

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION: A REVIEW  
OF SMALL-SCHOOL MODELS

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

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SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION: A REVIEW  
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Abstract

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This study examined the process of superintendent evaluation in six small public-school districts in Washington State. The researcher interviewed one superintendent and one board member in each district with regard to this process. He also reviewed the districts' current superintendent-evaluation forms as well as their job announcements and job descriptions for the position of superintendent when these documents were available. The researcher compared these documents to educational-leadership standards provided by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008a), Waters and Marzaro's (2009) work on district leadership, various state standards, and Washington State School Directors Association recommendations standards for superintendent evaluations. Interview responses and source documents indicated that four of the six school districts studied used superintendent-

evaluation forms consisting of a Likert rating scale (usually from 1 to 5) and a section for comments. The fifth district in this study meet formally with the superintendent to verbally review goals and set expectations for the coming year. The sixth district used a continuous process of monitoring that culminated in an end of the year review based on the monthly monitoring reports. Interviewees using the numeric rating form as the primary evaluation tool in their district felt it was insufficiently clear, subjective, lacked clear performance goals and therefore provided superintendents with inadequate guidance. Most also thought that the evaluation process needed to include more-frequent monitoring and ongoing evaluation of the superintendent's progress with regular updates for the board and community. This study offers recommendations as to how school superintendents and board members can work together to devise a more effective and relevant evaluation processes. In particular, it suggests that school districts use research-based, national evaluation standards modified to suit their district's unique needs and goals.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Background

In his article "Revisiting Superintendent Evaluation," DiPaola (2007) states:

All too often superintendent evaluations are performed hurriedly in an attempt to satisfy a legal requirement or a policy mandate. If the evaluation is merely an event, it has little, if any, impact on the professional growth of the superintendent or improvement of the school district (p.22).

Interaction between school-district superintendents and board members is crucial for the ongoing improvement of student learning. Based on personal relationships and a variety of criteria-based protocols, that interaction includes the school board's evaluation of the superintendent. In small school districts, the superintendent evaluation often is based on longstanding criteria. The relationship between the board and superintendent can provide insights into how evaluations are used and their potential impact on the superintendent as an educational leader.

According to Condali (1997), more than 90% of school-board members are not adequately prepared to evaluate superintendents. DiPaola (2007) discusses the need for a

well-designed performance evaluation that is allotted adequate time and resources to provide meaningful feedback for the superintendent. States mandate superintendent evaluations, and a growing body of research focuses on effective leadership (Fullan, 2004; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Waters & Marzano, 2006). However, many school districts still need to improve their superintendent evaluation process using the available school leadership research.

#### Purpose of the Study

This study reviewed current practice with respect to superintendent evaluations in six Washington State school districts in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation models currently employed by the districts' school boards. My experience as a practicing superintendent, along with my observations of the superintendent-evaluation process in three districts, led me to conduct this study. Having worked in districts with student enrollments of less than 2,500, I wanted to learn more about the evaluation process in small districts and how it can be improved through alignment with the standards of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC; Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2008a) and other key indicators of

superintendent performance (DiPaola & Stronge, 2001; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

This qualitative study examined the superintendent-evaluation process from the perspectives of practicing superintendents relatively new to their districts and school-board members within the same districts. In particular, the study investigated whether superintendents and board members believe their district's current evaluation process leads to a more effective blend of formative, summative, and performance assessments designed to strengthen the superintendent's role as an educational leader.

This study's data derived from superintendent-evaluation forms, districts' job announcements and job descriptions of the position of superintendent, and interviews of practicing superintendents and school-board members. A major goal of this study was to identify how evaluation processes affect communications between the superintendent and the school board, relate to ISLLC standards (CCSSO, 2008a), and provide superintendents with opportunities for professional growth. The study summarized key standards to be addressed through an evaluation tool and superintendent-board protocol.

### Significance of the Study

As in my case, superintendents new to a district may be unaware of available evaluation tools or are more focused on the day to day running of the school district rather than being evaluated. New superintendents often have no experience managing the evaluation process, and the school board may have limited training or understanding regarding superintendent evaluations. New superintendents need to understand the politics of their relationship to the school board and its effect on both parties' expectations. Newly serving as superintendent of a small school usually entails a steep learning curve with regard to the district's students, staff, community, history, and culture. Often the new superintendent is hard pressed to acquire the knowledge needed for optimal personal and professional interactions. It is incumbent upon school boards to clearly communicate their expectations and objectives with regard to what they expect from the new superintendent. Such communication is essential, especially given that numerous district issues require the superintendent's presence and decision-making. A cohesive team of superintendent and board members sets a positive tone and maximizes the chances of improving the district's educational system (Glass & Franceschini, 2007).

Providing new superintendents with a job description helps them understand the board's expectations and goals. The superintendent needs to discuss the job description with the board or its chairperson soon after being hired. Also, referencing the job description as part of the evaluation process during the superintendent's first year provides a framework for discussion and goal setting.

In a study on the superintendency conducted by the American Association of School Administrators, "Only 50.2 percent of the superintendents overall said they are evaluated according to the criteria in the job description. In very small districts, 36.9 percent of superintendents think they are not evaluated against the job description" (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000, p. 62). The superintendent evaluation should provide the superintendent with guidance and constructive feedback. Often it is the school board's only formal opportunity to evaluate both the superintendent and the school system's overall functioning for the improvement of student learning. Unless otherwise arranged by the school board, the evaluation may be discussed only during the required mid-year and year-end review with little follow up in between.

In small school districts, the evaluation often will address multiple aspects of a superintendent's duties and characteristics, including management responsibilities, educational vision, and curriculum leadership. In DiPaola's (2007) view, the evaluation process often is too informal and subjective, "based more on impressions than data" (p. 18). If school boards objectively assess the performances of both the superintendent and the school district, the district will be better directed in terms of vision and stated goals. DiPaola (2007) has posited eight key purposes of superintendent evaluations: identifying and prioritizing the school system's goals, guiding the superintendent's professional growth, defining the board's expectations of the superintendent, clarifying the roles of the board and superintendent, enhancing communications between the superintendent and board, enhancing the planning process, improving educational performance, and reviewing the district's overall effectiveness.

(DiPaola & Stronge, 2001) have called for more research on superintendent evaluations, "more credible superintendent evaluation models," and "improved evaluator training" (p. 108). This study explored how an evaluation tool can be created, modified, and used to enhance the superintendent's

professional growth and to benefit the school district. This study also reviewed how evaluation models could be linked to state and national standards in a way that results in a useful tool for the superintendent and district.

School boards that do not attend professional conferences may employ summative evaluation models that were created many years ago and do not reflect current state standards, such as those required by No Child Left Behind (Petersen & Young, 2004). The CCSSO (2008a) and AASA study (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003) on superintendent evaluations offer professional standards designed to enhance student learning through effective educational leadership. This study compared those standards to evaluation procedures currently used in small school districts. In many smaller Washington State school districts, superintendent evaluations are highly individualized, often locally designed with input from state organizations such as the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), Appendix J, or Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) and shaped over time in response to the school district's history.

In a survey of school district superintendents, nearly half indicated that they were hired primarily for their leadership ability but also for their honesty and dedication



(Glass, 2007). Leadership roles continue to change (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Changes in community perceptions, community interests, and board membership alter the relationship between the superintendent and the board (Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Holland, 2002; Hoyle & Skrla, 1999; Petersen & Short, 2001). Because of their leadership position, superintendents are often at the center of controversy—for example, regarding high-stakes testing (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Politics can adversely affect a superintendent's performance evaluation (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). There are many areas that affect the evaluation process that are jointly addressed and become part of the ongoing discussion with the school board shortly after the superintendent is hired. Establishing an objective, informative, data-driven evaluation model tied to leadership standards can improve the superintendent's ability to lead.

#### Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study's small sample size of six school districts may limit the findings' generalizability to other small districts in Washington State or across the country. Also, the similarities of their populations and rural settings may limit the extent to which the results are applicable to districts in larger more urban settings.

This study reviewed the district models used to evaluate superintendents. It did not address other factors that influence the relationship between the superintendent and the school board, such as a superintendent's past experience and degree of expertise, the reasons the superintendent applied for the position and was hired, the reasons that board members sought election to the school board or have remained on the board, the personal traits of the superintendent and board members, the personal relationships between the superintendent and board, or communications and interactions between superintendent and board outside the evaluation process.

#### Validity of the Study

When I conducted this study, I had served as superintendent of a small school district in Washington State for four years. Therefore, my own interactions with board members, involvement in local and state politics, and professional perspective might have biased my interpretation of the information collected from both superintendents and board members. However, I made every effort to analyze the data objectively.

## Methodology

For this study, I interviewed one superintendent and one school-board member in each of six Washington State school districts with K-12 student enrollments of 1,000-2,000. Interviews took place in person and over the phone, were audio recorded, and transcribed. The transcriptions were analyzed for patterns relevant to school-district leadership. I also reviewed districts' job announcements and job descriptions of the position of superintendent when these documents were available. Interviews and document collection were done one district at a time. As more data were gathered, the process and patterns used in the six districts studied became clearer and support the multi-case nature of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

## Summary

Given the growing body of research on superintendent leadership (Bjork, Grogan, & Johnson, 2003; Glass & Franceschini, 2007) and the changing leadership roles needed as schools shift into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), the need for relevant, meaningful superintendent evaluations is critical. Working as a cohesive superintendent-school board team can lead to improvements in the educational system through positive interactions that set

the overall tone for district operations (Glass & Franceschini, 2007).

Superintendents in the position of leadership find they are often at the center of discussion around high-stakes tests and that the overall political climate may have an adverse effect on their performance evaluation even when other areas under their leadership are positive (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Boards also change membership over time, which along with community perceptions and interests can definitely alter the dynamic of superintendent-board relationships (Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Holland, 2002; Hoyle & Skrla, 1999; Petersen & Short, 2001). Establishing an objective, informative data-driven evaluation model tied to leadership standards can be one way to improve the leadership ability of the superintendent while maintaining a strong district focus on improving student achievement.

Patterns developed from both superintendents and board members that reflect the leadership interactions in small districts in Washington. Reviewing the language described on the position postings and information in the job descriptions provided additional insight into the overall expectations of the board as they carried out the search for a district superintendent. This is a study that brings to life the

actual practice of the superintendent evaluation in six small districts throughout Washington State. While not a complete review of all districts, it is a multi-case study where the interviews and fieldwork were carried out one site at a time. As each case study was completed, the data and interviews at the preceding sites became more focused by providing a framework that defined the parameters from the previous studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

The interview process and flow of this dissertation reflects the importance of this particular study in providing additional insight and details on how the superintendent evaluation process takes place in small districts. A positive, effective relationship between the superintendent and school board is a critical component of school improvement in today's challenging climate of high-stakes testing, diminishing resources, and increased accountability at all levels of public education.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In *The School Superintendent: Theory, Practice, and Cases*, Kowalski (2005) emphasizes that school-improvement efforts characterized by decentralization and restructuring have produced contradictory expectations for superintendents. "Many school board members, for instance, want a superintendent to be both a visionary leader and a stern manager, both a cunning politician and an ethical role model, and both a demanding boss and a compassionate colleague" (Kowalski, 2005, p. xiv). Developing an adequate evaluation model can be a challenge for school boards.

Many studies have examined the career path to superintendency (Bjork, 2000; Brunner, 1998; Brunner, Grogan, & Bjork, 2002; Firestone, Mangin, Martinez, & Polovsky, 2005; Grogan, 1994; Kalbus, 2000), which often proceeds from classroom teacher, to secondary school principal, to assistant superintendent or district administrator, to superintendent (Tallerico, 2000). However, a review of the literature uncovered few studies on superintendent evaluation or retention with respect to the relationship between the superintendent and the school board.

This chapter discusses the organization of Washington State's public school system, the duties of a Washington

State school superintendent, the characteristics of successful superintendents, the superintendent's relationships with the community and the school board, standards for educational leadership, along with the various types of evaluation models.

#### Organization of Washington State's Public Schools

Washington State has 295 school districts, 250 of which have 6,071 or fewer students and only one high school; 212 of the state's school districts have student enrollments of less than 3,000 (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [OSPI], 2009). In some districts, Grades K-12 are taught in the same building. Other districts have separate schools for elementary, intermediate, middle, junior-high, and senior-high instruction. At the high-school level, student grade bands include 9-12, 10-12, and 11-12. Many very small districts are limited to a K-8 grade structure; their secondary students will attend schools in neighboring districts. School districts in transition (e.g., due to increasing or decreasing enrollment) may have a variety of temporary grade configurations. Each of the six school districts in this study had a student enrollment of 1,000-2,000. In Washington State, 38 districts fall into this

category. Many of them are suburban or rural and serve students from large geographic regions.

In Washington State, small and large school systems are similarly structured. All but the largest districts have five member school boards. The district superintendent is the chief executive officer of the district and oversees the educational and managerial operations of the district. They must meet similar state requirements, described in *Organizing and Financing of Washington Public Schools* (Lunghofer, 2009). Administrative tasks are similar in small and large school districts. However, large school districts receive more state and local funding and therefore have larger administrative staffs in proportion to their student populations. This allows for a departmental structure with department heads reporting to the superintendent or appointed designee. In small districts, superintendents are more directly involved in the district's overall operations, including curriculum and academic assessment, personnel, facilities, transportation, food services, contract negotiations, and financial oversight.

#### A Superintendent's Duties

The *Washington Administrative Code* (WAC) and *Revised Code of Washington* (RCW) outline requirements for



superintendent selection and evaluation (Appendix A). In each district, superintendents have various duties, depending on staffing levels in the central office and the district's historical makeup. In small districts, superintendents often have multiple responsibilities, listed in RCW 28A.400.030 and 28A.330.050.

RCW 28A.400.100 outlines a superintendent's duties:

In addition to such other duties as a district school board shall prescribe the school district superintendent shall: (1) Attend all meetings of the board of directors and cause to have made a record as to the proceedings thereof. (2) Keep such records and reports and in such form as the district board of directors require or as otherwise required by law or rule or regulation of higher administrative agencies and turn the same over to his or her successor. (3) Keep accurate and detailed accounts of all receipts and expenditures of school money. At each annual school meeting the superintendent must present his or her record book of board proceedings for public inspection, and shall make a statement of the financial condition of the district and such record book must always be open for public inspection. (4) Give such notice of all annual or special elections as otherwise

required by law; also give notice of the regular and special meetings of the board of directors. (5) Sign all orders for warrants ordered to be issued by the board of directors. (6) Carry out all orders of the board of directors made at any regular or special meeting.

RCW 28A.330.050 delineates the superintendent's duties as secretary of the school board:

[The superintendent] may be authorized by the board to act as business manager, purchasing agent, and/or superintendent of buildings and janitors, and charged with the special care of school buildings and other property of the district, and he or she shall perform other duties as the board may direct.

#### Characteristics of Successful Superintendents

Brunner (1998) has described the literature on the factors that enable women to succeed as school superintendents as "woefully little" (p. 160). In a qualitative study of 12 women superintendents, Brunner (1998) found that those who focused on children and curricula were perceived as successful. In contrast to Brunner's (1998) study, the current study focused on skills perceived as essential to superintendents of either sex.

Brunner (1998) identified seven strategies by which women succeed as superintendents: (a) balance role-related expectations and gender-related expectations; (b) keep your agenda simple, focusing primarily on the students, especially their academic achievement; (c) communicate in "feminine" ways, yet be heard in a male-dominated culture; (d) do not "act like a man"; (e) remove all obstacles to success; (f) remain a courageous, "can-do" risk-taker, but plan for retreat if confronted with the impossible; and (g) share power and credit (p. 179). Although intended to be gender-specific, several of these strategies are relevant to both sexes.

Marzano and Waters (2009) reviewed the research on district leadership and concluded that leaders in higher performing school districts (a) ensure collaborative goal-setting, (b) establish nonnegotiable goals for instruction and academic achievement, (c) get the school board to support the school district's goals, (d) monitor instructional and achievement goals, and (e) allocate resources to those goals (p. 22). Superintendent evaluations that reflect these leadership behaviors offer more meaning and relevance for practicing superintendents.

Waters and Marzano (2006) and Sanders and Kearney (2008) in their work on the Performance Expectations have described the leadership skills of strong educational leaders. In conjunction with the Wallace Foundation, Vanderbilt University has developed a program for assessing educational leadership based on the ISLLC Standards. This program can be used to assess superintendents' performance. The current study is based on ISLLC's leadership standards (CCSSO, 2008a).

#### The Superintendent and the Community

Superintendents need to develop relationships with their community. Typically, superintendents receive formal feedback only in the form of evaluations by their school board. They can be unprepared when community or special-interest groups influence the board. The diverse opinions of parent groups, community and business leaders, teachers, support staff (e.g., custodial, secretarial, food-service, and transportation personnel), and unions representing teachers and support staff can shorten a superintendent's length of service, no matter how capable and dedicated that superintendent (Bjork & Lindle, 2001). Murtadha-Watts (2000) found high turnover among superintendents at large, high-poverty urban schools. This high turnover limits

superintendents' effectiveness and often "works against necessary community engagement, negotiation, and stability" (p. 614). Specific, objective, predetermined evaluation criteria can protect superintendents against negative evaluations based more on political pressures from constituents than the superintendent's performance.

Superintendents work within a complex legal, political, and social environment that includes a range of local, state, and federal mandates. Implementation of NCLB in 2002 increased school districts' accountability by requiring them to publicly post their annual assessment results. The added pressure to improve student learning affected superintendents' relationships with their community and school board (Lashway, 2002). The superintendent's role in developing educational programs is receiving increased attention (Darling-Hammond & al., 2007). Focusing on the ISLLC standards and providing ongoing professional development will help educational leaders meet the challenges of a changing political landscape.

#### The Superintendent and the School Board

Several studies have addressed interactions between superintendents and school boards (Alsbury, 2003; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; DiPaola, 2007; Glass et al., 2000; Glass &

Franceschini, 2007; Houston, 1994; Lawrence, 2005; Petersen & Short, 2001). In a study conducted in conjunction with the AASA, Glass and Franceschini (2007) found that superintendents generally received good ratings from their board of directors; 89% of respondents reported that their boards evaluated them "fairly" or "very fairly" (p. xv). Glass (2007) comments that the "working relationship between boards and their superintendents" establishes a school district's climate, "from the classroom to the central office." If that relationship is harmonious, the district can focus on developing programs rather than defending current practice (Glass, 2007). A superintendent's ability to work with the school board should be one key element of a superintendent evaluation.

A superintendent's social style, including how they interact with their school board, strongly influences their credibility and their ability to effect change (Petersen & Short, 2001). Petersen and Short (2001) collected quantitative and qualitative data on 131 school-board presidents and found that board presidents who felt they knew their superintendent very well rated them high in social attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and emotiveness. Therefore, superintendent evaluations need to include

assessments of the superintendent's communications skills and other interpersonal skills.

#### Standards for Educational Leadership

To help superintendents and school boards provide high-quality leadership, the CCSSO (2008b) published *Performance Expectations and Indicators for Education Leaders*. The CCSSO (2008a) also has published ISLLC standards for educational leadership that promotes student success: (a) establish a widely shared vision for learning; (b) develop a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; (c) ensure effective management of operations and resources in order to maintain a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; (d) collaborate with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs and mobilizing community resources; (e) act ethically, with integrity and fairness; and (f) understand, respond to, and influence the political, social, legal, and cultural environment. These six standards can be incorporated into superintendent evaluations.

With regard to the first standard, the superintendent and school board should work as a team to articulate a vision shared by stakeholders, who will then support improvements to

the school district. The articulated vision provides a framework with which the board can set goals to be implemented by the district's administrators.

With respect to the second standard, the superintendent has a critical role in developing a culture of learning throughout the school district. School systems that function as learning communities promote student achievement (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002; Senge et al., 2000). In small school districts, superintendents are responsible for keeping the focus on student learning, creating a rigorous curriculum, and providing ongoing opportunities for professional development. While the primary role of the superintendent should be focused on instructional leadership, they also have the responsibility or oversight of district facilities, transportation, finance and business operations. Each of these areas should be addressed and included in the superintendent evaluation in some form.

Standard 3, effective management, can be challenging for superintendents in small districts that lack department heads or managers in all areas of daily operation. Because funding for personnel and resources is apportioned to districts based on student enrollment, staff in small districts tend to have increased responsibilities and added duties. To promote the



academic success of every child, superintendents in small districts need to find ways to ensure effective management while focusing on teaching and learning.

The superintendent must also devote time and attention to Standard 4, collaborating with faculty and community. One key element of this standard is to "build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers" (CCSSO, 2208a, p. 19). Working with the school board and district staff, the superintendent must work to promote relationships with parents and the community that lead to positive outcomes for students. This will vary by district according to the culture and make up of the community. Local boards and superintendent need to be aware of the importance of this standard and work together to engage their communities in the education of their youth. Developing specific targets and goals for public interaction is another area that that is often reflected in a strong evaluation tool.

With respect to Standard 5 (behaving ethically, honestly, and fairly), the superintendent should act as a role model for students and all others within the school system and community. Criteria of transparency (e.g., keeping the public informed about the school system), reflective practice, and ethical behavior need to be part of every

superintendent evaluation. Working together to jointly develop these criteria based on the standard and performance expectations will lead to clear understanding of for both the school board and superintendent.

Standard 6, dealing effectively with the broader context in which a school system operates, can be difficult. School systems are facing financial challenges and increased accountability with regard to student performance. District leaders need to be public-education advocates and leaders in a time rapid change. State and federal legislation changes with regularity making a challenging task of sifting through the laws even more complex for district superintendents. Together, the superintendent and school board can cope with decreasing resources and increasing accountability by determining the priorities that best promote student learning.

The superintendent evaluation is a process, not just a result. Early in a superintendent's tenure within the district, the superintendent and school board should jointly develop this process (WSSDA, 2007). An evaluation model is beneficial for school boards and superintendents when tailored to the particular school district but based on research-supported professional standards and practices.

Many states have developed evaluation templates for superintendents and board members that are designed to meet district or state expectations (IASB, 2006; Namit, 2008a, 2008b; WSSDA, 2007). The WSSDA (2007) manual *The Evaluation Process: Board Self-Assessment and Superintendent Evaluation* provides an evaluation overview for boards and superintendents and includes sample evaluations from several states. This study focused on the roles and responsibilities of small-district superintendents in terms of the AASA, ISLLC, OSPI, and WASA standards.

Fullan (2004) emphasizes the need for leadership practices that sustain a school system's improvement. The school board and superintendent working together need to continually reevaluate the school district's goals, and it is the school board's responsibility to continually monitor and evaluate the superintendent.

In many larger school districts, department heads oversee daily operations. However, in small districts, superintendents often oversee multiple departments. Having studied the professional preparation of beginning superintendents, Kowalski (2009) observed, "The need for superintendents to be both instructional leaders and organizational managers is greatest in districts where little

if any support staff is available to assist in district operations" (p. 23-24). He noted that professional standards must help superintendents develop the skills needed to work in school districts with limited or no district support staff. Comparing various evaluation models in terms of their likely contribution to the superintendent's professional growth will help determine the most useful evaluation criteria.

#### Types of Evaluation

Candoli et al. (1997) categorized 12 models of superintendent evaluation in terms of three types of judgment: global, criteria-driven, and data-driven. Global judgment includes evaluation by the school board, descriptive narrative reports, formative exchanges about the superintendent's performance, and evaluation by stakeholders. Criteria-driven judgment comprises printed rating forms, report cards, management by objectives, performance contracting, and duties-based evaluation. Data-driven judgment includes superintendent portfolio, measures of student outcomes, and school and district accreditation.

In many smaller school districts, the school board often uses more of global and criteria-driven evaluation of the superintendent (DiPaola & Stronge, 2001). Individual board

members provide an evaluation based on their judgment of the work accomplished. They will use a Likert scale, rating the superintendent on a numeric scale from 1 to 5, and provide a short narrative describing the superintendent's performance according to their perceptions as board members. The board then combines these evaluations into one evaluation form that the board chair or entire board reviews with the superintendent orally or in writing.

Data-based evaluation relies on measurable outcomes from a variety of data sources (DiPaola & Stronge, 2001). The data collected (DiPaola, 2007) relies on a predetermined set of measures that may include "formal observation, informal observation, district goal achievement, student achievement gains and client satisfaction (survey data)" (p.20). In many cases, the superintendent delivers a written or oral report on the outcomes addressing specific predetermined areas developed in consultation with the school board. Data-based evaluation is less subjective than other types of evaluation and requires more frequent monitoring of the superintendent's progress toward the specified goals. Data oriented evaluation "encourages clarification of the roles of the superintendent and the board and considers the work environment in the

evaluation of the superintendent" (Candoli et al., 1997, p. 80).

With regard to evaluation models, the public sector can incorporate ideas from the business world (Collins, 2001; DiPaola, 2003). However, the social and private sectors differ. A social-sector organization must assess performance "relative to mission, not financial returns" (Collins, 2005). A focus on the school district's mission and goals is key in developing an evaluation tool that clearly expresses the board's expectations and objectives regarding the superintendent's role as an educational leader. However, an evaluation also should consider the superintendent's managerial role. Therefore, school systems can adapt many aspects of private-sector evaluations of business leaders for their own use in areas that key in on the managerial roles of school district superintendents.

Each type of evaluation model has strengths and weaknesses. In developing an evaluation model, each district needs to consider which evaluation criteria will best meet its needs. The school board can then focus the superintendent's work on achieving the desired goals.

### Summary

A literature review uncovered studies on the career path to superintendency (Brunner, Grogan, & Bjork, 2002; Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Kalbus, 2000), the relationship between the superintendent and the school board (Kowalski, 2006; Petersen & Short, 2001), the superintendent's need to deal with politics and advocacy groups (Andero, 2000; L. Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Brunner, 1998; Brunner, 1994; Hoyle & Skrla, 1999), and leadership skills (CCSSO, 2008a; Fullan, 2006; Houston, 1994; Johnson, 2004; Langley & Jacobs, 2005; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Waters & Marzano, 2007; White, 2006). Candoli et al. (1997), DiPaola et al. (2003), DiPaola (2007), and Glass (2007) discuss superintendent evaluations. Many state school-board associations provide templates and/or suggestions for superintendent evaluations (IASB, 2006; WSSDA, 2007).

The process of superintendent evaluation is complex and influenced by a school district's history, community politics, and the past relationships between the superintendent and the school board. This study examined the actual process of superintendent evaluation, especially through the eyes of district superintendents and school-board members, in six small districts. By exploring multiple

perspectives on the evaluation model, this study provided insights that can assist new superintendents in small, rural school districts.



## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study focused on the perceptions of school-board members and district superintendents with respect to their district's process of superintendent evaluation. It examined current evaluation practices in six small Washington State school districts, identifying the tools used to evaluate superintendents and provide them with feedback conducive to improvement. Most of the study's data were collected through interviews of superintendents and board members. The study offers suggestions for evaluation processes that may better meet the districts' goals. This chapter describes the study's research questions; design; setting, population, and sample; data collection; and data analysis.

### Research Questions

This study focused on two primary research questions: "What methodology do school boards use to evaluate the district superintendent?" and "Do the evaluation models used meet the school district's overall goals?" Secondary questions included the following: Does the evaluation reflect the goals of the board and district? Can the superintendent use the evaluation for continued professional development? What components of the evaluation make it useful to the

superintendent and the board? How do the board and superintendent know if they are meeting the district's goals? How did the superintendent and board come to use a particular evaluation instrument? What components of the evaluation are tied to research-based criteria, such as state or national standards? How does the district use the evaluation? Who meets to discuss the evaluation? Are the evaluations narrative, based on a Likert scale, or a combination of the two? What, if any, similarities are seen in the data collected?

One goal of this study was to determine how the evaluation process relates to CCSSO's (2008a) *Educational Leadership Policy Standards*, Marzano and Waters' (2009) five key elements of district educational leadership, and WSSDA (2007) recommendations regarding general approaches to the evaluation process.

#### Research Design

This qualitative study consisted of multiple case studies and employed a phenomenological approach. Case studies "contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena" (Yin, 2008, p. 4). In this study, the individuals were school superintendents and board members, the organization was the

school district, and the related phenomenon was superintendent evaluation. A phenomenological research approach was appropriate for this study because it focused on individuals' perceptions and experiences (Creswell, 1998, 2003).

Usually, superintendent evaluations are not open to the public and take place in executive sessions attended by the board and superintendent (Banks & Maloney, 2007). Therefore, reporting superintendents' and board members' perceptions of the evaluation process will be useful not only to education professionals but also to the general public. Yin (2008) makes a strong point in defining your target audience by stating, "Giving some initial thought to your likely or preferred audience and reporting formats serves as a good starting point for composing your case study" (p. 167). The target audience for this study is new superintendents entering into their first superintendency in small rural district as well as board members interested in refining their evaluation process.

#### Setting, Population, and Sample

The study was conducted from April to June 2009 in six Washington State school districts located in rural or suburban areas in different parts of the state. The districts

were selected using information available from the WASA office on new superintendents and their date of hire. Selection criteria included geographic diversity, small size (a full-time student population of 1,000-2,000), and short tenure (2-5 years) of the superintendent within the district. Small districts were chosen due since I have personal experience of such districts and because in small districts the superintendent directly oversees the district's programs. It is also a personal interest since I have spent my entire career in districts with enrollments under 2,500 students. Superintendents in five of the six districts were in their first superintendency.

For the purposes of confidentiality, school districts and participants were given fictitious names. The Fir and Juniper districts are in eastern Washington State; the Cedar, Pine, Spruce, and Hemlock districts are in the western part of the state. In this section the six districts will be discussed from smallest to largest.

In Washington State the local community elects all school-board members for a 4-year term. Elections are staggered: two or three candidates run every other year. In this study all six districts had five members on their school boards. The district's superintendent referred the board

members interviewed for this study to me based on their knowledge of the district evaluation model. All of the board members were currently serving. In addition, each was a past or present board chair and, as such, had led the process of superintendent evaluation. Each board member had served on the school board of his or her district for more than 5 years (in some cases, more than 15 years). Four of the interviewed board members were women, and two were men.

Also, four of the interviewed superintendents were women, and two were men. Hemlock's superintendent, "Gloria," was beginning her third year as the district's superintendent and looked forward to continuing to work with the school board on numerous projects. For Gloria and the school board, the challenges of providing services to a small rural district were at the forefront of planning and ongoing dialogue.

Having previously been an assistant superintendent in a larger district, Juniper's superintendent, "Isadora," had been the district's superintendent for 4 years. As soon as she came to Juniper, where student enrollment is declining, she started working with the school board to improve the district's financial position. Recently she and the board had

helped the district pass a maintenance-and-operation levy needed to meet the district's curriculum and facility needs.

Cedar's superintendent, "Barbara," had previously held another position within the school district. From the outset of her superintendency, she had been familiar with the district's programs. Two years before, during a time of challenging growth, she had taken over from a long-time superintendent. At the time of this study, Cedar was balancing staffing needs of the district office with the district's overall needs. As is common in small districts, the superintendent was the only certified staff member in the district office. Evaluation documentation was limited in Cedar because the school board evaluated the previous superintendent only in spoken conversations, one at mid-year and the other at the end of the year. Barbara was working with the board to create a written evaluation that would provide clearer, more specific feedback.

The Fir school district consists of a small town with a strong sense of community. The superintendent, "Elana," was in her fourth year as Fir's superintendent. Previously she had been an assistant superintendent in a much larger district. She regularly appeared at events as a spokeswoman for Fir's school district. She had worked with the board,

which was very stable and had been very supportive, to solve several of the district's challenges.

Having previously served as superintendent in another school district, "Oliver" had been Pine's superintendent for 3 years. Pine had a stable school board, but most of its members saw one another only at board meetings. Oliver and the board worked well together and had developed an effective evaluation model.

The superintendent in Spruce, "Roland," was entering his fourth year as the district's superintendent. Previously he had been an assistant superintendent in a larger district. Spruce's school board was very stable; several of its members had been on the board more than 10 years. Like most of the superintendents in this study, Roland was working with the school board to meet the district's needs in challenging economic times. These needs limited the time that he and the board spent on evaluation.

#### Data Collection

After the six school districts were selected, each district's superintendent and referred board member were contacted by phone and regular mail, asked to participate in the study, and assured that their identities would remain

confidential. All 12 individuals agreed to participate and signed an informed-consent form (Appendix B).

### *Interviews*

I interviewed four participants by phone and eight participants in person at their workplace. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix C). The interview tapes were stored in a secure location and erased after completion of the study. All interview transcriptions and interview notes were also kept secure and destroyed after the study was completed per university guidelines.

All superintendents were asked the same 12 questions (Appendix D), and all board chairs were asked the same 11 questions (Appendix E). In addition, most of the interview questions were asked of both the superintendents and the board chairs, partly for the purpose of comparison. Six of these questions were key:

1. Describe the superintendent evaluation process in your district.
2. What are the expected outcomes of the evaluation process?
3. What are the key elements you see in your evaluation model that make it a useful tool?



4. Do the ISLLC standards or other national standards influence your district's evaluation model?
5. What do you see is missing from the current evaluation tool?
6. What changes would you make to improve the evaluation process in your district?

#### *School-District Documents*

In addition to interviewing participants, I collected districts' superintendent-evaluation forms, job announcements and job descriptions for the position of superintendent when these were available. Each district supplied what they had on file. Whereas some of the studied school districts could provide monthly reports of the superintendent's progress as well as annual summary evaluations, one of the districts did not use written evaluations of the superintendent and, therefore, could provide none. As was the case with all interview materials, all school-district documents were categorized by type and given unique identifiers for reference purposes.

#### *Data Analysis*

Interview responses were analyzed for patterns, common expectations, and suggestions with respect to the evaluation process. In addition, interview responses and superintendent

evaluations were compared to AASA standards (1992), ISLLC (CCSSO, 2008a), and WSDDA (2007) recommendations and to Waters and Marzano's (2006) standards for school-district leadership. Job announcements and job descriptions were compared to districts' current evaluation tools, and all documents compared to interview responses and assessed in terms of assisting or impeding the evaluation process.

#### CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the study's findings in terms of the evaluation forms used in the studied districts, the districts' current job announcements and job descriptions for the position of superintendent, and the responses of the six superintendents and six board members who were interviewed. It provides an overview of interviewees' perspectives on their district's current superintendent-evaluation model and their suggestions for improvements. The views of the two groups—superintendents and board members—are compared both within and between groups.

Of the six districts studied, most employed a very similar evaluation process of meeting with the superintendent in executive session (usually at the middle and end of the school year) to review the superintendent's performance. Other evaluation methods used included monthly updates by the superintendent to the board, spoken reviews with no written analysis or feedback for the superintendent, annual narrative evaluations, or some combination of these methods.

## Evaluation Forms

### *Format*

Four of the six districts used evaluation tools that had remained largely unaltered for years. The other two districts used recently modified evaluation tools, which board members considered clearer than the previous ones and more helpful to the superintendent. Several board members commented that it might be time to update their evaluation tool to better reflect the board's goals or what was required of the superintendent.

Five of the six districts used a Likert rating scale, typically 1 through 5, with space at the bottom for comments. Table 1 shows this type of form. The criteria for each district was very similar with commonalities in the areas of high ethical standards, working well with groups, strong communication skills, showing good judgment and dedication to the position and devoting time and energy to be successful in the superintendency. This was also accompanied with the expectation of continuing professional development in order to remain current and up to date on new and emerging trends in education.

Table 1

*Standard Superintendent-Evaluation Form*

Criterion	Rating from weakest (1) to strongest (5)				
a. Maintains high standards of ethics, honesty, and integrity.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Devotes time and energy to the job and does so effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Works well with individuals and groups.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Communicates clearly and concisely.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Exercises good judgment.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Maintains proficiency and professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					

Filling out such an evaluation is fast and easy, but the form provides very limited information. Often such an evaluation tool included no descriptors or rubrics indicating the level of skill expected of the superintendent. Also, this type of evaluation is fairly subjective and does not indicate the criteria for each numerical rating.

*Categories*

Table 2 shows the evaluation categories used by the four districts that were able to provide copies of their current evaluation. The wording somewhat varied between districts. As shown, all four districts included the superintendent's leadership ability, relationship with the board, and business/finance performance.

Table 2

## Evaluation Categories Used by Four Districts

Category	Fir	Juniper	Spruce	Hemlock
Relationship with the board	X	X	X	X
Relationship with the community	X	X		
Relationship with personnel	X	X	X	
Leadership	X	X	X	X
Business/finance performance	X	X	X	X
Personal and professional qualities	X		X	X
Strategic direction				X

*ISLLC Standards*

I compared the six districts' evaluation tools to ISLLC performance expectations (CCSSO, 2008b), ISLLC standards (CCSSO, 2008a), and sample evaluation forms from other states (WSSDA, 2007). No district used ISLLC standards in developing its current superintendent evaluation.

ISLLC standards (CCSSO, 2008a) for educational leaders cover six basic areas of performance: (a) vision, mission, and goals; (b) teaching and learning; (c) managing organizational systems and safety; (d) collaborating with families and other stakeholders, (e) ethics and integrity; and (f) the educational system. Appendix G shows a sample evaluation form that addresses these key areas. This form provides the indicators for each expectation as discussion areas for board members and superintendents. Conversations tied to written comments by board members focus the work of the superintendent on the research-based standards developed by the ISLLC (CCSSO, 2008a).

Districts differ in their evaluation needs. Allowing for individual differences while aligning the evaluation tool to researched-based standards can lead to better leadership practices by providing superintendents with tangible goals by which to measure district progress.

#### Job Announcements and Job Descriptions

I compared the six school districts' current superintendent-evaluation tools to their job announcements and job descriptions for the position of superintendent when these documents were available. Too often, job announcements for superintendent did not indicate the school board's

direction or goals, leaving the hired superintendent to discover that information only after working with the board. ALL of the six districts hired search consultants who worked with the board and community to create a job announcement describing what was desired in a superintendent. Spurge's districts' evaluation tools did not reflect the content of their job announcements or job descriptions for superintendent. Cedar's district had no current job description on file apart from the job announcement. Most superintendents in this study did not have a current job description reflecting actual practice. Those who did thought it was not useful or relevant in the evaluation process.

To varying degree, job announcements for the position of superintendent listed desired personal characteristics such as the following: honesty, integrity, and fairness; common sense and good judgment; energy and enthusiasm; a sense of humor; strong leadership ability; interpersonal and communications skills; an ability to give support and recognition; a warm demeanor; respect for others; being approachable; an ability to inspire and maintain trust; and a love of children.

Job announcements also listed desired professional characteristics, such as high standards; a focus on student



achievement; an ability to facilitate communication, understanding, and unity among colleagues and constituents; an ability to manage changing student-population size and community demographics; demonstrated participation in the school district and community; an ability to involve parents, staff, students, and community members in school-related issues; solid knowledge of research, finance, facilities, and technology in relation to public schools; success in securing grant money and in passing levies and bonds; successful experience as a school-district administrator; and an understanding of the unique needs of smaller school districts.

#### Interview Responses

The six superintendents and six board members shared their thoughts about their district's process of superintendent evaluation.

#### *Cedar*

*Superintendent.* Cedar's superintendent, Barbara, was working with the school board on revising their evaluation process. The previous superintendent, who had served in the district for 15 years, had not received any written evaluations. Instead he and the board had simply had a year-end conversation about how the year had gone and what changes

should be made. The board met with Barbara mid-year and reviewed her performance in terms of a checklist in a WSSDA (2007) style template. Cedar had used the same evaluation process, unchanged, for many years. Barbara stated:

For me to understand what their goals might be, so we can come together and formulate some goals for the district, would be something that I am going to encourage them to do because I think that in the absence of goals, we have some activities that happen and not a sense of direction, no sense of purpose. . . . I need to know what their direction is, so I can form my direction to meet that. . . . I would like them to key into maybe five component areas, and we could have a discussion about each of them.

Over the years, Barbara had received many previous evaluations indicating that her performance was "satisfactory" but providing no guidance as to how to improve her teaching. In her new position, she was working with the board to develop expressly stated, specific goals for the superintendent to be reflected in a written evaluation.

*Board Member.* The Cedar board member, Dara, commented that the previous evaluation method "didn't seem to be very effective, and the board wasn't actually taking their role in

what should be. . . . I think it should be a conversation but then a written document as well. I think the superintendent deserves that, whether positive or not so positive.”

*Pine*

*Superintendent.* In Pine the board evaluated the superintendent, Oliver, monthly, providing updates on their objectives for him. Oliver commented:

Essentially every month I have a little miniature evaluation, and they either tell me that I’m on track or I’m off. . . . We have intense conversations about some things, and other things they go great and just keep on going. And so it really breaks it down into these 12 segmented mini-evaluations, so the big evaluation in January is simply a compilation of what they think is the most important accomplishment, the things that they would like for me to work on specifically as the educational contractor they are hiring to run their school district.

*Board Member.* The board member, Quinn, reported that the board had refined the evaluation process and was pleased with the results:

We’ve set what I believe are pretty good policies in place as to what we expect of our superintendent, and so

it's very easy to determine whether he's meeting those or not. We are not really judging on, you know, what our principals are doing or other administrative staff or our teacher are doing per se. We are looking specifically at what is being accomplished by the school via our superintendent. And then he provides the supporting evidence for that. So it makes it quite easy to evaluate him quite frankly.

Pine focused on (a) the school district's goals for students, (b) the community's expectations of the school system, and (b) superintendent accountability with regard to student achievement. The board gathered input from the community and shared it with the superintendent. Referring to the monthly evaluations of the superintendent's progress toward the goals set out in the policy, Quinn stated, "I feel it is very helpful for the superintendent as well as for our staff, primarily because of the focus and its accountability."

*Fir*

*Superintendent.* Fir's process of superintendent evaluation was more traditional. Board members and the superintendent, Elana, completed the same standard evaluation form of the type shown in Table 1. Ratings were 1 (poor), 2

(requires some improvement), 3 (average), 4 (above average), and 5 (excellent) for several categories (Appendix I). In executive session, Elana went over her self-evaluation with the board and then left the room so that board members could privately discuss their evaluations. The board chair then wrote a single evaluation based on the input from all parties. The superintendent reconvened with the board to review the evaluation item by item. Elana's comments highlighted the subjectivity of the Likert ratings and how little substantive information they provided: "They gave me a 3 which I gave myself a 4 because I thought I worked really well [in that area]." Elana thought the evaluation did not advance her professional development or provide much guidance.

*Board member.* Having been on Fir's board for 15 years, the Fir board member, Georgina, was highly familiar with the district's evaluation process, which had changed little over many years. "We have an evaluation form and we, we rate them one to five. One is poor, two is some improvement, three is average, four is above average and five is excellent." The evaluation has several categories that are rated by both the board and the superintendent. In Fir the board and superintendent complete the evaluation separately and then

compare the two forms in executive session. She stated that, after comparing the superintendent's self-evaluation with the evaluations by board members, "She goes and she evaluates herself and then we evaluate her and then we get together and see what score she give herself and what score we've given her and we make a note about improvements."

### *Juniper*

In Juniper all five board members completed superintendent evaluations and then met with the superintendent, in January, to review the aggregate ratings. The board and superintendent held another meeting at the end of the school year to review the goals outlined by the board and complete the final evaluation. The Juniper board had used this evaluation process for several years with only minor changes.

*Superintendent.* Juniper's evaluation form was very similar to Fir's, involving a five-point Likert scale covering five areas outlined in the superintendent's contract.

The superintendent, Isadora, remarked:

Usually the board chair will send out the evaluation instrument to the other board members for input, and they give the chair input, and the chair basically

writes the evaluation and then brings it to an executive session, and they share with me.

Isadora commented that the evaluation process included no professional-development component and that the evaluation was fairly subjective and dominated by the board chair's perspective. She also noted that the ratings conveyed little information: "It's not very clear. There's not a rubric that says what a 5 is and what a 4 is. . . . They think of it like a report card: A, B, C, D, F." When Isadora asked the board chair to clarify a section of the evaluation, he responded only, "Well, we had one member that just didn't think you were a 5, just like before."

I asked Isadora, "When you think about the evaluation tool that you use, are there any key elements that make it useful for you?"

"No," she responded.

"As far as you know, do they, does the board look at any ISLLC standards or national standards and try to incorporate them [into the evaluation]?"

"No."

"So from your viewpoint as a superintendent, what do you see as missing? What do you think would be a better tool, evaluation-type tool?"

"I think a rubric with a description, much like we're used to with student evaluations and, you know, like evaluating student writing. I think there would be a lot of room for improvement in the evaluation instrument if we spent any time on it."

Isadora thought there was very little connection between the evaluation process and the work expected of her. Many of the goals in her evaluation seemed fairly general. Two evaluation criteria were "Works with Board in achieving district goals and objectives" and "Effective communications with staff, students and community." There was no mechanism by which Isadora could report to the board her progress in achieving the goals. Although she thought the district was doing good work and making progress in student learning and community support, there were still areas that needed improvement, and one was the evaluation process.

*Board member.* The perspective of the Juniper board member, Kaleb, was very different from Isadora's.

I asked him, "What are the key elements that you see in the evaluation tool that make it a useful model?"

"Well, like this," he replied. "The key part of our evaluation tool is a continuous feedback that we try to have with the superintendent, so there are no surprises when it



comes to the final, yearly formal evaluation, where we document it and put it in the file."

"Do you look at how [the evaluation is] based in terms of national standards for superintendents or district leaders?"

"I can tell you right now, looking at our board policy, and it was first adopted in 1985, reviewed again in '95, and reviewed the last time in 2003. And as near as I can tell, there wasn't much changes made to it. . . ."

"So, do you see anything missing from this model that maybe you'd like to look at putting in an evaluation tool in the future?"

"Ah. No."

Kaleb noted that the same evaluation tool had been used for more than 20 years with few changes and that the evaluation process complied with state law. He stated:

By contract we're supposed to evaluate the superintendent twice a year, and we have a policy that lies [sic] out the minimum area for evaluations. And they [the superintendent] work with the board in achieving their goals and objectives. Number Two is "implement the district's financial budget plan and follow through with it." Number Three is "meet the

district's instructional program and content areas." Number Four is "effective communications with staff, students, and community." Number Five is "carries out other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the board." See sample form in Appendix I.

The process of meeting twice a year with the superintendent is a common approach in Washington State. It meets the legal requirements and provides formal setting to discuss the progress and performance of the superintendent. As seen in the Juniper district, there is often a disparity between the superintendent and board member on the value of the evaluation model and process.

#### *Spruce*

Spruce, too, used a five-point rating scale of five categories. For about 10 years, they had used a WSSDA (2007) designed template for superintendent evaluations.

*Superintendent.* Previously, the district had used an evaluation that the superintendent, Roland, described as one "piece of paper that basically said 'satisfactory, unsatisfactory'—probably less extensive than even the mandatory state teacher evaluation." Like other superintendents in this study, Roland expressed the view that the current evaluation process satisfied legal requirements

and indicated whether the board was satisfied with his work but did little to advance his professional development and did not adequately address the district's goals for student achievement. He stated:

In most districts that I've talked to . . . it's a very similar process that really doesn't have a whole lot of professional goals or development for the superintendent. It's "What have you done? What do we want you to look at next year?"

*Board member.* The board member, Tabitha, said of the evaluation form:

Each individual board members fills it out, and then we as a board meet and compare notes, and then in the past we've used sort of an average of all the scores, and then people have put their own little individual notes down, and it goes into the superintendent file.

She noted that the board was "hoping to tie [the evaluation] to student achievement because basically that is what our purpose is" but hadn't yet accomplished that. Tabitha thought "the most important aspect" of the evaluation process was having the entire board meet with the superintendent to discuss areas of accomplishment and concern. However, she described the evaluation tool as "not as effective as we

would like” and expressed some frustration with the difficulty of reaching a consensus on an evaluation:

I think this is really very subjective and really hard to get five people to kind of approach this in ways that are common. It would be nice to have actual goals tied [to] student achievement that are related to the superintendent in some way. And then we can annually look at them or even monthly have a report on how close [we've come to our goals].

Tabitha desired an evaluation that would include appropriate measures, data, and be able to provide a way for the board to “ask the right questions.” In this way, the board can know what they would like from the superintendent and frame the evaluation in such a way as to answer those questions.

*Hemlock*

Hemlock had recently adopted an evaluation format of rating scale plus narrative. All board members completed an evaluation form, and the board chair then combined the results into one form for the superintendent (Appendix I).

*Superintendent.* As expressed by Hemlock's superintendent, Gloria, the form addressed “standard areas with some indicators” and included comments (sometimes suggestions) under each criterion. Gloria mentioned that if

the comments had been only "under the general category, trying to go back to find the indicators would have been more difficult." With regard to reporting her progress in areas addressed by the evaluation, Gloria stated, "I learned that I needed to be much more succinct and put things in writing rather than have just verbal conversations for my mid-year." Although the evaluation tool did not specifically address professional development, Gloria thought it aided her personal and professional growth: "It's a way for me to always strive to continuously improve."

*Board member.* Hemlock's board member, Ian, had been on the board about 8 years. He stated:

We've actually changed some of our evaluation forms over time in trying to find the right fit, and this is our third superintendent since I've been on the board. . . . We set the goal for the superintendent to focus on, and in our particular model we're looking at the effectiveness of the superintendent and also areas where we feel like there are strengths and weaknesses. . . . The goal portion of it is an important piece in that we really want to make sure within the district that we're progressing.

Ian said that Hemlock's evaluation model was based on the WSSDA model, with modifications over time to better meet the district's and superintendent's goals. He also remarked on the challenge of having five board members, of different backgrounds and relationships with the superintendent, read the evaluation in the same way: "Somebody else might look at that and say, 'Gosh, I don't see it that way.' . . . That's an inconsistency that we've run into here for many years. It becomes a little bit frustrating." Ian said that the board had tried to specify the expectations linked to each category ("needs improvement," "meets expectations," and "exceeds expectations") but had not succeeded in doing so.

For several years, Hemlock's superintendent and board had been working together to create an evaluation model that provides meaningful feedback for the superintendent. Hemlock determined the year's goals after completing the evaluation in January, giving the superintendent time to develop student-achievement goals for the next school year and revise them after fall publication of spring assessment scores. That schedule also allowed each school building to get its school-improvement plans in place before the end of the school year. Gloria and the board continually obtained the community's input on the district's progress toward its goals.

*Summary of Interview Findings*

*Superintendents.* Superintendents' interview responses indicated similar perspectives on the evaluation process. Shared concerns included a need to clarify (a) job-related expectations and standards, (b) the school district's goals, and (c) guidelines for teaching and learning. Several superintendents indicated that the evaluation did not help them reach their professional goals. Fir's superintendent stated, "It's nothing that would help me for the next year," and Spruce's remarked, "I don't think in the entire time I've been in education . . . I've ever had an evaluation that's been in any way fundamentally helpful to me." Several superintendents commented that a checklist marked "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" was not useful. Superintendents also expressed the view that their district would benefit if the board monitored them more regularly and if they reported to the board more often. Superintendents were aware of ISLLC standards but noted that they were not part of their evaluation.

*Board members.* Several board members pointed out that their district had historically used a five-point Likert scale for superintendent evaluations and that they felt comfortable continuing to use that format until a better one

was available. Board members also expressed concern that measurable goals were not part of the evaluation process. Some board members felt that their district's evaluation tool was lacking in some way but did not know how to make it more useful. As a board member, Tabitha commented, "We don't even know what we don't know."

All six board members noted that they carried out superintendent evaluations both to meet legal requirements and to fulfill their board duties. In all but one district, board members were unaware of ISLLC standards and how they might be incorporated into superintendent evaluations. The one district that used Carver's (2006) policy governance model thought their process of ongoing monthly reporting was a good basis for evaluation of the superintendent's work. That model seemed effective for small school districts.

Several board members indicated that they look to the superintendent for guidance regarding what the evaluation should contain. Many board members have full-time jobs in fields other than education and volunteer their time in serving on their local school board. In this study, Tabitha noted that a superintendent might be evaluated by a board with no members who are education professionals. She thought it would be beneficial if the superintendent provided



guidance for board members with regard to the evaluation process. However, new superintendents may have limited experience with the evaluation process and may be uncomfortable suggesting changes. The board acknowledged that preparing an incoming superintendent to work with a board of volunteers was "a pretty big job."

*Shared concerns.* In interviews of both superintendents and board members, two major themes emerged: (a) the need for clarity, consistency, and transparency in the evaluation process and (b) the need for ongoing dialogue between the superintendent and board regarding how to improve student learning.

All study participants expressed the need for a clearly delineated evaluation process and clearly defined expectations of the superintendent. They sought an evaluation tool with predetermined measures tied to the district's goals for school improvement—a tool based on data collection and other research, best practices, strategic planning, and community input. As expressed by one board member, such a tool "could be used as a standard and a way to help us frame the right questions, the right measurements, the right data." At predefined intervals, the superintendent would report to the board regarding progress made in achieving specific

goals, and yearly evaluations would be based on the extent to which those goals were reached.

Study participants thought that ongoing dialogue between the superintendent and the board should focus on working with the community and school improvement, especially increasing student learning. All participants mentioned the importance of working as a team to carry out the district's mission.

#### Summary

This study revealed similarities and difference in six school districts' models for superintendent evaluation. Evaluation processes ranged from no formal evaluation tool to a monthly update and summative end-of-year review. Four of the six districts used a Likert-scale evaluation tool that had remained largely unchanged for years. One district had changed its evaluation process to better reflect the superintendent's work, and another was in the process of doing so.

Superintendent's interviewed showed similar characteristics in their responses. Concerns that emerged from the superintendent interviews included clarity of purpose, specific job related expectations, setting of district goals by the school board and superintendent, and articulating standards that set clear guidelines for teaching

and learning. All of these concerns relate back to the underlining ambiguity that is often part of the superintendent's role in the school district. Hired to be the Chief Executive Officer of the district, the position expectations and goals for the superintendent are often not explicitly expressed by the board nor reflected in the evaluation tool.

In many postings, the role of the superintendent is all encompassing and may not list the actual direction or goals of the school board. Many times this is known only after the superintendent is hired and the board and superintendent begin to work together on implementing a district strategic plan and long-range goals. Given the complexity and overall responsibilities of the superintendent in small districts, the task of evaluation may be scattered and lack direction unless specific goals and targets are set by the board and superintendent early in the process. Monitoring and reporting by the superintendent to the board is one area many superintendents felt would be a benefit for both the board and district in turn leading to a clearer and better-defined evaluation practices.

Board members from all six districts pointed out that they carry out the superintendent evaluation as part of their

role on the board as well as meeting the legal requirement to evaluate the superintendent. This theme was evident in all districts and something that played out in very different ways in each of the six districts studied. As previously mentioned, most board members were not aware of the ISLLC standards and how they might work into an evaluation model. This came across in all districts except one.

An area that was evident in board member responses was their continuation of the evaluation process that may have been in place for many years. Several board members commented on the fact that it may be time to update their evaluation tool to better reflect the board goals or requirements of the superintendent. Many of the current evaluations did not reflect what was listed on the job posting or job description for the superintendent. While listing several categories for evaluation such as Board Relationships, Personnel Relationships, Community Relationships, Financial and Operations, and Educational Leadership many board members stated their evaluation forms had not changed over the years. One district in this study did make a major change of their evaluation from a more traditional model to a review of established ends on a monthly basis. While not part of this

study, this district had very positive reports about the evaluation process and model used.

New superintendents may also have limited experience with the evaluation process and may be uncomfortable with making suggestions or changes as someone new to the board-superintendent relationship. Several board members look to the superintendent for guidance and direction on the evaluation, therefore leading to a challenging process for both parties as they find ways to work on making evaluations meaningful.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study analyzed superintendent evaluation in each of six small school districts, especially with regard to the perspectives of superintendents and board members. The study also examined how each district's evaluation model related to ISLLC leadership standards (CCSSO, 2008a) and Waters and Marzano's (2006) standards for district leaders. I identified major themes in the interview responses of superintendents and board members.

Interviews of school board members and district superintendents took place over a two-month period. All interviews were transcribed and reviewed for commonalities and differences. Results of the school board members and superintendent interviews are discussed separately with a final analysis for recommendations of further study. District documents were reviewed and a comparison made between the posting or job descriptions and the current evaluation tool where available. The content and format of the evaluation was also reviewed in relation to the ISLLC Standards (2008) and the key areas of Waters and Marzano's (2006) research on effective practices of school district leaders. The last section highlights the relationship between the school board and superintendent describing what role the evaluation plays

in the complex interaction between the two. The need for further studies and research into more effective evaluation models is suggested as a follow up to this research project.

*Statement of purpose*

The purpose of this study was to analyze the superintendent evaluation models in six small districts from the perspective of the superintendent and school board member. How each model related to the common leadership standards from the ISLLC 2008 Standards and Waters and Marzano's (2006) District Leader Standards was also a major component of this study. Identifying key components from the each participant in the study lead to some common themes that are described in detail. My findings are fairly unique in this area due to the limited research studies that are currently available. While the superintendency has been a focus of several studies, the study of evaluations in small districts tends to be limited. I will share some ideas for future studies in this area that may lead to stronger evaluation models and clearer guidance for both superintendents and board members as they work together to enhance the learning opportunities for all students in their district.

### *Review of Key Questions*

A review of the key questions provided insight and clarity on the evaluation process in the districts studies. While each district varied in their responses, general patterns emerged as listed below. A summary to several questions follows.

*How is the evaluation tool determined?* In most of the districts, the evaluation tools had been in place for many years and often developed with guidance from the state school board association WSSDA. Information presented at state conferences and in consultation with WSSDA staff helped formulate the evaluation instrument. One district had moved away from the traditional five-point scale and several others were in the process of revising or looking at modifying what they were currently using.

*How is the evaluation used in the district?* Most districts use their current evaluation to meet the state requirements stated in RCW 28A.405.100 (Appendix A). This is often completed two times a year, once mid-year and again at the end of the school year. In the Pine district, monthly updates by the superintendent to the board were compiled into the annual evaluation. This was well received by both the board members and superintendent in Pine and provided regular



review of the district goals. Most superintendents did not find the district evaluation useful in providing guidance or direction for professional development. In all districts, the superintendent met with the board as part of the review process. This would take place in executive session with discussions focusing on the areas outlined by the district's evaluation model and tools used.

*Is the evaluation performance-based or subjective in nature?* In the majority of the districts, the evaluation was more subjective with board member perceptions expressed through a numeric scoring system and written comments on various items. Pine had moved away from this format by using monthly reporting and several other districts were in the process of reviewing their evaluation process to reflect the work of the superintendent on addressing district goals and objectives.

*What were the overall perceptions of board members and superintendents?* As noted, the responses from superintendents and board members varied in each district. Most superintendents felt the evaluation was not helpful in their own professional development. They also did not find many areas of the evaluation useful to them in their day-to-day oversight of the district. Superintendents were aware of the

ISLLC standards, but did not see them reflected in their district evaluation tool. Board members thought their evaluation tool worked to meet their needs and the needs of the district in evaluating the superintendent. Two of the board members, Cedar and Hemlock, were looking to make changes to the way they currently carried out the evaluation in their district. Board members in Fir, Pine, Spruce and Juniper felt their current evaluation met their needs and did not see a reason to change or modify what they were using. The board members were not aware of the ISLLC standards or performance expectations developed from those standards. There was willingness by all participants to look at current research and continue to refine their evaluations if needed to better meet the needs of their district.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study's generalizability was limited by the small number and small size of the districts studied. However, the sample represented the population of interest: small school districts in Washington State. This population was chosen partly because a review of the literature uncovered no previous study on the process of superintendent evaluation within this population or within small school districts in other states. Therefore, the study provides a starting point

for examining the components needed to provide input into more effective superintendent evaluations in small school districts.

#### Implications of the Findings

Most superintendents in this study did not have a current job description. Those who did thought it was not used in evaluation and of limited use in their role as the district superintendent. Job descriptions should be kept up-to-date and should be tied to the evaluation process in order for them to be meaningful and relevant for current and future superintendents.

Interview responses of superintendents as well as board members indicated a need for clear, jointly developed goals for the superintendent. Although the superintendent bears final responsibility for many aspects of a school district's daily operations, participants agreed that providing students with a quality education should be the superintendent's priority.

This study's participants expressed the view that superintendents and school boards must work together to set challenging but achievable goals for student learning and organizational improvement. Many small school districts do not have the resources to create research-based, optimal

superintendent evaluations. Using boiler-plate evaluation forms provided by state professional organizations satisfies legal requirements but may not meet the unique and changing needs of a particular district.

Early in a superintendent's tenure, the superintendent and school board should establish the process by which the superintendent's performance will be monitored and evaluated. For a school district to accomplish its mission of providing quality education for all students, the district must clearly define the superintendent's duties and goals and do so in ways that further the district's mission. As a team, the superintendent and board should develop measurable objectives that give the superintendent direction and form the basis of evaluation.

ISLLC standards (CCSSO, 2008a) and performance expectations (CCSSO, 2008b) provide a good framework with which school boards and new superintendents can develop a meaningful evaluation tool. In this study, five of the six school districts used evaluation instruments with a five-point Likert rating scale and limited indicators for each point. Developing a matrix based on ISLLC leadership standards would provide a set of definite criteria to guide the board's goals for, and assessment of, the superintendent.

Instead of being vague and therefore of little use, such criteria would specify desired performance outcomes in accordance with best practices. As a result, the superintendent could more easily provide leadership that would promote the professional growth of all school-district teachers and administrators. Implementing ISLLC's six core standards (CCSSO, 2008a) and Marzano and Waters' (2009) leadership guidelines would keep superintendents focused on providing high-quality leadership as they work with their communities to improve learning for all students.

Table 3 shows one possible evaluation rubric based on ISLLC standards (CCSSO, 2008a). The rubric describes the characteristics of emerging, proficient, and exemplary superintendents. However, each school district could define *emerging*, *proficient*, and *exemplary* in its own way. Ideally, experience and training would enable any new superintendent to become proficient and over time, exemplary. Such a matrix is more descriptive than a rating scale of 1 to 5 and therefore more likely to be effective. Superintendents should be held accountable to a clear set of standards and should periodically report on their progress.

Table 4

*Sample ISLLC Rubric for Superintendent Evaluation*

Criterion	Emerging	Proficient	Exemplary
Collaboratively develops and implements a shared vision and mission.	Does not define or fully formulate goals.	Publicizes goals but needs to broaden their scope.	Clearly defines goals and articulates them throughout the district.
Collects and uses data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning.	Rarely presents data to the board; does not explain the data.	Occasionally presents data to the board and somewhat explains them.	Monthly, presents data to the board, with narrative explanation.
Creates and implements plans to achieve goals.	Does not develop plans to achieve goals.	Develops plans but does not report on progress toward goals.	Develops plans well and periodically reports to the board on progress.
Promotes continuous and sustainable improvement.	Makes limited use of research on school improvement.	Discusses and reviews improvements based on perceptions.	With the board, reviews data showing ongoing, sustainable improvement.
Monitors and evaluates progress and revises plans.	Limited monitoring of district plans and does not revise those plans.	Monitors and reviews plans but without regularity.	Reviews and revises plans in accordance with a predetermined timeline.

### Suggestions for Future Research

Initial studies of the superintendency have focused on the path to the superintendency along with comparisons to business models. The focus of this study was to look at the models used by six small school districts in Washington State and draw conclusions and comparisons to current national models developed by CCSSO, AASA, NSBA and others. Future research studies into how the evaluation of district leaders can help meet the high expectations of school boards, staff, students, parents and community members is needed and will benefit current and prospective superintendents as they continue to refine their skills and knowledge in the area of district leadership.

There are specific traits that emerged from the data collected from interviews, surveys and primary source documents that lead to some consistent conclusions about what helps in the professional development of a superintendent in meeting the needs of the community. These include the need to review goals with the superintendent and set specific areas to be addressed during the year, review district data as a method for measuring district and student improvement over time, and develop an evaluation model that is more objective and less subjective. This would help focus the work

of the superintendent on specific areas the board felt would be important to the community and improve student learning which is one of the main objectives of public schools.

The overall goal of this dissertation was to collect, analyze, and summarize the current state of superintendent evaluation models used in six small school districts in Washington State. By gathering data through interviews and district documents, I was able to provide a practitioner's perspective into the superintendent evaluation process for new superintendents and school board members. This work led to recommendations and possible model documents for use by new superintendents as they begin their move into the superintendency as part of their educational career. In the 2008 ISLLC Educational Leadership Policy Standards (CCSSO, 2008a) the use of the performance-based standards is recommended as a possible tool in helping to create guidelines for the evaluation of school leaders. Tying the evaluation tool to a set of standards that have been researched as best practices in the field of education helps to provide direction and support for both the superintendent and school board.

Ongoing professional development will help to maintain a focus on the evolving state standards and leadership



standards designed to promote student success. Keeping the conversations focused on student learning, teaching and professional development, and overall district improvement will result in a stronger and more cohesive leadership team at the district level.

Continually reviewing the evaluation model to provide guidance and direction toward superintendent growth and development will lead to a more focused organization. In the final ISLLC Standards (2008) report, M. Christine DeVita wrote in an excerpt from *A Bridge to School Reform*, "The national conversation has shifted from 'whether' leadership really matters or is worth the investment, to 'how' to train, place, and support high-quality leadership where it's needed the most: in the schools and districts where failure remains at epidemic levels." (p. 3). While the districts in this study are not at epidemic levels of failure, the need to train and support high-quality leadership is something all districts should strive for in their district leaders.

Setting collaborative goals for future expectations based on the district vision and mission provides a clear and focused direction for the superintendent (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Framing the evaluation process based on national standards and researched based best practices will enhance

the leadership outcomes as the board and superintendent work together for the overall improvement of public education.

I recommend that future studies examine a greater number of school districts, larger school districts, and/or school districts in other states to add to the body of knowledge on superintendent evaluations. Also, further research is needed into how superintendent evaluations can best meet the expectations and needs of school boards, school staff, students, parents, and the local community.

#### Conclusion

This study focused on the superintendent-evaluation models used by six small school districts in Washington State. I interviewed one superintendent and one board member from each district regarding their district's evaluation process. Participants' responses indicated a need for more frequent review of the superintendent's progress in reaching the school system's goals as well as clearer, more objective, and more descriptive evaluation tools.

I compared districts' evaluation tools to current national models developed by the CCSSO (2008a, 2008b), the AASA, the National School Boards Association, and other organizations and found that the evaluations currently in use are not designed after these standards. The evaluations are

also not designed as fluid documents that allow change as boards and superintendents work on new goals or targets. This is an area that needs additional work and review to provide greater meaning and focus for district superintendents. I also examined districts' job announcements and job descriptions for the position of superintendent when these were available. I found that many expressed general goals and objectives that did not carry over to the evaluation tool used by the district. Both superintendents and board members failed to mention a connection between the job posting, job description and evaluation.

I recommend that superintendents and boards set collaborative goals based on their school district's vision and mission (Marzano & Waters, 2009). I also recommend that school districts base their evaluation process on national standards and researched-based practices in order to enhance educational leadership and thereby maximize student learning (CCSSO, 2008b; IASB, 2006; Marzano & Waters, 2009).

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## Appendix A

## RCW and WAC References

## RCW 28A.405.100

Minimum criteria for the evaluation of certificated employees, including administrators -- Procedure -- Scope -- Penalty.

(2) Every board of directors shall establish evaluative criteria and procedures for all superintendents, principals, and other administrators. It shall be the responsibility of the district superintendent or his or her designee to evaluate all administrators. Such evaluation shall be based on the administrative position job description. Such criteria, when applicable, shall include at least the following categories: Knowledge of, experience in, and training in recognizing good professional performance, capabilities and development; school administration and management; school finance; professional preparation and scholarship; effort toward improvement when needed; interest in pupils, employees, patrons and subjects taught in school; leadership; and ability and performance of evaluation of school personnel.

WAC 181-78A-270 Approval standard -- Knowledge and skills. Building on the mission to prepare educators who demonstrate a positive impact on student learning based on the Improvement of Student Achievement Act of 1993 (1209), the following evidence shall be evaluated to determine whether each preparation program is in compliance with the program approval standards of WAC [181-78A-220\(5\)](#):

(3) SUPERINTENDENT. Superintendent candidates, in order to support student achievement of the state learning goals and essential academic learning requirements, will complete a well-planned sequence of courses and/or experiences in an approved preparation program for superintendents which shall include specific performance domains for superintendents. An approved preparation program for superintendents shall require the candidate to demonstrate in course work and the internship the following:

(a) Strategic leadership: The knowledge, skills and attributes to identify contexts, develop with others vision and purpose, utilize information, frame problems, exercise leadership processes to achieve common goals, and act ethically for educational communities. This includes:

(i) Professional and ethical leadership.

(ii) Information management and evaluation.

(b) Instructional leadership: The knowledge, skills and attributes to design with others appropriate curricula and instructional programs which implement the state learning goals and essential academic learning requirements, to develop learner centered school cultures, to assess outcomes, to provide student personnel services, and to plan with faculty professional

development activities aimed at improving instruction. This includes:

(i) Curriculum, instruction, supervision, and learning environment.

(ii) Professional development and human resources.

(iii) Student personnel services.

(c) Organizational leadership: The knowledge, skills and attributes to understand and improve the organization, implement operational plans, manage financial resources, and apply decentralized management processes and procedures. This includes:

(i) Organizational management.

(ii) Interpersonal relationships.

(iii) Financial management and resource allocation.

(iv) Technology and information system.

(d) Political and community leadership: The knowledge, skills and attributes to act in accordance with legal provisions and statutory requirements, to apply regulatory standards, to develop and apply appropriate policies, to be conscious of ethical implications of policy initiatives and political actions, to relate public policy initiatives to student welfare, to understand schools as political systems, to involve citizens and service agencies, and to develop effective staff communications and public relations programs. This includes:

(i) Community and media relations.

(ii) Federal and Washington state educational law, public policy and political systems.

## Appendix B

## Research Study Consent Form

**WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Educational Leadership - College of Education

**Research Study Consent Form**

**Study Title:** Superintendent Evaluations

**Researchers:** Paul Goldman, PhD  
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**Sponsor:**

You are being asked to take part in a research study carried out by Dr. Paul Goldman and Thomas A. Opstad. This form explains the research study and your part in it if you decide to join the study. Please read the form carefully, taking as much time as you need. Ask the researcher to explain anything you don't understand. You can decide not to join the study. If you join the study, you can change your mind later or quit at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of services or benefits if you decide to not take part in the study or quit later.

**What is this study about?**

This research study is being done to describe the superintendent evaluation process in small districts and to define practices that lead to a stronger blend of formative, summative, and performance assessments designed to strengthen the role of the superintendent as an educational leader through the evaluation process.

You are being asked to take part because of your position as either a school superintendent or school board member in a small district.

Taking part in the study will take about 30 minutes to 1 hour.

You cannot take part in this study if you are under the age of eighteen.

### **What will I be asked to do if I am in this study?**

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to answer questions about the superintendent evaluation process in your district and any relationship to national standards. Questions that will be asked are listed below.

#### **Key Questions - Superintendent**

1. Describe the superintendent evaluation process in your district?
2. How is the evaluation used to improve the professional development of the superintendent?
3. What are the expected outcomes of the evaluation process?
4. How does communication take place between the board and superintendent in developing annual expectations? Who meets with you and in what venue to review the evaluation?
5. What are the key elements you see in your evaluation model that make it a useful tool?
6. Are board expectations and/or annual goals discussed with you throughout the school year? If so, when does that discussion take place and is it reflected in the evaluation?
7. Do you feel you have clear job descriptions and well defined expectations as a superintendent?
8. Is the evaluation performance-based or more subjective? Is it narrative or based on a Likert scale? Does the evaluation reflect the job posting and job description?
9. Do the ISLLC standards or other national standards influence your district's evaluation model?
10. What do you see is missing from the current evaluation tool?
11. How often is the evaluation tool revised or reviewed?
12. What changes would you make to improve the evaluation process in your district?

#### **Key Questions – Board Member**

13. Describe the superintendent evaluation process in your district?
14. How is the evaluation used to improve the professional development of the superintendent?
15. What are the expected outcomes of the evaluation process?
16. How does communication take place between the board and superintendent in developing annual expectations? Are all board members involved in the process?
17. What are the key elements you see in your evaluation model that make it a useful tool?
18. Are board expectations and/or annual goals discussed with the superintendent throughout the school year? If so, when does that discussion take place and is it reflected in the evaluation?

19. Who meets with the superintendent to review the evaluation? Are all board members involved in the process?
20. Do the ISLLC standards or other national standards influence your district's evaluation model?
21. What do you see is missing from the current evaluation tool?
22. How often is the evaluation tool revised or reviewed?
23. What changes do you feel would be helpful in improving the current evaluation model?

### **Are there any benefits to me if I am in this study?**

The potential benefits to you for taking part in this study are: Improved evaluation model that may be used with current or future boards and superintendents.

### **Are there any risks to me if I am in this study?**

The potential risks from taking part in this study include some discomfort due to questions that may be difficult to answer or may not have a clear answer given the research content and topic.

### **Will my information be kept private?**

The data for this study will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by federal and state law. No published results will identify you, and your name will not be associated with the findings. Under certain circumstances, information that identifies you may be released for internal and external reviews of this project. All interviews and data collected will be coded and a key maintained only by the researcher.

Conversations will be private and not shared with other participants. Data will be collected and stored at the home of the researcher and protected under lock and key and in the researchers safe. Only access to the data will be the researcher, research staff, the Institutional Review Board at WSU, transcriber, and the principal investigator. All interviews will be recorded and transcripts kept until completion of the study per WSU research guidelines. Taped recordings will be erased after they have been transcribed and reviewed by the researcher.

The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous

The data for this study will be kept for 3 years after the completion of the study as required by WSU.

### **Are there any costs or payments for being in this study?**

There will be no costs to you for taking part in this study.

You will not receive money or any other form of compensation for taking part in this study.

### **Who can I talk to if I have questions?**

If you have questions about this study or the information in this form, please contact the researcher, Thomas A. Opstad, 2906 Jackman Street Port Townsend, WA 98368, [topstad@gmail.com](mailto:topstad@gmail.com), 360-385-3881 (home) or 360-301-9022 (cell).

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or would like to report a concern or complaint about this study, please contact Dr. Paul Goldman.

### **What are my rights as a research study volunteer?**

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to be a part of this study. There will be no penalty to you if you choose not to take part. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

### **What does my signature on this consent form mean?**

Your signature on this form means that:

- You understand the information given to you in this form
- You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns
- The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns
- You believe you understand the research study and the potential benefits and risks that are involved.

---

### **Statement of Consent**

I give my voluntary consent to take part in this study. I will be given a copy of this consent document for my records.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Participant

### Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect.

I certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she understands the purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and potential risks of participation.

I also certify that he or she:

- Speaks the language used to explain this research
- Reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this person is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her
- Does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means to take part in this research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Role in the Research Study



## Appendix C

## Transcriber's Confidentiality Agreement

**Transcriber's  
Confidentiality Agreement**

IRB #: \_\_\_\_\_

Study Title:

Principal Investigator:

I \_\_\_\_\_, the Research Assistant/Transcriber understand that I will be hearing tapes of confidential interviews. The individuals who participated in this research project have revealed the information on these tapes on good faith that the information would remain strictly confidential. I agree to:

1. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts with anyone other than the researcher(s).
2. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.
3. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks tapes, transcripts to the researcher(s) when I have completed the research tasks.
4. After consulting with researcher(s), erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the researcher(s) (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive).

Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

Research Assistant/Transcriber

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Print name

Signature

Date

## Appendix D

## Interview questions - Superintendent

1. Describe the superintendent evaluation process in your district.
2. How is the evaluation used to improve the professional development of the superintendent?
3. What are the key elements you see in your evaluation model that makes it a useful tool?
4. Who meets with you to review the evaluation?
5. Are annual superintendent goals incorporated into the evaluation?
6. Did the ISLLC Standards influence the evaluation model?
7. What do you see is missing from the current evaluation?
8. How often is the evaluation tool revised or reviewed?
9. What changes would you make to improve the evaluation process in your district?

## Appendix E

## Interview questions - Board Members

10. Describe the superintendent evaluation process in your district.
11. How is the evaluation used to improve the professional development of the superintendent?
12. What are the key elements you see in your evaluation model that makes it a useful tool?
13. Who meets with the superintendent to review the evaluation? Are all board members involved in the process?
14. Do you work with the superintendent to set goals that will be part of the evaluation?
15. Did the ISLLC Standards influence the evaluation model?
16. What do you see is missing from the current evaluation?
17. How often is the evaluation tool revised or reviewed?
18. What changes do you see would be helpful in improving the current evaluation model?

## Appendix F

## ISLLC Standards

Standard 1:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

Functions:

- A. Collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission
- B. Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning
- C. Create and implement plans to achieve goals
- D. Promote continuous and sustainable improvement
- E. Monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans

Standard 2:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Functions:

- A. Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations
- B. Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program
- C. Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students
- D. Supervise instruction
- E. Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress
- F. Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff
- G. Maximize time spent on quality instruction
- H. Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning
- I. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program

Standard 3:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Functions:

- A. Monitor and evaluate the management and operational systems
- B. Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources
- C. Promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff

- D. Develop the capacity for distributed leadership
- E. Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning

Standard 4:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Functions:

- A. Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment
- B. Promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources
- C. Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers
- D. Build and sustain productive relationships with community partners

Standard 5:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Functions:

- A. Ensure a system of accountability for every student's academic and social success
- B. Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior
- C. Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity
- D. Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making
- E. Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling

Standard 6:

An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Functions:

- A. Advocate for children, families, and caregivers
- B. Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning
- C. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies

## Appendix G

Performance Expectations and Elements (conceptual categories)

for Educational Leaders

(An ISLLC-Based Guide to Implementing Leader Standards and a Companion Guide to the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008)

### **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 1: Vision, Mission, and Goals**

Education leaders ensure the achievement of all students by guiding the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning, strong organizational mission, and setting high expectations for every student.

- **Element A. High Expectations for All:** The vision and goals establish high, measurable expectations for all students and educators.
- **Element B. Shared Commitments to Implement the Vision, Mission, and Goals:** The process of creating and sustaining the vision, mission, and goals is inclusive, building common understandings and genuine commitment among all stakeholders to implement vision and goals.
- **Element C. Continuous Improvement toward the Vision, Mission, and Goals:** Education leaders ensure the achievement of all students by guiding the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning, strong organizational mission, and high expectations for every student.
- 

### **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 2: Teaching and Learning**

Education leaders ensure achievement and success of all students by monitoring and continuously improving teaching and learning.

- **Element A. Strong Professional Culture:** A strong professional culture supports teacher learning and shared commitments to the vision and goals.
- **Element B. Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction:** Improving achievement of all students requires all educators to know and use rigorous curriculum and effective instructional practices, individualized for success of every student.
- **Element C. Assessment and Accountability:** Improving achievement and closing achievement gaps require that leaders make appropriate, sound use of assessments, performance management, and accountability strategies to achieve the vision, mission, and goals.

### **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 3: Managing Organizational Systems and Safety**

Education leaders ensure the success of all students by managing organizational systems and resources for a safe, high-performing learning environment.

- **Element A. Effective Operational Systems:** Leaders distribute leadership responsibilities and supervise daily, ongoing management structures and practices to enhance teaching and learning.
- **Element B. Aligned Fiscal and Human Resources:** Leaders establish an infrastructure for finance and personnel that operates in support of teaching and learning.
- **Element C. Protecting the Welfare and Safety of Students and Staff:** Leaders ensure a safe environment by addressing real and potential challenges to the physical and emotional safety and security of students and staff that interfere with teaching and learning.

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 4: Collaborating with Families and Stakeholders**

Education leaders ensure the success of all students by Collaborating with Families and Stakeholders who represent diverse community interests and needs and mobilizing community resources that improve teaching and learning.

- **Element A. Collaboration with Families and Community Members:** Leaders extend educational relationships to families and community members to add programs, services, and staff outreach and provide what every student needs to succeed in school and life.
- **Element B. Community Interests and Needs:** Leaders respond and contribute to community interests and needs in providing the best possible education for their children.
- **Element C. Building on Community Resources:** Leaders maximize shared resources among schools, districts, and communities that provide key social structures and gathering places, in conjunction with other organizations and agencies that provide critical resources for children and families.

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 5: Ethics and Integrity**

Education leaders ensure the success of all students by being ethical and acting with integrity.

- **Element A. Ethical and Legal Standards:** Leaders demonstrate appropriate ethical and legal behavior expected by the profession.
- **Element B. Examining Personal Values and Beliefs:** Leaders demonstrate their commitment to examine personal assumptions, values, beliefs, and practices in service of a shared vision and goals for student learning.
- **Element C. Maintaining High Standards for Self and Others:** Leaders perform the work required for high levels of personal and organizational performance, including acquiring new capacities needed to fulfill responsibilities, particularly for high-stakes accountability.

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION 6: The Education System**

Education leaders ensure the success of all students by influencing interrelated systems of political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts affecting education to advocate for their teachers' and students' needs.

- **Element A. Exerting Professional Influence:** Leaders improve the broader political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context of education for all students and families through active participation and exerting professional influence in the local community and the larger educational policy environment.
- **Element B. Contributing to the Educational Policy Environment:** Leaders contribute to policies and political support for excellence and equity in education.
- **Element C. Policy Engagement:** Working with policymakers informs and improves education policymaking and effectiveness of the public's efforts to improve education.

Appendix H – Sample Superintendent Evaluation  
(Based on ISLLC Standards 2008 & CCSSO Performance Expectations)

The following list of superintendent expectations is intended to promote the evaluation process of the Superintendent of the Port Townsend School District. Each major expectation can be evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 as emerging (not yet meeting expectations), 3 as proficient (meeting expectations), and 5 exemplary (indicating expectations are exceeded) in the areas listed for the position. The performance indicators are important components of the expectations based on the ISLLC Standards as well as locally developed indicators and can be used as points of discussion.

Performance Expectation 1: Vision, Mission, and Goals – An educational leader promotes the success of every student by *facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.*

Performance Indicators:

- A. Collaboratively develops and implements a shared vision and mission**
- B. Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning**
- C. Create and implement plans to achieve goals**
- D. Promote continuous and sustainable improvement**
- E. Monitors and evaluates progress and revises plans based on systematic evidence**
- F. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**

Self-Assessment		Areas of Strength:
Board Assessment		
Gap		Opportunities for Growth:

Notes/Comments on Vision, Mission and Goals



**Performance Expectation 2: Teaching and Learning** – An educational leader promotes the success of every student by *advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a district culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.*

Performance Indicators:

- A. Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations**
- B. Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program**
- C. Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students**
- D. Supervise instruction**
- E. Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress**
- F. Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff**
- G. Maximize time spent on quality instruction**
- H. Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning**
- I. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program**
- J. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**
- K. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**

Self-Assessment		Areas of Strength:
Board Assessment		
Gap		Opportunities for Growth:

Notes/Comments on Teaching and Learning

Performance Expectation 3: Managing Organizational Systems and Safety – An educational leader promotes the success of every student by *ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.*

Performance Indicators:

- A. Monitor and evaluate the management and operational systems**
- B. Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources**
- C. Promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff**
- D. Develop the capacity for distributed leadership**
- E. Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning**
- F. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**
- G. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**

Self-Assessment		Areas of Strength:
Board Assessment		
Gap		Opportunities for Growth:

Note/Comments on Managing Organizational Systems and Safety

Performance Expectation 4: Collaborating with Families and Stakeholders – An educational leader promotes the success of every student by *collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.*

Performance Indicators:

- A. Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment**
- B. Promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community’s diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources**
- C. Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers**
- D. Build and sustain productive relationships with community partners**
- E. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**
- F. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**

Self-Assessment		Areas of Strength:
Board Assessment		
Gap		Opportunities for Growth:

Notes/Comments on Collaborating with Families and Stakeholders

Performance Expectation 5: Ethics and Integrity – An educational leader promotes the success of every student by *acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.*

Performance Indicators:

- A. Ensure a system of accountability for every student’s academic and social success**
- B. Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior**
- C. Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity**
- D. Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making**
- E. Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling**
- F. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**
- G. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**

Self-Assessment		Areas of Strength:
Board Assessment		
Gap		Opportunities for Growth:

Notes/Comments on Ethics and Integrity

**Performance Expectation 6: The Educational System** – An educational leader promotes the success of every student by *understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context*.

Performance Indicators:

- A. Advocate for children, families, and caregivers**
- B. Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning**
- C. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies**
- D. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**
- E. (Add local goal as performance indicator)**

Self-Assessment		Areas of Strength:
Board Assessment		
Gap		Opportunities for Growth:

Notes/Comments on the Educational System

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Board of Directors

\_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed

Appendix I - Sample District Evaluation Forms  
(Partial excerpts from actual district evaluation forms)

Sample A - Spruce  
EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

5=Excellent, 4=Good, 3=Fair, 2=Poor, 1=Missing, but needed

**1) Board Relationships:**

- |    |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Keeps the Board informed on issues, needs, and operation of MERIDIAN School District.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B. | Develops and provides professional recommendations to the Board on items requiring Board action.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C. | Recommends, interprets, administers and supports the intent of Board policy.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D. | Seeks and accepts constructive criticism of performance.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E. | Promotes a harmonious impartial working relationship with the Board.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| F. | Maintains liaison between the Board and personnel working toward a high degree of understanding and respect between the staff and the Board. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

**2) Goal Setting and Achievement:**

- |    |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Assists the Board in the formation of District operational priorities and goals for the coming year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B. | Assures that interim reports are submitted to the Board on goal achievement progress.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C. | Assures that end of the year reports are submitted to the Board in achievement of goals.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D. | Develops and works to achieve operational goals that reflect the Board/District goals.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

**3) Personnel Relationships:**

- |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Develops and follows sound personnel procedures and practices.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B. | Promotes good staff morale and loyalty to the organization.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C. | Insists on high performance of all personnel.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D. | Encourages participation of staff in regular discussion of the operation and issues the District. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E. | Keeps the Board informed of overall departmental strengths and weaknesses.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Page 2

**4) Business and Finance:**

- |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Supervises operations, insisting on competent and efficient performance.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B. | Monitors the expenditure of all funds through adequate control and accepted accounting procedures and provides meaningful reports to the Board. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C. | Evaluates financial needs and makes recommendations to the Board.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D. | Recommends budgets within projected revenue that considers the needs of the District.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E. | Provides leadership in planning and maintenance of facilities and equipment that assure a safe and effective environment.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| F. | Informs the Board of financial or management implications involved with collective bargaining/ negotiations with District employees.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

**5) Personal and Professional Qualities:**

- |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Maintains high standard of ethics, honesty, and integrity.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B. | Devotes time and energy effectively to the job.                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C. | Demonstrates ability to work well with individuals and groups.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D. | Communicates clearly and concisely with individuals and groups. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E. | Exercises good judgment.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| F. | Maintains professional proficiency and development.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

## Sample B - Fir

**SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

An effective working relationship between the school board and the superintendent is essential to the successful operation of a school district. The development and maintenance of such a relationship may be greatly assisted by a periodic review of the superintendent's diverse responsibilities accompanied by a frank discussion of his performance. Once having employed a superintendent, the board shares in the responsibility for his success, with an obligation to offer guidance and support in carrying out his duties.

**1. Purposes of an evaluation**

Evaluation is a valuable tool in establishing and carrying out the goals of any operation. Among the purposes of evaluating the superintendent are the following:

1. To establish and maintain good working relationships between the board and superintendent.
2. To define the functions and responsibilities of the superintendent.
3. To improve performance by suggesting areas of responsibility and operating techniques that may be strengthened.
4. To give encouragement and commendation for work well done.
5. To record some evidence of performance and improvement.
6. To offer a guide for the superintendent's self-appraisal of his own characteristics and skills.
7. To provide an opportunity for the board and superintendent to confer at periodic intervals on his performance.
8. To offer a procedure for comprehensive and dispassionate appraisal in a setting other than during the times of crisis.
9. To establish reasonable standards for continued employment.

**II. The instrument for evaluation**

The attached appraisal instrument contains a list of characteristics, skills and the duties, which may be expected of the superintendent. The list is not all-inclusive, and may be supplemented with additional items appropriate to a given situation in any of the five areas.

A five-point system is suggested for rating the superintendent on each item, with the selected number to be placed in the space provided. Comments or suggestions may be inserted after each item to supplement the point rating; this would be especially desirable if needed improvement is noted.

(Suggested Procedure for Evaluation of Superintendent)

The point scale suggested, ranging from a high rating of "5" to a low of "1" is as follows:



- 5 Excellent
- 4 Above Average
- 3 Average
- 2 Some Improvement
- 1 Poor

### III. Suggested Procedures

The procedure to be followed may vary according to circumstances and desires of the board. The following is suggested:

1. In a brief executive session with the superintendent and all board members present, the purposes and procedures of an evaluation will be discussed.
2. Set a date for carrying out the evaluation, providing no less than one hour of uninterrupted time in executive session.
3. Several days in advance of the session provide each board member with a copy of the evaluative procedure and instrument.
4. At the start of the evaluative session, permit the board, in the absence of the superintendent, to discuss and enter for each item on the instrument, a composite rating reflecting the board's consensus.
5. Encourage the superintendent to complete a self-appraisal for comparison with the boards' evaluation.
6. Meet with the superintendent to discuss all items on the instrument. This step should be the most fruitful of the entire process, aimed toward greater understanding and positive working relationships.
7. Complete the evaluation instrument, with any changes in rating that may result from the joint discussion; enter the date and signature of the board chairman.
8. Provide for filing of the evaluation as a permanent record and for future reference.

### EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

(For use in conjunction with suggested purposes and procedures)

Performance scale (enter appropriate number in space provided):

- 5 Excellent
- 4 Above Average
- 3 Average
- 2 Some Improvement
- 1 Poor

- A. Relationship with the Board
1. Keeps the board informed on issues, needs and operations of the School system. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Offers professional advice to the board on items requiring board action, with appropriate recommendations based on thorough study and analysis. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Interprets and executes the intent of board policy. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Seeks and accepts constructive criticism of her work. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Supports board policy and actions to the public and staff. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Community Relationships
1. Gain's respect and support of the community on the conduct of the school operation. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Solicits and gives attention to problems and opinions of all groups and individuals. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Develops friendly and cooperative relationships with news media. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Participates actively in community life and affairs. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Achieves status as a community leader in public education. \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Works effectively with public and private groups. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Staff and Personnel Relationships
1. Develops and executes sound personnel procedures and practices. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Develops good staff morale and loyalty to the organization. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Treats all personnel fairly, without favoritism or discrimination, while insisting on performance of duties. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Delegates authority and responsibility to staff members appropriate to the position each holds. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Recruits and assigns the best available personnel. \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Encourages participation of appropriate staff members and groups in planning, procedures and policy interpretation. \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Evaluates performance of staff members, giving commendation for good work as well as well as constructive suggestions for improvement. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Educational Leadership
1. Understands and keeps informed regarding all aspects of the instructional program. \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Maintains a sound philosophy of educational needs of all pupils. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Participates with staff, board and community in studying and developing curriculum improvement. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Organized a planned program of curriculum evaluation and improvement. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Provides democratic procedures in curriculum work, utilizing the abilities and talents of teachers, specialists, principals and central staff. \_\_\_\_\_

E. Business and Finance

- 1. Keeps informed of needs of the school program --plant, facilities, equipment, supplies. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Supervises operations, insisting on competent and efficient performance. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Determines that funds are spent wisely, with adequate control and accounting. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Evaluates financial needs and makes recommendations for adequate financing. \_\_\_\_\_

F. Personal Qualities

- 1. Defends principle and conviction in the face of pressure and partisan influence. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Maintains high standards of ethics, honesty and integrity in all personal and professional matters. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Earns respect and standing among her professional colleagues. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Devotes her time and energy to her job. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Exercises good judgment in arriving at decisions. \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

Subject of Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_

Board Chairman Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_

Sample C - Juniper  
Superintendent  
Evaluation

- 1. The Superintendent works with the Board in achieving district goals and objectives.**

Numerical Rating (1-5)

- 2. The Superintendent implements the districts financial budget plan and follows through with it.**

Numerical Rating (1-5)

- 3. The Superintendent leads the district's instructional program and content areas.**

Numerical Rating (1-5)

- 4. The Superintendent has effective communications with staff, students and community.**

Numerical Rating (1-5)

- 5. The Superintendent carries out other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the Board.**

Numerical Rating (1-5)

Appendix J - Tips on Evaluating the Superintendent  
 (Excerpt from WSSDA Manual - The Evaluation Process: Board  
 Self-assessment and superintendent evaluation)

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

Tips on Evaluating the Superintendent

Linking Evaluation to the Duties of the Superintendency

Superintendent evaluation should be grounded on two foundations: effective board-superintendent communication and a clearly understood conceptualization of the superintendent duties.

Proposed General and Illustrative Specific Duties of Superintendents

1. Promote and support student growth and development.

Indicators may include:

- 1.1 Assess and report on student achievement, attendance, and graduation rate.
- 1.2 Provide leadership for annually assessing and setting priorities on student and district needs.
- 1.3 Evaluate and provide direction for improving school/district offerings.
- 1.4 Motivate and assist students to develop a sense of self-worth.
- 1.5 Provide leadership for improving parent involvement in the schools.
- 1.6 Set priorities in the context of assessed student needs.

2. Honor diversity and promote equality of opportunity.

Indicators may include:

- 2.1 Recruit qualified minority and majority staff
- 2.2 Examine, communicate, and address gaps in achievement of different groups of students.
- 2.3 Provide leadership necessary to fully integrate schools and programs.
- 2.4 Serve as an articulate spokesperson for the welfare of all students in multicultural context.
- 2.5 Respect diversity of religion, ethnicity, and cultural values in students, staff, and programs.
- 2.6 Insure equitable distribution of district resources.

3. Foster a positive climate. Indicators may include:
  - 3.1 Assess and provide leadership for improving environments in and around each district school.
  - 3.2 Conduct school climate assessments.
  - 3.3 Articulate and disseminate high expectations for student learning and teaching quality.
  - 3.4 Promote a positive climate for learning and an atmosphere of acceptance for all students willing to participate in an orderly process of learning; do not tolerate chronic disruptive and/or criminal behavior from students.
  - 3.5 Promote, demonstrate, and support clear two-way communication at all levels of the district.
  - 3.6 Promote academic rigor and excellence for staff and students.
  - 3.7 Encourage and foster self-esteem in staff and students.
  - 3.8 Manifest multicultural and ethnic understanding.
  - 3.9 Assess individual and institutional sources of stress.
  
4. Provide leadership in school improvement efforts. Indicators may include:
  - 4.1 Develop, communicate, and implement a collective vision of school improvement.
  - 4.2 Encourage, model, and support creative and appropriate risk taking.
  - 4.3 Provide direction and support for periodic review of curriculum and school policies and procedures.
  - 4.4 Formulate strategic plans, goals, and change efforts with staff and community.
  - 4.5 Formulate procedures for gathering, analyzing, and using district data for decision-making.
  
5. Stimulate, focus, and support improvement of classroom instruction. Indicators may include:
  - 5.1 Provide encouragement, opportunities, and structure for teachers to design better learning experiences for students.
  - 5.2 Evaluate and provide direction for improving classroom instruction.
  - 5.3 Develop and offer opportunities that respond to teachers' needs for professional development.
  - 5.4 Encourage and facilitate the use of new technology to improve teaching and learning.

6. Lead and manage personnel effectively. Indicators may include:

- 6.1 Define and delegate administrative authority and responsibility effectively.
- 6.2 Evaluate performance of subordinates and take appropriate follow-up actions.
- 6.3 Recognize and reward exemplary performance of subordinates and take appropriate follow-up actions.
- 6.4 Encourage and support personal and professional growth among staff.
- 6.5 Comply with applicable personnel policies and rules.
- 6.6 Recruit and select competent district personnel.

7. Manage administrative, fiscal, and facilities functions effectively. Indicators may include:

- 7.1 Obtain competent fiscal/financial analysis.
- 7.2 Keep informed of funding sources.
- 7.3 Prepare appropriate budgets and cost estimates.
- 7.4 Manage the district budget.
- 7.5 Create and implement an internal/external audit system.
- 7.6 Maintain accurate fiscal records.
- 7.7 Ensure that facilities are maintained and upgraded as necessary.
- 7.8 Manage attendance, accounting, payroll and transportation.
- 7.9 Manage personal and district time effectively.
- 7.10 Conduct sound evaluations to guide decisions, e.g., in selecting office equipment, planning building construction or fund-raising campaigns.
- 7.11 Identify and evaluate alternative employee benefits packages.
- 7.12 Effectively apply the legal requirements for personnel selection, development, retention and dismissal.

8. Assure/provide a safe, orderly environment. Indicators may include:

- 8.1 Develop and communicate guidelines for student conduct.
- 8.2 Ensure that rules are uniformly observed and enforced.
- 8.3 Discipline students for misconduct in an effective and fair manner.

8.4 Promote a collaborative approach to discipline, involving staff, students, and parents.

9. Foster effective school-community relations. Indicators may include:

- 9.1 Formulate and implement plans for internal and external communication, including communication of the school district mission, student and district needs, and district priorities to the community and mass media.
- 9.2 Write and speak clearly and influentially in order to recruit community support for school programs.
- 9.3 Involve parents and other community members in serving school programs.
- 9.4 Provide services to the community and leadership for developing rapport between the schools and the community.
- 9.5 Obtain and respond to community feedback.
- 9.6 Implement consensus building and conflict mediation.
- 9.7 Align constituencies and build coalitions to support district needs and priorities and to gain financial and programmatic support.
- 9.8 Maintain constructive communication with employee organizations, including but not restricted to unions.
- 9.9 Understand and be able to communicate with all cultural groups in the community.
- 9.10 Institute, nurture, and improve the district's cooperative relationships with other districts, intermediate education units, the state education department, federal education agencies, etc., including sharing scarce resources, facilitating student transfers, conducting staff development, and obtaining grants.
- 9.11 Apply formal and informal techniques to assess external perceptions of the district by means of surveys, advisory groups, and personal contact.
- 9.12 Form alliances with other groups concerned with the welfare of children and youth, e.g., the police and fire departments and the juvenile courts.
- 9.13 Be knowledgeable about the community, including its history, culture, resources, and services.
- 9.14 Identify and analyze the political forces in the community.
- 9.15 Design effective strategies for passing referenda.



- 9.16 Successfully mediate conflicts related to the district.
- 9.17 Respond in an ethical and skillful way to the electronic and printed news media.
- 9.18 Involve stakeholders in educational decisions affecting them.
- 9.19 Exhibit environmental awareness and be proactive in such efforts as recycling and preserving natural resources.

10. Embody and promote professionalism. Indicators may include:

- 10.1 Participate in professional education organizations, e.g., AASA, AERA, ASCD.
- 10.2 Conduct oneself ethically and professionally.
- 10.3 Stay abreast of professional issues and developments in education.
- 10.4 Disseminate professional ideas and new developments in education.
- 10.5 Know and employ appropriate evaluation and assessment techniques, e.g., performance assessment, standardized testing, and educational statistics.
- 10.6 Obtain and use evaluation information as a basis for improving performance; conduct a systematic annual self-evaluation, seeking and responding to criticism of performance.
- 10.7 Maintain and understanding of national and international issues affecting education.
- 10.8 Maintain personal, physical, and emotional health.

11. Relate effectively to the school board. Indicators may include:

- 11.1 Meet the board's needs for information about district performance.
- 11.2 Interact with the board ethically, sensitively, and professionally.
- 11.3 Communicate clearly and substantively to the board.
- 11.4 Educate the board about professional education issues and approaches.
- 11.5 Recommend policies to improve student learning and district performance.
- 11.6 Provide leadership to the board for defining superintendent and board roles, mutual expectations, procedures for working together, and strategies for formulating district policies.

- 11.7 Recognize and apply standards involving civil and criminal liabilities, and develop a checklist of procedures to avoid civil and criminal liabilities.
- 11.8 Recommend district policy in consideration of state and federal requirements.
- 11.9 Draft a district policy for external and internal programs.

Source: A Proposed Model for Superintendent Evaluation, Daniel L. Stufflebeam and Jason Millman, *Journal of Evaluation in Education* 9:383-410, 1995, pp. 389~393.

Note: From Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) *The Evaluation Process: Board self-assessment and superintendent evaluation* (p. 85-89), Developed by Chuck Namit, 2007, Copyright 2007 by WSSDA. Adapted with permission.