of the superintendent (Byrd, Drews, & Johnson, 2006). A strategy that can help with superintendent-board relations is having a shared vision. In order to make real progress the school board and superintendent need a shared vision to make sure programs and activities are aligned (Davis & Diane, 1994). Having a shared vision leads to common board goals. Higher achieving school districts have clearly articulated goals that are set and supported by both the board and superintendent (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Another strategy is having a clear understanding of the roles of the school board and the superintendent. Role clarity can prevent future political issues and helps create positive relationships between the board and superintendent (Russell, 2014). One final strategy that superintendents need to be successful is having interpersonal skills. A superintendent will likely be more successful if they can use interpersonal skills to communicate issues facing the school district and decision that have been made (Peterson & Short, 2001). Unfortunately, most school district leaders

lack these political strategies to work with their trustees and special interest groups (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001).

Statement of the Research Problem

There is substantial evidence that documents the political influences embedded in communities that have an impact on managing school districts (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001). Politics are the intentional and unintentional activities one uses to lead people to a particular point of view (White et al., 2016). Politics also can refer to decisions about the allocation of resources within an organization or society (L. Bjork & Blase, 2009; Tucker, 1995). The job of the superintendent is influenced by a myriad of political situations (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Caruso, 2004; Mountford, 2004). The political landscape surrounding superintendents can have a negative impact. One study reports that 80% of superintendents feel frustrated with the politics of the job (Byrd et al., 2006). There are several political forces that influence politics. Forces can include employee unions, federal regulations, local government, and scarce resources. Although it is well documented that special interest groups influence the role of the superintendent, school leaders may not be prepared for such a political role (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001).

Considering the politics that impact schools, the role of the superintendent is critical to the organization's success. There is a correlation between the length of a superintendent's time of service to an organization and student achievement (Russell, 2014; Waters & Marzano, 2006). The longer the tenure of the superintendent the more positive influence on student achievement. Despite knowing this, the average tenure for a superintendent is very low. The national average tenure of a superintendent is 2.5 years (Grissom & Andersen, 2012; T. J. Kowalski, McCord, Petersen, Young & Ellerson,

2010; Russell, 2014). A reason often cited for this phenomenon is the conflict that can arise between a superintendent and their school board. There is a significant amount of documentation that illustrates superintendent and board conflict and superintendents use of ineffective apolitical strategies with their boards that further leads to the high superintendent turnover rate (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Peterson & Short, 2001; Russell, 2014). Alemán (2002) asserts the effectiveness of a superintendent depends on their political sophistication and expertise. The body of research on this topic is clear that superintendents who can effectively use political intelligence to leverage power and influence can often maintain longevity in the same school district more than those who do not (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Peterson & Short, 2001; Russell, 2014; White et al., 2016).

The lack of superintendents' political sophistication has been understudied leaving a gap in the research (Alemán, 2002; Grissom & Andersen, 2012; White et al., 2016). There is an urgent need to understand the political styles of school board members as perceived by superintendents to assist them in effectively navigating the politics within their organization, reduce conflict, decrease turnover and support higher student achievement outcomes (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Peterson & Short, 2001; Russell, 2014). In addition, it is critical to identify the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members so current and future superintendents may gain insight and be trained on the most effective strategies. Research makes it clear that superintendents must not disregard the need to operate politically and must develop skills in the use of multiple political styles to lead successfully with board members who have different governance approaches (Alemán, 2002; White et al., 2016)

Purpose Statement

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

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

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

Significance of the Problem

Considering the politics that impact schools, the role of the superintendent is critical to the organization's success. There is a correlation between the length of a superintendent's time of service to an organization and student achievement (Russell, 2014; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Longer tenure of the superintendent has a positive influence on student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Despite knowing this, the average tenure for a superintendent is very low. The national average tenure of a superintendent is 2.5 years (Grissom & Andersen, 2012; T. J. Kowalski et al., 2010; Russell, 2014). A reason for this short superintendent tenure with the same school district is the conflict that can happen between a superintendent and her or his board of trustees. There is a significant amount of documentation that illustrates superintendent

and board conflict; however, superintendents use apolitical strategies with their boards that lead to the high superintendent turnover rate (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Peterson & Short, 2001; Russell, 2014). The effectiveness of a superintendent depends on their political sophistication and expertise (Alemán, 2002). The body of research on this topic concludes that the superintendent who can use political intelligence to leverage power and influence can maintain longevity.

In addition to the gap in research about the politics of superintendents, their success or failure of superintendents is not well studied (Byrd et al., 2006; Glass et al., 2000). Little quantitative research exists detailing the characteristics of successful superintendents (Byrd et al., 2006; Glass et al., 2000). The political sophistication of superintendents has been understudied and there is a lack of educational leadership literature regarding the political sophistication of school superintendents (Alemán, 2002).

The relationship between a superintendent and board is significant because it impacts not only every employee within the organization, it impacts the students, families and every community nationwide (Byrd et al., 2006; Peterson & Short, 2001). It is clear that the relationship between school boards and superintendents is critical for the health of a school district yet more studies in his area are lacking (Byrd et al., 2006; Waters & Marzano, 2006). The results of the study provide critical information and strategies that can help with the professional growth of superintendents and board members. The results also fill a need for professional support that could be used by organizations such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and the California School Boards Association (CSBA).

While extensive research shows that leaders who do better in their careers are politically savvy, too many superintendents do not have the skill or understanding to use political strategies (White et al., 2016). The political sophistication of superintendents has been understudied which has resulted in a significant research gap (Alemán, 2002; Grissom & Andersen, 2012). There is an urgent need to understand the political styles of school board members as perceived by superintendents (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Peterson & Short, 2001; Russell, 2014). In addition, it is critical to identify the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members. Research makes it clear that superintendents must not disregard the need to operate politically and should adopt different leadership styles (Alemán, 2002).

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 interested. 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; A. J. 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 (California School Boards Association [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 (J. R. Hackman, 2002; J. R. 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).

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 (Duke, 1976; Fairholm, 2009; MacMillan Readers, 2006-2010; 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; J. 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 (L. Bolman & Deal, 2017; Brierton, Graham, Tomal, & Wilhite, 2016; DeLuca, 1999; Duffy, 2006; White et al., 2016).

Political strategy. Political strategy is the method one uses to work towards obtaining a desired goal or objective. Political strategy may consider both internal and external factors including the views and opinions of others. While effectively navigating issues and situations to obtain the identified objective, a person uses political strategy to adapt their plan of action based on changing dynamics (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. Political style impacts how a leader might view and respond to different circumstances and the opinions of others. Additionally, political system may require varying levels of motivation and initiative (DeLuca, 1999; Grenny, Patterson, Maxfield, McMillan, & Switzler, 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 high school district superintendents in California. An exemplary high school district superintendent in this study is a school district leader who demonstrates at least four of the following eight criteria:

- Evidence of positive governance team relationships.
- A minimum of three years of experience as a superintendent in current district.
- Identified by county superintendent as exemplary in working with board.
- Identified by a panel of experts knowledgeable of the work of superintendents.
- Received recognition as an exemplary superintendent by a professional organization such as ACSA.
- Recognition by their peers.
- Membership in professional associations in their field.
- Participated in CSBA Masters in Governance training or other governance training with at least one board member.

Overview of the Study

Chapter I stated the purpose for this dissertation that investigated the political factors that influence the success of public school superintendents. Additionally, Chapter I set the background, the problem, the purpose, and research questions of this study. Chapter II arranges the review of the literature and extends on the breadth of study related to the field of study presented in the background in Chapter I. Chapter III outlines the methodology of the study that describes the research design, population, sample, and data collection process. Chapter IV presents the qualitative and quantitative data and findings gathered through the process of the study. Finally, Chapter V presents the conclusions, implications, and recommendations provided from the obtained data or findings.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Politics have been thought about, discussed and analyzed since ancient Greece. From Socrates to Plato, and Karl Marx to C. Wright Mills, political thought and theories have been used to make sense of how human beings interact with each other (Tucker, 1995). Most descriptions of politics pertain to people seeking out power in the interest of oneself (Tucker, 1995). Researchers agree the importance of politics. Politics provides structures and systems that bring order to groups of people living within the same society (Burns, 1978; Machiavelli, 1513; Tucker, 1995). Politics transcends all organizations and agencies including the public school system.

Politics are part of all public agencies and educational systems are not immune. Public education is pinned to politics in nearly everything (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001). External political factors often attempt to influence public schools such as interest groups, local elections and community activists. This, in turn, impacts the leaders of public schools adding to the complexity of the job. Both micro-politics and macro-politics influence the work of public school superintendents (L. Bjork & Blase, 2009). Additionally, elected school boards can be pressured by the politics of special interest groups, which can negatively impact effective leadership to improve student outcomes (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001).

Crucial to the success of superintendents is their ability to work collaboratively and be politically intelligent as they work with their governing bodies (DeLuca, 2002; White et al., 2016). Despite this, researchers have found superintendents often lack the training and understanding of how to navigate the politics of the school board. A politically intelligent leader leads their organization while considering the wants, needs,

values, motivations, and emotions of the internal and external communities (White et al., 2016). For a superintendent, no group is more important to lead than a school board. School board members have different reasons for wanting to serve on a board and come to the position with different levels of commitment to the school district (White et al., 2016). Superintendents who hope to lead their districts in the pursuit of successful growth need to understand the importance of political awareness and strategizing around local internal and external politics within the organization in order to secure a long tenure (White et al., 2016). It is clear from the body of literature that it is important for superintendents to be politically savvy and intelligent in how they work with their elected school board members. A lack of political savviness and intelligence can negatively impact the operations of an organization and limit the longevity of the sitting superintendent (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). A gap in research shows that there is limited literature exploring the political sophistication of superintendents and their ability to use political strategies necessary to work with their school boards effectively (Alemán, 2002; Peterson & Short, 2001).

Chapter II provides a review of the research literature regarding the history of politics, how school systems are influenced by politics, and political strategies superintendents use to work with the political styles of their school board members. The literature review begins with the history and evolution of politics, the importance of politics, and the influence of politics on leadership. This literature review presents theoretical foundations. The theoretical framework used in this study is called the Political Styles Framework; this framework uses the Goal Allegiance Continuum and the Initiative Continuum (White et al., 2016). The review will then focus on politics and

public education, school district governance and the politics of the superintendent and school board. Finally, this review will investigate the superintendent and effective leadership, political strategies used by superintendents.

History of Politics

Political thought began more than 2,500 years ago. 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 (Fairholm, 2009; Tucker, 1995; White et al., 2016). Politics also involves the use of power to influence or to improve organizational interests (Fairholm, 2009; Tucker, 1995; White et al., 2016).

In ancient Greece, the philosophers Socrates and Plato were among the first to discuss politics and its purpose (Tucker, 1995). Through their dialogues, politics was defined as the pursuit and exercise of power in the interest of those who pursue and exercise it (Tucker, 1995). The understanding and application of politics evolved over time. In ancient Athenian cities, natural law was defended by the leaders. It stated that those with greater power will impose their will on the weak in order to rule the populace (Tucker, 1995). Socrates believed politics to be a form of art and a way to improve the soul; through the art of persuasion, known as rhetoric, a statesman will do what is good for men. Additionally, Plato considered politics the art of giving direction to an entire community to manage common affairs with the goal of improving all of their souls (Tucker, 1995).

Subsequently, other social philosophers developed schools of political thought centered on 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; J. Pfeffer, 1981, 1992). Machiavelli introduced the concept of politics as power. Karl Marx added the politics of class-struggle. Marx explains that society has two parties - the oppressed and oppressors. In the mid-20th century, C. Wright Mills refined power politics by developing elite theory (Tucker, 1995). Elite theory posits that politics and power are based on maximizing wealth, and the political man seeks power with other men of wealth to maintain and accumulate more wealth (Burns, 1978; Tucker, 1995). Power theorists Harold Laswell, describes politics as the study of influence and the influential and likewise, Robert Dahl explains politics as the study of shaping and sharing power (Tucker, 1995).

Additionally, political theorists explained the role between politics and society. Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes believed the importance of politics was in the security it provided for societies (as cited in Burns, 1978; Machiavelli, 1513; Tucker, 1995). Additionally, Aristotle and John Locke asserted the importance of politics was that it allowed for diversity and freedom. Moreover, Plato and Rousseau saw the importance of politics that it built community, unity, and vision (Burns, 1978; Tucker, 1995). Ultimately, what ties these theories together is that politics permeates all societies and organizations and directly impacts the role of the leader (DeLuca, 1999; Tucker, 1995; White et al., 2016).

Over the centuries, political thought evolved and eventually led to research about organizational politics. White et al. (2016) defined organizational politics as “the use of power toward and through other people in an environment inside or outside the organization” (p. 3). DeLuca (1999) goes on to define organizational politics as

employee self-interest and how it impacts the organization. It is important for the leaders of an organization to be able to analyze their organization through a political lens. One such lens is DeLuca's Interest Grid (see Figure 1). The grid illustrates how one's interest will either positively or negatively influence the politics of the organization. If there are positive behaviors of self-interest and organizational interest, it will lead to functional politics. If there are negative behaviors associated with self-interest and organizational interest, it will lead to dysfunctional politics. A politically savvy leader will align the interests of the individuals with those of the organization (DeLuca, 1999).



Figure 1. Interest Grid. Adapted from “Political Savvy: Systemic Approaches to Leadership Behind-the-Scenes,” by J. R. DeLuca, 1999, p. 41. Copyright, 1999 by EBG Publications.

Leadership and Politics

Plato equated politics with leadership (Tucker, 1995). According to Robert Tucker (1995) Plato connected politics and leadership by saying “ideally, politics has a positive function to perform for the community of citizens in which the ruler exercises power” (p. 2). For Plato, the leader was that statesmen who was the shepherd of his

flock. A leader is one who gives direction to a collective's activities. Going a step beyond Plato, Socrates believed the role of the statesman was to establish standards and administer justice (Tucker, 1995). Whereas in the 20th century, social scientist, Max Weber (2003), defined politics as "the leadership of a human community" (p. 310). In contrast, James Burns (1987) explains leadership as a process of human interactions where individuals attempt to exert influence over others. Leaders will induce followers to achieve the same goals to satisfy the collective wants and needs of the society. Robert Tucker explains that political leadership has three tasks: "diagnosing the situation authoritatively, devising a course of action designed to resolve or alleviate the problem, and mobilizing the political community's support for the leader's definition of the situation and their prescribed policy response" (p. 31). Subsequently, White et al. (2016) define politics as the strategies, activities, and tactics leaders use to bring others to their point of view.

Those leaders who avoid organizational politics do so because they believe politics to be morally reprehensible; however, leaders who are politically savvy operate ethically to influence others (DeLuca, 1999). Ethics are the moral principles of right and wrong, based on shared or agreed upon values, beliefs, and norms, which guide a leader's behavior (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Brierton et al., 2016; DeLuca, 1999; Duffy, 2006; White et al., 2016).

DeLuca (1999) illustrates political influence with an Influence Continuum (see Figure 2). To influence others, leaders will use tactics that are manipulative, ethical or somewhere in between. Leaders who are politically savvy work on the ethical influence end of the continuum.

Manipulation

Ethical

Figure 2. Influence Continuum. Adapted from “Political Savvy: Systemic Approaches to Leadership Behind the Scenes,” by J. R. DeLuca, 1999, p. 31. Copyright 1999 by EBG Publications.

Theoretical Foundations

In this section, the researcher reviews foundational theories that influence the political climate of public education. Under the umbrella of politics, there are many theoretical theories. In order to better understand politics and how it pertains to this study, the researcher has listed and explained several political theories. While no one theory on its own will offer complete clarity and understanding for this study, these theories together provide the context to better understand the political arena of education.

Elite theory. Elite theory was explained by C. Wright Mills (1956) in his book *The Power Elite*. The focus of this theory is how the elite use their positions of power to influence others through the structure of organizations and society. Higley et al. (1990) builds on this definition by stating that elite theory is a macro theory that focuses on small numbers of people who impact political change within an organization. Mills further explains the dichotomy between power and powerlessness, and he conceives of all political problems as intellectual problems. Likewise, Tucker (1995) asserts that, according to elite theory, a separation exists between a small contingency of those who hold a majority of power, and the majority who become submissive to them because of coercion. Mill’s work had significant influence over the course of American social thought (Gillam, 1975). Other political scientists built on C. Wright Mill’s work. Elite

theory was modernized when other researchers recognized it as the theory that best explains the flow of modern political history and contemporary events (Gillam, 1975).

Pluralist theory. Elite theory evolved to pluralism also known as the ideal of American politics (Gunnell, 1969). Unlike elite theory, which focuses on power within a group, pluralist theory examines the balance of power between different groups within a society. Numerous researchers use pluralist theory to explain the how groups such as religious, economic, ethnic, and geographical all overlap each other and create a system of balance (Gunnell, 1996; O'Connell, 1969; Polsby, 1985). Although each group has specific sets of values and beliefs, there are shared values that are broad and allows disagreement to happen within the same system. Furthermore, pluralist theory examines the politics of conflict and compromise between various groups that leads to solutions (Gunnell, 1996; O'Connell, 1969; Polsby, 1985).

Rational choice theory. Unlike pluralist theory, rational choice theory's primary focus is economics (Ulen, 1999). This theory is based on the assumption that people make prudent and logical decisions. Ulen (1999) further explains rational choice theory that consumers have preferences between commodities and seek to maximize the usefulness that they derive from those preferences. The motivation behind these decisions is to attain the highest amount of personal benefit and satisfaction while leveraging limited resources such as income (Ulen, 1999). When choices are presented to an individual, they will take the option that is in their self-interest. Many mainstream economic theories are based on rational choice theory (Goode, 1997; Hindess, 1984; Nee, 1994; Petracca, 1991).

Normative and empirical theory. Whereas the primary focus of rational choice theory is economics, political theorists use the relationship of normative and empirical thinking to analyze societal phenomena (Q. Skinner, 1978). Empirical questions will ask what happened and why? Normative questions will ask what should have happened (Q. Skinner, 1978). Using empirical questions, social scientists will compete over their interpretations of past societal events. Normative theorists will analyze the values systems and moral judgements of a society within the context of historical events (Morrell, 1999; Q. Skinner, 1978, 2006; Taylor, 1994). Marc Stears (2005) emphasizes that the two theories work together. The absence of one or the other will fall short of a full examination of the event being studied (Stears, 2005).

Social inequity theory. Unlike the other political theories, social inequity theories can lead to revolutions. Social inequality is the existence of unequal opportunities and rewards for different social positions or statuses within a group or society (Hall, 1958). Social inequity is what led to the writings of Karl Marx (Tucker, 1995). Marx' class-struggle doctrine describes the state's coercive use of power to benefit the few. This socioeconomic structure is what has led to many rebellions. Although different in their methods, reform leaders include Vladimir Lenin, Gandhi, and Ayatollah Khomeini (Tucker, 1995).

Political frames. The political frames describe an organization that competes within their group for limited resources and time. It is made up of assorted individuals with several different and opposing beliefs, interests, and perceptions of the group and its current standing (Blase, 1991). This is also known as micro politics. Micro politics is the way people use power to influence others by competing for scarce resources and

power (Blase, 1991; Lindle, 1999). These varied views and needs create a desire for power in order to satisfy conflicts (Keren, 2001). Using political framing, leaders will build their agenda to influence others as to how decisions should be made. It is also how political groups will build their platform of what they believe the priorities of a society should be (Keren, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), by placing research into a general conceptual framework, a rationale can be provided for the research questions.

Additionally, Grant and Osanloo (2014) claim the

theoretical framework is the ‘blueprint’ for the entire dissertation inquiry. It serves as the guide on which to build and support your study, and also provides the structure to define how you will philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole. (p. 13)

Grant and Osanloo (2014) continue to say

the theoretical framework consists of the selected theory (or theories) that undergirds your thinking with regards to how you understand and plan to research your topic, as well as the concepts and definitions from that theory that are relevant to your topic. (p. 13)

There are multiple political frameworks with the purpose of creating a typology of the various political styles of people within an organization. Political style is the way one’s values, character, and beliefs are manifested into actions and behaviors to influence others and achieve desired outcomes (White et al., 2016). 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 vs 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). Understanding these typologies could be a useful tool to improve the political intelligence of the leadership of an organization (White et al., 2016). Additionally, before one can improve their political savvy, it is essential for them to have an awareness of their own political style and the styles of others around them (DeLuca, 1999).

Political Style Grid

One such political framework is the political style grid (see Figure 3) developed by DeLuca (1999). This framework identifies nine political styles based on two continuums. One continuum is how one views politics, which can be viewed as negative, neutral or positive. The other continuum is the action orientation where an individual either initiates, predicts or responds to the politics within an organization (DeLuca, 1999).

		Politics viewed as...		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Action orientation	Initiates	Machiavellian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manipulator, sometimes created by context • looks at the number 1 • Win/lose 	Responsible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Obligation (no desire) to protect the good</i> • comes with the scope • Often reaction against Machiavellian 	Leader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play maker • Impact player • Win/win • Creativity • Low key
	Predicts	Protector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filer builder (emails, files, ...) • defensive towards new ideas, bureaucratic 	Speculator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe • Grapeviner (especially with reorganizations) • Predicts who is going to get what, which project is going to be launched 	Advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor in politics • Often senior who help juniors • Look for win/win
	Responds	Cynic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I told you so..." • Gossip • Have lost many tomes (lose/win) • Don't take risks 	Fatalist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Que sera sera • Do your job and hope for the best • A lot of technical managers 	Spectator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fan, soap opera • encourager, supports players (goes for a drink after win or los)

Figure 3. The Political Style Grid. Adapted from “Political Savvy: Systemic Approaches to Leadership Behind-the-Scenes,” by J. R. DeLuca, 1999, p. 11. Copyright 1999 by EBG Publications.

One’s political style is developed from experiences early in their career (DeLuca, 1999). DeLuca (1999) himself recognizes that there are limitations to this political style grid. While it is important for one to identify their own political style, these nine categories are useful but artificial, for they are intended to be used as guides and not as reality (DeLuca, 1999). Political styles can be flexible and change in various circumstances (DeLuca, 1999).

Political Style Matrix

Another framework is the political style matrix. White et al. (2016) created this matrix to identify political styles based on continuums of goal allegiance and political

initiative. White et al. explains that one's "political style is composed of a set of values, preferences, and priorities that are reflected in your behaviors and attitudes" (p. 68).

Similar to DeLuca's political style grid, this framework identifies nine political styles; however, the continuums are quite different. White et al. (2016) makes the case that for leaders in the education and public sector, goal allegiance is a strong determinant of political style. The goal allegiance continuum identifies the motivation behind the goals of an organization. Goal allegiance is the level of commitment toward advancing goals. The motivation ranges from self-interests to organizational interests. The other continuum is level of political initiative. This continuum varies from passive to moderately engage to assertive (White et al., 2016) (see Figure 4). Research shows that the level of political intelligence for the leaders of an organization will improve if they have a level of understanding of frameworks such as these (Caruso, 2004; DeLuca, 2002; Peterson & Short, 2001; White et al., 2016). According to White et al. a "politically intelligent leader is one who uses a moral compass to lead the organization in the right direction while considering the wants, needs, values, motivation, and emotion of followers and stakeholders" (p. 3).

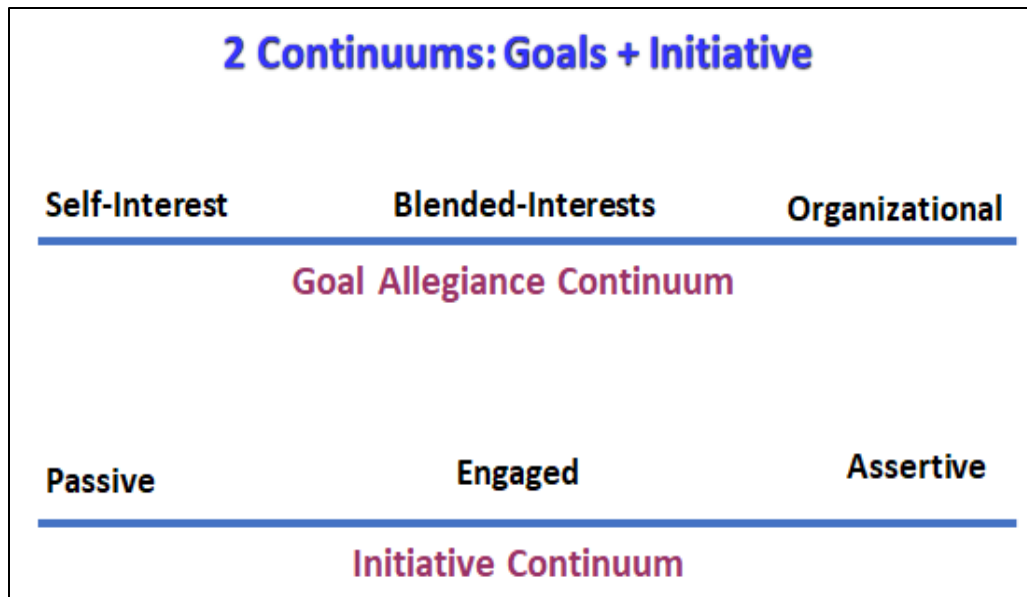


Figure 4. Two Continuums: Goals + Initiative. Adapted from “The Politically Intelligent Leader: Dealing with the Dilemmas of a High-Stakes Educational Environment,” by P. C. White, T. R. Harvey, and S. L. Fox, 2016, p. 69.

Political Style Definitions and Strategies

The following section defines the nine political styles 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 the levels of initiative and interest. The styles are determined by where the goal and initiative meet on the grid. The nine political styles fall under the headings of (a) passive political style, (b) engaged political style, and (c) assertive political style. Also included are strategies used when working with people who have the different political styles (see Figure 5).

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

Figure 5. Nine Political Styles. Adapted from “The Politically Intelligent Leader: Dealing with the Dilemmas of a High-Stakes Educational Environment,” by P. C. White, T. R. Harvey, and S. L. Fox, 2016, p. 71.

Passive Political Styles

The three passive political styles are found at the intersection of the passive political initiative spectrum with all three goal allegiances.

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 (L. G. Bolman & Deal, 1991; Boulgarides & Cohen, 2001; DeLuca, 1999; A. J. Rowe & Boulgarides, 1992; White et al., 2016). Analysts will avoid risk in their behavior and are unlikely to support change. A strategy in working with analysts include provide providing them with answers and examples of the proposed change. An analyst may also want to talk with others who have experienced specific change (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 et al., 1999; Church & Waclawski, 1998; Kirton, 1976; White et al., 2016). Adaptors will support change but will need support, training, and recognition of their work (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). Supporters work best when they have a relationship with their leader in which trust has been established. They appreciate clear messages that show how a change will benefit the organization (White et al., 2016).

Moderately Engaged Political Styles

The three moderately engaged political styles are found at the intersection of the engaged political initiative spectrum with all three goal allegiances.

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 (J. R. Hackman, 2002; J. R. Hackman & Wageman, 2005; White et al., 2016). Because planners like to ask a lot of questions, leaders need to be available to have question and answers sessions. Planners pay attention to detail and appreciate leaders who provide data and information (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). Balancers understand culture and will work well with people who are perceived to be part of the same networks (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). Developers are true believers in the organization's goals and value trustworthy people. It is important to have developers on brainstorming committees and to get their input on other committee members, agendas, and presentations (White et al., 2016).

Assertive Political Styles

The three assertive political styles are found at the intersection of the assertive political initiative spectrum with all three goal allegiances.

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 et al., 2005; Polletta, 2004; White et al., 2016). Challengers want to be aligned to the decision makers. Leaders should understand a challenger's agenda, for it will help the leader to be better prepared when presenting ideas for change (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 et al., 2014; White et al., 2016). Arrangers appreciate working with likeminded people who are problem solvers and creative thinkers (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). Strategists can be powerful allies to a leader and should be allowed to contribute to tactical solutions (White et al., 2016).

Politics and Public Education

In a democratic society, public education is pinned to politics in nearly everything (L. Bjork & Lindle 2001). Interest groups, local elections, and community activists often try to influence public schools. The superintendency and public schools as we know them were a product of the industrial revolution. Numerous researchers agree that at the onset, superintendents were at the nexus of political interactions (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Glass et al., 2000; T. J. Kowalski 2013). Unlike the first half of the 19th century when rural farming created the original role of the schoolmaster, the American economy evolved and shaped the public schools (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Glass et al., 2000; T. J.

Kowalski 2016). The role of the superintendent has evolved over time. One researcher explains the evolution of the role of the superintendent in three stages:

1. From 1837-1910 the role of the superintendent was instruction-oriented.
2. From 1910-1945 the superintendent's role was business oriented.
3. From 1945-1966 the superintendent's roll was viewed as a professional school administrator (Griffiths, 1966).

Similar to Griffiths, other researchers have identified four stages of the evolution of the superintendent. Carter and Cunningham (1997) identified these stages as:

1. The clerical role - assisted the school board with daily school activities.
2. The master educator - provided direction on curricular and instructional matters.
3. The expert manager - emphasis on hierarchical bureaucracy and scientific management.
4. The chief executive officer for the board - the superintendent serves as the professional advisor to the school board, leader of reforms, manager of resources, and communicator to the public. (pp. 23-24)

Due to the evolution of the role of the superintendent and their ever increasing political role, public education has become very political with elected officials at the state and federal levels adopting new reform legislation (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009). This phenomenon can also be seen at the local level and further signifies the complications of school board members and their conflicted roles and responsibilities. Betty Malen (1995) explained the political reality of schools in this way:

...schools are mini political systems, nested multi-level governmental structures, charged with salient public service responsibilities and dependent on diverse constituencies. Confronted with complex, competing demands, chronic resource shortages, unclear technologies, uncertain supports and value-laden issues, schools face difficult, divisive allocative choices. (p. 148)

In order to maintain a democratic form of government, there must be public participation in defining the problems of the community. Governments create agencies to support the values and goals of a society. From time to time problems occur in diverse communities where new policies must be designed, implemented and monitored. The department of education is one such agency (Tucker, 1995). At a more micro level, the system of local school districts governed by an elected board of citizens was designed and implemented across America (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009; T. J. Kowalski, 2013).

Additionally, McCarty and Ramsey (1971) observed the politics of the school board is reflected by the politics of the community they represent. The more political the community, the more political the school board. McCarty and Ramsey identified four types of community political structures (dominated, factional, status congruent, and sanctioned), and assert the superintendent will need to work with their board of education to match the level of politics.

School District Governance

Democratic government allows for public participation in defining problems within a political community. Agencies of government form the political infrastructure whose duty is to assist leadership in performing their functions of defining situations and devising and implementing policy (Tucker, 1995). One such agency is education.

Citizen oversight of local government is paramount to maintain democracy in America (Campbell & Greene, 1994). For nearly 100 years, citizens representing communities are elected to school boards to provide oversight over their public schools (Beckham & Wills, 2019). Research has affirmed the significant impact the role of the school board has in regards to student achievement and making policy (Waters & Marzano, 2006; Beckham & Wills, 2019).

Roles and Responsibilities of School Boards

National and state associations have provided guidelines as to the roles and responsibilities of local school boards. A National School Boards Association (NSBA), (2018) task force enumerated four core decision-making functions that are fundamental to a school system's accountability:

- The establishment of a long-term vision for the school system.
- The establishment and maintenance of a basic organizational structure for the school system, including employment of a superintendent, adoption of an annual budget, adoption of governance policies, and creation of a climate that promotes excellence.
- The establishment of systems and processes to ensure accountability to the community, including fiscal accountability, accountability for programs and student outcomes, staff accountability, and collective bargaining.
- Advocacy on behalf of children in public education at the community, state, and national levels.

In addition to the guidelines put forth by the NSBA, the CSBA has also published resources to define the roles and responsibilities of school boards (CSBA, 2016). The

CSBA guidelines are a simplified version of the NSBA guidelines. The five major responsibilities of a school board are:

- Setting the direction for public schools in the community.
- Establishing an effective and efficient structure.
- Providing support.
- Ensuring accountability to the public
- Providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district and public schools (CSBA, 2016).

Roles and Responsibilities of School Superintendents

The role of the superintendent is complex. The superintendent is held accountable by the local school board to implement the district's instructional philosophy and to manage resources and well-being of the entire organization (T. J. Kowalski, 2010; Waters & Marzano, 2006). T. J. Kowalski, McCord, Petersen, Young, and Ellerson (2010) contends that there are five separate roles of the school district superintendent:

- teacher-scholar
- business manager
- statesman
- applied social scientist
- effective communicator (p. 2).

A superintendent is expected to wear all the hats of these different roles and know when to transition between them (T. J. Kowalski, 2016).

The superintendent role as a teacher scholar was dominant from 1865-1910 (T. J. Kowalski, 2010). The responsibility of the superintendent was to supervise instruction

and be the lead educator. The role of the superintendent evolved after 1920 to include business manager (T. J. Kowalski, 2010). This was a response to the industrial revolution in an attempt to improve the efficiency of public education (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; T. J. Kowalski, 2016). After the Great Depression of the 1930s, the role of the superintendent became that of a statesman. As a statesman, the superintendent was expected to build public support for education which led to the job becoming political (T. J. Kowalski, 2016). In the 1950s and post-World War II, the superintendent's role became that of an applied social scientist. Superintendents were expected to have a sensitivity to the social conditions of a democratic society and were expected to solve educational problems (T. J. Kowalski, 2016). Finally, and most recently the role of the superintendent is to be a communicator. With high levels of expectations, school reform, and accountability, it was clear that the leader of a school system had to be an effective communicator with all stakeholders (T. J. Kowalski, 2010) (see Figure 6).

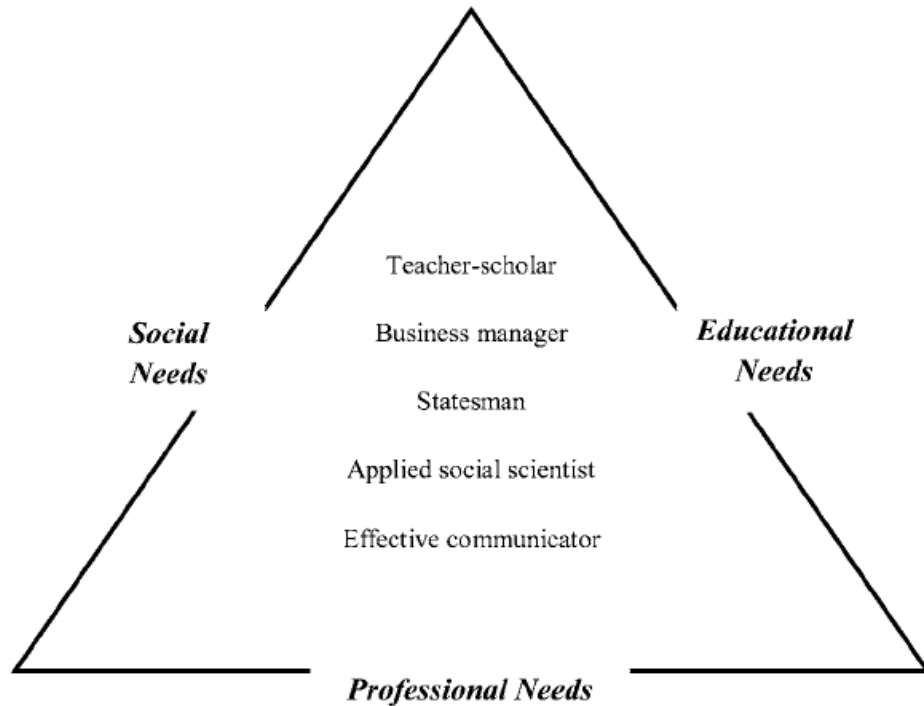


Figure 6. Superintendent Role Conceptualizations and Contemporary Needs Affecting Practice. Adapted from “The School Superintendent: Theory, Practice, and Cases (2nd ed.),” by T. J. Kowalski, 2006. Copyright by Sage.

Politics of the Superintendent and School Board

School districts with a high level of student achievement have school boards who are aligned with the vision and goals of the superintendents (Waters & Marzano, 2006). School boards are the leaders of local school systems, and these school board members govern school systems that have become increasingly complex. Even though the role of the school board seems clearly defined, there is much confusion as to the scope of their duties (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009; Campbell & Greene, 1994; T. J. Kowalski, 2013). The role of school boards has become impaired by board members lack of willingness to compromise, divisiveness, and micromanagement (Beckham & Wills, 2019). When individual board members work from their own goals rather than the board approved goals, the success of the district becomes compromised (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

The most important group of people for superintendents is the school board. A superintendent's survival depends on being politically intelligent with their governing body (White et al., 2016). 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).

Board members have different motivations for being a board member and different levels of engagement. There are multiple political styles of board members. This makes the political intelligence of the superintendent that much more important as they navigate the varying styles of their board members (White et al., 2016). Research makes it clear that superintendents must not disregard the need to operate politically and should adopt different leadership styles when needed (Alemán, 2002).

The relationship of the superintendent and school board is critical to the operation of a school district (Peterson & Short, 2001). The board is responsible for the hiring, firing and accountability of the superintendent (Davis & Diane, 1994). A politically intelligent superintendent will work with and help their governing board members become a meaningful part of the district governance team (White et al., 2016). Often the relationship between the school board and superintendent can become strained. One reason for this strained relationship is a result of confusion between the roles of the school board and superintendent, motivation for serving on the board, and varying levels of engagement of individual board members (Mountford, 2004; White et al., 2016).

The Superintendent and Effective Leadership

Effective leadership by the superintendent is crucial to the improvement of student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2006). During the past several decades superintendent leadership has emerged as an important element to school reform and success; however, superintendents have had to lead schools in a complex political environment as American society has become more diverse (T. J. Kowalski, 2013). The superintendent also has to manage the politics within the internal community. The school's daily interactions are influenced by politics (Lindle, 1999). Teachers, administrators, the office staff, parents and students interact and negotiate within the context of politics. A politically savvy and intelligent superintendent puts the organization first, believes in the issue at hand, plays above board, and avoids political blind spots (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). Effective leaders build credibility with others by putting aside personal agendas (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

The superintendent must contend with external politics while managing the interests of the internal community (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009). The effective leadership of a superintendent not only includes building and sustaining relationships with others, it also depends on the ability to see the need for change and being prepared to lead it (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2001; McKee et al., 2008). Effective leadership by superintendents also has been shown to have a positive influence on student achievement. Those who are effective are able to articulate district goals with the school board and monitor results to see higher student achievement results (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Interestingly, research shows that the longevity of the superintendent is linked to improved student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

Within the political context of running a school district, there are several leadership practices superintendents use to improve student achievement for their school district. Superintendents will create a goal-setting process that is inclusive of many stakeholders that leads to a shared vision (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Superintendents will articulate clear non-negotiable expectations and provide the proper levels of support to those expected to achieve the goals (Schmoker, 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2006). They will also create alignment between the school board and the district goals and vision (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

Trust is the key to leadership and political action (Covey & Merrill, 2006; Harvey & Drolet, 2004; White et al., 2016). Superintendents who gain the trust of their stakeholders can influence them to work for the betterment of the organization (White et al., 2016). According to T. J. Kowalski (2006),

Trust is essential because without it, there are suspicions, misinterpretations, accusations, insecurity, and political behavior that can run rampant. Studies have found that superintendents and board members share that their most important element in a positive working relationship is trust. (p. 150)

Peterson and Short (2005) contend that the ability of the district superintendent to be influential with his board is related to personal attributes such as trustworthiness. A trusted leader is dependable and competent, will show vulnerability with others, and gain respect (McKee et al., 2008; White et al., 2016).

Political Strategies Used by Superintendents

Delfino Alemán (2002) concludes in his dissertation, *The Political Sophistication of District-Transforming Superintendents*, that the superintendency requires political

expertise. He states that “transforming superintendents have a sophisticated level of political expertise and manifested by their use of political knowledge, political skill, and political strategies...” (p. 315). Research shows that while leaders who do better in their careers when they are politically savvy, most leaders do not have the skills or understanding of how to use political strategies (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). It has been shown that superintendents can learn and develop political sophistication (Alemán, 2002); however, there is limited support in properly training educators to be superintendents. An educator can be promoted from teacher to various administrative roles, and become a superintendent with virtually no understanding of the relationship with the board members (Russell, 2014).

In order for a leader to successfully navigate the political waters of an organization, they need to be politically savvy (Caruso, 2004; DeLuca, 1999; Peterson & Short, 2001; White et al., 2016). DeLuca (1999) defines political savvy as “ethically building a critical mass of support for an idea you care about” (p. 112). Political savvy is not about power but rather making an impact on specific situations by influencing those in authority (DeLuca, 1999). Being politically savvy is a key dimension of leadership; it requires a leader to not avoid politics, but rather to engage and value the politics of an organization (DeLuca, 1999).

Superintendents with political expertise are intentional about using different political strategies (Alemán, 2002; DeLuca, 1999). Leaders who are politically savvy will view their organization as a human system and assume that there are many agendas driving the organization (DeLuca, 1999). Superintendents utilize various strategies to build harmonious relationships with both school boards and communities (Alemán,

2002). The relationship between the superintendent and school board president is vital in determining the continued employment of the superintendent (Byrd et al., 2006; White et al., 2016).

In order to generate strategies, a leader must first get a sense of the political lay of the land (DeLuca, 1999; White et al. 2016). Leaders will use a mapping technique to identify the politics of the organization. Leaders will identify who are the key players of the organization and what is their level of influence. The leaders will then ascertain how the key players use their influence, if their influence can be changed, and the relationships between the key players (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016).

Build Shared Vision

One strategy that improves superintendent-board relations is building a shared vision. In order to make real progress, the school board and superintendent need a shared vision to make sure programs and activities are aligned (Davis & Diane, 1994). Having a shared vision leads to common board beliefs and goals. Higher achieving school districts have clearly articulated goals that are set and supported by both the board and superintendent (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

Clear Understanding of Roles

Another strategy is having a clear understanding of the role of the board and the superintendent. Role clarity can prevent future political issues and helps create positive relationships between the board and superintendent (Russell, 2014). School boards and superintendents that have a clear understanding of roles and the decision making process are in a better position to lead a school district (Peterson & Short, 2001).

Develop Personal Characteristics

One final strategy that superintendents need to be successful at is developing personal characteristics that will lead to a stronger relationship with the school board. A superintendent will likely be more successful if they can use interpersonal skills to communicate issues facing the school district and the decisions that have been made (Peterson & Short, 2001). In Peterson and Short's (2001) findings, superintendents are more influential to the school board if they have the personal attributes of "expertness, trustworthiness, attractiveness, assertiveness, and emotiveness" (p. 561).

Unfortunately, most school district leaders lack these political strategies to work with their trustees and special interest groups (L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; White et al., 2016). Superintendents who possess the political intelligence of working with the different political styles of their school board members, tend to be more successful and do better in their careers (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). Often leaders fail to use political strategies because they lack the training and support to feel confident (White et al., 2016). While there is a lot of literature about leadership, there is little research about effective strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of their school board members.

High School District Superintendents

According to the California Department of Education (CDE) (2018) there were 1,026 school districts in the 2017-18 school year (see Table 1). The various school district types were unified, elementary, high, and others. All high school districts are comprised of only high schools serving students from grades 9 through 12. There are 76 high school districts in California. Every high school district has a superintendent

leading it. The leadership frame for this study will be high school district superintendents.

Table 1

California Department of Education Number of California School Districts

District Type	Number of Districts
Unified	344
Elementary	524
High	76
Other	82
Total	1,026

Note. Adapted from “Fingertip Facts on Education in California – CalEdFacts,” by California Department of Education, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/ceffingertipfacts.asp>

The role of the high school district superintendent is complex. High school district superintendents are exposed to a myriad of challenging dynamics. To begin with, the student body are teenagers between the ages of 12 to 19. This brings unique challenges as these students come of age. Teenagers tend to express themselves in ways that can be a challenge to managing the school. High schools also offer many extra-curricular and co-curricular experiences. There is a public expectation that the superintendent should be present at sporting events, plays, and concerts. Often problems can occur with these activities due to poor adult supervision or people making poor decisions. High school superintendents are also expected to be visible in the community. They tend to be members of civic clubs and community taskforces. High school district superintendents are also expected to be available to community groups and civic leaders. Finally, high school district superintendents are expected to prepare all of their students to be ready for life upon graduation (T. J. Kowalski & Bjork, 2005; T. J. Kowalski, 2006, 2013).

Gap in the Research

The literature shows that there is interest in politics and education. There is a significant amount of research that details the political history of public education. There is also ample research on the role of the superintendent and school board members and the political relationship between them. There is limited research about the political strategies high school district superintendents use to work with the different political styles of school board members. This study attempts to fill that gap between identifying the political styles of high school superintendents and school board members and strategies high school district superintendents use with the various political styles of their board members.

Summary

This literature review reflects studies conducted in the areas of the history, evolution, and the importance of politics. It reviews leadership in politics and various theoretical frameworks. An examination of the roles of school boards and superintendents revealed the political relationship between the two. The literature also reviews the Political Style framework of White et al. (2016).

Chapter III follows and discusses the research methodology and design used to collect strategies used by exemplary high school superintendents when working with the political styles of their school board members. Included in Chapter III is a review of the purpose and research questions used for this study. Also included in Chapter III are the instrumentation, population and sample, validity and reliability, the data analysis, and limitations.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Chapter III details the methodology used in this study to identify the political styles of superintendents and school board members. Further, the study identified the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of their board members. This chapter includes the purpose and research questions studied and provides an overview of the research design and methodology. The population, target population, and how the sample was selected are described. The quantitative survey instrument and qualitative interview protocol are discussed in addition to detailed data collection procedures. Data analysis for both quantitative and qualitative elements of this mixed-method study are set forth. Lastly, the limitations of the study are described as well as participant safeguards.

Purpose Statement

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

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

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

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

Research Design

A mixed-methods study is a way of combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods within the same study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Researchers have found that a good approach to answering research questions is to use both quantitative and qualitative methods. According to McMillan and Schumacker (2010) using only one method often does not provide complete answers. Thus, mixed-methods research provides an advantage by providing a more comprehensive data and enhances the credibility of findings over utilizing a single method alone. Mixed-methods research also allows for data triangulation. Data triangulation uses multiple sources for obtaining data on the research topic and makes the data more dependable and trustworthy (Patten, 2017). This study used surveys to collect quantitative data and in-person interviews to collect qualitative data.

Methodology

To identify the perceived political styles of high school district superintendents and board members, and the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members, the methodology selected for this study was sequential explanatory mixed method. The explanatory strategy first gathers and examines quantitative data and then gathers and examines qualitative data (J. W. Creswell, 2003). The purpose of this strategy is to use qualitative findings to aid in the explanation and interpretation of the quantitative results (J. W. Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Numerical data (quantitative), through use of a survey, was used to provide the

researcher a perspective of the political styles exemplary high school district superintendents identify as their own political style and the political styles of their board members. Qualitative research designs emphasize gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena, and most of the data are in the form of words (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative researchers study how people and groups construct meaning and collect data via interviews, observations and documents (Patton, 2015). Qualitative data is analyzed and interpreted to find meaningful themes and patterns (Patton, 2015). Qualitative inquiry documents what happens among real people in the real world in their own words (Patton, 2015). Qualitative researchers document the actions of these people and the intended and unintended consequences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Patton, 2015). A qualitative method is appropriate, for the participants of this study will participate in interviews and share their real life experiences.

In addition to this being a mixed method study, it will also be a sequential explanatory design. In a sequential explanatory design, research is done in two phases. This explanatory sequential mixed-methods case study combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches, also known as an explanatory method (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This design is used when quantitative data is needed and qualitative data is necessary to give meaning to the quantitative findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Figure 7 illustrates how in this type of study quantitative data is first gathered then qualitative data is collected to give meaning to the quantitative data.

SEQUENTIAL EXPLANATORY MIXED METHODS

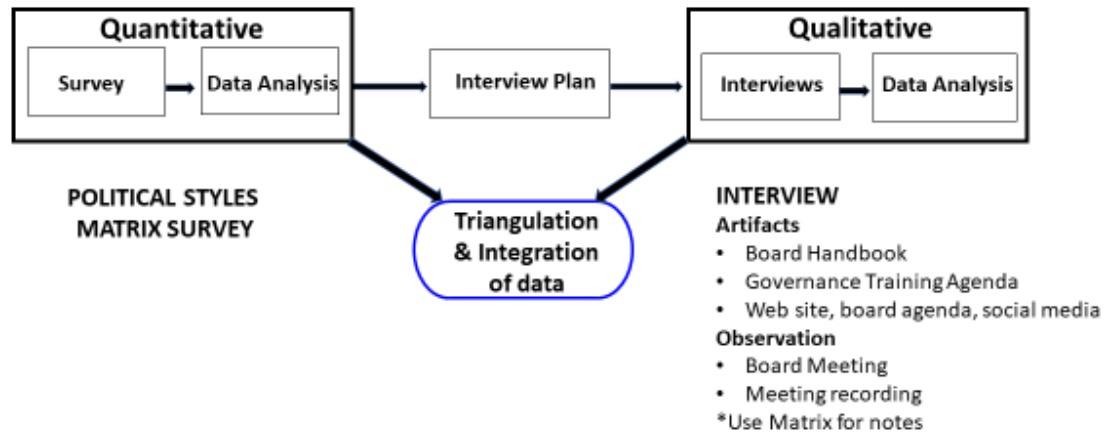


Figure 7. Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods. Adapted from “Research Design: Qualitative, and Mixed Method Approaches,” by J. W. Creswell, 2003. Copyright by Sage.

Other designs were originally considered before selecting sequential explanatory mixed method design including phenomenological, heuristic inquiry, and ethnography study. A phenomenological design was considered because it focuses on individual lived experiences (Patton, 2015). As Patton (2015) says, “phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature of meaning of our everyday experiences” (p. 115). Phenomenology investigates how humans experience the world, and give structure to those experiences (Patton, 2015). However, the peer researcher team determined that a phenomenological approach would be appropriate for this qualitative study. Data was collected via interviewing superintendents who have experience working with school board members with different political styles. The data was analyzed and interpreted to identify the political style of superintendents and board members. Strategies used by the high school district superintendents when working with individual board members based on their political styles were also identified.

A heuristic inquiry was also considered. Heuristic inquiry focuses on intense human experiences and a contentedness between the subject and the researcher (Patton, 2015). Initially, heuristic inquiry was considered because of the lived experience of superintendents working in a political workplace which is quite intense. Ultimately it was determined that the heuristic approach would not be appropriate. Heuristic inquiry would not be congruent for this study where the researchers will objectively report on the shared learning of others. Also, the heuristic researcher must have personal experience with the phenomena being studied and have intense interest in it (Patton, 2015). While members of the thematic team have interest in this study, most individuals from the thematic team are not currently sitting superintendents.

Another method considered, but not selected was an ethnography study. Ethnography is the primary method of anthropology and takes as its guiding assumption that human groups interacting together will evolve a culture (Patton, 2015). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), ethnography involves prolonged fieldwork where the researcher observes groups of people and engaging in casual interviews. This method would not work because the researchers conducted formal interviews in a short period of time. The ethnographic method was also not selected because the purpose of this study was not to observe culture, but rather to identify successful strategies used by superintendents when working with school board members with different political styles.

Population

A population is defined as a group of interest to the researcher of which the results of the study will be generalized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Roberts,

2015). The population for this study was California public school district superintendents. Currently, there are 1,026 public school district superintendents in the state of California (CSBA, 2018; California Department of Education [CDE], 2016). The common characteristics of this superintendent group is that they all are hired by and work for school boards. Working with the governance team, superintendents collaboratively develop the school districts vision and goals and are accountable to the board for implementation. The scope of responsibilities range from building agendas for board meetings, being present in the school communities, and working with the various stakeholder groups of the school district. Superintendents implement policies adopted by the school board and are responsible for leading and managing every aspect of the school district operations (T. J. Kowalski, 2013). According to Patten (2014), researching entire populations can be difficult, therefore researchers often further narrow the study population to a target population.

Target Population

Identifying a target population is necessary to narrow the scope of the study population and identify the study sample. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state a target population is a subset of the population that share similar characteristics. As stated, there are 1,026 public superintendents in the state of California. To narrow the scope of the study, the target population was California superintendents of high school districts. High school districts are school districts comprised of only high schools. High schools serve students from 9th grade through grade 12. According to the CDE (2016), there are 76 high school districts in the state of California resulting in 76 superintendents

of high school districts. As such, these 76 California high school district superintendents were the designated target population for this study.

Sample

Patton (2017) states, “researchers frequently draw a sample from a population, which is the group in which researchers are ultimately interested” (p. 55). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) narrow this down by calling a sample “the group of subjects from whom the data are collected” (p. 129). According to Patten (2014) “when it is impractical to study and entire population, researchers draw a sample, study it, and infer that what is true of the sample is probably also true of the population” (p. 53). This study used a purposeful convenience sample. Purposeful sampling “selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p, 138). The sample for this study were five exemplary high school district superintendents. In order for participants to be considered “exemplary” selection criteria was developed (see Figure 8).

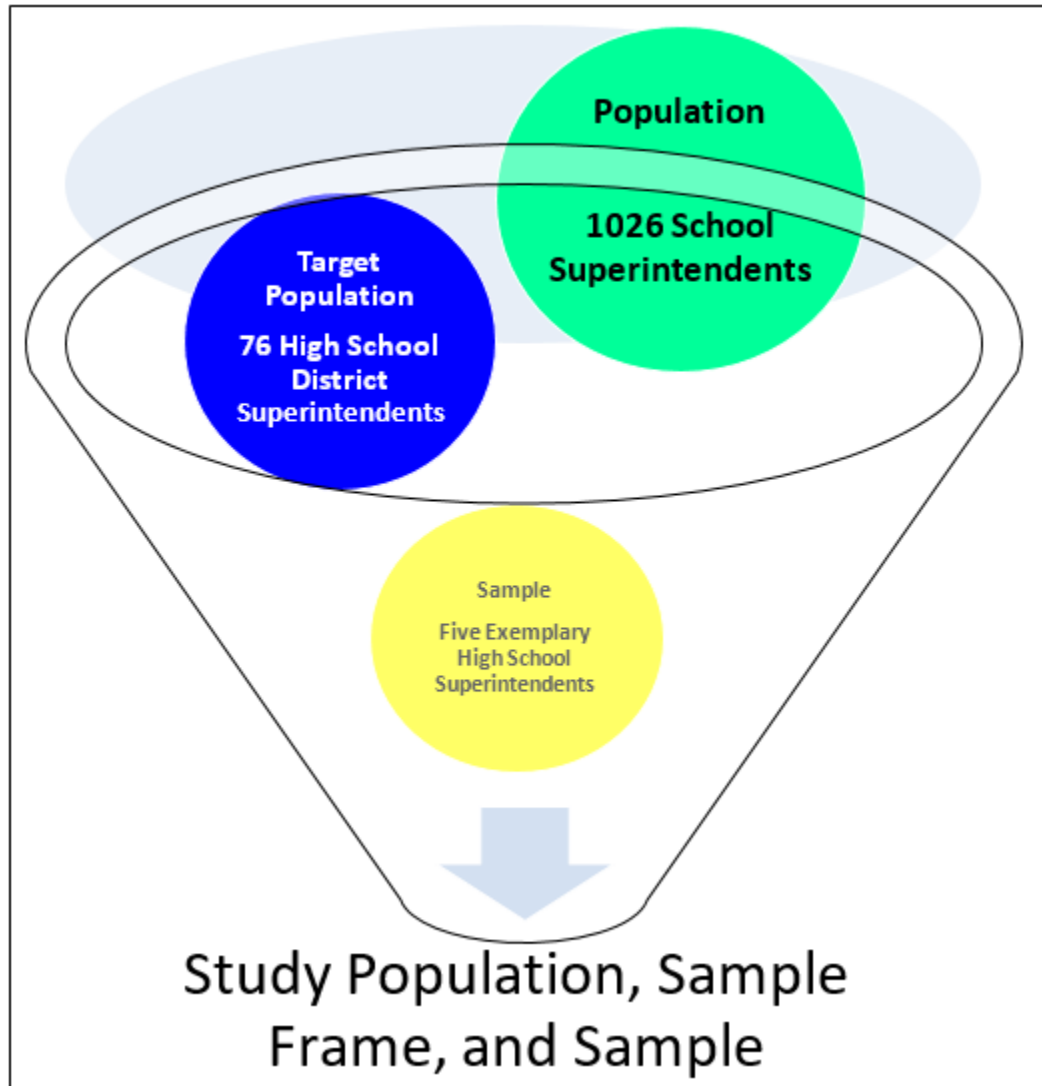


Figure 8. Study Population, Sample Frame and Sample.

The credibility of this study relies on the procedures used to select the sample (Roberts, 2010). Selection criteria was developed for this study in order to identify exemplary high school district superintendents in California. An exemplary high school superintendent is a school district leader who demonstrates at least four of the following eight criteria:

- Evidence of positive governance team relationships.
- A minimum of three years of experience as a superintendent in current district.
- Identified by county superintendent as exemplary in working with board.
- Identified by a panel of experts knowledgeable of the work of superintendents.
- Received recognition as an exemplary superintendent by a professional organization such as ACSA.
- Recognition by their peers.
- Membership in professional associations in their field.
- Participated in CSBA Masters in Governance training or other governance training with at least one board member.

The superintendent selection process was based on meeting the above mentioned criteria and recommendations from both educational experts and executive search consultants. Educational experts are active and respected practitioners of education. They are well networked and have knowledge of who are current exemplary superintendents. Executive search consultants are typically retired superintendents who had a distinguished career. Further, they have been hired by executive search firms to assist school district board members in the superintendent hiring process. These professionals have experience and collegial relationships with high school superintendents throughout California.

For this study, one retired superintendent who is a member of the north superintendents group, has more than 20 years' experience as superintendent, taught in doctoral programs at the university level, and worked as a search consultant, asked

county superintendents to nominate high school district superintendents in their county that are exemplary and meet the study criteria as exemplary. Additionally, a sitting superintendent who is also a member of the north superintendents group and considered an exemplary high school superintendent identified qualified superintendents for this study. Other methods of identifying exemplary high school district superintendents was through the use of the news media, social media, and school websites. Once evidence of exemplary superintendents was obtained by the researcher, five high school superintendents were selected to be the sample of this study.

Once this study was approved by the Brandman Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A), the sample participants were contacted. The process for contacting sample participants was as follows:

1. An educational expert or executive consultant introduced the researcher by email.
2. The researcher contacted the participant via email and telephone.
3. Once in contact, the researcher explained the purpose of this study and asked for permission for them to participate.
4. Once the superintendent agreed to participate, the researcher e-mailed the participant (a) an invitation to participate letter (see Appendix B), (b) the Brandman University Research Participants Bill of Rights (see Appendix C), (c) an informed consent form (see Appendix D) so the participant was knowledgeable about the nature of the study prior to indicating consent on the electronic survey, and (d) a link to the electronic Superintendent Political Intelligence Survey (see Appendix E).

Once the five participants completed the Superintendent Political Intelligence Survey, the researcher followed up to arrange for an interview. The interview went as follows:

1. The researcher contacted the participants by email and telephone to schedule an interview.
2. Interviews were no more than 60 minutes.
3. Interviews were conducted face to face.
4. Prior to the interview the researcher collected from the participants the (a) invitation to participate letter, (b) the Brandman University Research Participants Bill of Rights, (c) an informed consent form to be signed and collected at the interview, (d) an audio release form to be signed and collected at the interview (see Appendix F), and (e) a copy of the interview questions and definitions of the five domains of trust contained in the Superintendent and School Board Trust Interview Protocol (see Appendix G)

Instrumentation

According to Patton (2015), qualitative findings may be presented in combination with quantitative data. This is called mixed-methods. Obtaining and combining data from multiple methods is called methods triangulation (Patten 2014). In methods triangulation, multiple forms of data are collected from the same population, in this case exemplary California high school district superintendents. This technique is important to assure the quality of the research. The survey and interview questions were developed by a team of peer researchers with faculty assistance.

For this study, the quantitative data was collected first; by doing so, the quantitative results are then explained with the qualitative data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The quantitative data was collected via an electronic survey that was designed by a team of peer researchers.

The team of peer researchers also designed the interview questions to collect qualitative data. The interviews were based on open-ended questions designed to yield in-depth responses about superintendent's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge (Patton 2015). For the interviews, the researcher was the instrument of study who conducted interviews to collect qualitative data. As the instrument of study, there was the potential for an intentional or unintentional bias based on influences the researcher has for the subject (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher is an educator who has worked for four superintendents and has been in education for 25 years. The researcher has worked at the district office level for 10 years; six as the deputy superintendent. The research attends all board meetings and works closely with the superintendent and the school board.

Validity

According to Patten (2017), researchers say that "a measure is valid to the extent that it measures what it is designed to measure and accurately performs the function it is purported to perform" (p. 71). Roberts (2010) agrees that "validity is the degree to which your instrument truly measures what it purports to measure" (p. 151). Furthermore, if the tools used to collect data are unreliable, then the hypothesis put forth by the researcher could be inconclusive (Salkind, 2017). Validity is relative to the purpose of testing. For

this study, the purpose of testing was to design a survey and interview questions that accurately collect strategies from exemplary high school superintendents.

J. W. Creswell (2005) recommends a minimum sample size between three to five for a mixed methods research when the focus of the research is on analyzing qualitative data. A smaller sample size provides valuable information on this chosen topic (J. W. Creswell, 2005). Further, the importance of this purposeful sample was the in depth of knowledge, perceptions and experiences of high school district superintendents working with board members with different political styles. The importance of the data emerges from the comprehensive qualitative data obtained rather than the total number of participants in research (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010).

One of the ways that researchers can improve the validity of their instruments is to field test them (Roberts, 2010). In a mixed-methods approach it is essential to field test both the quantitative and qualitative instruments. The validity of quantitative research depends on careful design of the instrument and that it measures what it is supposed to (Patton, 2015). The validity of qualitative research depends on the researcher as the instrument (Patton, 2015). In this mixed-methods study, both quantitative and qualitative instruments were field tested.

Both the quantitative survey and qualitative interview questions were field tested to insure a high level of validity. Multiple researchers worked together as an expert panel to ensure that the survey was designed to collect the accurate quantitative data that lead to appropriate interview questions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Furthermore, the transcription of the interviews were shared with the participants to make sure their interview was properly captured.

Reliability

Roberts (2010) states that “reliability is the degree to which your instrument consistently measures something from one time to another” (p. 151). Patten (2017) agreed with Roberts by adding that for a test to be reliable, it must yield consistent results. In this study, both the quantitative and qualitative instruments, reliability means that the results from the field-tests were consistent.

To ensure the highest level of reliability, the utilization of the instruments were consistently administered. Participants were provided the same opportunity to understand the purpose of the study and the expectations of their participation. Participants were also given the same survey to collect accurate quantitative data. To ensure a high level of reliability to the qualitative data, a script was used to administer the interviews. This secured consistency in the participants understanding of the questions and the depth of the responses.

Once the interviews were recorded and transcribed, a third-party coded the data and identified the themes. Themes are a categorical approach to qualitative research where the researcher interprets the meaning of patterns (Patton, 2015). Intercoder reliability was then used to insure a higher level of reliability. According to Lombard, Snyder-Dutch, and Bracken (2004) “intercoder reliability is the practice of independent coders evaluating a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion as the researcher” (p. 2).

Field Test-Pilot

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) there are several “techniques to ensure good qualitative questions including interview script critiques by experienced

interviewers, interview guide field testing, and revision of initial questions for final phraseology” (p. 357). As such the electronic survey was field tested by using a retired superintendent who was considered exemplary based on the sample selection criteria but would be excluded from potentially being part of the study due to their retired status. The retired superintendent was contacted by the researcher and asked if they would participate in the field test to improve the validity of the quantitative survey instrument and qualitative interview questions. First, the survey was distributed to the retired superintendent and collected. Then the retired superintendent was asked in a face to face interview setting for feedback regarding the clarity and effectiveness of the quantitative survey using the Survey Validation Feedback Form (see Appendix H). Adjustments were made based on the feedback and the purpose of the research.

Field testing of the qualitative interview process and questions was also conducted. The same retired superintendent utilized in the survey field test also participated in the interview field test. Additionally, an observer was present during the interview. The observer was an expert in the field of education, qualitative research, and holds a doctorate degree from an accredited university. The field test interview was conducted face to face utilizing the Interview Script and Questions with the observer present and taking notes to assist in completing the Field Test Observer Feedback Form (see Appendix I) immediately after the conclusion of the field test interview. The purpose of the form was to elicit feedback regarding the researcher’s interview skills and provide valuable feedback to support the collection of data gathering when interviewing an actual study participant. At the conclusion of the interview field test, both the researcher and the observer met to discuss the Field Test Interview Feedback Questions

(see Appendix J). This process aided the researcher in gaining valuable insight about their interview skills and affect during the interview process in preparation for interviewing actual study participants. Notes were taken and adjustments were made based on the observer's feedback and the researcher's self-reflection prior to commencing the actual study interviews.

Data Collection

Data collected in this mixed-methods study were conducted in two phases. First, the quantitative data were collected via an electronic survey that was designed by peer researchers and faculty advisors. The survey had five exemplary high school district superintendents identify their own political style and the political styles of their school board members. The qualitative data were then collected via face to face interviews. The interviewer asked five exemplary high school district superintendents to identify successful strategies they use when working with the different political styles of their school board members. The results of the surveys and interview audio recordings and transcripts were kept secured on a password protected computer and also backed up on Google Cloud. The collection of data for this study began once the researcher received approval from Brandman University's Instructional Review Board and the necessary coursework was completed and a certificate was issued by The National Institutes of Health (see Appendix K). The rights of all participants were protected throughout the study as were their information and privacy. Records of information that participants provided for the research study and any personal information provided was not linked in any way. Participants were identified as Superintendent A, Superintendent B,

Superintendent C, Superintendent D, and Superintendent E, thus making it impossible to identify participants or any district specific information they provided for the study.

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis were both used for this mixed-methods study. The quantitative data were collected through an electronic survey and the qualitative data were obtained through face-to-face interviews. The quantitative data were acquired first, followed by the qualitative interviews and their transcription. Upon the completion of the collection of both kinds of data, the data were analyzed to answer the research questions.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Using Survey Monkey, a survey was designed and given to five exemplary high school district superintendents. The purpose of the survey was for the participants to gain an understanding of the Political Styles Matrix (see Appendix L). High school district superintendents were asked to identify their political style and that of each of their board members. The survey collected personal information such as years of superintendent experience, years of experience in their current school district, gender, age, and level of terminal degree. The survey included definitions of the nine political styles. Finally, the survey asked each high school district superintendent to identify their own political style and the political style of each of their board members. This information was used to assist the superintendent's understanding of the purpose of the study. It also assisted in keeping the interviews to no more than 60 minutes by not having to explain the political style matrix during the interview.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher conducted and recorded five interviews of exemplary high school district superintendents. Transcription of the interviews were conducted. Transcription is the process of taking the interview responses and converting them into a format that facilitated analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The transcription was shared back with the participants to check for accuracy. Once all responses from the participants were returned, the researcher began the coding process. Using the coding program NVivo, the data was put into frequency tables were used to identify patterns and themes (Patton, 2015).

Intercoder reliability was then used to insure a higher level of reliability. According to Lombard et al. (2004) “intercoder reliability is the practice of independent coders evaluating a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion as the researcher” (p. 2). The intercoder used for this study was a fellow colleague of the thematic team. The researcher and an intercoder independently analyzed the data looking for patterns and general themes prior to coding.

Referring back to the data collected from the survey, patterns and themes from the interviews were reviewed. The results of this mixed-methods data analysis guided the researcher in answering the research questions of how do high school district superintendents perceive their own political style and the individual styles of their school board members, and what are the strategies high school district superintendents use to work successfully with the different school board member styles?

Limitations

Perfect validity can be elusive, for some traits researchers want to measure are inherently difficult to measure (Patten 2017). Limitations in any study are often out of the researcher's control and may impact the results of the research and affect the generalizability of the study (Patton, 2015; Roberts, 2010). This thematic study of political styles was replicated by 10 different peer researchers who utilized the same quantitative and qualitative instruments and methodology but focused on superintendents from different types of school districts —suburban unified, high school, small rural, Latino superintendents, small suburban in southern California, female superintendents, female/minority Regional Occupational Program superintendents, and small school districts.

There was a variety of limitations that may have affected this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study including the researcher as the instrument, geography, time, and sample size.

Summary

This study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach. A mixed-methods approach allows the researcher to develop a more complete and thorough understanding of the complexities involved in human phenomena and the topic being studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). The study analyzed quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to answer the research questions based on White et al. (2016) political style framework. This analysis was done in order to determine the strategies that exemplary high school district superintendents use to work with the different political styles of their school board members.

This chapter restated the purpose statement, research questions, and research design. The chapter then discussed the population, target population, and sample, including the sample criteria. This section reviewed the instruments used in this study as well as the data collection methods and data analysis methods utilized. This methodology chapter ended with the potential limitations of the study.

This study was conducted with high school district superintendents. Nine other peer researchers conducted similar studies using the same instruments and methodology with superintendents from different types of school districts. Through this thematic approach, studying different target populations and samples, the goal was to identify and describe the strategies exemplary superintendents used to work with the different political styles of their school board members.

Chapter IV presents the data obtained through the study, the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data, and the findings and results of the research. Following this, Chapter V contains a discussion the significant findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter I provided an overview to this study and corresponding research. Research questions, significance of the research problem, definitions, delimitations and organization of the study were also presented in that chapter. Chapter II reviewed the literature on leadership, politics and provided a theoretical framework. Chapter III presented the methodology used to construct and implement this research study. This chapter provides a review of the purpose statement and research questions along with a description of the research design, methodology, demographic data of the sample, presentation of quantitative and qualitative data, and a summary of the study's findings.

Purpose Statement

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

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

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

Research Design

A mixed-methods study is a way of combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods within the same study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Researchers have found a good approach to answering research questions is to use both quantitative and qualitative methods. According to McMillan and Schumacker (2010) using only one method often does not provide complete answers. Thus, mixed-methods research provides an advantage by providing a more comprehensive data and enhances the credibility of findings over utilizing a single method alone. Mixed-methods research also allows for data triangulation. Data triangulation uses multiple sources for obtaining data on the research topic and makes the data more dependable and trustworthy (Patten, 2017). This study used surveys to collect quantitative data and in-person interviews to collect qualitative data.

Methodology

To identify the perceived political styles of high school district superintendents and board members, and the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members, the methodology selected for this study is sequential explanatory mixed method. The explanatory strategy first gathers and examines quantitative data and then gathers and examines qualitative data (J. W. Creswell, 2003). The purpose of this strategy is to use qualitative findings to aid in the explanation and interpretation of the quantitative results (J. W. Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Numerical data (quantitative), collected through an electronic survey, was obtained to provide the researcher a perspective of the political styles exemplary superintendents identify as their own political style and the political styles of their board

members. Qualitative research designs emphasize gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena, and most of the data are in the form of words (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative researchers study how people and groups construct meaning and collect data via interviews, observations and documents (Patton, 2015). Qualitative data is analyzed and interpreted to find meaningful themes and patterns (Patton, 2015). Qualitative inquiry documents what happens among real people in the real world in their own words (Patton, 2015). Qualitative researchers document the actions of these people and the intended and unintended consequences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Patton, 2015). A qualitative method is appropriate for this study as participants will participate in interviews and share their real-life experiences.

In addition to this being a mixed method study, it was a sequential explanatory design. In a sequential explanatory design, research is done in two phases. This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches, also known as an explanatory method (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This design is used when quantitative data is needed and qualitative data is necessary to give meaning to the quantitative findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Quantitative data is gathered first followed by qualitative data collection to give meaning to the quantitative data.

Population

A population is defined as a group of interest to the researcher of which the results of the study will be generalized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Roberts, 2015). The population for this study was California public school district superintendents. Currently, there are 1,026 public school district superintendents in the

state of California (CSBA, 2018; CDE, 2016). The common characteristics of this superintendent group is that they all are hired by and work for school boards. Working with the governance team, superintendents collaboratively develop the school districts vision and goals and are accountable to the board for implementation. The scope of responsibilities range from building agendas for board meetings, being present in the school communities, and working with the various stakeholder groups of the school district. Superintendents implement policies adopted by the school board and are responsible for leading and managing every aspect of the school district operations (T. J. Kowalski, 2013). According to Patten (2014), researching entire populations can be difficult, therefore researchers often further narrow the study population to a target population.

Target Population

Identifying a target population is necessary to narrow the scope of the study population and identify the study sample. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state a target population is a subset of the population that share similar characteristics. As stated above, there are 1,026 public superintendents in the state of California. To narrow the scope of the study, the target population for this study was California superintendents of high school districts. High school districts are school districts comprised of only high schools. High schools serve students from grade 9 through grade 12. According to the CDE (2016), there are 76 high school districts in the state of California resulting in 76 superintendents of high school districts. As such, these 76 California high school superintendents were the designated the target population for this study.

Sample

Patton (2017) states, “researchers frequently draw a sample from a population, which is the group in which researchers are ultimately interested” (p. 55). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) narrow this down by calling a sample “the group of subjects from whom the data are collected” (p. 129). According to Patten (2014) “when it is impractical to study an entire population, researchers draw a sample, study it, and infer that what is true of the sample is probably also true of the population” (p. 53). This study used a purposeful convenience sample. Purposeful sampling “selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 138). The sample for this study were five exemplary high school district superintendents. In order for participants to be considered “exemplary” selection criteria were developed.

The credibility of this study relies on the procedures used to select the sample (Roberts, 2010). Selection criteria was developed for this study in order to identify exemplary high school superintendents in California. It was determined that an exemplary high school district superintendent is a school district leader who demonstrates at least four of the following eight criteria:

- Evidence of positive governance team relationships.
- A minimum of three years of experience as a superintendent in current district.
- Identified by county superintendent as exemplary in working with board.
- Identified by a panel of experts knowledgeable of the work of superintendents.

- Received recognition as an exemplary superintendent by a professional organization such as ACSA.
- Recognition by their peers.
- Membership in professional associations in their field.
- Participated in CSBA Masters in Governance training or other governance training with at least one board member.

The sample selection process was based on meeting the above mentioned criteria and recommendations from both educational experts and executive search consultants. Educational experts are active and respected practitioners of education who are well networked and have knowledge of who are current exemplary superintendents. Executive search consultants are typically retired superintendents who had a distinguished career. Further, they have been hired by executive search firms to assist school district board members in the superintendent hiring process. These professionals have experience and collegial relationships with high school superintendents throughout California.

For this study, one retired superintendent who is a member of the north superintendents group, has more than 20 years' experience as superintendent, taught in doctoral programs at the university level, and worked as a search consultant, asked county superintendents to nominate high school district superintendents in their county that are exemplary and meet the study criteria as exemplary. Additionally, a sitting superintendent who is also a member of the north superintendents group and considered an exemplary high school district superintendent identified qualified superintendents for this study. Other methods of identifying exemplary superintendents was through the use

of the news media, social media, and school websites. Once a list of exemplary superintendents was obtained by the researcher, five high school superintendents were selected to be the sample of this study based on their willingness to participate.

Demographic Data

The sample of five participants for this study were electronically surveyed. The participants represented five high school districts in California. The five high school districts vary in size and location. The enrollment of these high school districts varies from 6,300 students to 16,300 students. These high school districts also represent suburban and urban high school districts. Demographic data was collected as part of the electronic survey. All five participants were male between the ages of 51-60. Two of the participants hold doctoral degrees, while the other three hold masters degrees. Three participants have 10+ years of service as a superintendent and all have a minimum of two years of service in their current district with one participant serving 11 years in their current district. Table 2 presents a description of the sample at the time of the study and includes years of service as a superintendent, years of service as a superintendent in this district, gender, age, level of terminal degree and if the board members are elected at large or by area.

Table 2

Description of Sample

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Years of Service as a Superintendent</u>	<u>Years as Superintendent in Current District</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Terminal Level of Degree</u>	<u>Board Members Elected At Large or by Area</u>
Superintendent A	11	4	M	51-60	Ed.D.	By Area
Superintendent B	11	11	M	51-60	M.A./M.S.	At Large
Superintendent C	12	2	M	51-60	Ed.D.	At Large
Superintendent D	8	8	M	51-60	M.A./M.S.	At Large
Superintendent E	4	4	M	51-60	M.A./M.S.	By Area

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This study's findings were gathered from electronic survey data and one-on-one interviews conducted between October 1, 2019 and October 21, 2019. Five superintendents from high school districts in California participated in an electronic survey to gather quantitative data and then interviewed at separate, one-time sessions as part of the qualitative data collection process. The objective of the interviews was to provide meaning to the quantitative data collected in the electronic survey and gather effective strategies used by high school district superintendents when working with the nine different political styles of their board members. The nine political styles include: (a) challenger, (b) arranger, (c) strategist, (d) planner, (e) balancer, (f) developer, (g) analyst, (h) adaptor, and (i) supporter.

The electronic survey data was collected and analyzed. Throughout the qualitative data collection, each superintendent's interview was recorded. Each audio file was transcribed with any personal participant identification removed and each

superintendent was assigned a letter. To verify proper transcription, each participant was emailed his or her own transcription file for review and verification. After all superintendent's transcriptions were completed, the researcher scanned the data to determine potential themes. A preliminary list of 34 themes were identified. The five interview transcriptions of participant interview were uploaded into NVivo software and coded. A third-party also coded the data and identified themes in addition to the researcher to ensure intercoder reliability. The codes represent the various effective strategies as reported by each of the high school district superintendents. After the coding process, the overarching themes identified with each political style were narrowed down to the most prominent findings. This resulted in a total of eight overarching themes encompassing 74 coded strategies. The findings for the study are arranged by research question.

Research Question 1 Findings

Research question one asked, *How do superintendents perceive their own political style and individual styles of the school board members?* The quantitative and qualitative findings related to this research question follow:

Quantitative findings related to research question 1. The first phase of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study is quantitative data collection. In this study, an electronic survey was used and asked participants to indicate the style that best matches their preferred political style and that of each board member. The quantitative survey results for research question one are presented by perceived superintendent political styles and the perceived styles of their board members.

Perceived superintendent political styles. Three of the superintendents perceived their own political style as a strategist and two superintendents perceived their own political style as developer. Interestingly, none of the other seven political styles were reported. Table 3 presents detailed data of how the participants perceive their own political style.

Table 3

Perceived Superintendent Political Styles

Participant	Perceived Political Style
Superintendent A	Strategist
Superintendent B	Developer
Superintendent C	Strategist
Superintendent D	Developer
Superintendent E	Strategist

Perceived board member political styles. Via the electronic survey, superintendents also identified the perceived political styles of their board members. Each participant is a superintendent of a high school district with five board members making a total of 25 board members for this study. Table 4 presents detailed data of how the superintendent participants perceived the political style of their individual board members. The 25 board members' political styles were identified as the following: (a) four were balancers, (b) four were challengers, (c) four were developers, (d) four were supporters (e) three were arrangers, (f) two were planners, (g) two were strategists, (h) one was an adapter, and (i) one was an analyst. It is interesting to note that 10 (40%) of the board members identified political style was associated with organizational interests.

Only one board member was identified as an analyst (passive) and one as a challenger (self-interests and assertive).

Table 4

Perceived Political Styles of Board Members

Political Style	Number of Superintendents Reporting a Board Member with each Style	Total Number of Board Members with Each Style
	N=5	N=25
Developer	2	4
Supporter	3	4
Challenger	3	4
Balancer	3	4
Arranger	3	3
Planner	3	2
Strategist	2	2
Adapter	1	1
Analyst	1	1

Qualitative findings related to research question 1. The second phase of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study is qualitative data collection. This design is used when quantitative data is needed and qualitative data is necessary to give meaning to the quantitative findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As such, superintendents were asked during the qualitative interviews to share a story about a time when a board member demonstrated some of the characteristics of a particular style. Their responses to

the question provide further insight and support the quantitative findings for research question one and are presented here by political style.

Developer political style. 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). Developers are true believers in the organization's goals and value trustworthy people. It is important to have developers on brainstorming committees and to get their input on other committee members, agendas, and presentations (White et al., 2016).

Two of the five participating high school district superintendents identified board members with the political style of developer for a total of four of the 25 board members. Two superintendents provided examples of how their board members demonstrated the developer political style. Superintendent A described his developer board member:

He just tells me 'you're doing a great job. They love you out in the community, appreciate what you're doing.' He's very supportive. Well when it gets down to, and he, he says, 'well, I don't care what these people say.' This is what we're going to do. This is what's right. He's been very, very supportive my four years here. He's an easy guy to talk to. We back and forth. There's give and take. He's not in it for the power he's in it for the care. He's really in it for the right reasons. He's always very thankful. We just really haven't had any conflicts with them. I talk things through with him and I'm nice to him. He's nice to me. We get along and because of the things we've done for kids, it's, there hasn't been and he's willing to spend money for the kids.

Additionally, Superintendent C described his developer board member that, “His moral compass was completely screwed on. So, there was no need to really appeal to what's right because he was already centered on that. There was a willingness to strategize on finding potential solutions.”

Supporter political style. 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). Supporters work best when they have a relationship with their leader in which trust has been established. They appreciate clear messages that show how a change will benefit the organization (White et al., 2016).

Three of the five participating high school district superintendents identified board members with the political style of supporter for a total of four of the 25 board members. Two superintendents provided examples of how their board members demonstrated the supporter political style. Superintendent D described his supporter board member by saying,

Whenever we get into evaluation mode, he's always been very complimentary, very supportive. He loves being a board member. He's very supportive in any kind of vote. Or he'll ask how, you know, what do I think? And he'll usually support me in that way.

Superintendent B described his supporter board member:

The term that jumped out at me as risk averse, she is definitely a supporter of harmony and doesn't want to take sides. She's very much about keeping

everybody happy. She was always concerned about parent reactions, student reactions and the media, if you will. Community reaction. Those were really important to her. It was about making and keeping harmony. She would have a hard time making those tough decisions. Even though as we all know, half the people are going to be pissed off. I mean it's a tough decision. We have winners and losers and she's struggled with those things sometimes.

Superintendent C described his supporter board member in a similar fashion, also mentioning their hesitation to take sides.

What I would categorize as a potentially benign board member and that is they will always cloak their thoughts behind basically your recommendation. They'll support you, but they won't be out in front of it at all. They'll quietly listen, they'll seldom speak you know, likely that their disposition is to support you, but they don't come out and take sides. They may analyze things carefully to assess whether they're support still rests with you, but they're pretty much, supporters don't speak a lot. And watch your moves. If I needed them to speak publicly and eloquently and passionately on a subject they just, that just was not their nature.

Challenger political style. 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 et al., 2005; Polletta, 2004; White et al., 2016). Challengers want to be aligned to the decision

makers. Leaders should understand a challenger's agenda, for it will help the leader to be better prepared when presenting ideas for change (White et al., 2016).

Three of the five participating high school district superintendents identified board members with the political style of challenger for a total of four of the 25 board members. Three superintendents provided examples of how their board members demonstrated the challenger political style. Superintendent E described his challenger by saying, "he acts and believe that he's in charge. He will gather information about what's going on a school site without talking to me or the principal." Superintendent B described his board member with the political style of challenger as:

She would be assertive. She was definitely vocal in her opinion. She would call out our CBO on issues in open session. Not abusive, but definitely putting people on point. She would ask very specific questions that staff, or myself may or may not have been prepared for. She would create some tension at board meetings with that kind of behavior. Sometimes she is successful in pushing decisions off and then she would often work behind the scenes to steer the ship the way she wanted it to go. She's one I would be worried about talking to the board members and doing things that were probably not legal. She would spend a lot of time supporting her position, whether it was at the open session or not. So that's her sort of political operations she would do behind the scenes without letting anybody know.

Additionally, Superintendent C described his challenger board member and the difficulties he had working with this particular political style by stating:

This is for me, one of the self-seeking dangerous people that exist on boards. She was very much motivated by future political goals. Just pure self-interest, no organizational value whatsoever. This is a board member who pressures you in essence to bring home a desired outcome that has nothing to do with children, education, anything like that. This is a complicated, complicated style. If they have no moral compass they're lost. At the end of it, nothing worked with this person because they were bent on their own particular gain in the position.

Balancer political style. 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). Balancers understand culture and will work well with people who are perceived to be part of the same networks (White et al., 2016).

Three of the five participating high school district superintendents identified board members with the political style of balancer for a total of four of the 25 board members. Three superintendents provided examples of how their board members demonstrated the balancer political style. Superintendent E described his balancer board member by stating, "This board member is focused on board goals and not just her own opinion. She asks good questions and wants to hold others accountable." Superintendent B described his board member who uses the balancer political style:

What I found with a lot of people over the years in particular with this person is board members can be objective and definitely work in the best interest of the district. She is a very solid board member and 99% pretty objective and rational

with a lot of decisions. She is a balance the organization's interests and her self-interest. I'd see her pretty much blending those interests pretty well. She was very engaged, very proactive as far as the district goes. So that's why I put her in the balancing category.

Superintendent D described his balancer board member by sharing, "She does truly care about the programs in the school sites. She also likes to be in the know, so she can share with the community that she is involved and know what is happening in our school."

Arranger political style. 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). Arrangers appreciate working with likeminded people who are problem solvers and creative thinkers (White et al., 2016).

Three of the five participating high school district superintendents identified board members with the political style of arranger for a total of three of the 25 board members. Two superintendents provided examples of how their board members demonstrated the arranger political style. Superintendent C described his arranger,

This particular board member was in the middle of a two-two vote. There were two board members, dead set against and two board members dead set for it, and then him in the middle. And thus, he was caught in the middle of how to split the child without offending either side too. So, there's my arranger.

Superintendent A stated, “I had my doubts because of her union affiliation, but she has evolved into a good board member. She's board president right now, and she's really showed some strength and standing up to certain things, and she hasn't copped out to the union like I thought she would.” Superintendent D described his arranger by stating:

This is probably the highest maintenance of all the board members. I categorized her as blended interests. It's hard to say whether it's 100% school interest or self-interest because she really thrives on being involved in everything. Even though her questions are always about the school, it is really about her and her status within the community. So placating to that status is, is important to her.

Planner political style. 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 (J. R. Hackman, 2002; J. R. Hackman & Wageman, 2005; White et al., 2016). Because planners like to ask a lot of questions, leaders need to be available to have question and answers sessions. Planners pay attention to detail and appreciate leaders who provide data and information (White et al., 2016).

Two of the five participating high school district superintendents identified board members with the political style of planner for a total of two of the 25 board members. Two superintendents provided examples of how their board members demonstrated the planner political style. Superintendent A described his supporter board member by saying,

She was really afraid to make decisions. I tried to meet with her more than anybody. She can really go off the deep end. She started to micromanage. We've

got some personnel issues now that she wants to get into, and I am telling her that is not her role.

Superintendent B described his planner board member in the following way:

He was asking very specific questions about how our facilities are utilized. I think at the end of the day, what he's doing is going down the road of trying to bring in a solution. And I get the sense this is probably more editorializing but he wants to be the smartest guy in the room. I do think his personality is such that he wants to be the solution guy and be the smartest guy in the room. He's engaged. I mean he'll go out and do the work. He's not passive about it. He's not as assertive as maybe a challenger, but he's definitely known for bringing things up at board meetings just out of the blue. So that's where I get this self-interest angle with him is a little self-aggrandizing a little. It's about me.

Strategist political style. 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 can be powerful allies to a leader and should be allowed to contribute to tactical solutions (White et al., 2016).

Two of the five participating high school district superintendents identified board members with the political style of strategist for a total of two of the 25 board members. Two superintendents provided examples of how their board members demonstrated the

strategist political style. Superintendent D described his strategist board member by saying,

[H]e can be forceful. Some might even classify him as a jerk when it comes to issues. He needs to be heard. His style kind of sets off some of the other board members. He's one of the more intelligent board members. So usually if he does have an issue, it's something to think about. He will ask the hard questions to get a good outcome.

Superintendent C also described his strategist board member:

This was a person who wanted to ensure that the schools were safe and also wanted to engage key stakeholders from each one of the campuses, law enforcement to take proactive steps to ensure families and students that we were taking these concerns very, very seriously. This board member had that idea of being very transparent about security, of engaging other people so that there was a broad approach of how to address security from student perspective, from a law enforcement perspective, from a parent perspective. Just making sure that everyone was brought into the discussion to elicit any potential solutions to this. So, I think that is a good example of a board member being a strategist. With this member, if you know what you want to accomplish and how you want to be viewed by this decision in terms of being fair, reasonable, balanced you want to be honest and put all the details out on the table and address both the areas where your position is strong as well as where your position may be compromised and just paint that picture clearly so that they understand the downside and then find

that that middle road consensus that seems reasonable and defensible if it were to go into the public arena.

Adapter political style. 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 et al., 1999; Church & Waclawski, 1998; Kirton, 1976; White et al., 2016). Adaptors will support change but will need support, training, and recognition of their work (White et al., 2016).

One of the five participating high school district superintendents identified board members with the political style of adaptor for a total of only one of the 25 board members. One superintendent provided examples of how their board member demonstrated the adaptor political style. Superintendent D described his adaptor board member:

Every meeting he really does not say much. I actually have to pull information from him to get his input. His interests are usually for the good of the district in general. However, he does have two daughters that work for the district and that's when it tends to get a little bit muddy. But at every meeting he really kind of sits back and almost lies in wait; you could almost describe him as passive aggressive. I'll get an email, he'll either send an email to the president or myself saying something that he does not like. A lot of times he will shoot off an email and stinging someone or something. It's important for him to feel that status of being a board member. He is probably the greatest creator of conflict on the board. He enjoys it. He really is interested in student achievement. He's really interested in

our athletic programs. He's really interested in the image of the schools. He really is 100% for the school.

Analyst political style. 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 (L. G. Bolman & Deal, 1991; Boulgarides & Cohen, 2001; DeLuca, 1999; A. J. Rowe & Boulgarides, 1992; White et al., 2016). Analysts will avoid risk in their behavior and are unlikely to support change. A strategy in working with analysts include provide providing them with answers and examples of the proposed change. An analyst may also want to talk with others who have experienced specific change (White et al., 2016).

One of the five participating high school district superintendents identified board members with the political style of analyst for a total of only one of the 25 board members. One superintendent provided examples of how their board member demonstrated the analyst political style. Superintendent B described his analyst by stating,

It was just very much a question about her personal interests and attitudes and what we're doing in our school district. She has certain strong opinions, and she will go out in a relatively passive way to try to influence the rest of the board. She is not really engaged publicly because I think that she's not looking to shine that big spotlight on it. She likes to see the changes you'd like to see without trying to big bright light.

Research Question 2 Findings

Research question 2 asked, *What are the strategies high school district superintendents use to work successfully with the different school board member styles?*

The findings related to this research question, organized by political style, follow:

Effective strategies used with developers. Three overarching themes were identified with a total of 23 individual coded strategies. The overarching themes and codes are identified in Table 5. The theme with the highest frequency of individual coded strategies is “communication” with 18 and “decision making” with three coded strategies. The theme of “effective governance team” had two individual coded strategies. The individual coded strategies with the highest frequency of references across all themes were:

- Explain the why
- Reason what is best for kids
- Regular communication with developer board member
- Let them draw their own conclusions

Table 5

Summary of Effective Strategies Used with Developers

Political Style	Overarching Theme	Coded Strategies	Number of References
Developer	Communication	Total for all communication codes	18
		Explain the why	6
		Reason what is best for kids	5
		Regular communication with board member	5
		Share good things that are happening	1
		Celebrate the good work	1
	Decision Making	Total for all decision making codes	3
		Let them draw their own conclusions	2
		Ask for their opinion	1
	Effective Governance Team	Total for all effective governance team codes	2
		Attend CSBA trainings	2
	Total		

Communication. Under the theme of communication, the most frequently coded strategies were “explain the why,” “reason what is best for kids,” and “regular communication with board member.” Superintendent A noted, “He just likes the full explanation. And once we do that, he's good. He likes to hear the explanation of why we're doing things.” Superintendent C also explained the importance of communication by saying,

With this particular board member he would want to know where is the organization headed? And making sure that there was a common direction and vision that he felt connected to. And you could always come back to with him, this is where we're headed, this is why we're headed there. And he would completely commit to that. He is definitely an information junkie that could actually comprehend pretty sophisticated political and fiscal pieces. Laying off 75 people before Christmas, that's not a great thing. But if you're going to CSBA and you have the legislative analyst's there explaining why you have to do these actions because we're being cut so deeply, that kind of made sense.

Superintendent A explains the strategy of reasoning with them what is best for kids by stating:

We talk about what's best for kids. When I put it in that lens is when I sold her on the bond. We talked about the things that we're going to do and how it would help the teachers and the kids. So she's a supporter. She is always very thankful. We get along and because of the things we've done for kids, there hasn't been any conflict, and he's willing to spend money for the kids. I say to him this isn't what's best for kids, and this board member is very responsive to that.

Superintendent A provided more strategies under the theme of communication by sharing:

I give board updates once or twice a week, depending on the time of year. He really appreciates it and is always sure to say, 'hey, thanks for all the updates; I appreciate it.' So keeping him informed is important. I try to, like any superintendent, you don't want them to find out about something that the local

grocery store. And he appreciates that. I tried to meet with her whenever it's convenient for her and talk about things that are in her interest area because she appreciates it when I communicate with her.

Celebrate the good work was an additional strategy identified when working with developers. Superintendent A shared,

He likes to hear about the good things we're doing. He is a really a nice guy who likes to know about things we should celebrate. I tell him about the good things we're doing. I'm always taking pictures of when I'm out in classrooms and sending it to him and tell him how great our teachers and students are.

Taken together, these statements illustrate there are many forms of communication. It is important for the superintendent to be an effective communicator with his/her board members (Kowalski, 2016). In regards to communicating with developers it is important for the superintendent to have regular communication to explain the why.

Decision making. Within the theme of decision making, the most frequently coded strategies where “let them draw their own conclusion” and “ask for their opinion.” Crucial to the success of superintendents is their ability to work collaboratively in the decision making process in a politically intelligent manner as they work with their governing bodies (DeLuca, 2002; White et al., 2016). Superintendent A shared that “I wouldn't tell him, ‘Hey, this is what we're going to do.’ I tried to ask for his opinion and let him draw his own conclusions.” Superintendent C offered additional strategies under communication by stating:

Letting them discuss and process potential decisions is perhaps the one strategy that's effective, but it's a passive. It's a passive but not useless strategy either.

Then you would be able to strategize potential solutions with him, use information, he could speak publicly, you could help him create a sense of ownership where he was given some opportunities to lead that.

Effective governance team. Effective governance team was the final theme identified. The only strategy offered for this theme was “attend CSBA training.”

Building an effective governance team is important. School boards and superintendents that have a clear understanding of roles and the decision making process are in a better position to lead a school district (Peterson & Short, 2001). Superintendent A speaks to the importance of having board members trained in governance, “He's gone through all the board training that was offered, which most of board members do not. So he knows the rules and role of the board.” Superintendent C emphasized this by stating:

Helping provide potential solutions and the respect to what trainings were available for board members. What kind of presentations could we do with board members to assist them in the process or really engaging him and being proactive in this area of helping them understand their role as a board member?

It is worthy to note that both superintendent A and C said that developers are not difficult to work with, and they have not found a strategy that does not work with them. Superintendent A shared that, “I haven't had any conflict with her yet. I really haven't had conflict with her at all. Everything I have done with this board member has worked. They've all been effective so far. No conflicts.” Superintendent C concurred by stating, “Because his moral compass is so strong, all strategies work with this board member.”

Effective strategies used with supporters. Three themes were identified with a total of 40 individual coded strategies. The overarching themes and codes are identified in Table 6. The themes with the highest frequency of individual coded strategies is “conflict resolution” with 19 coded strategies and “communication” with 16. The theme of “show value and respect” had five individual coded strategies. The individual coded strategies with the highest frequency of references across all themes were:

- Provide timely information
- Provide information in a variety of ways
- Help supporters manage push back
- Prepare them for potential conflict
- Give them time to consider a solution

Table 6

Summary of Effective Strategies Used with Supporters

Political Style	Overarching Theme	Coded Strategies	Number of References	
Supporter	Communication	Total for all communication codes	16	
		Provide timely information	7	
		Provide information in a variety of ways	6	
		Have study sessions	2	
		Provide meaningful data	1	
	Conflict Resolution	Total for all conflict resolution codes	19	
		Help supporters manage pushback	6	
		Prepare them for potential conflict	6	
		Give them time to consider a solution	4	
		Show them both sides of a decision	3	
	Show Value and Respect	Total for all show value and respect codes	5	
		Let them know they are valued	3	
		Show them equal respect to other board members	2	
	Total			40

Communication. Under the theme of communication, the most frequently coded strategies were “provide timely information” and “provide information in a variety of ways.” Superintendent C stated, “I made sure that I spent time with this board member, so that I knew where he was coming from. I would make sure that I equally spent time with him as well as others. I would do a lot of one on one meetings. The key thing with

this board member is one on one meetings.” Superintendent E shared “This board member needs a lot of data. I make sure to communicate with her regularly.”

Additionally, Superintendent C gave the example:

I would do a lot of one on one meetings. And specifically, I was always making sure that she understood why I was making a particular recommendation to the board and the rationale and the reason behind that. And also why some people weren't supporting that or people were supporting that. So, it was pretty reasoned information. Keeping them informed on all critical issues proactively.

Superintendent B communication strategy included:

It was about a lot of times about talking, communication and data. A lot of it was perception data that we'd have to share with her. And reading the tea leaves and finding out if there's push back. What I came to realize over time is when I saw a decision coming in, and I knew there would be some pushback, I had to get to her first. I just sort of had this belief, whether it's teachers or parents or board members. Oftentimes people believe the first person they talk to. And so I felt that if I knew something was coming, I would want to reach out to her ahead of the decision or of it coming from public to say, ‘hey, this is what I'm thinking. I realize it's going to have some problems. These are the people who are going to like it. This is the downside, but here's the upside, here's the rationale, whether it's economic or academic or whatever that rationale is.’ So really getting to her ahead of a decision became more and more important to sort of brace her for the negative reaction that may come.

Superintendent D added additional communication strategies that are useful when working with supporters:

If there is a difficult issue, he struggles with the solution. If I give him time to analyze and time to think about things, he will usually agree with me. If I spring something on him it'll go south pretty quickly. So, with him, I have to build up to decisions, whether it's about reorganizing the district office, whether it's adding a position at the district office, adding a position at a school site taking some kind of personnel action. And then reminding them that we've talked about it for months previously and so on. He needs a lot of time to mule things over.

Conflict usually comes when I surprise him. If I have to surprise him with something that's coming up, then then I have to really do a good job explaining why he didn't get the time that he needed to mull some, a decision over with. To rectify it I make sure that the next time that we need to make a big decision. I start even before I need to, so that he has time to process any kind of important decision that he has to make.

Superintendent E shared, "We talk through the issues ahead of time. Especially if it is political. I give him a lot of information and answers before important decisions need to be made." Superintendent D offered another strategy by sharing, "I have to give him information in a variety of ways. This year it goes very well because he's the president, and we meet regularly. A lot of study sessions with him, a lot of discussion and study sessions, and a lot of presentations." This statement supports the importance of communication between superintendents and school board members. As stated in the literature, "the role of the superintendent is to be a communicator. With high levels of

expectations, school reform, and accountability, it was clear that the leader of a school system had to be an effective communicator with all stakeholders (T. J. Kowalski, 2010).

Conflict resolution. Under the theme conflict resolution, the most frequently coded strategies were “help supporters manage pushback,” “give them time to consider a solution” and “prepare them for potential conflict.” Superintendent D noted, “making sure that he has the information. He has to be able to explain his decisions and what he does, and the direction that we take with any of his friends and fellow alumni of the school.” Superintendent E added, “I make sure to show both sides of a decision before a vote. The least amount of conflict is important to this board member.” Superintendent E shared, “We talk through the issues ahead of time. Especially if it is political. I give him a lot of information and answers before important decisions need to be made.” Helping supporters manage conflict is an example of effective leadership. Political savvy is not about power but rather making an impact on specific situations by influencing those in authority (DeLuca, 1999).

Superintendent B also gave an example of the importance of managing conflict when he stated,

What I found with her was getting stuff to her ahead of time and being proactive with her. Getting to her ahead of a decision became more and more important to sort of brace her for the negative reaction that may come. And then that tended to make it easier for her to push through it because we knew which people would or wouldn't be upset. She would get most concerned if we were actively engaging with media, social media, and things like that. But again, it came back to that proactive piece that. Getting the perception data to her ahead of time on a

controversial decision and showing her that if, if the perception was against the way the district wanted to go, or the way I was recommending we go, then providing her concrete information. But then if the perception data was positive, the direction we were going, and it was just smooth sailing. So really it's that proactive communication and the perception data.

Additionally, under the theme of conflict resolution, Superintendent B shared the following strategy:

It was more about perception and managing harmony. Reading the tea leaves, what are we going to get push back? In her mind, her first question on any sort of decision is, is there going to be pushback. If there's no pushback, making a decision is easier. But if there's a faction that's going to come, even though the faction's pretty small, she's definitely going to hold on. Let's take this into account before we make any decisions here. That tended to make it easier for her to push through... So what I found with her was during the decision it was just, hey, stay the course. I can show her 10 different ways we're going to save money. She's not going to care if the public sentiment is going to be so overwhelming against the idea.

Show value and respect. Under the theme of show value and respect, the two strategies identified were “let them know they are valued” and “show them equal respect to other board member.” The literature states, “The effective leadership of a superintendent not only includes building and sustaining relationships with others, it also depends on the ability to see the need for change and being prepared to lead it” (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2001; McKee et al., 2008). This was illustrated when

Superintendent E stated, “I make sure I affirm her. I let her know that I appreciate her. I always thank and appreciate them.” Superintendent C provided additional strategies by stating:

The key is because they speak very little and always support you is treating them equal to the others because they have an ego too, even if they're not speaking a lot. And the last thing they want to feel is that they're less respected or less than member. That is always a bit of a challenge because they're kind of proud to be a board member. They've put their neck out there to run, and they don't want to feel like a superintendent doesn't respect them even if they don't speak as much as a more, let's say pushy one. Making sure that they felt equally respected as they're more positioned, counterparts are more engaged and more opinionated people so that they never felt that you didn't pay them the same respect as the others who were more vocal. Another key thing with this board member is one on one meetings and making sure that they are equally informed about the issue so that they feel commensurate with all the other board members.

Effective strategies used with challengers. Three overarching themes were identified with a total of 29 individual coded strategies. The overarching themes and codes are identified in Table 7. The theme with the highest frequency of individual coded strategies is “communication” with 13 and “defend your position” with nine individual coded strategies. The theme of “effective governance team” had seven individual coded strategies. The individual coded strategies with the highest frequency of references across all themes were:

- Information should be tight
- Do your homework
- Stand up for what is right
- Agree to disagree

Table 7

Summary of Effective Strategies Used with Challengers

Political Style	Overarching Theme	Coded Strategies	Number of References	
Challenger	Communication	Total for all communication codes	13	
		Information should be tight	8	
		Do your homework	4	
		Speak with them the way they speak to you	1	
	Defend Your Position	Total for all defend your position codes	9	
		Stand up for what is right	4	
		Agree to disagree	2	
		Know their motivations	2	
		Know where they stand on issues	1	
	Effective Governance Team	Total for all effective governance team codes	7	
		They are one of five board members	4	
		Explain board governance	2	
		Explain the consequences of their behavior	1	
	Total			29

Communication. Under the theme of communication, the most frequently coded strategies were “information should be tight,” “do your homework,” and “speak with them the way they speak with you.” High school superintendents shared the need to work with challengers in ways they would not typically work with board members with other political styles. This is important to recognize as “research makes it clear that superintendents must not disregard the need to operate politically and should adopt different leadership styles when needed” (Alemán, 2002). Superintendent E presented an example of when it is necessary to work with challengers differently by sharing,

He [the challenger] would share confidential information from closed session with others. So that means they only get absolutely necessary information and the other board members know I'm doing that. I can't trust him, so I only provide necessary information and not much more. So, I would basically go toe to toe with her and closed session and the rest of the board went my direction.

Superintendent B also gave examples of strategies for communication by sharing:

We really had to have our information tight with her. She was very into data. The best strategy we found is to have a lot of information available at any given moment, so we can answer her questions in real time. Because if she was successful in deferring it, then she had more time to politically operate and move decisions. Data, data, data, data, and data I mean like really hard stuff. It had to be concrete information. There were some issues where she was resolute that I wasn't going to change her opinion necessarily, but if I could show her to evidence, she would acquiesce. So, she was very much a hard data person. Very

concrete data is what I think was still the best with her communication.

Superintendent B also stated:

One of her techniques would be when she didn't like something, she would often push it off by saying she needed more information. So, we had to do our homework before every board meeting. We would actually talk about it ahead of time is this particular person going to say she need more information because that was one of the techniques she would use pretty often. So, we would try to have as much information available in real time as we could to counteract that. 'Oh well here's some information for you.' And we would share that with the whole board. And that's sometimes worked and sometimes didn't. I went in closed session and did a presentation on the budget, how it worked and what I thought our options were. And I remember her telling me afterwards, she said, 'That's the best presentation you've ever done for us. I appreciate that information and all those things.'

Defend your position. Under the theme of defend your position, the most frequently coded themes were "stand up for what is right," "agree to disagree" and "know their motivations." These strategies speak to the need for superintendents to manage the politics within the internal community which Lindle (1999) states is crucial. As such, defending the superintendent's position is an effective strategy when working with challengers. Superintendent B illustrates this strategy when he stated:

She wanted to meet with me and we had a good but tense conversation about a disagreement. She basically accused me of not working in the best interest of the district. And I said to her 'I 100% disagree. I know you're not going to agree

with me on that, but I hope you'll at least respect it, that this is what I feel I have to do the best interest of the district and that I don't believe doing what you're asking us to do is, and that's just where I sit.' You have to just stand up to the board member at some point and say we're not doing that.

Effective governance team. Under the theme of effective governance team, the most frequently coded strategies were “they are one of five board members” and “explain board governance.” Superintendent E shared, “I've used logic with him. It's teamwork concept around board governance with him. And that works sporadically.” One strategy deployed by superintendent C was:

Public embarrassment in a newspaper article. Anything that could potentially damage her reputation in a public forum, not a hidden forum, a board member, a board meeting wasn't sufficient to embarrass her kind of public integrity. But if something hit the print that could be Googled, she was fearful of that. That was the only external authority that would ever impact her decision making.

Interestingly, one superintendent noted that there are no effective strategies when working with the challenger political style. Superintendent C states, “If they have no moral compass they're lost. At the end of it, nothing worked with this person because they were bent on their own particular gain in the position.” All the superintendents shared that even though they have strategies that work from time to time, essentially there are very few strategies that work with this political style. This is in part due to this style's motivation on self-interests. The role of school boards has become impaired by board members lack of willingness to compromise, divisiveness, and micromanagement (Beckham & Wills, 2019). When individual board members work from their own goals

rather than the board approved goals, the success of the district becomes compromised (Waters & Marzano, 2006). This makes the superintendent's ability to build effective governance teams more challenging but all the more important as a leader.

Effective strategies used with balancers. Four overarching themes were identified with a total of 36 individual coded strategies. The overarching themes and codes are identified in Table 8. The theme with the highest frequency of individual coded strategies is “communication” with 18, and “conflict resolution” with 11 coded strategies. The theme of “relationship building” had five individual coded strategies and “effective governance team” had two individual coded strategies. The individual coded strategies with the highest frequency of references across all themes were:

- Give them what they need
- Recognize the challenge of being a parent board member
- Find the answer to their questions
- Give them timely information
- Maintain harmony between board members
- Use interpersonal skills

Table 8

Summary of Effective Strategies Used with Balancers

Political Style	Overarching Theme	Coded Strategies	Number of References
Balancer	Communication	Total for all communication codes	18
		Give them what they need	9
		Find the answer to their questions	5
		Give them timely information	4
	Conflict Resolution	Total for all conflict resolution codes	11
		Recognize the challenge of being a parent board member	6
		Maintain harmony between board members	3
		Be complimentary	2
	Relationship Building	Total for all relationship building codes	5
		Use interpersonal skills	3
		Take interest in their personal life	2
	Effective Governance Team	Total for all effective governance team codes	2
		Keep them out of the weeds	1
		Refer to CSBA protocol	1
	Total		

Communication. Under the theme of communication, the most frequently coded strategies were, “give them what they need,” “find the answers to their questions,” and “give them timely information.” Superintendent E noted, “I explain information thoroughly with this trustee. She uses her seat to gain access to knowledge. She needs direct information, so she can communicate with others.”

Superintendent B also gave an example of communication when he stated:

It is about providing information to this board member. If there was a difficult piece of information to share, don't let her find it, bring it to her ahead of time. We'd try and bring it to her ahead of time and say, 'Hey, we're aware of this. We want you to be aware of it. Here's what happened.' Be very transparent with her. It would be a sort of a combination of information with her, making sure she had some concrete data but was also interested in how, kids are going to react to an issue. How parents were going to react to an issue. So it was just communicating with her on all levels. The perception data and the hard data. And again, being proactive, don't let her hear about the issue from somebody else, make sure she's hearing about it from me.

Superintendent D provided additional strategies under the theme of communication by sharing:

She loves information. She loves being the holder of information. So anytime, anytime I can give an FYI heads up to the board, she's very appreciative of that. Even if it's confidential, I don't give them too much, but she's able to say, 'Oh, I heard about that too.' She'll say, 'Yeah, I got a heads up from the superintendent, and so I do know about that.' So if she knows about something before anybody

else, she's very happy. She'll ask a question about something that was posted, and I'll get the information. I have to give her enough information to make sure that she know what is happening at the schools. And so it's again, it's this much information that I can pump them.

With high levels of expectations, school reform, and accountability, it is clear school leaders have to be effective communicators with all stakeholders (T. J. Kowalski, 2010).

Conflict resolution. Within the theme of conflict resolution, “Recognize the challenge of being a parent board member” and “maintain harmony between board members” were the most frequently coded strategies. While trust was not mentioned by the superintendents, managing conflict is an important component of building trust (Kowalski, 2006). A superintendent must manage conflict because suspicions, misinterpretations, and accusations will compromise the effectiveness of the governance team. Superintendent D described the importance of these conflict strategies,

She loves to gossip and not engaging in that with her, whether it's about people things or what have you. She'll make a comment about something that she's heard. If I can respond, I will. And if I cannot respond, all I'll do is smile. Even if it's true, I'll smile and not confirm it. And if it's not true, then I'll just say, ‘well, there's another side to that story.’ But that's the biggest thing that I can do with her.

Superintendent B stated:

And then something involving one of her own children would happen and I would get seven phone calls about how this has got to be fixed. I would say to her ‘I understand what you're saying, but you realize that's just your daughter.

That's not everybody.' Conflicts with her that did happen and were never with other board members. They're more just around issues involving her children. And so when there was a specific issue with a school or an administrator or a teacher, she was very good about coming to me. And then I would kind of work through a process of reminding her that she is a board member. I would take her information and definitely address it and then bring it back to her. And, and she appreciated that. I think her initial reaction was to engage that she wanted to go to the school and raise hell or whatever. Over time she realized that she was better off working through me and keeping herself out of direct line because again, I kept saying, you understand the teacher when you walk in, you are a board member. She worked with me on those issues whenever there was something we had to deal with and bring it to me first, which was I think a more positive approach for her. Then I could address and bring it back around. So that is a strategy I think is what we developed as the way to make it work.

Relationship building. Under the theme of relationship building, “use interpersonal skills” and “take interest in their personal life” were coded. The literature states, effective leadership of a superintendent not only includes building and sustaining relationships with others, it also depends on the ability to see the need for change and being prepared to lead it (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2001; McKee et al., 2008). Superintendent D stated, “she has to feel, you know her family. Her children are really important to her. So take an active interest in her children or programs and how the school is doing.” Superintendent D stressed the importance of building relationships with a balancer board member:

She's very interpersonal, so if, if I absolutely need to have her vote on one thing, then, then it's just a matter of talking to her and listening to her, making sure I know how her family's doing and, and so on. She's, it's more of a personality than in a political style.

Effective governance team. The final theme is effective governance team. Coded strategies listed under this theme include “keep them out of the weeds” and “refer to CSBA protocol.” Building an effective governance team is a common theme and is supported in literature. White et al. (2016), states “a politically intelligent superintendent will work with and help their governing board members become a meaningful part of the district governance team.” Superintendent C stated, “.....like most superintendents, we show the board the 10,000 feet and keep them out of the weeds.” Superintendent E added, “I constantly need to point out CSBA protocol.”

Effective strategies used with arrangers. Three overarching themes were identified with a total of 27 individual coded strategies. The overarching themes and codes are identified in Table 9. The theme with the highest frequency of individual coded strategies is “conflict resolution” with 18, and “communication” with five coded strategies. The theme of “decision making” had four individual coded strategies. The individual coded strategies with the highest frequency of references across all themes were:

- Consider the interests everyone
- Let them know you hear them
- Have them weigh in
- Stay constantly engaged via dialogue

Table 9

Summary of Effective Strategies Used with Arrangers

Political Style	Overarching Theme	Coded Strategies	Number of References	
Arranger	Conflict Resolution	Total for all conflict resolution codes	18	
		Consider the interests everyone	5	
		Let them know you hear them	4	
		Have them weigh in	3	
		Show all sides of a solution	2	
		Works towards a best case scenario	2	
		Remind them of the moral purpose	2	
	Communication	Total for all communication codes	5	
		Stay constantly engaged via dialogue	3	
		Take the time to meet with them	2	
	Decision Making	Total for all decision making codes	4	
		Involve them in the decision	2	
		Guide them to make their own conclusion	2	
	Total			27

Conflict resolution. Under the theme of conflict resolution, the most frequently coded strategies were “consider the interests of everyone,” “let them know you hear them,” and “have them weigh in.” Effective superintendents identify the relationships

between key players in an organization and will use their influence to manage those relationships (DeLuca, 1999; White et al. 2016). Developing conflict resolution strategies will ultimately improve board relations that will lead to a more effective governance team. Superintendent A shared his strategy when working with his arranger board member,

She'll suggest things and I give on a couple of things and she wants to go a little bit easier on the teachers on discipline issues. I'll pose questions to her, and let her kind of chew on it. I don't make them make immediate decisions, especially if it's a tough decision, I put it out there to them so that we can work towards a win-win.

Superintendent D added, "It is information and with her having faith that I'm looking at everyone's interests and not just the interests of other board members." Superintendent C also shared,

I clearly know that you're in the driver's seat on this issue, right? We're split to two on either side. So if you go against it, here's your downside. And if you go for it, here's your downside. And so for him, now he's a negotiator, right? So he's thinking, what, win can I produce for each side? And so we strategized on finding something in the upside for each side. Wins for each child was really what it came down to, and as you can imagine, despite trying to be an arranger with win-loss, you kind of have a loss and a win. Best case scenario, a worst case scenario mitigating solutions in the middle.

Superintendent A added a strategy about respect by sharing, "I run things by her. Even though we both know that's what we need to do. I'll ask her, 'Hey, what do you

think about this?’ And she likes to weigh in just like any board member. That allows her to weigh in, and I think she appreciates it. It makes her feel respected.” Superintendent D added additional support for respect by saying, “I make sure that she feels that her voice and her emails and the articles that she sends are respected. The biggest thing with this board member is when she's feeling not listened to or respected.” Superintendent C offered an additional communication strategy about moral purpose:

My strategy with this board member was always to bring him back to discussing our moral purpose. Why do we exist? We exist to serve children and anything that harms that interest, we need to be very protective of. Yes, we do live in a complex world. Yes, there are issues that we're dealing with, but let's never lose sight that we're trying to do good things for kids. And so that was kind of like bringing him back to that light when he could. When he was struggling I would use this strategy on the moral purpose of why we're in this business. I kind of had to keep it tethered to that moral core to not let him get too far off.

Communication. Under the theme of communication, the most frequently coded strategies were “stay constantly engaged via dialogue” and “take time to meet with them.” Superintendent A supported this by saying,

We meet every couple of weeks, and I always have a list to discuss what we're doing. I just getting back to her, and I always point out when I'm out with the teachers, going through classrooms who I'm meeting with, you know, whether I meet with police chiefs, that's important to her. She needs me to engage her to keep her in the loop.

Superintendent D added,

The biggest strategy with her, even though it takes a lot of time, is always being very respectful and always commenting and engaging her in some kind of dialogue. Time conversations, dinners. She likes dinners and banquets. She likes to be the board member that will represent the school district at different events.

Decision making. Under the theme of decision making, the most frequently coded strategies were “involve them in the decision” and “guide them to make their own conclusion.” Superintendent D asserted the importance of decision making by stating, “She really needs to discover the truth on her own. Anytime that I try to give her a conclusion, that usually goes south on me. I don't do it.” Superintendent A added a decision making strategy by stating,

Involving her in the decision making is important. I just can't say this is what we are going to do. I would certainly word it differently. Though it's something we have to do here and we're having to suspend a teacher right now, and he's a popular teacher. I didn't say, ‘Hey, we need to suspend him, suspend them now.’ You know, I believe I said, ‘I am afraid that there's going to be a suspension with this insubordination and. What do you think?’ She will typically draw the say conclusion, but I need to allow that to happen.

Effective strategies used with planners. Two overarching themes were identified with a total of 25 individual coded strategies. The overarching themes and codes are identified in Table 10. The theme with the highest frequency of individual coded strategies is “communication” with 20, and “decision making” with five coded

strategies. The individual coded strategies with the highest frequency of references across all themes were:

- Ask direct questions
- Be straightforward with what can and cannot be done
- Remind them of the role of a board member
- Always follow up with their questions or requests
- Planners like concrete data

Table 10

Summary of Effective Strategies Used for Planners

Political Style	Overarching Theme	Coded Strategies	Number of References
Planner	Communication	Total for all communication codes	20
		Ask direct questions	7
		Be straightforward with what can and cannot be done	5
		Remind them of the role of a board member	3
		Always follow up with their questions or requests	3
		Make time to meet together	2
		Decision Making	Total for all provide decision making codes
	Planners like concrete data	3	
	Make it their idea	2	
	Total		

Communication. Under the theme of communication, the most frequently coded strategies were “ask direct questions,” “be straightforward with what can and cannot be done”, and remind them of the “role of the board.” The leader of a school system has to be an effective communicator with all stakeholders (T. J. Kowalski, 2010). This requires utilizing various communication strategies. Superintendent B provided an example of being straightforward and direct when communicating with their planner board member,

I'm trying to remind her of her job as a board member because she used to be CSBA president. I tried to reason with her from that area. Personnel is not a board's job, but she's neck deep in this whole thing. Going back to the basics and always quote, it's good to know the board goals and priorities and remind her of what their job is. As a board member, she respects that. She doesn't always like it, but I need to be direct.

Superintendent B provided another example of a communication strategy by stating,

Directly questioning him a little bit similar to the challenger personality is most effective. I just kind of go at it and follow up with whatever the issues are.

Address it pretty directly. With him is being very clear about what I think we can and cannot do education code wise. Just go right at it. Not offensively, but just be very straightforward about what's going on and what I want to see happen.

Superintendent B explained another communication strategy when working with planner board members by sharing,

You're reacting to things that he has said or done. But the after that piece is definitely following up. Some more follow up is important with him too. It's not simply just answering their questions and moving on. He's got a few underlying

goals in mind. He's an active board member right now that I think he's going to keep bringing issues up until he's satisfied or some changes made. So just keep wrapping back around and talking and talking and talking about it with him.

Decision making. The second theme for effective strategies with planners is decision making. Exemplary superintendents' decision making includes the way that they negotiate 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). The strategies identified were "provide concrete information," "make time to meet together," and "allow board member to draw their own conclusion." Superintendent B shared examples of these strategies:

We do a lot of information sharing on that. So it's providing him concrete data. He likes, formula driven, things like explaining that typically 80% of our dollars go toward personnel and personnel costs. He uses that information to make conclusions. I can't ignore him. I've got to get the information that he's looking for. He's more of concrete data kind of guy. He likes to I get focused around that kind of data and that can help the conversation the way you want to go or at least to come to some resolution. So again, he's a data guy.

Superintendent A also shared about his planner,

I tried to I meet with her more than anybody. So she needs attention. So I take her out to lunch and I just try to get on her good side and get her to understand where I'm coming from. She also likes to make her own decisions, so I try not to make things my ideas but rather her ideas.

Effective strategies used with strategists. Two overarching themes were identified with a total of 12 individual coded strategies. The overarching themes and codes are identified in Table 11. The theme with the highest frequency of individual coded strategies is “decision making” with six, and “share common values” with six coded strategies. The individual coded strategies with the highest frequency of references across all themes were:

- Be transparent
- Include all people impacted
- Show the upside and downside of decisions
- If it is important to them, make it important to you
- Predict the information they will need

Table 11

Summary of Effective Strategies Used for Strategists

Political Style	Overarching Theme	Coded Strategies	Number of References	
Strategist	Decision Making	Total for all decision making codes	6	
		Be Transparent	2	
		Include all people impacted	2	
		Show the upside and downside of decisions	2	
		Share Common Values	Total for all share common values codes	6
	If it is important to them, make it important to you	3		
	Predict the information they will need	2		
	Avoid status quo	1		
			Total	12

Decision making. Under the theme of decision making, the most frequently coded strategies were “be transparent,” “include all people impacted,” and “show the upside and downside of decisions.” Including stakeholders is important to strategists during the decision making process. This strategy is supported in research. Superintendents must also master communication in order to hear, organize, and operationalize the interests of the many stakeholders they interact with, focusing them all on the goals the board and community have set forth and leading all in a common goal-centered direction (T. J. Waters & Marzano, 2006). Superintendent C provided an example of these strategies by stating,

I try to paint two sides to an equation. So, here's a potential solution. Here's the upside of that solution and here's the downside of that solution and trying to find that moderate middle if you will, that at times you can find solutions that address both. Not always, but when you can, it's not a bad place to be.

Additionally, superintendent D shared that his board member:

Needs to be heard. His style kind of set off some of the other board members, but we knew there had to be a variety of solutions. And so, we were able to make a change in the design of a building, and then he softened his view on the building greatly over the next meeting.

Superintendent C shared a strategy about being transparent and involving many people:

In this case, this particular board member had that idea of being very transparent about security of engaging other people so that there was a broad approach of how to address security from student perspective, from a law enforcement perspective, from a parent perspective. Just making sure that everyone was brought into the

discussion to elicit any potential solutions to this. We have to be open to improving the idea that we will come out of this endeavor stronger because of the multiple points of view to try to solve the problem.

Share common values. Under the theme of share common values, the most frequently coded strategies were “if it’s important to them, make it important to you” and “predict the information they will need.” Sharing common values is supported in research. Superintendents who are effective in articulating district goals with the school board tend to see improved student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Superintendent D stated, “We need to share common values. If I say something that is not important, that's important to him or if I give the appearance that it's not that important that's when things will go south with him.” Superintendent C also stated:

The way that I worked with this board member was to share a common value together of safety for our schools. If you know what you want to accomplish and how you want to be viewed by this decision in terms of being fair, reasonable, balanced you want to be honest and put all the details out on the table and address both the areas where your position is strong as well as where your position may be compromised and just paint that picture clearly so that they understand the downside and then find that that middle road consensus that seems reasonable and defensible if it were to go into the public arena.

Superintendent D shared a strategy in regards to providing information to his strategist board member,

I have to predict what's going to be asked ahead of time. Right now he's focused on special ed. funding and the encroachment of the general fund. So I have to

make sure that he knows this is what we're doing to try to prevent it or at least to know what happens in due process hearings and what the process is and why we're more likely to give in early on as opposed to fighting something. And that's worked well.

Effective strategies used with adapters. Three overarching themes were identified with a total of 13 individual coded strategies. The overarching themes and codes are identified in Table 12. The theme with the highest frequency of individual coded strategies is “communication” with six, and “show value and respect” with four coded strategies. The theme of “effective governance team” had three individual coded strategies. The individual coded strategies with the highest frequency of references across all themes were:

- Take time for meaningful communication
- Give adapters factual information
- Appeal to their status

Table 12

Summary of Effective Strategies Used for Adapters

Political Style	Overarching Theme	Coded Strategies	Number of References
Adapter	Communication	Total for all communication codes	6
		Take the time for meaningful communication	4
		Give adapters factual information	2
	Show Value and Respect	Total for all show value and respect codes	4
		Appeal to their status	2
		Validate their ideas	1
		Meet their needs	1
	Effective Governance Team	Total for all effective governance team codes	3
		Go back to CSBA guidelines	1
		Build a governance team	1
		Redirect	1
	Total		

Communication. Under the theme of communication, the most frequently coded strategies were “take the time for meaningful communication” and “give adapters factual information.” Once again, according to Kowalski (2010), superintendents need to develop strategies around effective communication. Superintendent D provided examples of these strategies by stating,

The biggest thing is constant communication, so I can provide him factual information. When I lose patience and I'll just try to address a question or something quickly, that is usually when things get sideways between me and this person. When I communicate via text, that's when things will go sideways. I want him to have the facts straight, so I'm able to have a lot of conversations with him to mitigate any potential conflicts.

Show value and respect. Under the theme of show value and respect, the most frequently coded strategies were “appeal to their status” and “validate their ideas.” Ripley et al. (2013) agreed that generating mutual respect is important between a superintendent and the school board. Superintendent D also shared a strategy they use to show their board members they are valued and respected,

I appeal to his seniority on the board. It usually works to solicit his opinions because he is very passive. He was a local star, so if you appeal to his pride, usually good things happen. I let him know when he has a great idea that should be brought up at a meeting.

Effective governance team. Under the theme of effective governance team, the most frequently coded strategies were “go back to CSBA guidelines” and “build a governance team.” Superintendent D offered one specific strategy by stating, “I remind him of the role of the board and board protocols and that he is a member of a governance team. I always go back to CSBA guidelines.” Role clarity can prevent future political issues and helps build an effective governance team between the school board and superintendent (Russell, 2014).

Effective strategies used with analysts. Two overarching themes were identified with a total of 14 individual coded strategies. The overarching themes and codes are identified in Table 13. The theme with the highest frequency of individual coded strategies is “communication” with 13 individual coded strategies, and “effective governance team” with two coded strategies. The individual coded strategies with the highest frequency of references across all themes were:

- Put items in the parking lot and get to it later
- Promote open dialogue
- Provide information
- Follow up
- Remind them they are one of five

Table 13

Summary of Effective Strategies Used with Analysts

Political Style	Overarching Theme	Coded Strategies	Number of References
Analyst	Communication	Total for all communication codes	12
		Put items in the parking lot and get to it later	3
		Promote open dialogue	3
		Provide information	3
		Follow up	3
	Effective Governance Team	Total for all governance team codes	2
		Remind them that they are one of five	2
			14

Communication. Under the theme of communication, the most commonly coded strategies include “put items in the parking lot and get to it later” “promote open dialogue” “provide information” and “follow up.” A superintendent will likely be more successful if they can use interpersonal skills to communicate issues facing the school district and articulate how decisions have been made (Peterson & Short, 2001).

Superintendent B stressed the need for effective communication:

At the end of the day, it always seems to boil down to communication with this particular member. It usually has to do with a more open dialogue. In terms of communication, I would just let her air out her opinion and then reminding her that you're one board member and not all the members feel the way you do. I set up a time to meet with her outside of the board meetings, so it's not on the stage of a board meeting. I've wound up just dealing with her one on one and that is the strategy that appears to resolve it without her bringing it back around to engage other board members. She'll put something on the table without warning.

Superintendent B offered strategies about providing information and putting items in the parking lot, and follow up:

I address that basically through information communication. I will hook her up with our assistant superintendent who oversees curriculum, hooked her up with our social science department chair where we address these issues in the curriculum and showed her all the information that we have available. Following through with that. One of the things I would say that if anything's gone sideways with this particular board member, it's when we've put some through the parking lot, but then we've not addressed it and deferred it. She is accommodating of us

putting it aside, but don't ignore it because that will come back and bite you in the tail.

Effective governance team. Under the theme of effective governance team, the most frequently coded strategy was “remind them they are one of five” School boards are the leaders of local school systems, and these board members govern school systems that have become increasingly complex. Even though the role of the school board seems clearly defined, there is much confusion as to the scope of their duties within a governance team (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009; Campbell & Greene, 1994; T. J. Kowalski, 2013). As such, superintendents must help board members understand their role in order to develop effective governance teams. Superintendent B shared an example of helping an analyst board member understand their role,

I remind her that she is one board member and not all the members feel the way she does, and then we're going to do what's in the best interest of kids in the district. I let her air it out and talk about her position then she comes to realization that okay, not everybody feels like I do. I'm one of five board members, and I'm going to have to go with the group.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the study's purpose, research questions, methodology, data collection process, population and sample, and a comprehensive description of the data analysis process. This was then followed by a presentation and analysis of the findings that emerged from an in-depth review of five one-on-one interviews with high school district superintendents. This analysis was guided by two

research questions, which aimed to identify the perceived political styles of board members and effective strategies used in working with the different political styles.

Chapter V presents a final summary of the study, including major findings, unexpected findings, and conclusions from the results of the study. These are followed by implications for action, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks and reflections.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a review of the purpose statement and research questions, methodology, population, and sample, and presents a final summary of the study, including major findings, unexpected findings, and conclusions from the results of the study. These are followed by implications for action, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks and reflections.

Purpose

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

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

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

Methodology

To identify the perceived political styles of high school district superintendents and board members, and the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members, the methodology selected for this study is sequential explanatory mixed method. The explanatory strategy first gathers and

examines quantitative data and then gathers and examines qualitative data (J. W. Creswell, 2003). The purpose of this strategy is to use qualitative findings to aid in the explanation and interpretation of the quantitative results (J. W. Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Numerical data (quantitative), through use of a survey, was used to provide the researcher a perspective of the political styles exemplary superintendents identify as their own political style and the political styles of their board members. Qualitative research designs emphasize gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena, and most of the data are in the form of words (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative researchers study how people and groups construct meaning and collect data via interviews, observations and documents (Patton, 2015). Qualitative data is analyzed and interpreted to find meaningful themes and patterns (Patton, 2015). Qualitative inquiry documents what happens among real people in the real world in their own words (Patton, 2015). Qualitative researchers document the actions of these people and the intended and unintended consequences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Patton, 2015). A qualitative method is appropriate, for the participants of this study will participate in interviews and share their real life experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015).

In addition to this being a mixed method study, it was a sequential explanatory design. In a sequential explanatory design, research is done in two phases. This explanatory sequential mixed-methods case study combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches, also known as an explanatory method (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This design is used when quantitative data is needed and qualitative data is necessary to give meaning to the quantitative findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Population

A population is defined as a group of interest to the researcher of which the results of the study will be generalized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Roberts, 2015). The population for this study was California public school district superintendents. Currently, there are 1,026 public school district superintendents in the state of California (CSBA, 2018; CDE, 2016). The common characteristics of this superintendent group is that they all are hired by and work for school boards. Working with the governance team, superintendents collaboratively develop the school districts vision and goals and are accountable to the board for implementation. The scope of responsibilities range from building agendas for board meetings, being present in the school communities, and working with the various stakeholder groups of the school district. Superintendents implement policies adopted by the school board and are responsible for leading and managing every aspect of the school district operations (T. J. Kowalski, 2013). According to Patten (2014), researching entire populations can be difficult, therefore researchers often further narrow the study population to a target population.

Target Population

Identifying a target population is necessary to narrow the scope of the study population and identify the study sample. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state a target population is a subset of the population that share similar characteristics. As stated, there are 1,026 public superintendents in the state of California. To narrow the scope of the study, the target population for this study is California superintendents of high school districts. High school districts are school districts comprised of only high

schools. High schools serve students from grades 9 through grade 12. According to the CDE (2016), there are 76 high school districts in the state of California resulting in 76 superintendents of high school districts. As such, these 76 California high school superintendents were the designated target population for this study.

Sample

Patton (2017) states, “researchers frequently draw a sample from a population, which is the group in which researchers are ultimately interested” (p. 55). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) narrow this down by calling a sample “the group of subjects from whom the data are collected” (p. 129). According to Patten (2014) “when it is impractical to study an entire population, researchers draw a sample, study it, and infer that what is true of the sample is probably also true of the population” (p. 53). This study used a purposeful convenience sample. Purposeful sampling “selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p, 138). The sample for this study was five exemplary high school district superintendents who were considered “exemplary” through the use of selection criteria.

The credibility of this study relies on the procedures used to select the sample (Roberts, 2010). Thus, selection criteria were developed for this study in order to identify exemplary high school superintendents in California. An exemplary high school district superintendent is a school district leader who demonstrates at least four of the following eight criteria:

- Evidence of positive governance team relationships.
- A minimum of three years of experience as a superintendent in current district.
- Identified by county superintendent as exemplary in working with board.
- Identified by a panel of experts knowledgeable of the work of superintendents.
- Received recognition as an exemplary superintendent by a professional organization such as ACSA.
- Recognition by their peers.
- Membership in professional associations in their field.
- Participated in CSBA Masters in Governance training or other governance training with at least one board member.

The superintendent selection process was based on meeting the above mentioned criteria and recommendations from both educational experts and executive search consultants. Educational experts are active and respected practitioners of education. They are well networked and have knowledge of who are current exemplary superintendents. Executive search consultants are typically retired superintendents who had a distinguished career. Further, they have been hired by executive search firms to assist school district board members in the superintendent hiring process. These professionals have experience and collegial relationships with high school superintendents throughout California.

For this study, one retired superintendent who is a member of the north superintendents group, has more than 20 years' experience as superintendent, taught in doctoral programs at the university level, and worked as a search consultant, asked

county superintendents to nominate high school district superintendents in their county that are exemplary and meet the study criteria as exemplary. Additionally, a sitting superintendent who is also a member of the north superintendents group and is considered an exemplary high school superintendent identified qualified superintendents for this study. Other methods of identifying exemplary superintendents was through the use of the news media, social media, and school websites. Once evidence of exemplary superintendents was obtained by the researcher, five high school district superintendents were selected to be the sample of this study.

Major Findings

The purpose of this study was to identify the political styles of high school district superintendents and school board members as perceived by superintendents. In addition, it was the purpose to identify and explain the political strategies high school district superintendents use to work with the different political styles of school board members. There are several major findings for research question one and two. The major findings are presented below.

Major Finding 1: Superintendents Work in the Interest of the Organization when Working with School Board Members

Exemplary high school superintendents need to work in the interest of the organization. A politically savvy and intelligent superintendent puts the organization first, believes in the issue at hand, plays above board, and avoids political blind spots. Effective leaders build credibility with others by putting aside personal agendas (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). Exemplary high school superintendents most frequently perceive their own political style as either a strategist or a developer. These two political

styles are on the “organizational interest” end of the “goal allegiance continuum” found in *The Politically Intelligent Leader* (White, et al. 2016). Of the five high school district superintendents, the most frequently self-reported political style was that of a strategist, with three superintendents identifying with that style. Two superintendents identify as developers. None of the other remaining seven political styles (adapter, analyst, arranger, balancer, challenger, planner or supporter) were reported by any of the five superintendents in this study.

Major Finding 2: Superintendents Work with all Political Styles of School Board Members

Exemplary high school superintendents perceive board members having a variety of all of the political styles. Superintendents must understand how to work with others who have the entire range of styles (White et al, 2016). Of 25 board members, the most frequently reported political styles were balancer, challenger, developer, and supporter, with four board members each of this style. The second most frequently reported political style of board members was arranger with three board members. The third most frequently reported political style was that of planner and strategist with two reported. Lastly, the adapter and analyst political styles each had one board member of that style.

Major Finding 3: Superintendents Utilize Effective Communication Strategies when Working with Political Styles of Board Members

The most commonly identified strategy high school superintendents use is communication with the school board. Communication was the most frequently reported strategy in eight of the nine political styles. While the type of communication and motivation behind communication were different from one political style to another, it is

clear that communication between the superintendent and school board members must be attended to. This finding is supported by research that has found being an effective communicator is one of the most important roles of the superintendent (Kowalski, 2016).

All five high school superintendents applied the strategy of communication differently. Even though they all used the term “communication,” the motives behind the communication would lead to other findings. Communication is the overarching strategy that transcends nearly all other strategies.

Major Finding 4: Managing the Decision Making Process is Crucial when Working with School Board Members

Superintendents must manage decision making with the school board members. All five high school superintendents deployed strategies to improve the decision making process. Exemplary superintendents decision making includes the way that they negotiate 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). The strategies used in approaching decision making varied from one political style to another. For example, with planner and developer school board members, superintendents need to allow them to draw their own conclusions. With strategist school board members, superintendents need to create a decision making process that is transparent, inclusive and identifies the pros and cons of a decision. Including stakeholders is important to a strategist during the decision making process.

Major Finding 5: The Challenger Political Style Negates All Strategies

Exemplary high school superintendents will try nearly any strategy to work with their challenger school board members, but in the end, there is little that works.

Challenger school board members operate from their own self-interest and have little regard for the mission of the school district. This finding is supported by White et al. (2016) that state political encounters with challenger board members are often demanding and intimidating. All of the superintendents said of working with challengers is that as much as they try to find effective strategies that work, there is nearly nothing that does because they have no moral compass. Superintendents report the strategies used when working with challengers are communication, defend your position and build an effective governance team.

Major Finding 6: Building an Effective Governance Team is Necessary When Working with School Board Members

Exemplary high school superintendents deploy strategies to build effective governance teams. Even though the role of the school board is clearly defined, there is much confusion as to the scope of their duties (L. Bjork & Blasé, 2009; Campbell & Greene, 1994; T. J. Kowalski, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative for superintendent to constantly work with their board members to work towards being an effective governance team. Governance team strategies vary from one political style to the next. All high school superintendents encourage their board members to attend CSBA trainings and conferences. Superintendents will also refer board members to CSBA protocol when necessary. Lastly, superintendents will also remind assertive board members that they are one of five board members.

Major Finding 7: Conflict Resolution is Important When Working with School Board Members

Exemplary high school superintendents work with their board members to manage conflict either between board members or with members of the community. This aligns with the literature that finds effective superintendents identify the relationships between key players in an organization and will use their influence to manage those relationships (DeLuca, 1999; White et al. 2016). High school superintendents will use strategies to manage potential conflict between board members by building common goals and making sure that all board members receive equal attention and respect. Superintendents will also help manage conflict by helping school board member's deal with potential conflict that comes from the community when governing the school district.

Major Finding 8: School Board Members who are also Parents Present a Unique Challenge

Board members with children enrolled in the school district present a challenge to superintendents. High school superintendents reported board members would often deviate from their regular political style when an issue involving their child or their child's school was discussed and/or a decision needed to be made. In these instances, they would deviate from organizational interests to self-interests. Superintendent C noted that his board member was "outstanding until it came to an issue pertaining to her own child. When that would happen, she became illogical and motivated by self-interest." Superintendent D also added that one of his school board members "would advocate for all students until it came to matters involving his children. At that point he would

advocate only for his kids.” High school superintendents reported this being an extreme challenge as it becomes unpredictable what strategies will work once the board members interests have shifted.

Major Finding 9: Trust Building was not Identified as an Effective Strategy to use with Board Members

While trust is almost universally accepted as a building block for positive relationships and conflict management, it was not mentioned in interviews with superintendents. The word “trust” was not mentioned in any of the five interviews with exemplar high school superintendents. As such, a “trust building” theme did not emerge. This is unexpected as numerous researchers have indicated trust as an essential leadership skill and strategy (Covey, 2006; Harvey & Drolet, 2004; McKee et al., 2008; White et al., 2016). In addition to trust building, relationship building was also rarely mentioned by any of the five exemplar high school superintendents. The researcher would have anticipated that “building trust” and “relationship building” would have been prominent themes of the study. Relationship building only emerged as a prominent theme under the balancer political style and was absent in the other eight remaining political styles.

A case can be made, however, that many of the findings were intended to build trust. Communication, conflict resolution, effective governance team and decision making are all rooted in trust. Even though trust was never mentioned, this researcher believes it is still an important component for being an effective high school superintendent.

Conclusions

As demonstrated by the research findings of the study, in conjunction with connections to the literature, the researcher was able to make several conclusions concerning high school superintendents own political styles, the political styles of their board members, and effective strategies to use with each of the nine political styles. Some conclusions resulted from a combination of one or more findings as some themes could be found across multiple political styles.

Conclusion 1: Superintendents Must be Prepared to Work With all Nine of the Political Styles as Exhibited by Board Members

It is concluded that high school superintendents who are prepared to work with all nine of the political styles as exhibited by board members will be more politically savvy. A politically savvy and intelligent superintendent puts the organization first, believes in the issue at hand, plays above board, and avoids political blind spots (DeLuca, 1999; White et al., 2016). In this study, the five exemplary high school superintendents collectively identified board members that had all nine political styles. It is likely that during the tenure of a superintendent, he/she will work with board members with several political styles. Superintendents who can recognize the political styles and deploy effective strategies will be well served.

Conclusion 2: Superintendents Must be able to Effectively use a Variety of Communication Strategies to Work with Board Members

It can be concluded that superintendents who utilize effective communication strategies when working with board members will have a better governance team. Superintendents that do not develop methods of communication with the political styles

of board members will have difficulty working effectively with them. Regardless the political style, communication is a significant theme when working with school board members. With high levels of expectations, school reform, and accountability, it was clear that the leader of a school system had to be an effective communicator with all stakeholders (T. J. Kowalski, 2010). The strategies under communication vary, but communication is paramount when working with board members.

As Superintendent C put it, “at the end of the day, it always seems to boil down to communication. Some of that can be in terms of data, some of that can just be in terms of discussion and letting them air out.”

Conclusion 3: Superintendents Must be Able to Utilize a Variety of Conflict

Resolution Strategies to Effectively work with Board Members

It is concluded that superintendents who utilize conflict resolution strategies when working with board members will have more success in decision making and building a governance team. Superintendents who are adept at using a variety of conflict resolution strategies to work with board members to find common ground will build a more effective governance team. Effective high school superintendents identify the relationships between key players in an organization and will use their influence to manage those relationships (DeLuca, 1999; White et al. 2016). Developing conflict resolution strategies will ultimately improve board relations that will lead to a more effective governance team. Conflict resolution strategies will help board members who are adverse to issues that will fill a board room, and board members who value harmony.

Conclusion 4: Superintendents Who do Not Encourage Board Development are Unlikely to Have an Effective Governance Team

It can be concluded that superintendents who engage the board in ongoing board development will create effective governance teams. Superintendents encourage school board members attend CSBA workshops and conferences. Superintendent also refer to board protocol when necessary. The strategies and motivations vary for creating an effective governance team, but by having an effective governance team is a common strategy in working with self-interest political styles. Superintendent C illustrates this when he said:

Our board is highly involved in masters of governance. All of them have gone through masters in governance through CSBA individually, which we recommend it. We support it, we fund it. And that's been proven to be pretty effective. I would say if a new superintendent asked me, I would say definitely get your board involved with CSBA masters in governance.

Conclusion 5: Superintendents Must Utilize Strategies that Demonstrate Board Members are Valued and Respected

It can be concluded that exemplar high school superintendents who utilize strategies that demonstrate value and respect to school board members will build high levels of trust. It is important to remember that each board member is a human being who took a risk by running for school board. Each member deserves respect from the superintendent. Each board member deserves to know that the superintendent values and appreciates them, even when they don't see eye to eye. Trust is the key to leadership and political action (Covey, 2006; Harvey & Drolet, 2004; White et al., 2016).

Superintendents who gain the trust of their stakeholders can influence them to work for the betterment of the organization (White et al., 2016). According to T. J. Kowalski (2006),

Trust is essential because without it, there are suspicions, misinterpretations, accusations, insecurity, and political behavior that can run rampant. Studies have found that superintendents and board members share that their most important element in a positive working relationship is trust. (p. 150)

Implications for Action

The research in this study yielded important insight into the most effective strategies high school district superintendents can use when working with board members who have one of the nine political styles (challenger, arranger, strategist, planner, balancer, developer, analyst, adaptor and supporter). The following section addresses the implications for action superintendents, school boards, universities and professional organizations should implement immediately to better prepare superintendents to navigate the politics of school governance and political styles of board members.

Implication 1: New Superintendents Should be Required to Participate in ACSA Superintendents Academy

It is recommended that new superintendents be expected to participate in the ACSA Superintendents Academy. It goes without saying that superintendents need training and support in leading a school district. The ACSA Superintendents Academy has the reputation for being a tremendous resource for superintendents to learn about the fundamental skills needed to lead school districts. Besides training, participants of the

ACSA Superintendent's Academy network with other superintendents and also meet potential superintendent mentors.

Implication 2: Modify ACSA Superintendents Academy to Include Political Intelligence and Effective Political Strategies

It is recommended that the ACSA Superintendents Academy modify the topics and themes covered. The complexities of leading a school district is constantly changing. The Superintendents Academy provides robust training in governance, human relations, instructional leadership, and policy and procedures. The academy should also include a seminar about political intelligence and effective strategies when working with the political styles of board members. Every superintendent this researcher has told about this study has commented how valid and relevant the topic is. An essential outcome of the Superintendents Academy should be to help new superintendents become politically savvy.

Implication 3: Board Members Should be Required to Participate in CSBA Masters in Governance

It is recommended that new school board members participate in the CSBA Masters in Governance program. Legislation needs to be adopted to require all school board members to attend professional training before they serve their term on the school board. The same expectation of superintendents participating in the Superintendents Academy should be applied to school board members. School board members should be afforded the same opportunities for professional learning as superintendents. The CSBA Masters in Governance program has the reputation for equipping school board members with the knowledge and skills to build and support an effective governance structure.

Participating school board members also network with school board members of other school districts.

Implication 4: Modify CSBA Masters in Governance to Include Political Intelligence and Effective Strategies in Working with Different Political Styles

It is recommended that CSBA modify its Masters in Governance program. The Masters in Governance program provides robust training in governance, policy, school finance, human resources and community relations. The Masters in Governance program should also include a seminar about political intelligence and effective strategies when working with the political styles of superintendents and other school board members. School boards who have members with an understanding of the political styles of the other school board members and the superintendent will create a more effective governance team.

Implication 5: Modify Master's Degree in Education to Include an Emphasis on Political Intelligence and Effective Strategies

It is recommended that universities who offer Master's degree in education and administrative credentials modify the curriculum to include political intelligence, political styles and effective strategies to use with varying political styles. Universities should specifically add this research into the curriculum as most universities do not specifically focus on this crucial area. There are limited resources to help principals and/or superintendents navigate the political waters of running a school or school district. Universities should include curriculum that teaches administrators about the politics of working within a school district. Curriculum should also include topics such as: communication, conflict resolution, decision making, and effective governance teams.

Implication 6: School Districts Should Hire a Consultant to Work with Governance Teams

It is recommended that school boards hire a consultant to work with the board members and superintendent. The role of the consultant is to facilitate the annual evaluation of the superintendent and to be available as a mentor for the superintendent. The governance team and consultant should keep in mind the political styles in an effort to build a more effective team. Consultants must meet with school boards multiple times a year to support the relationship between the school board and superintendent. Training provided by the consultant should include political styles and how effective strategies can be used between the members and superintendent.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, it is recommended that future research be conducted to continue to expand the understanding of the political styles of superintendents and board members. Further, additional research on the effective strategies to use with the nine political styles should be explored.

- It is recommended that a detailed quantitative survey, such as the *Inventory of Political Styles* by White et al. (2016), be used to gather more comprehensive quantitative data and improve the accuracy of the reporting. The current study asked superintendents to identify their political style and that of their individual board members by reviewing the definitions for each political style.
- It is recommended that a future study using a mixed-methods approach with both qualitative and quantitative data collected from both the superintendents and school board members could add breadth and depth to the data collected.

The current study used mixed-methods to gather quantitative and qualitative data from exemplar superintendents. A better narrative understanding of the perspective of board members will add powerful information to the existing framework.

- As the current study was part of a larger thematic peer researcher group, it is recommended a meta-analysis study be conducted utilizing the results from all the thematic studies to explore similarities and differences amongst all 10 studies.
- It is recommended that a future mixed-method study of female high school district superintendents be conducted. The current study sample included all male exemplar high school district superintendents. It is recommended that a replication study be conducted which explores the political styles of exemplar female high school district superintendents and the political styles of their board members.
- It is recommended a study be conducted specifically with high school district superintendents. This study was focused on high school district superintendents; however, it did not focus on strategies that were specific and unique to high school district superintendents. A research question that asked if there are strategies that work for high school district superintendents as opposed to all superintendents will add depth to the study.
- It is recommended a study be conducted that takes a closer look at the political styles of school board members who are voted in at-large districts compared to being voted in by area districts to see if differences may exist. It is

important to know if there is a political impact when school board members are elected by a singular area or by the district areas at-large.

- It is recommended that a quantitative study be conducted that looks at the political styles of superintendents based on years of experience and education to determine if differences exist based on different variables. There are no programs that truly prepare a new superintendent for the rigor of the job until they experience firsthand. A study of effective strategies used by superintendents who have been in the field for multiple years as opposed to those who have just entered as a new superintendent will add depth to the study.
- It is recommended a replication study be conducted with school board members who have completed CSBA Masters in Governance training. School board members who have completed training in effective governance as well as political styles will add depth to further research.
- It is recommended that a replication study be conducted with superintendents who have completed ACSA Superintendents Academy. Superintendents who have complete additional training in effective governance and political styles will add depth to further research.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

During the time of this study, school districts have been hit with one crisis after another. There have been dozens of school shootings resulting in the deaths of too many students and school staff. Schools have gone dark because of power outage decisions made by the state power utility companies. Entire towns have been destroyed by

devastating fires displacing thousands of people. The opioid epidemic and e-cigarettes plague our schools and communities. The homeless rate has never been higher. Every day there seems to be a new crisis that hits our schools that the superintendent has to manage.

Additionally, let's not forget that the average tenure of a school superintendent is less than three years. This means that during the time of this study, hundreds of California school superintendents left their school district for myriad reasons. The role and expectations of school superintendents are becoming untenable. There needs to be more systems of support in public education in order to better equip superintendents to effectively lead our public schools.

The research and writing of this dissertation have been both meaningful and relevant. I have worked in education for over 25 years, and have been working closely with board members for over a decade. Understanding what political styles are and how they are applied to school board members and superintendents has helped me grow as a school district leader. My professional growth has been exponential. I have a better understanding of how to work with and support board members.

It is clear that there is a need for this type of research and training, for superintendents currently are not provided the proper level support. Superintendents did not knowingly enter education as a young teacher to eventually become the leader of a school district. Delivering effective instruction to students and building relationships with them is not the same as managing a school district. The job of running a school district is difficult; it is especially difficult if a superintendent lacks political savvy.

I hope this work will result in further research that will lead to more support for both superintendents and school board members. The end game is about student achievement. There is a direct correlation to student achievement and effective governance teams. If this study contributes to more effective governance teams, I will be satisfied.

Ultimately, I have a tremendous amount of respect for those who serve as school board members. An effective school board member makes personal sacrifices in order to perform well for the citizens of their community. It is local democracy in action. Good schools mean good communities. There are few things more important than when adults come together to advocate for kids.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Brandman University Instructional Review Board

Dear Jeffrey Tooker,

Congratulations, your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board. This approval grants permission for you to proceed with data collection for your research. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If any issues should arise that are pertinent to your IRB approval, please contact the IRB immediately at BUIRB@brandman.edu. If you need to modify your BUIRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at the following link:
<https://irb.brandman.edu/Applications/Modification.pdf>.

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank you,

Doug DeVore, Ed.D.

Professor

Organizational Leadership

BUIRB Chair

ddevore@brandman.edu

www.brandman.edu

APPENDIX B

Letter of Invitation

Study: Strategies Exemplary High School Superintendents Use to Work with the Political Styles of School Board Members

September 1, 2019

Dear Prospective Study Participant:

You are invited to participate in a mixed methods research study that identifies the political styles of superintendents and school board members and explore the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political strategies of school board members. The main investigator of this study is Jeffrey Tooker, Doctoral Candidate in Brandman University's Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program. You were chosen to participate in this study because you are a high school district superintendent. Participation will require about one hour of your time and is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

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

The results of this study may provide critical information and strategies that can help superintendents use political intelligence to leverage power and influence which in turn can contribute to longevity in the position. Further, the study may contribute to the professional growth of superintendents and board members and used by organizations such as ACSA and CSBA in filling a need for professional support.

PROCEDURES: If you decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to participate in a brief electronic survey followed by a face-to-face interview conducted by the researcher. During the interview, you will be asked a series of questions designed to allow you to share your experiences as a superintendent working with different political styles of school board members. The interview session will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are minimal risks for your participation in this research study. It may be inconvenient for you to arrange a time to respond to the electronic survey and/or for the interview which must be conducted face-to-face in a mutually agreed upon location, as arranged with you when free from any distractions. Your interview will last no longer than one hour. For the purposes of this study only, the interview will be documented using audio recording devices. These recordings will only be reviewed by the researcher. Your responses will be coded and

unlinked to any personal identifying information before reporting or publication in the dissertation study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participation, but your feedback could help contribute to existing literature and provide recommendations critical to identifying the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members. The information from this study is intended to inform researchers, superintendents, board members and professional support organizations such as ACSA and CSBA.

ANONYMITY: Records of information that you provide for the research study and any personal information you provide will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

You are encouraged to ask questions, at any time, that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. You may contact me by email at [redacted]. You can also contact Dr. Keith Larick (Dissertation Chair) at larick@brandman.edu. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or your rights as a study 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) 341-9937.

Respectfully,
Jeffrey Tooker
Doctoral Candidate, Brandman University

APPENDIX C

Research Participant's 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 pressures 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.

Brandman University IRB Adopted November 2013

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

INFORMATION ABOUT: Strategies Exemplary High School Superintendents Use to Work with the Political Styles of School Board Members

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Jeffrey Tooker

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Jeffrey Tooker, a doctoral student from Brandman University. The purpose of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study is to identify the political styles of superintendents and school board members as perceived by superintendents. In addition, it is the purpose to identify and explain the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of school board members. The results of this study may provide critical information and strategies that can help superintendents use political intelligence to leverage power and influence which in turn can contribute to longevity in the position. Further, the study may contribute to the professional growth of superintendents and board members and used by organizations such as ACSA and CSBA in filling a need for professional support.

By participating in this study, I agree to participate in a brief electronic survey and a face-to-face interview with the researcher. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be conducted in person.

I understand that:

- a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher.
- b) There are no major benefits to you for participation, but your feedback could help contribute to existing literature and provide recommendations critical to identifying the political strategies superintendents use to work with the different political styles of board members. The information from this study is intended to inform researchers, superintendents, board members and professional support organizations such as ACSA and CSBA. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.
- c) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Jeffrey Tooker at [redacted].
- d) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate

or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. In addition, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

e) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that 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.

Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date BUIRB Written Informed Consent

APPENDIX E

Political Styles Survey and Definitions

Political Styles Survey & Definitions

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.

- 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)

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

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; Whit, 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.

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.

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)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board member 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board member 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board member 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board member 4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board member 5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board member 6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board member 7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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 F

Audio Release Form

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: Strategies Exemplary High School Superintendents Use to Work with the Political Styles of School Board Members

**BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY
16355 LAGUNA CANYON ROAD
IRVINE, CA 92618**

I authorize Jeffrey Tooker, Brandman University Doctoral Candidate, to record my voice. I give Brandman University and all persons or entities associated with this research 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 purposes and the information obtained during the interview may be published in a journal/dissertation or presented at meetings/presentations.

I will be consulted about the use of the audio recordings for any purpose other than those listed above. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising correlated 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.

Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

Date

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX G

Interview Script and Questions

“My name is Jeffrey Tooker and I the Deputy Superintendent of Educational Services for the Placer Union High School District. 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?”

Nine Political Styles

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

White, P. C., Harvey, T. R., & Fox, S. L. (2016). *The politically intelligent leader: Dealing with the dilemmas of a high-stakes educational environment*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

White et al. (2016) Politically Intelligent Leader Framework

2 Continuums: Goals + Initiative



White, P. C., Harvey, T. R., & Fox, S. L. (2016). *The politically intelligent leader: Dealing with the dilemmas of a high-stakes educational environment*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

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 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 H

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 I

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 J

Field Test Interview Feedback Questions

Conducting interviews is a learned skill set/experience. Gaining valuable insight about your interview skills and affect with the interview will support your data gathering when interviewing the actual participants. As the researcher you should reflect on the questions below after completing the interview. You should also discuss the following reflection questions with your 'observer' after completing the interview field test. The questions are written from your prospective as the interviewer. However, you can verbalize your thoughts with the observer and they can add valuable insight from their observation.

1. How long did the interview take? _____ Did the time seem to be appropriate?
2. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous?
3. Going into it, did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared?
4. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?
5. What parts of the interview seemed to struggle and why do you think that was the case?
6. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how would you change it?
7. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

APPENDIX K

The National Institutes of Health Certificate



APPENDIX L

Political Styles Matrix

Nine Political Styles

Goal Initiative	Self-Interests	Blended Interests	Organizational Interests
Assertive	Challenger	Arranger	Strategist
Engaged	Planner	Balancer	Developer
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