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AN ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS UNIVERSITY-BASED SUPERINTENDENT PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND THEIR ALIGNMENT WITH RESEARCH FINDINGS, SCHOLARS' OPINIONS, AND PRACTITIONERS' EXPERIENCE

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by

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Treatise

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Dedication

To the memories of my beloved father, Warren Green Lawrence, Sr. and my precious sister, Iris Lawrence Green, an unusually gifted and celebrated educator who left us all too soon, and to all those who hold dear the value of the education of all children and place it in the most highly venerated place where it rightfully belongs.

Acknowledgements

The journey to conduct this study began many years ago, and the road has been as long and circuitous as the journey has been arduous. It began when I realized that I had been called to a solemn and respected undertaking—to fight in the ongoing battle to educate the most disenfranchised and neglected population of children—the children of poverty. And although I thought early in my career that that battle would be waged in my classroom, it gradually dawned upon me that I could accomplish and contribute so much more from the administrative ranks.

I began the Ph.D. program as part of Cohort VIII in the Cooperative Superintendency Program (CSP) in 1989 and was ABD in 1990, leaving to begin work as an elementary principal and eventually as a superintendent and high school principal. By choice, all of these formative professional experiences were in educational settings that had been historically needy, neglected, and challenged. They were in places where many of my colleagues would have attempted to avoid, but my sentiment was that these children were no less deserving than those youngsters who were born into circumstances of affluence and privilege. In fact, the circumstances of poverty, if anything, made them more deserving, and thus attracted my interest. I always felt as though I were coming home when the Lord called me to these locations.

The backgrounds of these youngsters who relied upon the efforts of struggling campuses and districts to provide them the education that would equip them for success (or failure) in life were not very different than my own. I belonged in these settings because I was a product of such settings, and I learned the hard lessons so often associated with tough assignments. And with each lesson learned came growth and

wisdom. Although I didn't realize it then, I was on the road to writing this treatise. Those experiences ultimately led me back to the University of Texas and reignited my passion and interest in research for change. I am indebted to many individuals for assisting me in getting to this point and supporting me in my own professional growth and learning.

Dr. Ruben Olivarez has been a fixture on and off in my life for some nineteen years now. He administered the Accountability Division at the Texas Education Agency when I first entered the University of Texas at Austin, and most of the CSP Fellows were assigned there as Research Associates. He generously agreed to serve on my first dissertation effort and found the time, in spite of his demanding schedule, to meet with me to assist with my research. He also was extremely helpful as I completed my coursework in near record time and advanced to candidacy the first time.

Later, when I returned again to UT and TEA, Dr. Olivarez promoted me to administer the state and federal programs monitoring function for the public schools of the State of Texas. Within a couple of years, I was off again to gain experience in the superintendency. A few years later, as he left the superintendency of the San Antonio Independent School District and took on the role of Director of the Cooperative Superintendency Program and the L. D. Haskew Distinguished Professor of Public School Leadership, our paths crossed yet again. "Dr O", as I affectionately and respectfully refer to him, advised me to return once more to finally complete what I started long years ago and graciously consented to serve as my treatise chair. I never quite figured it out, but this great educational leader always served as a source of support and encouragement to me, and I will forever be in his debt.

I was indeed fortunate to attract the involvement and interest of others who agreed to serve on my treatise committee, each of whom is a distinguished educator in

her or his own right. Without their advice, suggestions, and generous contributions of time and effort, I most likely would not have reached the point where I find myself today. Dr. Norvell Northcutt, Dr. Dorie Gilbert, Dr. Walter Tillman, and Dr. I. Carl Candoli, established scholars and educators, found the time to guide me as I readapted to the role of graduate student. Their selflessness, dedication, tireless concern for education, and limitless love for children apparently nudged them in the direction of supporting my efforts and guided us onto a common path. I will never forget their undying commitment and will be forever indebted to each of them for their inspiration.

Expressions of gratitude are also in order for my research participants. I stepped out on a limb in selecting educators whose schedules are generally inflexible and extremely demanding. Having served as a superintendent, I am genuinely sensitive to how precious their time is, especially during a typical day at the office. Beside the six veteran superintendents, I also was fortunate to secure the participation of six university professors. Understand that these were nationally prominent and respected expert/scholars who are noted authors in the field of leadership preparation. I still cannot quite believe that each agreed to participate in my study.

The faculty of the University of Texas at Austin's Department of Educational Administration, in readmitting me to the program, cannot be thanked enough. Their scholarly contributions to my research as well as their efforts within the classroom really prepared me to do this important work. Dr. Martha Ovando, Graduate Advisor took my cause forward and enlisted the support of her colleagues in allowing me to return. Although Dr. Nolan Estes has allegedly retired, he had a hand in my development and initial inclusion in the Cooperative Superintendency Program. He also was supportive of my returning to complete my academic work and to acquire this credential.

Dr. Michelle Young, Executive Director of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), was a great source of support, and my study would not have been possible without her guidance and insight. Her generosity and selflessness motivated me to get this done. Her consideration meant and continues to mean so much to me. She made the UCEA surveys available to me and offered the benefit of how my study might be strengthened.

Staff in the Department of Educational Administration who tolerated my endless requests for information and assistance are worthy of commendation. For Hortensia Palomares, who painstakingly transcribed my interviews, and Sarah Cale, who proofed and did the final preparation of my document, I cannot express how much your work and support means. Jennifer Cook and Linda Overton were also very helpful although I know that I can be a bit of a pest sometimes.

I would be remiss to not mention the gratitude that I have for Dr. Abelardo Saavedra, Superintendent of the Houston Independent School District. From the time that he became HISD's CEO, Dr. Saavedra extended to me countless instances of support. From my promotion to Leadership Development Manager in HISD to my request for time to return to Austin to complete the doctorate, Dr. Saavedra always made me aware of the fact that I had his support. He graciously consented to see me whenever I called upon him, and not once did he deny a request during that time.

To the friends who are too numerous to mention here who assisted me when I was in a pinch of some sort (and there were quite a few pinches, some small; others not so small), thanks for being there in times of need to help me revise this or that or to generate a table or two. Although the assistance in whatever fashion it emerged may have seemed small to you, it meant the world to me. I will never forget your kindness.

I'd also like to acknowledge the gracious assistance of a family who has helped us out with Warren, our two year-old, while we've tried to keep on track with our goals and careers while raising him. Carl and Jackie Clark (Warren's other mother), and their young adult children, Carl, Jr. and Meagan, who Warren absolutely adores--thanks to all of you for being there in so many ways.

Most people recognize what they consider their extended family. The Lawrence clan consists of what I refer to as “extensive immediate family”—my ten living siblings and their significant others. I want to express my gratitude to and affection for my brothers and sisters, their spouses and children. Thanks a million for being there: Warren, Jr., Ray, Kenneth, Adrian, Brenda, Jamie, Steve, Dorcas, Judith, and Naomi. Growing up as a part of this energetic brood prepared me for anything that life has to offer.

My mother is a highly spiritual person who has served to encourage and motivate me throughout my entire life. She has watched while I struggled to return finally to finish this labor of love that I started as a fairly young man. She is the greatest proponent of doing the right thing always and has instilled that attribute in me as a core value. In holding hard and firm to that value, I have had to endure hardships and suffer setbacks professionally in my life. But I always found satisfaction in the fact that I did the right thing many times, even when it wasn't the easiest thing to do. Making the best decision for kids is something that I've never regretted.

I want to thank all of my kids for allowing their dad the latitude to be immersed in the pursuit of learning. My children have been blessings in my life, and I thank God for them. They've heard me emphasize since their earliest days the importance of education and the importance of establishing and attaining goals—and I've tried to be an example to them in that regard. Tyrus, Chevella, Lauren, Stan, Jr., Jaicee, and Warren

all saw less of me during this time, and I want to commend them for their understanding and their love. I love you each so much, even when that love has had to be tough love.

And if there's any advantage to saving the best for last, my hat is totally off to my most significant other, the love of my life, my darling wife, Leola Lawrence. I knew when I first spoke with her about my desire to return to finish the doctoral program that it would mean her filling in for me at home. She's had to be mother (and father, at times while I was in Austin) to our son, the fixer of things around the house, chief cook and bottle washer—and she did it with such style and grace. To top it off, the year that I returned to Austin, she became an elementary school principal in a very challenging campus in the Houston Independent School District, MacArthur Elementary School. I will admit that when she shared her intentions with me that I protested vigorously. I had initial reservations about whether my dear wife was capable of managing all of these things along with a very active toddler and an absentee husband. My concern, of course, is that she might have been taking on too much and that she'd find herself overwhelmed. But all of my initial fears were allayed. The lesson it taught me—one should never tell a woman what she can't do. The roof remained on the house, and her campus rose from low-performing to academically acceptable during her first year as principal. And never did she say to me “I told you so” although she had to have been tempted. Thanks a million to the best wife that anyone could ever be blessed to have. I love you so much, Leola.

A final word of thanks has been reserved for the Lord of my life and to my God. We can easily fool ourselves into believing that we accomplished some lofty goal all on our own, that it is our superior intellectual mettle and intelligence that allows us to make progress in life. In all things, I acknowledge the Lord Who allows me to remain healthy enough to come and go, Who allows me to remain financially solvent, and Who has

blessed me with the ability to think and to learn, to grow and to teach. Truly none of this would have happened without Him. All things are possible through Christ who strengthens me.

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2008

Supervisor: Ruben Olivarez

The process through which most aspiring superintendents are prepared for their craft, university-based superintendent preparation programs, have for some time been assailed by an array of nationally respected critics and organizations. The basis of their disparagement is grounded in the wide-ranging conclusion that these programs are out of kilter with the present day specialized needs of would-be school executives. The critics draw support for their perspective by accentuating the observation that the contemporary university-based superintendent preparation process has stagnated while transformation in the work of superintendents has evolved noticeably, especially within the last twenty-five years. This study develops a framework for intensive assessment of attributes and components of current university-based superintendent preparation programs as the beginning point of a larger discussion that reconsiders their efficacy and effectiveness. Secondly, the study amasses broad insight from the current literature and from experts in the field regarding how the effort to recreate these programs must be approached as well

as who should be at the table for these negotiations to engender productive outcomes. The data that spring from this study should be rich with fresh insight and, as such, should be given ample consideration as professional associations continue to push forward in the struggle for answers to how these programs might be redesigned. At the very least, it will provide several significant clues for future action and should result in a more thoughtful discussion around this issue. In-depth interviews with veteran practicing superintendents as well as nationally prominent scholars add significant value and merit to the study and suggest that its findings and conclusions are deserving of consideration by educators, policymakers, and scholars alike.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to describe, understand, and offer suggestions for the improvement of current university-based leadership preparation programs for school superintendents. In this study of university-based superintendent preparation programs, the goals are to analyze: (1) twenty-eight surveys of such programs that were conducted by the University Council for Educational Administration; (2) six interviews of practicing superintendents; and (3) six interviews of nationally renowned scholars/experts on the subject of university-based superintendent preparation programs (UBSPP's). This chapter defines the context within which this issue has emerged and establishes a foundation through which an informed discussion might be initiated and moved forward regarding the future of such programs.

Background

For several years now, discussions around what should be done to address widely perceived fundamental inadequacies in educational leadership preparation programs have persisted (Levine, 2005, p 16). These discussions have tended to focus on programs designed to prepare professionals as school principals as well as school superintendents. Nearly twenty years ago, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEAA) issued its landmark report entitled *Leaders for America's Schools* (NCEEAA, 1987). The headline-making report was a “scathing indictment of the university-based programs that prepared the vast majority of the

country's quarter-million principals, superintendents, and other school administrators" (Levine, 2005 p 18).

The Commission, a blue-ribbon panel of elected officials, state school officers, university professors and researchers, demonstrated that the production machinery (the university-based educational leadership preparation program) of "this once-proud discipline" had fallen into disrepair (Sanders, 2005). More specifically, the commission determined that most colleges of education were teaching "substandard courses" to just about anyone who was financially capable of paying fees, and this was just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

Fast-forward to 2005, and a new report emerges, recapitulating the current state of school leadership preparation programs, and arriving at fairly similar conclusions as the earlier account. The policy report, funded by The Education Schools Project, "Educating School Leaders" was authored by Arthur Levine, former president of Columbia University's Teachers College and current president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (Levine, 2005). According to Levine, "the majority of programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities". If its conclusions are embraced, one might easily be left with the impression that not a bit of progress has been made since the publication of the 1987 report. Levine states:

Time is running out. Education schools and their leadership programs are in desperate straits. Because the programs have failed to establish quality controls, states have developed alternative routes for people to enter school leadership careers, and major school systems have embraced them. Because traditional educational administration programs have not prepared school leaders for their

jobs, new providers have sprung up to compete with them. Because they have failed to embrace practice and practitioners, their standing has fallen, and school systems have created their own leadership programs. All of these changes are likely to accelerate (Levine, 2005, p. 68).

Many observers in the field, however, suggest that the media frenzy which followed closely upon the heels of the Levine report's release intensified the national reaction to the significance of its findings. Others have prodded educational scholars to move swiftly into action as a response to these challenges instead of merely criticizing or simply discussing them without any action (Young, 2006).

And while some believe that Levine does not make the report more "palatable" for his fellow education school professionals, it is clearly viewed by many policymakers and researchers in the field as seemingly out of touch with mainstream educational thought (Orr, 2006). "Some observers have expressed serious reservations about whether these institutions are capable of reengineering their leadership preparation programs to effectively educate aspiring principals and superintendents to lead high-performing schools" (Orr, p. 492).

Orr goes further to shore up her position and to counter Levine's argument:

In recent years, however, many graduate schools of education across the country have revamped their programs in an effort to set a course for changing the world of leadership education. The innovations are rooted in five areas: 1) a reinterpretation of leadership as pivotal for improving teaching and learning; 2) new insights into how program content, pedagogy, and field-based learning experiences can be designed to be more powerful means of preparing leaders; 3) the redesign of the doctorate as an intensive mid-career professional development activity; 4) the use of partnerships for richer, more extensive program design opportunities; and 5) a commitment to continuous improvement. Unfortunately, such innovations have gone largely unnoticed, particularly outside the field's professional circles (Orr, p. 493).

Indeed, the Levine report has been received with some reluctance and skepticism from many in the field of educating school leaders. On one hand, Levine suggests that colleges of education “are not responsible for the myriad societal challenges that have created crises for the public schools, nor do they have the capacity to resolve them” (Levine, p.6). In a seeming contradiction, he forthrightly suggests that the education schools are guilty of doing “business as usual, refusing to acknowledge the real problems that confront them” (Levine, 2005).

Professional associations have made enormous strides in nudging the debate forward about the steps that educational leadership preparation programs must take to regenerate themselves. The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) and the National Council for Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), organizations comprised primarily of university professors have fittingly weighed in and designed efforts to begin to move the discussions about change forward (Björk, Kowalski, and Young, 2005). Although “critics have indicted the professor-oriented associations for disregarding the changing nature of leadership in schools and districts”, there has been more than sufficient evidence to support the positions of the associations (Björk, Kowalski, and Young). In response to this rising tide of criticism, the associations have combined their efforts as UCEA funded NCEEA’s research which culminated in the issuing of the 1987 *Leaders for America’s Schools* report. (Björk, Kowalski, and Young).

That the associations have a vested interest in the wellbeing and advancement of educational leadership preparation programs goes without saying. That they lack the

organizational wherewithal to marshal the resources necessary to lead an effective reconceptualization process is the road up which Levine appears to be traveling. And while the speculation and uncertainty continues regarding the issues to which the educational leadership preparation establishment must respond as well as how those reactions should be framed, the plight of school leaders remains perched prominently and precariously in the forefront of this ongoing dispute.

Statement of the Problem

The average tenure of superintendents belonging to the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) decreased from 2 1/3 years in 1999 to 2 1/2 years in 2001 (Council of the Great City Schools, 2001). “Just over 14% of GCS superintendents had 5 or more years in their current positions in 2001”, which comprised an increase from 9% in 1999 (CGCS, 2001). Present day superintendents arguably experience far more job-associated pressures than their predecessors thirty or more years ago, and the results of those demands are related to their diminishing tenure. Couple this with the change in the nature of the superintendent’s role and the evident need for transformation in the way that superintendents are prepared for their work in university-based preparation programs, and therein lies the disconnect. There is an understandable need to examine the current state of university-based superintendent preparation programs and to determine how they might be altered to positively impact the prospect for superintendents to succeed in their work-related responsibilities and thus persist with some degree of longevity in their positions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this collective case study is to describe, understand, and offer suggestions for the improvement of current university-based leadership preparation programs for school superintendents. For the purpose of this study, university-based leadership preparation programs will be generally defined as “leadership preparation doctoral programs for superintendents that are operated by American colleges and universities”.

Scope of the Study

This study will take into account a previously conducted survey of approximately 28 university-based leadership preparation programs. The survey, which was conducted by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), collected data related to the design and structure of existing university-based preparation programs for superintendents. The study will rely on an exhaustive review of the literature to determine what attributes or characteristics are prominent in the literature, programs, and course offerings of the 28 leadership preparation programs surveyed. The literature review will also include information upon which program attributes or characteristics are commonly associated with effective or outstanding superintendent preparation programs, including mentorship/internship components of such programs.

Lastly, the study will include interviews with 1) 6 nationally recognized experts in the field of university-based leadership programs for school superintendents and 2) 6 currently practicing superintendents in the state of Texas. These interviews will be conducted between September, 2007 and December, 2007. Each interview will last

between 30 and 45 minutes and will include questions about the respondents views on current issues associated with university-based leadership preparation programs as well as their insights/suggestions regarding how these programs might be re-created to make them more responsive to the needs of aspiring school superintendents. Follow-up interviews will be conducted as necessary. The experiences and other pertinent background information of these “experts” will be included in this report.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are clearly evident. It should be noted that the UCEA survey takes into account 28 university-based leadership preparation programs. These universities, all of which are UCEA members, were invited to participate in the study. Currently, “450 to 500 programs in colleges of education offer leadership preparation culminating in master’s degrees (472 institutions), specialist credentials (162 institutions), and doctoral degrees (199 institutions)” (Baker, Orr, and Young, 2004).

Another limitation is the extremely small number of participants interviewed. The researcher can offer no assurances that their views, positions, or perspectives are in any way reflective of the broader sentiments that are held by their counterparts in the field. Other limitations will undoubtedly emerge as the study unfolds.

Research Questions

The four research questions are as follows:

- A) “What does the literature reveal regarding effective university-based superintendent preparation programs?”
- B) “What do scholars suggest regarding effective university-based leadership preparation programs?”
- C) “What do current practitioners suggest regarding effective university-based leadership preparation program?”
- D) “How do the UBSPP’s surveyed in the treatise align with the literature review, scholars’ opinions, and practitioners’ perspectives?”

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature for this study will focus on four primary areas. Each will serve an important function as it stands alone. Cumulatively, however, they will set the stage to equip the reader with a thorough understanding of how research and practice in the superintendency must be the impetus which influences the design of university-based superintendent preparation programs.

First, the researcher will examine literature that speaks to the evolution of the role of the school district superintendent and the historical significance as it relates to how policymakers and other have sought to provide for its licensure and related academic requirements. Secondly, the researcher will take a reflective look at the various waves of reforms beginning in the 1980's and continuing presently that have brought us to where we currently are.

Third, the literature review will delve into the competencies that superintendents are expected to possess and provide some insight regarding how those competencies should influence the design of programs to prepare them for their work-related performance. The final focus of the literature review will provide information about what the research has to offer regarding mentorship efforts and how they impact the professional readiness of graduates of UBPPs. This information should serve as an excellent starting point for comparing what the literature offers with what the experts and practitioners suggest should be happening with regard to the effectiveness of superintendency preparation programs.

The evolution of the role of the local school district superintendent has unfolded in a timeframe of nearly 150 years and, over time, demonstrated considerable consistency from state to state (Kowalski, 2005). It wasn't until the 1980's, however, that most states (82%) required their local school chiefs to have completed an established formal program of study and acquired some type of state-issued certificate or license (Kowalski). This was an indication that the public expected this role to indeed be a professional one. Instead, like medical, legal, engineering and any number of other professions, standards were attached to the position that had the expectation of preparing the candidates to succeed.

The role of school superintendent is a multifaceted one, and the person who steps forward for consideration is expected to be well equipped to function in each area of competency. The successful candidate had to possess the following strengths: 1) teacher-scholar, 2) manager, 3) democratic leader, 4) applied social scientist, and 5) communicator (Kowalski). Having primary responsibility for curriculum implementation and supervisor of classroom teachers placed the superintendent in the teacher-scholar role. The nation's transition in the late 1800's from an agrarian to an industrial society replete with the philosophical underpinnings of scientific management goaded school leaders into the management role (Callahan, 1962). The political leadership that is inherent in governance dealings dictated the democratic leader element of the superintendency. A subsequent shift in political thinking nudged the school chief into the direction of social scientist—namely, a sense of dissatisfaction with democratic leadership after WWII. And the nation's conversion from a manufacturing society to an

information society required superintendents to be, first and foremost, communicators. (Kowalski, 2001).

In spite of these diverse roles, school district superintendents were held accountable for making certain that the product for which they had primary responsibility—the student—was taught well. In order to ensure the rigid standardization and centralized control that was thought to be necessary to guarantee delivery of instruction from the national level to the classroom level, superintendents were placed at the state, county, and local levels (Kowalski, 1999). This rank and file appearance did much to ensure that the responsibility for public education was not concentrated in the single position of school district superintendent.

An understanding of how the role of superintendent advanced previously as well as the competencies they are expected to possess does little, however, to assist us in understanding how the function must continue to evolve as we look toward the future. In order to do that, an intrusive examination of what has beckoned education to critically inspect itself is required. As the public has thoroughly lambasted the educational enterprise and hung upon it the heavy medallion of blame for most of the social and economic ills that have plagued society, the overwhelming weight of the criticism has compelled a reaction (Björk, Kowalski, and Young).

This criticism, which has persisted for about two decades (1983-2003), was a response to three waves of education reform reports by national commissions and task forces. Most of the major educational reforms that have occurred during and since that time were responses to these reports. And while different groups generated the reports,

policy analysts agreed that the reports could be categorically grouped in “three successive waves”, from of which emerged readily identifiable and common themes.

The first wave of reports (1983-86) called for an improvement in student performance on standardized assessments, increasing graduation requirements, more time in school (either increasing the school day and/or the school year), and strengthening requirements for teacher certification/licensure (Björk, Kowalski, and Young). The second wave of reports (1986-1989) demanded that: (1) improved accountability should take the form of standards-based assessment systems, (2) academic rigor be gained through higher order thinking skills, problem solving, computer competency, and cooperative learning, (3) attention be paid to the unmet academic challenges of children living in poverty, and (4) total reconceptualization of teaching and learning processes was necessary to address the needs of all children, especially those considered to be “at-risk” (Murphy, 1990). The final wave of reports (1989-2003) criticized the solutions emanating from the previous commission reports and suggested instead that the more appropriate focus of improvement efforts should be “children and learning” rather than “organizational structures and teacher professionalism”. The recommendation also concluded that education would not be improved unless some effort was made to bring families into the circle of support that schools provided (Murphy).

These reports were the forces that nudged the educational community into action, and the reforming continues unabated to this day. Policy analysts have suggested that as this scenario unfolded, significant changes were evident in the way that schooling was

accomplished. Smaller learning communities, data driven instructional planning, and site-based decision-making are all by-products of what these commissions and task forces have generated.

And while schools and school districts were all impacted by the reforms and began to do business very differently, the preparation of superintendents and other school leaders continued to proceed as it had for decades. At least this was the claim of “key observers” of this somewhat sedentary professional culture (Björk, Kowalski, and Young). “Recent changes in the nature and direction of school reform eclipsed management-focused professional preparation programs that aligned with administrators’ work during previous decades. Reports also concluded that inasmuch as reform initiatives were changing schools, educational administration had to be realigned to fit new circumstances which would involve adopting work-embedded preparation approaches as well as performance-based assessment to ensure that aspiring school and district leaders could successfully perform job requirements” (Björk, Kowalski, and Young).

These observations along with the sweeping momentum of ongoing national school reform efforts must converge to generate the *synergy* necessary to budge the massive leadership preparation enterprise into action. The uncertainty regarding how the adjustments to leadership preparation programs should proceed is indeed understandable. It is uncharted territory--a new frontier that Levine and others are wont to describe as a virtual *wasteland* that will only be salvaged when those responsible for its direction and focus pull their heads out of the sand and face the reality of *what is!!*

In my readings related to what appears to be on the horizon for educational leadership preparation programs, the variance is considerable and appears to be driven by the school of thought from which the writer or speaker ascribes his or her own training and preparation. Noted educational researcher Kenneth Leithwood, for instance, suggests that programs that were based strongly on “research and theory, provided authentic field-based experiences, and stimulated the development of situated cognition” tended to be aligned with teacher-perceived leadership effectiveness of graduates.

The respected professional associations in the field have suggested something altogether different regarding the direction colleges of education should head if they want to produce graduates who are capable of providing effective leadership in challenging school districts. The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, and the Teaching in Educational Administration Special Interest Group and Division A of the American Educational Research Association each have their own ideas about new approaches that university-based preparation programs might consider (Orr, 2005).

According to Margaret Terry Orr of Columbia University, “many graduate schools of education have revamped their programs in an effort to set a course for changing the field of leadership education.” She specifies five areas in which innovative transition is clearly apparent: a) a reinterpretation of leadership as pivotal for improving teaching and learning; b) new insight into how program content, pedagogy, and field-based learning experiences can be designed to be more powerful means of preparing

leaders; c) the redesign of the doctorate as an intensive mid-career professional development activity, d) the use of partnerships for richer, more extensive program design opportunities; and e) a commitment to continuous improvement (Orr, 2006). She attributes Levine's failure to recognize these developments to the fact that he is outside the "professional circles" within which such innovations are occurring (Orr).

Orr goes further to observe that the course offerings of most university-based preparation programs in educational leadership are influenced by state policy requirements for licensure and certification of "building and district leaders". Her position is echoed in a survey of program chairs conducted by Joseph Murphy a little over a decade ago that found that "many programs were remaking themselves in design, content, and delivery" (Orr).

Similarly, Murphy provides an excellent illustration of how educational leadership programs are "reculturing the field" (Murphy, 2002). His example of the "three new constructs of leadership is a radical departure from how the concept had been historically viewed.

On the other hand, the U. S. Department of Education, long a critic of conventional leadership preparation programs, has described them as lacking vision, purpose, and coherence. The programs, USDE suggests, should be "more innovative and need to include intensely focused components and authentic course- and fieldwork" (Orr). While these suggestions may sound well thought out and insightful on the surface, they are actually vague and lack the specificity needed to properly implement them. It would seem as though the field does not lack those who are willing to step

forward and offer their informed professional opinions. They have nothing to lose because if the reforms they suggest fail, it all falls squarely on the shoulders of those who operate the leadership preparation programs -- and they alone will have to bear the brunt of any such collapse. Certainly one could reasonably argue that we all lose if the educational system fails to deliver, however, the finger of blame would be pointed squarely at those who have responsibility for producing capable, qualified school leaders.

Lately, other alternatives to the traditional leadership preparation program have crept into the options picture, placing additional pressure on university-based programs to either expeditiously morph or to consequently be threatened with their own extinction. Several urban school districts, most notably the programs in school districts in Chicago and Boston, have developed in-district leadership preparation programs in which they (the districts) are “firmly in the driver’s seat on matters of design and implementation” (Teitel, 2005).

As such programs continue to spring up, develop, and thrive, they have simultaneously been quite uncomplimentary in their assessments of their obvious competition—the university-based leadership preparation program, describing them as “ranging from inadequate to appalling (Teitel). Many of the alternative programs consider their mission to be the development of “change agents”. In that regard, they are looking for candidates that do not fit the traditional mold of having the historically required background of classroom teacher. The Broad Urban Superintendent’s Academy is another non-traditional preparation outlet available to non-traditional

candidates. Broad requires their candidates to “apply for urban superintendencies within 18 months” of completing their programs (Teitel).

As we reflect upon how these aspiring leaders are prepared in colleges of education as well as whether that preparation equips them to perform in a profession that only faintly resembles the one of one hundred fifty years ago, we are forced to admit that the need for change is compelling and overdue. The fact that during the past twenty to thirty years, preparation programs have evolved little, if at all, is a position to which Levine ascribes often throughout his report. And perhaps that is where we should refocus our light to gain a clear picture of how preparation of school leaders might be reframed.

Described by many as contentious, Arthur Levine’s widely reviewed study, *“Educating School Leaders”*, comes at a time when educational leaders and those who prepare them are feeling mounting pressure to revamp leadership preparation programs across the nation. The reaction of the media to Levine’s message gave one the impression that the report came as a long-awaited combination death knell and clarion call to those who failed to recognize that time and trends have changed dramatically for those who serve in the superintendency. The other point that Levine’s research attempted to communicate with obscure intelligibility is that colleges of education must reciprocate and make massive adjustments in how they prepare aspiring leaders if they are to produce successful superintendents who can respond effectively to the challenges that are inherent in their multifaceted roles. And if the customary brevity of tenure of chiefs of urban school systems is not reflective of the need for change, then it is more

than likely a reflection of endemic public dissatisfaction with how these leaders have tended to perform over the long haul.

The purpose of Levine's study was to critically assail the current state of educational leadership as well as leadership preparation programs and to develop "a roadmap for improvement" (Levine, 2005). He suggests that "many university-based school leadership preparation programs are engaged in a 'race to the bottom,' in which they compete for students by lowering admission standards, watering down coursework, and offering faster and less demanding degrees" (Levine). This decline in program quality and student competency, Levine continues, was triggered by "state and school district policies that reward teachers for taking courses in administration whether or not the material is relevant to their work". The author concedes that those same schools and district also fail to take into account the academic rigor, or the lack thereof, of the programs.

Levine's methodology engaged the use of a nine-point template for assessing the quality of school leadership preparation programs take these factors into account: 1) program purpose, 2) curricular coherence, 3) curricular balance, 4) faculty composition, 5) admissions criteria, 6) degrees (graduation standards and appropriateness of degrees), 7) research, 8) finances, and 9) assessment (Levine). The methodology also involved the assessment over a four-year period of time 1,206 education schools, conducting national surveys of deans, faculty, alumni, principals, superintendents, and parents. Lastly, he conducted site visits of case studies of twenty-eight leadership preparation programs.

The findings emanating from Levine's research were considered significant by the mainstream establishment although many policymakers and scholars have raised compelling arguments against the accuracy of its contents. Many suspect that he has fairly generalized his findings across most existing leadership preparation programs without taking the trouble of enumerating the strong or outstanding characteristics or merits of the respective programs. Curricular disarray in which course coherency and rigor are lacking was his most glaring criticism. He goes further to suggest that the programs focus on "helping students meet the minimum certification requirements with the least amount of effort, using the fewest university resources" (Levine). A summary of other study findings include 1) low admissions and graduation standards, 2) weak faculty, 3) inadequate clinical instruction, 4) inappropriate degrees, and 5) poor research (Levine).

Levine concludes that several measures are required if educational leadership expects to be responsive to changes that are occurring or that have occurred in the field. He suggests first that the incentives that motivate low-quality programs must be discontinued. "School systems, municipalities, and states must find alternatives to salary scales that grant raises merely for accumulating credits and degrees" (Levine). He goes further to share that often university administrators use these programs as "cash cows", raking in the money generated by the programs and redistributing it to other university programs. Secondly, the author concludes that the standards for admission into the programs must be strengthened or the programs should be discontinued (Levine). He fails to mention the challenges many universities face in their efforts to

diversify the faculty as well as the students enrolled in the programs and how admissions criteria have been diversified as a result.

Another prominent conclusion is the suggestion that leadership programs must be redesigned. He proposes eliminating what he describes as “the current grab of courses” and replacing them with relevant, rigorous, and challenging curriculum content “designed to prepare effective school leaders”. Among the report’s conclusions that appeared most off the mark was Levine’s suggestion that the Ed.D. be eliminated. He based his thinking on the assumption that a watered-down curriculum and also those professionals who serve as principals produce the degree and superintendents do not require “the skills and knowledge associated with doctoral study” (Levine).

The limitations that were most prominent in Levine’s work tend to center upon the bases of many of his observations. Regardless, as the cultural tapestry of our society continues to evolve into a more multi-hued fabric, a reexamination of the standards upon which we initially based many critical policy factors, including program admissions standards, is necessary and advisable. Certainly, it is understandable that Dr. Levine would fail to spot the obvious cultural bias that dominates admissions standards that were established for another time -- a time long gone. The outstanding academic and professional performance of students who are included in the subset of students categorized as ethnic/cultural minorities speaks most strongly to this point. While it is clear that a need exists for the reform of leadership preparation programs, it is highly questionable if Dr. Levine’s research along with his findings and conclusions should be the blueprint for the reforms.

Levine notes the following as key indicators that leadership preparation programs must evolve in their design and implementation: 1) school leadership is the most crucial catalyst for school improvement, 2) current era of social, economic, and technological change, 3) large proportions of principals, superintendents are expected to leave their jobs, and 4) new leadership skills and knowledge are required to be responsive to these changes. He notes also that we are preparing three types of students: 1) current and future school administrators, 2) teachers earning a degree primarily for salary enhancement, and 3) future researchers in educational leadership (Levine).

Contrary to much of what Levine contends in his report, others suggest that *Educating School Leaders* greatly exaggerates the current state of efforts to move leadership preparation programs to the next level.

When we consider the percentage of administrators who will be exiting the profession within the next ten years, the critical nature of what lies ahead looms large. That factor coupled with the obvious brevity of a typical urban superintendent's tenure again suggests strongly that an effort to overhaul university-based preparation programs must take place and not a moment too soon. Both concerns should nudge the profession into action; however, our seeming reluctance has more to do with an undying and purposeful obsession with *getting it right*. Knowing what hangs in the balance--the future not only of the youngsters who must be educated in our schools, but the future of our nation--we recognize that we cannot afford to get it wrong.

That being the case, practitioners and policymakers must be thoughtful and deliberate about the charge before us. We must take into account even the most minute

detail of what outcomes we will build into these programs, and give great consideration the ideas and advice of individuals and organizations with whom we will rarely, if ever, see eye to eye. Our ultimate goal has to be the transformation of this wasteland—even though we may not agree that it *is* a wasteland—into a leadership preparation oasis. Identification and selection of candidates must take into account what our ultimate expectations are on the back end of the preparation process. Program content and pedagogy must be rethought and structured in such a way that the thinking of candidates will be transformed--all aspects of their assignments will require critical analysis and didactic precision, leaving very little to chance. Candidates must emerge from programs with a fresh and creative methodology to teaching and learning that will allow them to maximize their flexibility in order to be responsive to the varied and diverse needs of their learners.

A precise assessment of the competencies that merge to comprehensively create the professional skill set of school superintendents is as good a starting point for discussion as might be found. Using the findings of such an assessment as the foundation upon which to construct an effective and responsive superintendent preparation is itself a colossal undertaking. The immensity of this task will also require colleges and universities to temporarily (maybe permanently) disassemble the barriers that have been constructed through years of competition. Pulling it off would require the collective effort of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers.

Nancy S. Nestor-Baker and Wayne K. Hoy describe the *tacit knowledge* of superintendents in their 2001 report entitled *Tacit Knowledge of School*

Superintendents: Its Nature, Meaning, and Content. According to the authors, it is action-oriented knowledge acquired without the direct help of others that allows individuals to adapt, select, and shape their environments in ways that enable them to achieve their goals (Horvrath et al, 1994a). And while tacit knowledge is undoubtedly related to job experience, it is considered to be much more than experience (Nestor-Baker & Hoy). “What matters is not how much experience one has, but what is done with that experience to acquire knowledge and solve the complex problems of practice” (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995; Wagner, 1987).

In her book, *Leading to Change: The Challenge of the New Superintendency*, Susan Moore Johnson highlights a “qualitative study of 12 new superintendents to determine their approaches to leadership” (Johnson, 1996). The author suggests that three categories of leadership tend to influence the role of the contemporary superintendent: 1) educational, 2) political, and 3) managerial (Johnson). Educational leadership is associated with values and vision while political leadership deals with financial issues and coalition building. Support, supervision, and development of the structure of the organization all fall within the category of managerial leadership (Johnson).

Olivarez (2008) discusses combining such functions as administrative, instructional and political leadership theory with real world applications. This has resulted in the establishment of the Ten Functions of School Districts, which are: 1) governance operations; 2) curriculum and instruction; 3) elementary and secondary school campus operations; 4) instructional support services; 5) human resources; 6)

safety and security services; 7) accountability, information management, and technology services; 8) external and internal communications; 9) facilities planning and plant services; and 10) administrative, finance, and business operations.

In an effort to merge preparation with practice, Olivarez, Executive Director of the Cooperative Superintendency Program (CSP) has designed a field-based experience for aspiring superintendency doctoral students who participate in this cohort driven program. The CSP Fellows, all of whom are experienced school administrators, are engaged as CSP Protégés in a formally established professional relationship with a veteran superintendent who has agreed to guide them as a CSP Mentor for the duration of the field experience process. The field experience process requires the Protégés along with the Mentor to develop a field guide plan around “The Ten Functions of a Superintendent” (Olivarez, 2008).

Yet another prospective method of examining competencies associated with the superintendency is an insightful review of the standards of measurement by which boards of education evaluate superintendents. Studies conducted as recently as 2000 by the American Association of School Administrators took a look at criteria used by boards to assess the effectiveness of superintendents’ on the job performance ((Nestor-Baker). Boards expect their superintendents to have competencies in the areas of 1) board/superintendent relations, 2) management functions, 3) community relations, 4) budget development, and 5) leadership/knowledge (Glass, 1992; and Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000). These researchers and the national association that commissioned their studies contend that “the tacit knowledge of both the board and the superintendent” are

taken into account in determining evaluative criteria (Glass, and Glass, Björk, & Brunner).

Recognizing that many states require their school district leaders to undergo a professional preparation regimen of licensure that is often managed by state departments of education opens still another door for identifying competencies required in the superintendency. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders was adopted in 1996 by the Council of Chief State School Officers. In a letter to the document's readers, Neil Shipman, director of the effort, and Joseph Murphy, chair, share that the research-based product which contains the standards was drafted by "personnel from 24 different education agencies and representatives from various professional associations" and that they "present a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances that will help link leadership more forcefully to productive schools and enhanced educational outcomes" (ISLLC Standards for School Leaders, 1996).

The ISLLC initiative, which began in 1994, included the thinking of representatives from its 24 member states as well as input from its affiliated professional organizations. The professional associations include among them the University Council for Educational Administration, American Association of School Administrators, American Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, National Policy Board of Educational Administration, and others (ISLLC, 1996).

ISLLC's document entails six standards as follows:

Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;

Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;

Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;

Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;

Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes success for all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and

Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

--ISLLC Standards for School Leaders, 1996

Obviously, the task of generating these standards was meticulously undertaken, and the evidence is apparent in the quality of the document. Each standard is supported by a) the foundational *knowledge and understanding* that is required for an administrator to have the capacity to succeed in each respective standard, b) *dispositions* that undergird and frame the administrator's systems of values and beliefs to increase the likelihood of success for that particular standard, and c) *performances or activities* for

which the administrator is held accountable for leading or facilitating to maximize the prospects for success with each specific standard. (ISLLC Standards)

The effort to recreate and redesign university-based superintendency preparation programs is one that will require massive shifts in thinking among the stakeholders of that community. University professors, policymakers, professional associations, and others will have to merge their collective thinking in order to get the job completed. Among the most promising of endeavors currently underway is the Joint Research Taskforce on Educational Leadership Preparation which is jointly administered by the University Council for Educational Administration, Teaching in Educational Administration Special Interest Group of AERA (TEA-SIG), the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, and Division A of AERA. According to UCEA, “the primary aims of the taskforce are:

1. to provide a foundation about existing research and theory in the field of leadership preparation
2. to identify gaps and new directions for research on leadership preparation
3. stimulate more, better quality research in the field of leadership preparation
4. to encourage new and experienced researchers to undertake research in the field.
5. to provide a community of scholars for on-going conceptual and methodological work.”

While the goals of the taskforce are lofty and admirable, accomplishing them will be no small order. Participants will have to remember to respect each other’s perspectives and positions as they work across college and university lines as well as

professional association lines cooperatively in hammering out the minute details of this undertaking.

Colleges and universities that offer leadership preparation programs stand to be the greatest beneficiaries of these redesign efforts. As such, they have a vested interest in embracing the changes that will inevitably be generated by the planning and implementation phases of these projects. They and their colleagues in the professional associations must understand that if this work is not given its just due with regard to a sufficient abundance of painstaking time and calculated effort, then the profession will observe the slow metamorphosis from a process with needs for critical improvements to a process that is obsolete.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this study was to describe, understand, and offer suggestions for the improvement of UBSPPs. The study's focus examined 28 UBSPPs to gain insight into how they were structured (i.e., their program purpose and context, course offerings, pedagogical content, faculty experience, and how these and other factors contributed to or lessened the effectiveness of these programs). The study also took into account the insight and perspectives of six practicing Texas superintendents and six nationally prominent scholar/experts.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology that was relied upon for gathering and analyzing the data for this study. A secondary purpose of this chapter is to describe how the researcher interpreted the data and formulated findings and conclusions of the study regarding the current state of university-based superintendent preparation programs and the direction and effort that will be required to recreate those programs in such a way that aspiring superintendents are better prepared to succeed in their roles.

Chapter III also presents a brief discussion on the specific qualitative research methods that were used in this study and explains why the study's design lends itself most effectively to such methods. Included in this discussion is brief coverage of the tenets of qualitative research by some of its most fervent advocates. The researcher also provides some insight into structured interviewing techniques, the procedures that were

used to collect and analyze the data, as well as issues related to the limitations and trustworthiness of the study.

Through intensive review of data from twenty-eight different university-based superintendent preparation programs, the researcher identified commonalities and themes that emerged across those programs. Additionally, this study relied upon an exhaustive review of the current literature on university-based superintendent preparation programs to determine what is customarily recommended for inclusion in such programs.

The researcher also interviewed six experienced practitioners who are currently sitting superintendents as well as six renowned educational administration scholars/policymakers to gain the benefit of their perspectives regarding how an ideal university-based superintendent preparation should be designed.

Expanded Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this collective case study was to describe current university-based superintendent preparation programs, to understand their expected outcomes, and to offer suggestions for their redesign as more effective programs for better preparing school superintendents to perform in their roles.

The researcher investigated the effectiveness of university-based superintendency preparation programs in three major competency areas of superintendent's work: a) curriculum and instruction; b) finance; and c) governance. Within each of these competency categories, the research focused on three types of skills: a) performance-based skills; b) knowledge-based skills; and c) attitude or belief-

based skills. The researcher is not suggesting that each category area is represented by each skill type, but rather that the unfolding research clarified which categories are supported by a particular skill type.

Through making a comparison of these competency categories and how each interacts with the various skill types, the researcher hoped to gain an intrusive glimpse into how current practices in university-based leadership preparation programs either successfully prepare or marginally prepare superintendents to perform in their roles as school leaders. He further expected to glean from the most current research literature the proven practices that are present in outstanding university-based programs and how those practices might be replicated in programs that are struggling to produce capable school leaders.

More importantly, however, the researcher attempted to scrupulously examine data from surveys collected from thirty-five colleges and university-based superintendency preparation programs by the University Council for Educational Administration. He expected that what would emerge from this study was a more lucid understanding of the commonalities that underscore successful practices which exist across and between those programs as well as the areas in which improvement is needed. Lastly, the assertions of highly-regarded practitioners and policy-makers/scholars, who were interviewed by the practitioner, made an indelible impression upon those who are inclined to think that all is well with the status quo.

Qualitative Research

There is only one thing that is certain, and that is that nothing is certain.” In *The Qualitative Dissertation* (Piantanida and Garman, 1999), the authors cannot remember the source of the quote but suggest that it might also provide a fairly apt description of qualitative research. They further suggest that the nature of qualitative research makes a comprehensive definition difficult to produce and that “the debate about it continues” as the “doers” of the research continue their work (Piantanida and Garman). They warn against trying to confine things “that are so multifaceted and ever changing...to a neat tidy definition”.

Recognizing that quantitative research or scientific inquiry failed to “illuminate” all aspects education, enlightened scholars began the search for new ways of acquiring knowledge and truth, and “the process continues still” (Piantanida and Garman). This researcher believes that qualitative research has emerged as the most promising response to their efforts. It allows the adventuresome researcher to pursue avenues of inquiry that would be effectively cut off if he or she relied exclusively upon numbers to validate the legitimacy of his topic and the outcomes of his efforts.

In his quest to isolate a definition or description that stood apart in its clarity and comprehensiveness, the researcher felt that the following came closest: “Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the study’s use and collection of a

variety of empirical materials—-case study, personal experience, introspective life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts- —that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals’ lives” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.”

As I initially considered the multiple sources of data that will be analyzed in order to gain insight into the present condition of university-based superintendent preparation programs, it became clear that a qualitative study would allow the findings to emerge naturally. The analysis of surveys and the structured interviews of the practitioners and professors/policymakers merely required the appropriate research design to ensure that the study produced outcomes that might contribute to the existing body of knowledge. The researcher intends to allow the review of the literature to serve as an additional data source for the study.

Qualitative Research Design

These definitions and subsequent reflections upon them are inextricably bound to the need for an even deeper understanding of foundational aspects of qualitative research design. The successful researcher must be able to make a clear distinction between actual qualitative research and the type of design that is selected through which the research will be accomplished. One noted qualitative research scholar stipulated that the

“design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions (Yin, 1989).

Creswell (1998) holds that five assumptions guide all “good” qualitative studies. He contends that “1) the multiple nature of reality; 2) the close relationship of the researcher to that being researched; 3) the value-laden aspect of inquiry; 4) the personal approach to writing the narrative; and 5) the emerging inductive methodology of the process of research” work cumulatively to contribute to the strength and effectiveness of a qualitative study (Creswell, 1998).

The first assumption, the multiple nature of reality (oncology), suggests that any phenomenon may be viewed from any number of vantage points, and as such, can only be studied effectively holistically (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The social context in which an individual exists and lives influences his or her interpretation or construction of meaning as it relates to reality, thus multiple constructed realities. An individual who produces thorough qualitative research has to approach his or her study by taking into account, to the extent possible, each specific reality.

The realities of myriad individuals who are involved in some aspect with university-based superintendent preparation programs are each separate and distinct. I will make a focused effort to take into account the reality of superintendents through conducting structured interviews with three practicing superintendents. Similarly, three of the leading thinkers of national renown will participate in structured interviews to share their perspectives. The surveys submitted by thirty-five colleges and universities

will allow me access to the reality of university professors of educational administration who are currently managing superintendent preparation programs.

My personal experience as a former school superintendent has significantly heightened my interest in the future of the profession of school district leaders as well as the preparation programs from which they emerge. I hold solid beliefs regarding the need for high quality preparation programs, not only for superintendents but for any leadership professionals in the field. Coupling my experience and interest has generated an extremely elevated level of motivation for me to pursue this qualitative study. Qualitative research methods are appropriate for this study since they also permit the reality of the researcher as yet another lens of analysis.

The second assumption that Creswell emphasizes, the close relationship of the researcher to that being researched (epistemology), again brings into discussion my background as an educational administrator. In qualitative studies, the researcher, as the primary tool of data gathering and analysis, operates in close proximity to the object of inquiry and in that regard interacts with the object (Lincoln and Guba). This proximity can be either a positive or negative influence and must be controlled to minimize compromises in the integrity of the study. In the instance of this researcher and this study, proximity is an obvious benefit because it allows me the opportunity to rely on my background to better understand the issues associated with reinventing leadership preparation programs.

The significance of fieldwork, i.e., data gathering and analysis processes requires the researcher to be either already knowledgeable or to engage in a process that will

allow him or her to expeditiously acquire the knowledge needed to gather and analyze the data. In addition to my background as an educational administrator, I have been in the past and am presently a student in one of the most highly regarded superintendent preparation programs in the country.

Lastly as an aspiring researcher, I have been fortunate to have established an association with UCEA, and, in particular, the Executive Director, Dr. Michelle Young. This has been extremely helpful as I have prepared to conduct this study. I have discovered that it is natural for aspiring researchers, as they become acclimated to the craft, to develop levels of comfort with certain “modes of qualitative inquiry, and in so doing to develop a corresponding level of comfort with “the language” that is needed to discuss their projects and the mode of inquiry (Piantanida and Garman, 1999).

The third assumption, the value-laden aspect of inquiry (axiological) is often compared with generalizability of findings in scientific research. Creswell (1998) asserts that the nature of qualitative inquiry admittedly takes into account the “value-laden nature of the study” and actively reports the “values and biases of the investigator”. My earlier criticisms of the work of Levine, while clearly biased and opinionated, are important as a part of this study’s design.

The forth assumption (rhetorical) involves the personal approach to writing the narrative. To the untrained reader, qualitative researchers may appear at times to be engaging in the sharing of personal anecdotes, asides, storytelling, or, in some instances, “bird-walking”, when in effect the investigator is building a case for the research he or she anticipates conducting. Creswell (1998) informs us that “basing research on the

rhetorical assumption means that the qualitative researcher uses specific terms and a personal and literary narrative in the study”.

The analytical benefits of this aspect of qualitative research are abundant and compelling. Whereas researchers whose work is grounded in quantitative genres are forced to be concerned with internal and external validity, generalizability, and objectivity”, qualitative work is more focused on “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) as well as naturalistic generalizations (Stake, 1995). Other terms that are increasingly visible in qualitative work include “understanding, discover, and meaning and “are important rhetorical markers in writing purpose statements and research questions (Creswell).

These assumptions all converge to shed light on the methodological design that will guide and ultimately influence the conduct of the study. The methodology that I engaged involved three distinct data sets: 1) the literature review; 2) the survey of twenty-eight university based leadership preparation programs; and 3) the structured interviews of a) six practicing school superintendents and b) six scholars in the field of educational leadership with particular emphasis on the superintendency.

The researcher is hopeful that much of what has been generated as a result of this study may have some level of impact in the ongoing debate about how these programs might be redesigned. During the conduct of this study, the researcher had discussions with practitioners and policymakers who, although they may not be formally included in the report of analyses and findings, will undoubtedly shape, influence, and mold my

thinking so that what I present is reflective of what is needed to contribute to this ever growing field of research work.

Selection of Samples

Sites

The researcher will rely upon purposeful sampling as the sampling strategy for this study. According to Creswell (1998), “an array of possibilities for purposeful sampling is available”. He shares that he prefers to select cases that show different perspectives on the “problem, process, or event” he intends to investigate, but adds that he may also select “ordinary cases, accessible cases, or unusual ones” (Creswell, p. 120).

The sites from which the superintendent participants are selected were limited to the state of Texas. I attempted to synthetically provide for diversity in site selection by including at least one each of the following district types within the sample of six school districts: 1) a small/rural school district; 2) a medium-sized/suburban school district; and 3) an urban or large school district.

Participants

The participants for this study included 1) six practicing school district superintendents and 2) six scholars/policymakers. I conducted structured interviews with each group in order to gain the benefit of their insight and opinions regarding: a) the current state of university-based preparation programs, b) whether the programs as they are currently structured effectively prepare superintendents to succeed in the field, c) what might be done to redesign the programs in order to make them more responsive, and d) the process needed to help any suggested transition(s) to occur.

Participant selection for superintendents took into account district type (size and location) and controlled to provide for diversity in gender and ethnicity among the participants. Participant selection for scholars/policymakers will be based upon the reputation of the participant as a preeminent national authority in the field.

Data Gathering Instruments

Structured Interviews

The structured interview uses a “data collection instrument (DCI) to gather data, either by telephone or face to face” (Campion, Campion, and Hudson, 1994). In their book on the structured interview process, Campion, Campion, and Hudson suggest that this type of process involves asking “the same questions of numerous individuals in a precise manner, offering each individual the same type of possible responses”. For clarification, they compare the structured interview with the unstructured information gathering process in which questions are open-ended and not asked in a precise way.

The various structured interview types, as data gathering processes, each have distinct advantages and disadvantages. Let us consider each in an effort to understand why the telephone interview is the selected method.

Face-to-face interviews allow the researcher the obvious advantage of establishing rapport with the participant (Campion, et al). They also allow the researcher to observe as well as listen, permitting him or her to ask more complex questions than in other interview processes (Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 1997). Face-to face interviews are also particularly beneficial when using lengthy DCI’s.

Mailed questionnaires are another option for conducting interviews as a data collecting process. Although this option is the least costly, it is the slowest method of collecting data. (PARE). This method, however, requires precise question design which must take into account the reading comprehension levels of participants. Due to the relatively small number of participants to be interviewed and the expeditious timeline for collecting data, this option was the least favored of the three.

Telephone interviews have cost advantages over face-to-face or personal interviews, and they typically involve less time. Recording of the data is simplified if the researcher uses a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) device in which the “DCI is stored in a computer and the interviewer records responses directly into the computer (PARE, 1997). The greatest advantage of relying on telephone interviews occurs when the number of questions is relatively small and time available to gather data is short. These were the primary reasons that I sought the telephone interview as the preferred mode for interviewing.

Question Format Considerations

In determining the format that would best serve the purpose of the study, the researcher opted for an open-ended question style. This type of question design is advisable “where the number of respondents is small, and the object is to refine the research direction and determine more precise questions that can be structured in another way (PARE).

According to the publication “Designing Structured Interviews for Educational Research”, “because open-ended questions provide no structure for the answer, they

should be tightly focused to elicit the kind of information the researcher wants to get.”

The amount of time required to transcribe such interviews accurately is fairly excessive, however, the researcher is much more likely to acquire useful information.

The Survey Instrument

The survey that was used to elicit information from the colleges and universities that are subjects of this study was designed by the University Council for Educational Administration. The survey consists of ten labeled sections, each of which requested specific information that provides insight into the college or university’s leadership preparation program(s). The section’s are as follows:

- 1) Program Name/Title;
- 2) Admission/Selection Requirements;
- 3) Program Purpose/Context;
- 4) Program Design and Delivery;
- 5) Program Standards (Leadership Practice/Development);
- 6) Program Content;
- 7) Program Evaluation;
- 8) Length of Time in Operation;
- 9) Program Faculty; and
- 10) Program Contact for further questions

In addition to the ten sections of the survey, respondents were asked to submit four (4) enclosures as follows:

- 1) A program syllabi for each of these courses and/or a URL that will provide access to course syllabi;
- 2) A brochure (or other written materials) describing the superintendent preparation program;

- 3) A URL (web address) that links to the program description, courses, etc.; and,
- 4) A brief (2-5page) written statement that provides additional perspective of your program (e.f., origin and development, changes and successes, program evolution, learning, influences, etc.)

In reviewing the surveys, the researcher coded them to identify commonalities and themes that emerged naturally. Anticipating that the number of themes would initially be excessive, the researcher reviewed and recoded the data to limit the emerging themes to a manageable number.

Research Questions

Although the research questions are included in chapter one, they appear here for additional emphasis. They are as follows:

- A) “What does the literature reveal regarding effective university-based superintendent preparation programs?”
- B) “What do scholars suggest regarding effective university-based leadership preparation programs?”
- C) “What do current practitioners suggest regarding effective university-based leadership preparation program?” and,
- D) “How do the UBSPP’s surveyed in the treatise align with the literature review, scholars’ opinions, and practitioners’ perspectives?”

The researcher relied upon established case study design methods to ensure that the study is thorough and that its procedures complied with departmental and university requirements for conducting research

Case Study Research Design Considerations

“Whereas some consider the case an object of study (Stake, 1995) and others consider it a methodology (Merriam, 1988), a case study is an exploration of a bounded system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context (Creswell, 1998). As stated earlier, the purpose of this collective case study was to identify, describe, and offer suggestions for the improvement of current university-based leadership preparation programs for school superintendents.

Procedures

This study proceeded in four phases, the specifics of which are detailed in this section. The first phase involved contact with the participants who were interviewed as a part of this study. The second phase involved the development of the protocols that were used for both superintendents and scholars. The third phase involved the interviewing of the superintendents and scholars. The fourth and final phase was the data analysis.

Phase One

This initial phase of the treatise was the first contact with the participants who were included in the project. The treatise committee chairperson and the researcher have already agreed upon the superintendents to be interviewed, and they have each agreed to participate. The researcher sent each participant a formal letter that outlined important aspects of the study and how their participation was structured. It offered each participant an opportunity to determine the time (that accommodated his or her

schedule best) for conducting the telephone interview. I expected the initial formal contact phase to be completed by mid-May, 2007.

Phase Two

The second procedural phase of the data collection and analysis process was development of the interview protocol. The researcher worked in collaboration with the committee chair and members to develop a protocol that elicited information that was helpful in understanding the current state of university-based superintendent preparation programs. In designing the protocols, attention was given to ensuring that the protocol also gauged the participant's perspective regarding what is lacking or what must be altered in order to redesign existing university-based superintendent preparation programs.

Phase Three

Based upon the responses of the superintendents and scholars, the researcher began transcription of the interviews by mid-October, 2007. Much of what transpired in this phase of the project was driven by how useful the data are determined to be and whether a second interview was required of some participants. No second interviews were required of participants in this study.

Phase Four

The final phase involved analysis of the data as well as reporting of the findings that emanated from the project. As is typically the case with qualitative research, analyses were ongoing from the earliest phases of data gathering until the final analysis process ground to a halt. Once transcription of the data was accomplished, the researcher

used the process outlined by Walcott (1990) in *Writing up Qualitative Research*.

Walcott ascribes to the notion that “social research is both a process and a product” and, as such, “one informs the other”.

The researcher unitized the interview transcripts and designated several codes in which to establish these identified units. The researcher relied upon an inductive coding or open coding process to assist in this phase. I asked and received the support of two graduate colleagues who have familiarity with my research topic to unitize and code six of my twelve interviews to maximize the reliability and validity of my coding. The researcher reflected upon efforts to establish trustworthiness during the proposal meeting and during and after the conduct of the study.

The Interview Protocol

The interview process, which relied upon the use of a protocol, was designed to elicit a maximum response output from participants without involving an overwhelming number of questions. To achieve this result, questions, as well as the process, were open-ended and focused, allowing the participant to expound on responses while guiding him or her in the direction of specific information. The interview protocol required the participant to respond to the following questions:

1. To what extent do you believe that your experience as a student in a university-based superintendent preparation program adequately prepared you to perform successfully as a superintendent?
2. Describe the aspect(s) of the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated that benefited you most?

3. Describe the aspect(s) of the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated that benefited you least?
4. Taking into account the skills that you now know are needed to perform successfully as a superintendent, what major changes would you make to improve the effectiveness of the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated?
5. In as brief a response as possible without sacrificing the substance of your comments, how would you describe the purpose of the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated?
6. Similarly, how would you describe the university-based superintendent preparation program's curricular coherence and balance, i.e., how well did the range of courses offered converge to form a comprehensive menu of academically and professionally appropriate content?
7. How would you describe the suitability of the faculty for the demands of providing academic guidance in the courses they taught in the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated?
8. To what extent do you believe that the standards for admission in the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated were adequate for ensuring that only qualified students were selected?
9. Taking into account your experience as a superintendent, how do you generally foresee university-based superintendent preparation programs being re-conceptualized or redesigned to maximize their effectiveness for aspiring superintendent practitioners?

In order to elicit the most productive responses, the researcher utilized additional leading or probing questions if his or her responses suggested that more detailed information needed to be shared.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the collection of data in this study. Survey data on twenty-eight university-based superintendent preparation programs are presented. In addition to the presentation of survey data, the researcher will present data based upon the interviews of six practicing Texas superintendents. The researcher also interviewed six nationally prominent scholars whose expertise is university-based superintendent preparation programs. Participants in the compared will be compared through the use of descriptive statistics.

Research Context

The twenty-eight colleges and universities selected for this case study are distributed fairly evenly across the continental United States. They range from large public research universities to smaller, private campuses. The participating institutions or respondents are renamed University A through University BB to provide anonymity and protect confidentiality.

These institutions agreed to participate in a research study that was conducted by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA). This survey was an outgrowth of the efforts of a taskforce that was established to examine leadership preparation efforts.

This group, formally known as the UCEA/Teaching Educational Administration-Special Interest Group of the American Education Research Association Taskforce on

Evaluating Leadership Preparation Programs, was formed in 2001 when Dr. Margaret Terry-Orr and Dr. Robert Kottkamp invited interested educational administration faculty to participate in a discussion about the need to conduct evaluation research on the effectiveness of leadership preparation programs. As the group formalized, they determined four areas of focus that they would investigate: “a) mapping program designs and prevalence; b) backward mapping study on leadership effectiveness; c) study of the student experience; and d) a comparative longitudinal evaluation of programs” (Terry-Orr and Pounder, 2006, p. 5). The group was endorsed by the UCEA Executive Committee and AERA, and thus began what ultimately became a joint research endeavor. Their work on university-based leadership programs is ongoing.

Survey Data

Tables are included to highlight the similarities and differences in responses of the colleges and universities that were included in the UCEA survey of university-based superintendent preparation programs.

The survey data illustrates the broad disparity that exists across the twenty-eight UBSPP’s that are a part of this study. There was no rhyme or reason that influenced how the preparation programs were selected except that all were UCEA member institutions in good standing. Although the sections of the survey were described earlier, this section will highlight other contextual survey details. The researcher sought and was granted permission from UCEA to utilize the surveys for the purpose of this treatise. One condition of the agreement to use the survey results was that the survey respondents be granted total confidentiality during the conduct of this study. The researcher fulfilled

that condition by assigning the twenty-eight respondents pseudonyms which would allow them to maintain complete anonymity.

Each UBSPP that participated in the survey was asked to provide information regarding the admission requirements and selection process for gaining entry into their respective programs. The programs indicated whether their criteria for selection took into account: a) GRE scores; b) letters of recommendation; c) transcripts; d) experience as a school administrator; e) experience as a school teacher; f) certification or licensure as a school administrator; g) an interview; h) in-basket activities; h) a writing sample; i) participation in an assessment center; or j) other criteria not listed.

Table 4.1 Program Admission Requirements

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS											
School Name	GRE	LOR	Transcripts	EXSA	EXT	CERT/LIC	INT	I-BA	WRS	ASSTCTR	Other
University A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			
University B		✓	✓		✓	✓					
University C		✓	✓						✓		
University D	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University E		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
University F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
University G	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
University H	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					M.Ed.
University I		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		MAT
University J	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓		
University K			✓		✓	✓					3.0 GPA
University L	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
University M			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		MAT
University N	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
University O	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
University P			✓	✓	✓	✓					
University Q			✓	✓	✓	✓					
University R		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
University S	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		
University T		✓	✓			✓					
University U		✓	✓						✓		
University V		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
University W		✓	✓	✓							Ed.D.
University X	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	Ed Spec.
University Y	✓	✓	✓								Miller Anal.
University Z	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Sup't Rec
University AA		✓	✓	✓							
University BB											M.Ed.

The mode of selection was also requested in the questionnaire, and respondents indicated: a) self-selection; b) nomination; c) district or university relationship; or d) any other factor that would lead to selection into the program.

Table 4.2 Program Selection Process

School Name	SELECTION PROCESS			
	SELF	NOM	DISTR/ST	OTHER
University A				
University B	√			
University C	√			
University D	√			
University E	√	√		
University F	√	√		
University G	√	√	√	
University H	√			
University I	√			
University J	√			
University K	√			
University L	√			
University M	√		√	
University N	√			
University O	√		√	
University P	√			
University Q	√			
University R	√	√		
University S	√			
University T	√			
University U	√	√		
University V	√			
University W	√	√		
University X	√			
University Y	√			
University Z	√			
University AA	√	√	√	
University BB	√	√		
	√			

Fifteen of the twenty-eight respondent institutions did not take into account GRE scores as a criterion for consideration for admission. Six did not require letters of recommendation, while only one, University BB did not consider a transcript of prior coursework in its admission requirements. Thirteen respondents did not consider experience as a school administrator; only ten did not require experience as a teacher.

Certification or licensure as a school administrator did not figure prominently into the admission requirements of eleven schools while only nine required an interview as one of the determining criteria for admission. University Z, University A, and University D were the only institutions that required in-basket activities as a requirement. Samples of a prospect's writing skills mattered to roughly half (13) of the respondent group, and only three required participation in an Assessment Center—University Z, University X, and University D. Ten members of the group considered criteria other than those compiled in the list of admission requirements.

Regarding the selection process for being considered as a tentative participant, all except two of the institutions (University T and University Y) saw self-selection as an acceptable mode of selection. Nomination by someone other than the prospective candidate was acceptable to only seven of the survey respondent group. Four institutions considered district and/or state participation in the selection process as important.

The third section of the survey focused on program purpose and context. Specifically, the respondents shared whether their program focused on a particular district type: a) low-performing schools; b) rural schools; c) urban schools; d) Title I

schools; e) capacity building with a specific gender or ethnic focus; or f) another particular district type.

Table 4.3 Program Context

TARGETED CONTEXT						
School Name	LP Schools	Rural	Urban	Title I	Capacity Bldg	Other
University A					√	
University B						
University C						
University D						
University E						
University F						
University G			√			
University H	√	√				
University I						
University J						
University K						
University L					√ (Latinos)	
University M						
University N	√	√	√		√	
University O						
University P						ELCC
University Q						
University R		√	√			
University S	√					At-risk
University T						
University U						
University V		√	√			
University W						
University X			√			Charter
University Y		√				
University Z	√		√		√	
University AA						
University BB						

Only four of the twenty-eight respondents specified that their programs focused specifically on low-performing schools while five suggested a focus on rural schools. Six institutions indicated that their focus was on urban campuses, four indicated a focus on some aspect of capacity-building, and three responded that their interest was in other school types (charter, at-risk, and ELCC).

The respondents also shared information regarding whether their programs appealed to a certain category of student types: a) full-time students; b) working students; c) racial/ethnic minority students; d) rural administrators; e) suburban administrators; f) urban administrators; or g) other student or administrative type. The survey also provided respondents an opportunity to share program goals, expected outcomes for program participants, and whether the individual outcomes were aligned with state licensure requirements.

Table 4.4 Program Focus

PROGRAM FOCUS							
School Name	Full-Time	Working	Minority	Rural Adm.	Sub Adm.	Urban Adm.	Other
University A							None
University B		√					
University C		√					
University D		√					
University E		√		√	√		
University F							
University G		√		√	√	√	
University H		√		√			
University I		√					
University J		√					
University K		√					
University L		√					
University M		√					
University N	√	√	√	√	√	√	
University O		√					
University P		√					
University Q		√					
University R		√		√	√	√	
University S	√	√	√	√	√	√	
University T		√					
University U		√					
University V		√		√		√	
University W		√		√	√	√	
University X		√	√				
University Y		√		√			
University Z	√		√				
University AA		√					
University BB		√		√	√	√	

Only three on the twenty-four respondents (University Z, University S, and University N) indicated an interest in attracting full-time students. Conversely, only three (University Z, University F, and University A indicated that they did not have a preference for appealing to working students. Four of the total group said that their programs were designed to appeal to the interest of minority students; ten indicated a preference for candidates with an interest in rural administration; and seven each expressed an intended appeal to prospective suburban and urban administrators.

The aspect of the survey that addressed the curriculum related matters was fairly extensive. Organization and delivery of the curriculum inquired whether the following styles were used by the respondents: a) individual courses; b) learning strands; c) modules; d) workshops; or e) seminars.

Table 4.5 Curriculum Organization

	PROGRAM OUTCOMES	CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION					
School Name	Certif./ Degree/Both	Individual Courses	Learning Strands	Modules	Workshops	Seminars	Other
University A	Certif. Only	√				√	
University B	Certif. Only	√					
University C	Degree Only	√					
University D	No data	√	√				Practicum
University E	No data	√					
University F	All options	√					Internship
University G	Certif. Only	√					
University H	Certif. Only	√				√	
University I	All but degree only	√					
University J	Certif. & Degree	√					
University K	No data	√		√	√	√	Internship
University L	Certif. & Degree	√	√			√	
University M	Certif. & Degree	√					
University N	Certif. & Degree	√	√			√	Conference
University O	Certif. Only	√					
University P	Certif. Only	√				√	
University Q	Licensure	√					
University R	No data	√					
University S	Certif. & Degree	√					Doc. Core
University T	Certif. & Degree	√					
University U	No data	√					
University V	No data	√				√	Field Exp.
University W	All but degree only		√				
University X	All but degree only	√				√	
University Y	No data	√					Internship
University Z	Certif. & Degree	√	√			√	Field Exp.
University AA	Certif. Only					√	
University BB	Certif. Only	√					

Only two (University W and University AA) of the twenty-eight respondents indicated that their curriculum was not organized around individual courses, while five indicated a preference for learning strands. Modules and workshops were the organizational preferences of only University K. Seminars were utilized by ten of the institutions surveyed, and eight indicated that other curriculum considerations were taken into account such as internships, field experiences, and practicum.

The survey also asked whether the respondents' approach to learning took any of the following formats: a) hands-on, experiential learning and development; b) self-assessment and feedback linked to development and accountability; c) peer interaction and learning; or d) learning from a variety of styles.

Table 4.6 Program Approach

PROGRAM APPROACH						
School Name	Hands-on	Self-Assess	Lect./Discuss	Peer Interaction	Perspectives/Styles	Other
University A	√			√	√	
University B					√	
University C	√			√	√	
University D	√	√	√	√	√	√
University E	√	√	√	√	√	Clinical
University F	√	√	√	√	√	
University G				√	√	
University H	√			√	√	
University I	√			√	√	
University J	√			√	√	
University K	√	√	√	√	√	Case Study
University L	√	√	√	√	√	
University M	√			√	√	
University N	√	√	√	√	√	
University O	√					
University P	√			√		
University Q					√	
University R	√	√	√	√		
University S	√				√	√
University T					√	
University U	√			√	√	
University V	√	√		√	√	
University W	√	√		√	√	
University X	√	√		√	√	
University Y			√	√	√	Online
University Z	√	√		√	√	
University AA					√	
University BB	√			√	√	

With the exception of only six institutions out of the respondent group, all others indicated that their programmatic approaches were hands-on. Eleven utilized a self-assessment approach to teaching, and eight preferred a lecture/discussion format. Six did not rely upon peer interaction as an approach, and only three did not consider individual learners perspectives and styles in their approaches to teaching.

Respondents were asked to share information on whether they used any of the following instructional strategies in their programs: a) cadres/cohorts/teams; b) networks; c) coaches; d) mentors; e) case studies; f) applied projects; g) assessment; h) reflection; i) journals; j) portfolios; k) training of trainers; or other methods to operate their programs. Additionally, the respondents described whether their curricular resources included published/package materials, internet access, external experts/consultants, or data bases.

Table 4.7 Instructional Strategies

School Name	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES						INTERNSHIP
	Cohort/Cadre	Networks	Mentors	Coaches	Case Study	Projects	
University A		√	√		√	√	Y
University B	√		√		√	√	Y
University C		√			√	√	Y
University D	√	√	√	√	√	√	No data
University E	√	√	√	√	√	√	No data
University F		√	√		√	√	Y
University G		√			√		Y
University H	√				√		N
University I	√				√	√	Y
University J	√		√		√	√	Y
University K	√				√	√	No data
University L	√				√	√	Y
University M	√				√	√	Y
University N	√	√	√	√	√	√	Y
University O			√		√		No data
University P		√			√	√	Y
University Q	√				√	√	Y
University R	√	√			√	√	No data
University S	√				√	√	N
University T					√	√	Y
University U					√	√	
University V	√		√	√	√	√	No data
University W		√	√		√	√	Y
University X			√		√	√	Y
University Y					√		
University Z	√	√	√	√	√		Y
University AA	√		√		√		Y
University BB					√	√	Y

Table 4.8 Program Resources

RESOURCES					
School Name	Published/ Published/Packaged	Internet	Consultants	Databases	Other
University A	√	√	√		
University B	√	√	√	√	
University C	√	√	√		
University D	√	√	√	√	
University E	√	√	√	√	
University F	√	√	√	√	
University G	√	√	√		
University H	√	√	√		
University I	√	√	√	√	
University J	√	√	√		
University K	√	√	√		
University L	√	√	√	√	
University M	√	√			
University N	√	√	√	√	
University O		√		√	
University P		√			
University Q	√	√	√	√	
University R	√	√	√	√	
University S	√	√			
University T	√	√	√		
University U	√	√	√	√	
University V	√	√	√	√	
University W	√	√	√	√	
University X	√	√	√		Online
University Y		√	√		
University Z	√	√	√	√	
University AA	√	√	√		
University BB	√	√	√		

Twelve of the respondent institutions did not utilize a cohort structure in their programs while eleven relied upon networks to further their programs' purpose. Nearly half of the group (13) utilized mentors while only five thought coaching was a sound strategy for grooming leaders. All institutions surveyed felt that case studies provided their aspiring leaders grounding in the competencies required to be effective leaders while only six looked toward applied projects to accomplish the same outcomes.

Only three of the twenty-eight institutions did not use published/package products as a mode of content delivery, however, all relied upon the internet as a resource. Twenty-four of the preparation programs used consultants or outside experts, and while half (14) saw databases as a great resource.

Another aspect of the survey focused on program standards and delved into leadership development and practices. Among the information requested of respondents was whether their program explicitly addressed national, state, or professional standards as well as identifying specifically which standards. The respondents were also asked to share whether the program was tied to state certification and/or professional development requirements.

Table 4.9 Program Standards

School Name	STANDARDS	SPECIFIC STANDARDS					
	Yes/No	AASA	ELCC	ISLLC	ST/ISLLC	ST/NonISLLC	OTHER
University A	Y	√	√	√	√		
University B	Y			√			
University C	Y		√	√	√		
University D	Y	√	√	√	√		
University E	Y			√	√		
University F	Y			√	√		
University G	Y			√	√		
University H	Y			√	√		
University I	Y			√	√		
University J	Y		√	√	√		
University K	Y		√				TX Standards
University L	Y	√	√	√	√		
University M	Y		√	√	√		NCATE
University N	Y	√	√	√	√		
University O	Y	√					
University P	Y		√		√		
University Q	Y	√	√	√	√	√	
University R	Y			√	√		
University S	Y						
University T	Y					√	
University U	Y					√	
University V	Y	√		√	√		NBPEA
University W	Y	√	√	√	√		
University X	Y			√		√	
University Y	Y	√			√		
University Z	Y	√		√	√		
University AA	Y			√			
University BB	Y		√	√	√		

Table 4.10 State Certification

	ST. CERT
School Name	Yes/No
University A	Y
University B	Y
University C	N
University D	Y
University E	Y
University F	No data
University G	Y
University H	N
University I	Y
University J	Y
University K	Y
University L	Y
University M	Y
University N	Y
University O	Y
University P	Y
University Q	Y
University R	Y
University S	N
University T	Y
University U	Y
University V	Y
University W	Y
University X	Y
University Y	Y
University Z	Y
University AA	Y
University BB	Y

In response to the question “Does your program explicitly address national, state, or professional standards for leadership practice, all respondents replied in the affirmative. In detailing the specific standards to which their programs were aligned, nine indicated that they used the American Association of School Administrator (AASA) standards; twelve listed Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) as their complying standards; and twenty-two chose the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. Five respondents listed all three groups as complying influences, while seven indicated that they complied with two of the three sets of standards.

Only eight of the respondents indicated that they made no effort to comply with state-mandated standards that were based on ISLLC standards. Four institutions responded that they embraced state-mandated standards that were not based upon ISLLC standards. Three programs listed other standards that were the foundation of their programs, which were: a) Texas standards; b) National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards; and c) NBPEA standards. Only four respondents indicated that their programs were not tied to state certification or professional development requirements.

Additionally, the survey asked for a listing of the courses (titles and course numbers) that were required for acquiring superintendent certification. The courses that were listed by the respondents ran the gamut of possibilities of what one might expect for institutions which are in the business of equipping leaders to become outstanding school executives. Not surprisingly, a majority of the programs (16) listed at least one

course title in which the word “superintendent” or “superintendency” appeared. Two listed courses entitled “District Level Leadership” which could pertain to the superintendency, but that also leaves most readers with the impression that they could apply as to other central office administrative positions. Only eleven institutions listed courses that appeared to be designed to prepare the aspiring superintendent with the expertise necessary to manage the human resource aspect of leadership.

Table 4.11 Program Content

Program Content						
School Name	Certification Course 1	Certification Course 2	Certification Course 3	Certification Course 4	Certification Course 5	Certification Course 6
University A	The Superintendency	Politics of Education	Policy Planning/Dev.	Educational Facilities	Sup't Internship	
University B	The Superintendency	Bldgs, Grounds, Facilit.	Admin. Staff Personnel	School Finance	Organizational Mgmt.	Internship
University C*	Research in Admin.	Princ. Of Ed. Admin.	Leadership, Theory/Pract.	Personnel Admin.	Advanced Law	Public School Finance
University D*	Professional Seminar	Leadership & Ethics	Research Design	Society & The Individual	Statistics I	Human Resource Leadership
University E*	Curr. Superintendency	Planning Operations	HR Development	Personnel Evaluation	Advanced School Law	Administrative Problems
University F*	Advanced Supt'cy Sem.	Ethical Dim. Leadership	Strategies for Change	Diverse Populations	Political Leadership	Advanced Seminar
University G*	The Superintendency	Personnel	Theory/Practice Finance	Politics and Community	History of Education	Practicum
University H	School Superintendent	School System Admin.	Strategic Planning	Practicum-Superintendent		
University I	Leadership	Curriculum Development	Ed Finance	School Law	Research Methods	
University J*	Foundations of Ed Admin	School District Admin	Staff Develop/Evaluation	Advanced School Law	School Business Admin	Research Topics-Ed Admin
University K	Superintendency Practic.	Public Info/Comm. Rel.	Human Resource Mgmt.	School Finance	The School Plant	
University L						
University M*	Supt'cy/District Admin	Research& Data Mgmt	Leadership Theory/Practice	Strategic Mgmt.	School Business	District Program Development
University N	Supervision & Accountab.	Leadership/Gov't. Policy	Ed Law & Policy Implem.	Theory & Practice		
University O	Supet'cy, Problems in	Special Programs	Instr. Planning	School Finance	Facilities Planning	Internship
University P	Supt'cy Seminar	Human & Instr. Resourc.	School Finance	Field-based Practicum (6 hrs)		
University Q	The Superintendency	Business Affairs	Issues in Schl Finance	Legal Issues/leadersh.	Politics/Ed Leadership	Special Ed Law
University R	The Superintendency	Sch. Distr. Mgmt.	HR Mgmt.	Financial Admin.	Ed Policy/Politics	Clinical Experience
University S	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
University T	Distr. Level Leadersh.	Policy Analysis	Human Resources	Change Process	Facilities	Internship
University U	Distr. Level Leadersh.	Policy Analysis	Finance & Budgeting	Research Course		Internship
University V	Supt'cy, Intro to the	HR Admin.	Ed. Leadersh./Chg Syst.	Ed Finance	School Business Mgmt	Supt'cy Seminar
University W	Sup't-Collab Tm Bldg	Sup't Instr Leader	Sup't Fise/Legal Leader	Central Ofc Admin Int.		
University X	Exec Leadersh Issues	Portfolio	Principal Assess Ctr.	Internship Seminar		
University Y						
University Z						
University AA	Organization/Admin	Ed Leadership Seminar	Policy Formation	Values & Ethics		
University BB	The Superintendency	Adv. Law Ed. Govern.	Collective Bargaining	Tech/Facilities/Org.	Clinical Experience	

Of the twenty-eight respondents, only six offered courses that carried the phrases “politics of education” or “educational politics” within the title of the course. “School Finance”, “public school finance”, “school business” “educational finance”, or “financial administration” appeared within the titles of courses offered in fourteen of the preparation programs. Nine programs listed course titles that addressed some aspect of school law. Eleven of the programs listed a course that seemed to imply the provision of an internship or some form of field-based or clinical experience that placed the program participants in settings that resembled actual on-the-job type developmental experiences.

Respondents were asked about whether the program had a formal evaluation as well as the format of the evaluation, frequency, and how the evaluative data is utilized. They also shared information regarding feedback, if any, solicited from its graduates and whether the feedback included information on the standards and competencies that the program contended it covered.

Table 4.12 Program Evaluation

	EVALUATION	FREQUENCY
School Name	Yes/No	Annual/Bi-Annual
University A	Y	Annually
University B	Y	Continuing
University C	Y	3 Yr. Cycle
University D	Y	Annually
University E	Y	5 Yr. Cycle
University F	N	No data
University G	Y	No data
University H	Y	Bi-annual
University I	Y	5 Yr. Cycle
University J	Y	Annually
University K	Y	Annually
University L	Y	Annually
University M	Y	Continuing
University N	Y	Annually
University O	Y	No data
University P	Y	Annually
University Q	Y	Semester
University R	Y	Annually
University S	N	N/A
University T	Y	5 Yr. Cycle
University U	Y	N/A
University V	Y	5 Yr. Cycle
University W	Y	New Program
University X	Y	5 Yr. Cycle
University Y	Y	5 Yr. Cycle
University Z	Y	5 Yr. Cycle
University AA	Y	Annually
University BB	Y	Semester

Table 4.13 Program Purpose

School Name	PURPOSE						
	Course Enhncmt.	Course Offering	External Eval.	Internal Eval.	Gen. Prog. Dev	Improve Curriculum	Other
University A	√		√			√	
University B	√		√			√	
University C	√	√		√	√	√	
University D	√	√	√	√	√	√	
University E	√		√	√	√	√	
University F	√	√		√	√	√	
University G	√			√			
University H	√	√		√	√	√	
University I	√	√	√	√	√	√	
University J	√	√	√		√	√	
University K	√				√	√	
University L	√		√	√	√	√	
University M	√	√	√	√	√	√	
University N	√	√	√	√	√	√	
University O	√						
University P			√	√	√	√	
University Q	√	√		√	√	√	
University R	√	√			√	√	
University S	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
University T	√	√	√	√	√	√	
University U	√	√	√		√	√	
University V	√		√	√	√		
University W					√	√	
University X	√	√	√	√	√	√	
University Y	√	√			√	√	
University Z	√		√	√	√	√	
University AA	√				√	√	
University BB	√		√		√	√	

In response to the question of whether or not they conducted an evaluation of their program, only two respondents indicated that they did not (University S and University F). Nine programs conducted evaluations annually while seven preferred a 5 year-cycle for considering the effectiveness of their program. Two indicated that they conducted evaluations on an ongoing basis while one shared that theirs was an irregularly scheduled evaluation process.

Twenty-five of the respondents indicated their usage of the evaluation for the purpose of course enhancement. Half of the programs shared that their course offerings were influenced by the evaluation outcomes. Eleven used both internal and external evaluations in order to get a balanced and more comprehensive look at their programs. Five institutions used only some form of an external or internal evaluation process to accomplish a review of their program's effectiveness.

Program longevity was another aspect of the survey of UBSPP's. The respondents shared the year that their program was initially established, the number of participants as well as graduates, and how many are currently employed as superintendents.

Table 4.14 Program Longevity

School Name	Yes/No	0 - 2 Yrs.	3 - 5 Yrs.	6+ Yrs.	Total #	Graduates	Superintendents
University A	1981			√	50	46	35
University B	1979			√	200*	200*	40*
University C	1970			√	100*	100*	no data
University D	1993			√	197	no data	11
University E	no data			√	no data	no data	no data
University F	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data
University G	2004			√	no data	no data	no data
University H	no data			√	no data	no data	no data
University I	1995			√	15	10	5
University J	1960			√	no data	no data	no data
University K	1970			√	200*	200*	100*
University L	1977			√	no data	500*	150*
University M	1969			√	300*	250*	125*
University N	2001		√		800*	400*	1
University O	no data		√		no data	no data	no data
University P	1977			√	no data	no data	no data
University Q	Uncertain						
University R	No data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data
University S	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
University T	1970			√	400+#	400+*	20+*
University U	1990			√	No data	5	10
University V	2000			√	104	76	28
University W	2004		√		13	no data	2/3*
University X	Uncertain			√	no data	no data	no data
University Y	Uncertain			√	150*	125*	90-100*
University Z	1975			√	291	262	197
University AA	1966			√	225	171	73
University BB	Uncertain						

The range of dates during which programs were established ranged from 1960 (University J) to 2004 (University G and University W). When asked in the survey about the number of years that they had been in operation: a) no institution indicated that they had fewer than three years in the superintendent training business; b) only three had been in operation three to five years; and c) twenty-one responded that they had better than six years as a superintendent preparation program.

Seven of the programs could only provide estimates regarding the total numbers of students, graduates, and currently practicing superintendents. While these estimates appear in the table with an asterisk to denote that the figures were inaccurate, the researcher chose not to reference them in the discussion on data presentation. The only exception is the report by one institution that estimated that they had approximately 800 participants, approximately 400 graduates, and only one known practicing superintendent. Ten other programs, on the other hand, were unable to provide data for the survey.

Eight respondents were able to provide numbers that they reported as valid with regard to program participants, graduates, and practicing superintendents. Some of the numbers are staggering in what they reveal about the numbers of graduates. For instance, the program that was established next to the earliest year of the group, 1966, has had 225 participants, 171 graduates, and produced only 73 superintendents. Such figures would imply that the program averaged 10.6 participants per 2-year cycle (provided the program was organized in that manner). Factor in the number of graduates (171) over the 42-year history of the program, and we arrive at a productivity level of

8.1 graduates per cycle. The 73 superintendents that emerged from the 42 year-old pipeline is approximately 3.4 per cycle.

The surveyed program that appeared to have the figures to suggest that it was the most productive when comparing numbers of years in existence to the numbers of participants, graduates, and practicing superintendents was The University Z. In its thirty-year existence, it has had nearly three hundred (291) participants, 262 graduates, and 197 superintendents. On a two-year cycle, the program would average nearly 18 participants per cycle, nearly 16 graduates per cycle, and twelve superintendents per cycle.

Perhaps one of the most critical components of the UCEA survey (that has tremendous implications for research) and which links the survey outcomes with much of what the literature review confirms is the section on program faculty characteristics. Respondents shared information that provided insight such as: a) the total number of faculty members that their superintendent preparation program employed; b) the number of dedicated full-time (FTE) faculty members in educational administration preparation; and c) the number of FTE faculty that were tenure-track faculty, clinical faculty, and adjunct faculty. The survey also inquired into whether the full-time faculty had prior K-12 administrative or school experience.

Table 4.15 Program Faculty Characteristics

	Total #	FACULTY CHARACTERISTICS				
School Name	Faculty	Dedicated EDA	Tenure-track #	Clinical #	Adjunct #	Other
University A	4	2	2	0	2	
University B	10	4	3	1		
University C	3	8.5	7	1.5	Variable	
University D	28	3	6	4	18	
University E	7	5	3	4		5
University F	6	6	5	1		
University G	no data	2	2			
University H	2	2	2			
University I	5	0	1		4	
University J	28	11	11	12	5	
University K	10	20	13	1	5	1
University L	0	5	5			
University M	5	5	5			
University N	25	5	5		20	
University O	2	2	2			
University P	1	1	1			
University Q	7	11	11	0	1	
University R	6	4	no data	no data	no data	
University S	7	7	7	no data	no data	
University T	6	3	3		3	
University U	5	5	4	1		
University V	5	4	3	1	1	
University W	6	7	6	1	2	
University X	1	8	10		3	
University Y	8	5	5			
University Z	11	9	7	2	2	
University AA	6	3		3	3	
University BB						

Table 4.16 Administrative/School Experience

ADMINISTRATIVE/SCHOOL EXPERIENCE								
School Name	No Teaching	No P.S. Admin	Some Teaching	Ass't. Princ.	Principal	Centr. Ofc.	Sup't.	Other
University A	0	0	√	√	√	√	√	
University B			√		√	√	√	
University C		√	√	√	√	√	√	
University D				√	√	√	√	√
University E	√	√	√		√	√	√	√
University F			√	√	√	√	√	
University G			√	√				√
University H			√		√	√	√	
University I			√		√	√	√	
University J		√		√	√	√	√	√
University K				√	√	√	√	√
University L		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
University M		√	√	√	√	√	√	
University N				√	√	√	√	√
University O			√	√	√			
University P		√	√	√	√		√	
University Q		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
University R					√	√	√	
University S				√	√	√	√	
University T			√	√	√	√	√	
University U		√	√	√	√	√	√	
University V			√	√	√	√	√	
University W			√	√	√	√	√	
University X			√	√	√	√	√	√
University Y				√	√	√	√	
University Z			√	√	√	√	√	√
University AA			√	√	√	√	√	√
University BB								

The range of numbers of total faculty members employed by the twenty-eight programs was quite expansive. Two of the programs (University J and University D) had twenty-eight faculty members each, but there was a huge difference in the number of faculty members dedicated to full-time (FTE's) teaching in educational administration. One of the programs had three FTE's while the other had eleven. Compare that to the program at University K which had only ten total faculty members teaching in the superintendent preparation program, however, they listed twenty dedicated FTE's teaching in educational administration courses.

The variations in the numbers of faculty that were FTE's, tenure track, clinical, and adjuncts followed no clear pattern across the programs which raises some questions about the accuracy of the figures. Take into account University N which lists 25 faculty members employed in its superintendent preparation program, five of whom are dedicated FTE's in educational administration. The institution lists 5 tenure-track positions, no clinical positions, and twenty adjunct professors. In contrast, University C lists three total faculty teaching in its superintendent preparation program, including 8.5 dedicated FTE's (three and one-half such positions more than University N), seven tenure-track positions, 1.5 clinical positions, and reports the number of adjuncts as "variable". It is understandable that course offerings between fall, spring, and summer sessions would create a circumstance in which the number of adjuncts would not be consistent at all times.

Among the categories to which the respondents provided information regarding whether their faculty had subsequent experience were: a) no teaching experience; b) no

public school administrative experience; c) some teaching experience; d) assistant principalship experience; e) principalship experience; f) central office administrative experience; g) superintendency experience; h) other leadership experience; and i) other teaching experience.

Similarly, the range of variation for the various categories of administrative experience was broad across the spectrum of programs. Only one respondent (University E) indicated that they employed faculty with no teaching experience. Eight of the programs, however, indicated that some of their faculty had no public school administrative experience. Twenty respondents indicated that their faculty members had some teaching experience. This figure creates some uncertainty about the accuracy of the first category in which only one respondent indicated that their program employed faculty with no teaching experience.

Only two of the institutions responded that they had faculty members who had no experience as principals, while six programs indicated that they employed faculty who had not served as assistant principals. Twenty-five respondents indicated that all of their faculty members had some experience in central office administration, and only two noted that they had no faculty who had served in the superintendency.

The UCEA survey has far-reaching implications for practice, above all when taken in the context of what the literature reveals about the effectiveness of existing programs and the approach that would be required to redesign or restructure them. Levine has notably argued and contended in *Educating School Leaders* that most of the programs should be put on notice that their demise is forthcoming.

Interview Participants

In order to further clarify the context of this research, descriptive statistics were used to detail information about the research participants. Although total confidentiality was respected and the anonymity of each participant maintained, the researcher went to great lengths to examine the experience, backgrounds, and demographic variables associated with the participants for comparative purposes.

The six superintendents selected for this study are all currently serving in Texas school districts. The sizes of the school districts span the range from large urban to small rural school district. Two-thirds of the six superintendents interviewed were females, and one-half of the six are ethnic minorities. This was an attempt by the researcher to artificially control the participant pool so that it reflects, to some extent, the gender and ethnic population of superintendents in the state of Texas.

The school districts in which the superintendents are currently serving tend to reflect Texas' ethnic demographics as well. The largest three districts have predominantly Latino populations while the first of the two medium sized as well as the smallest districts have heavy concentrations of White students. Only the latter of the two medium sized districts was primarily African American. All of the superintendents interviewed have served in at least one other superintendency prior to their current position, and each is generally regarded as successful in the profession. To underscore the breadth of variance in the types of school districts from which the superintendent participants were selected, Table 4.1 provides the reader additional insight regarding the districts.

The superintendents provided responses to several questions that focused on their experiences as participants in UBSPP's and the aspects of the programs that were most and least beneficial. The superintendents also provided insight into how he or she felt that the program might have been strengthened to assist in their skill development and acquisition process. The superintendent participants add considerable value to the treatise due to their unique perspectives as practicing school executives. Perhaps, however, what really makes their input most critical to this research is their own experiences as students in UBSPP's. With the exception of one, each participated in a preparation program, and as such, developed some insight into how much their preparation benefited them once they moved into the superintendency. One of the six participated in an administrative training program that did not have the superintendency as its primary focus. That superintendent has served longer than the other participants and has experience in large urban districts.

Table 4.17 Demographics of Selected Superintendent Participants

	Minority		White	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Urban		2	1	
Medium		1	1	
Rural				1

The researcher also interviewed six professors of educational administration who are nationally prominent authors, regularly contributing to the literature around UBSPP's. Identified as scholars for the purpose of this study, these experts shared their thoughts regarding the current state of UBSPP's, their deficiencies and strengths as well

as how they might be improved and redesigned. Their insight is particularly relevant to this research because they have the unique perspective of providing instruction

The six scholars are associated with higher educational institutions of varying size (enrollment), some of which are large research universities and others, smaller institutions.

Table 4.18 Demographics of Selected Scholar Participants

	Minority		White	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Large		1	1	4
Medium		0	0	
Small				0

Interview Data

Superintendent Participants Reflections Regarding UBSPP's

The questions in the interview protocol for superintendents were focused on gathering information about the participants' opinions about a range of issues around UBSPP's that included the following: a) adequacy of program preparation; b) most beneficial and least beneficial aspects of the programs; c) major program changes that they would suggest; d) their perceptions of whether the program had fulfilled its purpose; e) their perception of the curricular coherence of the program; f) their perception of the suitability of the faculty for the program's mission; g) their perception of whether or not admission standards were adequate for ensuring high quality candidates; and h) their predictions regarding how these programs might be redesigned or re-conceptualized.

The superintendents' responses to the question that focused on adequacy of preparation by their respective programs varied considerably. Some of their comments are as follows:

My frame of reference went from a single district to broad based across the state and that was a real strong suit of the program at the time. That was the practitioners' part of the program in addition to the coursework that we had there at the university. So for me I could never express what a positive component that was in terms of preparing to be a superintendent because you go to a statewide perspective and you deal with real people.

I went through a superintendency prep program in the mid to late 1980s and had an opportunity to be a superintendent at a very young age. I think there are both sides. I could rate it low or high so I guess the question, experience in the program, I'm going to say that it didn't fully prepare me. I'm going to say it minimally prepared me to perform successfully as a superintendent.

I think it did a really, really good job. I haven't come across only one other experience since that really helped me. I think it was comprehensive and it was field based and to me that was the best part which kind of gets to your number 2.

It is clear that the range of comments gravitate from some participants who felt very strongly that their programs prepared them well to others who felt "minimally prepared" as superintendents. Other comments were consistent with the ones posted above. There were no comments in which the participant's reaction reflected that they felt indifferent regarding their experiences.

The participants' comments regarding the most beneficial aspect of the preparation programs also tended to have a broad range. Here are some of the comments on that topic:

I think it helped. I don't think it defined me. I was already a superintendent when I got my doctorate. I think the biggest help that it gave me was to truly appreciate both qualitative and quantitative research. I was mostly a quantitative person. I was a pretty good numbers person.

Probably the research aspect of the program, not having done a lot of research prior to that point. Also keeping in mind that I completed my doctorate in 1975. So that's 30 years ago.

Probably the thing that I think that benefited me the most, for some reason I always understood that I was going to be in a district that was probably a troubled district. I probably felt that I was going to be in a district that most of the students were going to be minority and needed a lot of support as far as trying to close the gap. In achievement, I was probably going to be in a situation where a community would have to be taught as well as the school and bring everybody together to some common goals and so forth. I think I was fortunate enough to be in a superintendency program that prepared me to do just that.

Two of the participants of six identified the research aspect of their superintendent preparation program as the most beneficial to them. The third, however, felt that the program in which he participated specifically helped to prepare him for the type of district that he would have in the future. This type of variation was a thread that tended to persist throughout the study.

Participants also reflected on the least beneficial aspects of the program. The researcher noted the following responses:

Probably, I could have spent more time, and this is probably more so myself than anything else. I probably could have spent more time on finance. And what I'm talking about finance, I'm talking about how school districts are funded. You know when you get out and went to a poor school district like North Forest and then Edgewood versus Kirby and all the school funding mechanisms and how all that is struck up.

I never really thought about that. The core courses were directly related, the stats course to the dissertation, Dr. Thomas' pieces on curriculum and alignment were essential to the budget, finance courses were essential to what we do. I can't really identify anything that I would say should not be part of the program.

It's not for me because I'm very opinionated. Some of the things that added no value was research at the library. In fact, I protested going to the library. There

are so many things that are available online now and so many of the professors made you go get certain articles out of the library. Research can still be done in a non-traditional way. In some aspects, some of the courses were I felt like were an endurance test. They were just going to see if you were going to stick it out and if you were tough enough.

It becomes more transparent that the values that certain participants placed on some aspects of their experience were in conflict with what other participants reflected. Take for instance the two participants who clearly identify the research aspects of their preparation experience as most beneficial and the one participant who really felt that it was the least beneficial part of his preparation.

Participants then reflected on the changes, if any, which they would make to improve the effectiveness of their respective preparation programs. Again, the researcher observed a broad range of disparities.

I think we did not spend much if any time on policy, in how important policy and governance issues are. We did board-superintendent relations but we didn't really talk about the public image of the superintendent and how important it is to be out in the field with, in your community I should say, not the field, but out in the community developing business relationships, paying attention to the power brokers in a community and getting them on board with public education in general and with your specific school system.

In the program that I participated in there was not any mentoring-type program where I actually had an opportunity to go and work in a school district alongside, maybe a superintendent or an upper level administrator in a school district. My program was predominantly coursework and no hands-on experience. That's probably the aspect I would change.

I'll probably be a little redundant here but I would definitely have more practitioners. There's a lot to be said for a good mixture of the scholar and the practitioner. I believe any program that doesn't blend itself well and make sure they encompass people that have actually been there.

Here we see three clearly different responses, and perhaps, for the first time, strong connections to both the surveys as well as the literature review. The first participant reflects on the absence of a focus on governance and policy-related issues in the preparation program in which she participated. She connects the need for such a strand to what she has experienced in practice.

Likewise, the second participant notes that the lack of a mentoring experience in his preparation program was something that he would change. He suggests that he would have received strong benefits from such an arrangement and certainly less on-the-job learning by doing, which is sometimes not the most effective way of growing professionally.

The final participant's comment on suggested program changes mirrors what Levine and many other critics of UBSPP's have offered about faculty characteristics in such programs. The lack of a sufficient percentage of faculty members who have had grounding through experience personally in the superintendency creates issues for some of the programs.

The participants also shared their thinking regarding what they thought their preparation program's purpose should have been. Among their comments were the following:

I think the primary purpose in the program I participated in was to simply get the students who participated in the program to the point of earning a doctorate degree in school administration. My program was a very broad program not necessarily specific to the superintendency it was specific simply to a doctorate in administration.

To me purpose is mission. How I would describe that is that for me to prepare candidates for all of the facets that an individual's going to face in being a chief executive officer of a school system. I think that more emphasis needs to be placed on the impact of the superintendent on the academic performance of students.

I think its purpose was to prepare leaders to assume the top CEO position in the school systems in the state. To prepare leaders who are thoughtful, who are actually well prepared, who understand what they're walking into. In a nutshell it is to prepare leaders for schools.

When asked about curricular coherence and how they viewed the performance of their respective programs in that particular area, the responses, again, were seldom similar. Consider the following:

I thought that's one of the stronger points of the program. I think it focused there on instruction and instructional leader, the superintendent as instructional leader, quite often you had to research. Those professionals in the field who were successful, whose programs were successful, teaching strategies, who's-who in curriculum and instruction and that type of thing. I think that's one of the, much more than management, in anything else, I'd say the focus was on instructional climate and establishing an effective instructional climate for a school district.

I think very well. I go back to working with Dr. Thomas. We actually had a chance to go into one of the districts in San Antonio and look at their alignment of curriculum, we got to look at staffing patterns, we got to look at roles and responsibilities and actually sent a report back to the district after going in, making a site visit, talking, examining documents and all to look at the big picture as a whole of how a district operates. That was kind of a curriculum piece but I think what you're talking about here is the whole offering of the program.

That's a good question too. All programs that I'm familiar with are like either 15 or 18 hours and that includes an internship. I think they did a very good job with the internship. It may have been because of my supervisor and the things there and I'll probably discuss that later in more detail. There was a good range of courses.

This is one of the very rare instances in which the researcher observed that more than two responses from participants were similar. In fact, the three participants whose

comments are above seem to agree that their respective programs did very well in terms of curricular coherence. Levine had described many programs' curricular coherence as what he labeled a "grab bag of courses" suggesting that many had outlived their usefulness and that their relevance to the practice of superintending was questionable.

Participants were asked to share their thoughts regarding the suitability of the faculty to the very demanding challenge of preparing school executives to effectively lead. The following highlights some of what the participants shared during their interviews:

I don't think there was near enough practitioners. We had a lot of professors and even the professors that had some practitioner experience it was long ago and at a much different environment. The whole issue of governance and superintendency has changed completely, completely since integration. And pre-integration were some of the people who were there. Every decade, I believe there needs to be at least one or two practitioners every decade that in that decade have experienced the superintendency so they can add value as to the changing nature of the superintendency.

Excellent. I know all those key players have changed. I don't think you will find a person who is more visionary, more out there, more on the edge of things than Dr. Estes. He is very global. He was tremendous about talking about the importance of vision, the importance of talking about being ready for the 21st century. Dr. Thomas was very strong, very grounded, very strong on the curriculum end. Dr. Wagstaff, very renowned in terms of research and he brought a tremendous strength to the faculty. The people who were there at the time, I think, were very diverse. Each player, each teacher, each professor brought a different strength to the table.

These participants undoubtedly felt that the faculty suitability was excellent although the first indicated a need to make certain that the faculty evolved to reflect current practice. The participant seems to be suggesting that if faculty members retired as practitioners and the nature of the profession is vastly different than it was during

their time, then it is quite possible for that individual to be out of touch with current practice and for that disconnect to impact his teaching.

The second participant, on the other hand, seems to be really appreciative of the caliber of faculty that she experienced during her preparation program. She comments that different faculty members bring different strengths and that this contributes to a strong comprehensive experience.

The participants were also asked about their perception of admissions standards and whether or not those standards led to the recruitment and selection of strong candidates. The following comments reflect the perspectives of some of the participants:

I don't know what all the standards were. Because we got through that as participants and we were either lucky to be selected or not selected. But I do believe that there was a concerted effort to represent Texas and to represent diversity and to get a group that represented male, female and different ethnic groups across the state. I think that is important to continue in that aspect today.

They did a pretty good job of that. At the time they required a GRE. Sitting on the other side I'm not sure how they used it. At the time I wasn't sure what the standards were for getting in. But I do believe that they leaned heavily on experience in the school business or maybe on the principalship or other areas. I don't know that we need to be taking classroom teachers and allowing them into the superintendency program unless there are special occasions because the problem is that they don't have the breadth and depth of experiences that they're going to need going into that program.

Quite honestly it was a little bit of a disappointment. Because I knew when I got into the program, when I looked around the room, saw people that I was in the cohort with, I said, If I don't get a doctorate from the University of Texas, there's something wrong with me. Because some people were let in that weren't prepared. They didn't make it. In our cohort of 12 I think only 7 of us finished. And even some of them bailed out even before they finished the coursework. And when we went through the in-basket activity, I think the standards were too low.

I think the standards were high standards, good standards. Again, being that this occurred back in 1974 when I went into the program and I got accepted. Where minority set-asides were very much in place at the time. The standards were I guess high standards and at the same time allowed for a representation of minorities in the program.

The range of variation in these responses once again demonstrate that while some participants felt that the standards were adequately elevated to attract top tier students, that view was not universally shared. One participant in particular described his disappointment in the caliber of candidates, sharing that they didn't possess a competence level sufficient to support them throughout the program through graduation and practice.

The final focus for the superintendent participants addressed their views on program redesign and re-conceptualization. The data gathering effort of this study will lay the groundwork to generate some solid assumptions regarding possible directions for program improvement. The responses of the participants are as follows:

I like the last three words, aspiring superintendent practitioners. If that is your goal then you need to make it field-based. And the experiences that you participate in need to be field based. I think one of the great learnings that I had would be an executive director of a service center. That's not being a superintendent but what you do is that you have to do is watch a lot of different superintendents and their styles, and what works and what doesn't work. So I think an internship, or an assignment, or a mini-lesson with a service center director would teach tremendous value to the candidates about helping people become practitioners.

I think the more real world experiences that are relevant to what superintendents do today, that could be incorporated into the program, the stronger it would be.

I think the value field-based experiences on a very long-term basis a minimum of a semester, possibly even a full year as well as taking some of the coursework. I would envision a program that actually assigns a student into a school district

alongside a superintendent. Frankly, working fulltime and doing the coursework weekends and evenings I think that will be of more value to the person when they graduate with a superintendent certificate. I think there has to be a lot of field-based experience.

The general thrust of many comments from the participants indicates that more field-based learning opportunities would, in their opinions, better prepare aspiring superintendents to succeed. Even the description “real-world experiences” suggest that classroom-based learning, while necessary, cannot be the thrust of an entire preparation program.

Scholar Participants’ Reflections Regarding UBSPP’s

Just as the superintendent participants’ perspectives are unique and add considerable value to the discussion about the current state of UBSPP’s as well as the future of such programs, scholars’ opinions are just as critical. The scholars, although some have not practiced as superintendents, are extremely well read, have conducted research on issues related to practice, and have taught in these programs for years. The scholars who agreed to participate in this study include the most highly respected and widely read names in the field. The commitment of the researcher to maintaining confidentiality does not allow us to disclose their identities.

As their comments are shared, the researcher considers what is offered here with what has already been shared. The cumulative efforts of all interview participants along with the UCEA surveys establish a solid base to make practical predictions about the path that should be taken to improve superintendent preparation programs. The questions for the scholars followed the exact same focus types as those for our

superintendents. Instead of reflecting on their experience as practitioners, however, they simply share based upon their intimate knowledge of these programs.

The questions in the interview protocol for scholars were similarly focused on gathering information about their opinions on the same issues around UBSPP's that included: a) adequacy of program preparation; b) most beneficial and least beneficial aspects of the programs; c) major program changes that they would suggest; d) their perceptions of whether the programs fulfilled their purpose; e) their perception of the curricular coherence of the program; f) their perception of the suitability of the faculty for the program's mission; g) their perception of whether or not admission standards were adequate for ensuring high quality candidates; and h) their predictions regarding how these programs might be redesigned or re-conceptualized.

The scholars' responses to the question that focused on adequacy of preparation by the preparation programs with which they had the greatest familiarity varied as occurred with the superintendent participants. Some of their comments are as follows:

I think that the majority are capable of providing fairly good entry-level introduction to the superintendency. I don't think that the majority of those programs are adequate actually for preparing the superintendent because they don't have the organizational context, meaning the school districts in which to work closely with that individual in a work-embedded context.

I don't think they're very strong. The answer is not very.

This is a hard one to answer. Very few, unless they find a way to be a blend of research and practice. What I mean by that, first of all let me say, I don't believe in nontraditional superintendents. I'm looking for people in my program who have been teachers. That's a prejudice shared by our faculty and it was a prejudice shared by faculty when we created the program.

As the researcher has done throughout the presentation of data, the comments have been selected to reflect the range of comments across the broader spectrum of participants. The first participant felt that the programs did a decent job, but only in an “introductory” sense—that when it came to genuine substance and depth, that perhaps, in that regard, the programs were lacking. The second comment, although brief, left nothing to the imagination regarding how inadequate the participant felt the programs were. The final participant’s comment on adequacy of preparation implies that very few do an adequate job, and he qualifies adequate as the blending of “research and practice”.

The scholar participants’ comments regarding the most beneficial aspect of the preparation programs likewise tended to have a fairly wide range. Consider some of the comments on that topic:

I think what’s most beneficial is certainly some specific content knowledge, like law and finance and looking at getting a different perspective on curriculum and instructional issues and of course the district internship.

One is no matter how research-based your faculty is, and I’ve got a bunch of them here, their face has to be turned towards practice, their research has to be turned toward practice. That means that a faculty such as, any faculty should have scholars, hopefully eminent scholars, but those scholars who are looking to research issues of importance in public education. We’re not trying to develop people who are going to be superintendents of the archdiocese of the school system here. We’re looking for superintendents of schools. So the research faculty has to be practice-focused.

The divergent views of the two participants whose comments are provided here suggest that they consider two very different aspects of the programs that most benefit their students. On one hand, targeted “content specific” strands of focus are needed to

equip the aspiring practitioner with “job-ready” competencies and skills to improve his likelihood of succeeding. On the other hand, program faculty whose research efforts were influenced by the needs of educational administration practice were much more likely to produce graduates equipped through their program for success.

As the scholars, who tended to be much more expressive than our superintendent participants, weighed in on the least beneficial aspects of the programs, some interesting views emerged. The following is a representation of what was shared:

Here is what I see as a major problem. The superintendent training is scaffolded on the doctoral program, generally in universities. This is a dysfunctional program that prepares leaders, superintendents, because the Ed.D. programs tend to be scaffolded on university norms and university expectations. They're not built around the question of what do you need to know and be successful to be a school superintendent. If you don't start from that perspective, and they don't, I mean, they start from the perspective of what the university knows and can do. That's just not very helpful.

One of the least beneficial things I think is teaching in a classroom setting rather than actually being in a work setting. We tend to have professor-oriented instruction rather than engagement of student focus. I think another weakness of the programs is that they really don't do a very good job on orienting future superintendents about the politics of education and politics of education in a particular area which is in superintendent-board relations.

The comments of the scholar participants, to a certain extent, seemingly reflect a certain level of disdain with the contemporary structure of traditional UBSPP's. That they support radical change in the way these programs operate is more than implied. The first suggests that the overwhelming university influence has in some respect tainted the effectiveness of the programs. The other pushes in the direction of more field-based experiences as opposed to classroom-focused instruction.

As the scholar participants commented on how the programs might be improved, we can see clear connections between their comments and those of the superintendent participants. Again, in spite of the broad range of disparities, we observe some important connections:

Some of it has to do with the need to understand the nuts and bolts of the superintendency, which there are many, particularly developing and selling district budgets. Developing and managing board relations is a huge, huge problem, an area where there needs to be a lot more skill development. Learning to be kind of an ambassador for the district in building community relations. Most importantly things that have emerged over the last 20 to 25 years is that there has been a real shift in how to think about the superintendency as the leader of education, not simply the manager and steward of the schools, which I think is what it has historically been viewed as, but rather someone who can really be the curriculum and instructional leader for the district.

First of all they have to close a lot of them. And I don't mean to put people out of business. They have to consolidate resources. Now Texas is a little different because it's so big but you don't need millions of superintendents and you don't need millions of programs preparing them. First thing they should do is consolidate resources across the state and have like three centers or four centers, depending on the size of the state. In many states it would be one or two that actually do the preparation. So you bring all the resources and all the firepower to the question.

I think the superintendent preparation programs ought to be done on a cohort basis; I think they ought to be work-embedded in a district context. I think they ought to be able to work with the best superintendents possible so we pair our future superintendents that are in the program with the very best superintendents in the field, internship, mentorship, coaching. That would really be key.

Here we see three clearly different responses, and perhaps, for the first time, strong connections to both the surveys as well as the literature review. The first participant reflects on the absence of a focus on governance and policy-related issues in

the preparation program in which she participated. She connects the need for such a strand to what she has experienced in practice.

Similarly, the second participant notes that the lack of a mentoring experience in his preparation program was something that he'd change. He suggests that he would have received strong benefits from such an arrangement and certainly less on-the-job learning by doing, which is sometimes not the most effective way of growing professionally.

The final participant's comment on suggested program changes mirrors what Levine and many other critics of UBSPP's have offered about faculty characteristics in such programs. The lack of a sufficient percentage of faculty members who have had grounding through experience personally in the superintendency creates issues for some of the programs.

The participants also shared their thinking regarding what they thought their preparation program's purpose should have been. Among their comments were the following:

When I say I still see value in university-based programs, this means also, however, that part of my university-based program includes an advisory panel of superintendents who come and advise us on the program, are part of the evaluation and developmental process for our students and then we have a whole group of mentor superintendents who we train, who we bring here and talk to them about mentoring. We put them through some work with a consultant.

I view education schools as professional schools. Their job is to serve the profession and its institutions and prepare and continue to educate people for leadership in that community. So the purpose of a superintendent's program is to prepare superintendents to be able to do the job of a superintendent. And that means providing them with skills and knowledge they need which are required by the job, which have changed dramatically over the years. So it's a different

set of skills, a different set of knowledge, a different body of knowledge. To do the job of a superintendent is no longer to manage a system, it's to transform a system, for the most part, particularly if you're working in areas like the one you worked in.

When asked about curricular coherence and how they viewed the performance of the programs they'd observed, the responses, again, were vastly different. Consider the following:

I think they should all be coherent around that. What was particularly helpful to me was the Annenberg Institute a few years ago, which developed some materials around something "School Communities that Worked." They developed a lot of materials around how to do student-centered budgeting. And that really triggered a light for me that everything we do could be thought in terms of how does it support instruction. Are we putting our resources where they're most needed? Do we align our educational priorities with our budget and staffing and programs and so forth? And when you take and use that as a coherent thread you can then begin to say, well, let me understand how does law support optimizing education, how does finance and so forth?

This comment opens the door to a new frame of reference regarding the linking of curriculum development to a) an approach that is student-centered and b) thinking about teaching the various strands based on how each impacts instruction. This participant admits that when she considered this perspective, the "light bulb comes on" for her, and she believes that this type of thinking would improve the curricular coherence of the preparation programs.

The scholar participants likewise shared their opinions regarding the suitability of the faculty in the preparation programs for effectively teaching the courses based upon their background experiences. The following comments provide enlightenment on their perspectives:

National data in 10-year studies reported that only 2 percent of the faculty in educational administration programs in the country had a focus on the superintendency. As a consequence, most of the superintendent courses are taught by adjuncts who are practicing superintendents. So the criticism of how well faculty are prepared is problematic because we don't have enough faculty in those programs that have superintendent preparation programs as part of the university administration program to actually adequately field preparation. So basically, we've had to rely on adjuncts.

Poor. That would be my definition. It isn't that university people can't contribute. Why they would be driving the boat is bizarre. They need to be much more heavily ingrained with people from practice and development people in figuring out what the curriculum is going to be. And they need to talk less and listen more. Because everyone has their own pet course, 'I believe in social justice, so I think they should have a course on social justice,' or 'I believe in ethics. I think they should have a course in ethics. I believe in this.' Well, that's fine but the real issue is what do superintendents do on the job?

The reliance on adjunct professors to make the connection between theory and practice is echoed once again by this scholar. He argues that this dearth of faculty with at least some experience in the superintendency creates a disconnection that is difficult to bridge without the use of adjuncts.

The second participant, although somewhat extreme in his position, feels that university faculty's dominance in determining what the curriculum looks like is the largest issue requiring attention. Based upon his comment, he seems to be driving home the point that an effective curriculum requires quite a bit more involvement from practitioners and curriculum development experts and less from faculty.

As the participants shared their perception of admissions standards and whether or not those standards were attracting strong candidates, the following comments reflect the perspectives of some:

I don't think they have standards for the most part. Many of the programs around the country are open admission. The primary requirement for entrance is that the student still be breathing and have completed an undergraduate degree and a master's degree. There's no sense, in general, of what it takes to be a successful superintendent. As a result, those characteristics aren't sought for admission to the program.

Well, that's tough to answer across the board. Most of the things we've talked about so far we can say were generalized as weaknesses. Now when you get to the recruitment I think that really does vary. I think that's higher at the doctoral level than at the master's. I think there are places that probably do it fairly well. Then there are probably places that don't do it particularly well.

The first participant's comments suggest that standards are sorely lacking and that the programs simply admit any student who demonstrates interest, which again seems somewhat extreme. He believes that the attributes with which candidates should ideally be imbued to stand a chance of experiencing success in the superintendency are seldom considered in admitting prospective students.

The next comment takes a "middle of the road" position on the matter. According to this participant, doctoral superintendency programs would naturally attract a higher caliber of aspirant than a master's level program. He believes that some programs excel in this regard while others flounder.

Our scholar participants' final comments reflect their perspectives on preparation program redesign and re-conceptualization. Perhaps the value, if any, that this study may bring to the ongoing national discourse on the direction and future of these programs may be what emerges from this aspect of it. The scholars leave us with these final thoughts:

I think the way they could be reconceptualized is to more clearly articulate and to work harder to adhere to the standards laid out by the ELCC which I think are really good, at the superintendency level to more clearly identify how their coursework addresses the district level and prospectus and to organize more around the problems and opportunities of being a superintendent and less around skill and discipline of the subject matter.

My point on this is that there's a time when the house is so decrepit and pathetic that it's just better to bulldoze it down and rebuild. And that's where I think we are on this now. I think we just need to bulldoze, without being mean and hurtful, just say, "Look guys, let's just take everything off the table here." Let us start with some new guiding principles that are going to help us understand what kind of curriculum we want. And then let's talk about the kind of programs that we need and then rebuild. You can take stuff back that you took off the table, it could reappear but I wouldn't privilege it to start with because if it's on the table it's going to stay there. And I would take everything off the table and really have a zero-based discussion about how these programs are supposed to look.

I think part of the redesign work has to begin with sitting down and looking at the current and emerging work of the superintendency. I think we need at that point to backward map from reality to defining programs that capture the actual, real work of superintendents and then bring in the research-based knowledge that helps to illuminate those respective areas. And then what we need to do is engage school districts and school boards into providing the kinds of collaboration and work environments where we can place our students so they actually do the work. So most of the future, if we're going into a revised kind of reform mode, superintendent preparation has to be work-embedded and not so much in university classrooms and dominated by university classrooms and dominated by sort of professor classroom instruction. I think we have to have a more dynamic engagement of professional superintendents in the field in creating the next generation of superintendents.

These final comments are quite profound, the last two seemingly suggesting an exhaustive and comprehensive restructuring of the entire UBSPP structure, earmarking nothing that currently exists as "sacred". The first of those scholars advocates "bulldozing" while the second wants a thoughtful approach that embraces the "backward mapping" process that we've hear reflected earlier.

The very first of these three, however, believes that salvaging what presently exists is possible. However, we need to be more standards-focused, and she suggests that the ELCC standards are the way to go.

Research Question One:

What Does the Literature Reveal Regarding Effective UBSPP's

The literature reveals that the current structure of most university-based superintendent preparation programs are not adequate for serving the needs of aspiring superintendents. Many programs are designed to equip the student with a graduate credential and licensure or certification only. Very little preparation effort is given to prepare the individual to perform effectively, if at all, and admissions standards at many are highly suspect.

Over the past quarter century, university preparation of educational administrators has fallen into a downward spiral dominated by low-prestige institutions, diploma mills, outmoded instruction and low expectations. Many of these sub-par training programs have virtually no entrance requirements, save an applicant's ability to pay tuition. The doctor of education (Ed.D) degrees they confer have lost their salience (Guthrie & Sanders, 2001, p.46).

Such information does not paint a very encouraging picture of the future for these programs and begs the question, what must be done to counter this apparent deluge of mediocrity? Levine (2005) concurs with more than one of our scholar participants when he suggests that universities be accountable for policing the quality of their programs.

In 1987, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration concluded that more than 60 percent of the existing school leadership programs were of such insufficient quality to remain open...most of the programs examined in the course of this study were inadequate. Some of them have the

capacity for substantial improvement; many do not....It is the responsibility of leadership program and education schools, their home universities, and the states to ensure that all leadership programs achieve minimum acceptable standards in each area (Levine, 2005, p. 65).

What seems to emerge from the literature when we take into account what the various authors, policymakers, educators, and others conclude in a comprehensive sense is that preparation programs must be dismantled as they presently exist. A collective effort must be undertaken to reestablish these programs so that they better prepare aspiring school executives to be successful in their work. Whether the topic is selection processes or faculty experience, change seems to permeate the discussion regardless of who's speaking.

Equally protective strategies are evident in the selection strategies in many of these narratives. These initiatives often begin with development by faculty of more reasoned conceptions of the abilities, values, and interests that they prize in students. This activity often leads to recognition that intangibles may be the most significant qualities in how individuals lead. This acknowledgement, in turn, helps bring the deficiencies of traditional screening devices in sharp relief and encourages active searches for "other screening methods of admission (Murphy, 1993, p.229).

So, it is clear that the literature nudges UBSPP's rather forcefully in the direction of massive change in nearly every aspect from curriculum related issues to other issues of program design. Whether this converges with what both our groups of interview respondents shared will be addressed next.

Research Question Two:

What Do Scholars Suggest Regarding UBSPP's

Throughout the interview process with the scholars, what repeatedly struck the researcher as a constant was the level of passion and commitment that the group seemed

to demonstrate for their position on most matters related to reforming UBSPP's. The scholars were overwhelmingly more inclined to suggest a demolition instead of an overhaul of preparation programs. None was reluctant to express his or her opinion, and each seemed quite certain that the solutions they proposed were the only functional responses to the issues.

One of the major issues that the scholars seemed to emphasize was the disconnect on some instances and overlap on others that tended to occur in programs that were trying to prepare campus and district leaders:

Let me answer that in two parts. The first is based my experience is in New York state. We are to prepare people for building leadership and district leadership. The assumption is that district leadership is primarily superintendent. But the state strongly encourages programs to prepare people for both certifications at the same time. So that means we're drawing in teachers who are thinking about becoming assistant principals and principals and getting preparation for both building and district leadership at the same time. So on the one hand, it capitalizes on where there's overlap between the two preparations and attempts to differentiate where it might be different. The problem is that what I think one needs to really be prepared for the superintendency is under addressed. Because most of it is about gaining a district perspective and beginning to think about district-related issues, particularly law and finance and some about how to think about curriculum and instruction district-wide.

Anyone who heard that response would conclude that the person who made it felt pretty certain of her position. This type of overlap caused superintendents to be less better prepared than they would have been had they attended programs designed specifically to suit their needs. The scholars also felt strongly about the need to design programs based on practice-based concerns. There were many references to looking at the work of superintendents over a period of time and "backward mapping" what the preparation program should resemble.

I think that changes need to be made in the field so that we're not really talking about courses as much as competency. I think that whatever kinds of instruction or experiences that future superintendents have should be research based. It should be backward mapped from the actual work of the superintendent. It should be work-embedded in terms of learning. It should be standards-aligned with the AAS Standards and it should be performance assessed. I don't think that precludes courses but I think when we're thinking about forming superintendent preparation programs we need to think about the end-user. We need to backward map from what the superintendent actually does and then create experiences for future superintendents that prepare them to actually perform at high levels in the job.

The scholars also tended to believe that the grounding of preparation in practice was an extremely significant piece of the puzzle if the redesign was going to be successful. Most connected the preparation program experience with the actual work of superintendent's on the job. Consider this comment, which although it comes from the literature, is the perspective of two of the scholar participants.

First, there is a consensus that course content and course sequences should be revised to reflect a coherent and integrated curriculum closely linked to emerging work demands (Hoyle, Björk, Colie, & Glass, 2005, p. 8)

Since the scholars publish regularly and are frequent contributors to the literature, it comes as no surprise that their perspective is closely aligned with what the researcher's literature review revealed. In fact, the two mirror each other so closely that they're virtually indistinguishable. The researcher encountered numerous other sources that are not included as a part of this study that were the work of some of our scholar participants.

As the study continued to unfold the connections between the scholars and the superintendent was the next area of focus. However, before we can realistically begin to

make those comparisons, we must give some attention strictly to the superintendent practitioners and their perspective.

Research Question Three:

What Do Practitioners Suggest Regarding UBSPP's

Unlike the scholar participants, the practitioners, with few exceptions, were to some extent complimentary of the programs through which they were prepared.

Although they were honest in admitting that there were some aspects of their position responsibilities in which they felt they were inadequately prepared, they were not as critical of the programs as the scholars.

When it came to the topic of how the programs might be structured differently to be more responsive to the needs of aspiring school chiefs, some of the practitioners leaned more in the direction of the scholar/experts. Consider the following:

Absolutely, it was my preparation of school finance. Professors at that time didn't have the skill or weren't up to date in that area. I believe they are still not. I'm very familiar with superintendent programs even today. Two decades later and we still have a lot of programs that are being allowed to be taught school finance by people that aren't up to date and aren't keeping up. I'm seeing some of the better programs are the ones that the finance part is being taught either by a specialist hired by the university that has specialty in school finance and that can keep up or that course is being farmed out to a very, very qualified adjunct, a person that's working in the field, because it's so hard to keep up to date with school finance. You almost have to be a full-time expert.

Here the researcher underscores the scholarly-leaning perspective of the practitioner as she indicates the belief of a preparation that is grounded in practice, a recurring theme throughout the study. School finance is an area that every

superintendent want to be prepared for on Day One; however, it is a competency that most acquire once they are selected to the position.

In the interviews of the practitioners, we see myriad instances in which this group describes their proclivity for “work-embedded” type learning experiences. The researcher listened attentively during the interviews as participants spoke of the value of grasping theories and concepts in the classroom-based courses and what that experience means to them as learners. Applying those theories and concepts in practice is an experience that has far deeper meaning, however.

Surprisingly, the participants were also more inclined to highlight the importance of research in their programs than were the scholars.

One was that I just mentioned was understanding and appreciating qualitative research and that was important. Another big thing was exposure to very successful, high profile superintendents. In the program we had an opportunity to interact with, ask questions of, interface with, try to analyze and dissect what urban, not just necessarily urban, but successful superintendents did.

Scholars, in fact, suggested that the research aspect of preparation programs were wasteful and unnecessary. One mentioned that too often, programs failed to clearly focus on whether they were preparing researchers or practitioners. Practitioners needed more of a focus on practice and researchers needed to be solidly grounded in preparation for research.

A comparison of the reflections of scholars versus those of practitioners yields information that may be very helpful in this study. To some extent, the researcher believes that practitioners feel a certain degree of allegiance to their respective programs and are, thus, less inclined to be openly critical. This puts them at odds with scholars

who feel no such inclination and are more comfortable airing their differences about where programs fall short.

Question Four:

How Do the UBSPP's Surveyed in the Align with the Literature, Scholars' Opinions, and Practitioners' Perspectives?

When the researcher collectively took into account the literature and the reactions of scholars and participants, what he came away with were five themes which emerged naturally. It was mentioned earlier the parallel universe that appears to exist between what was prevalent in the literature and the corresponding views of the scholars. Because of that connection, these themes were applicable to the literature review, the scholars' opinions, and the practitioners' perspectives.

The themes are as follows: a) more grounding of preparation in practice, b) field-based orientation, c) change in the nature of the superintendency, d) radical shift in preparation program design, and e) dissatisfaction with the status quo. These themes were prevalent across the range of data sources although in varying degrees.

Because of the array of disparity that separates the twenty-eight UBSPP's that were a part of the survey, an effort to superimpose these themes to consider how well or how poorly they align to the literature as well as the interviews is somewhat problematic. The researcher instead, based upon the data collected through the survey and the interviews, looked at three aspects of the data to determine degree of alignment: a) program standards, b) program content, c) internships or field-based experiences, and

d) frequency/usage of evaluation process. These data were used to categorize the twenty-eight programs as a) well-aligned, b) somewhat aligned, or c) poorly aligned.

The outcome of these comparisons found that eight universities were well-aligned, thirteen were somewhat aligned, and seven were poorly aligned.

Presentation of Data Summary

Chapter 4 presented the results from the data collection. The data showed that quite a bit more discussion will be required before we can hope to have our scholars singing in one voice. As intellectuals, some of them are extremely passionate regarding their perspectives and seemingly don't feel that much room for compromise exists. Our superintendents, on the other hand, while not always sharing the same viewpoint, know that the nature of current leadership preparation efforts require them to find that happy medium that will ultimately lead to improvement in their work.

Finally, the data collected through the UCEA surveys coupled with the interviews demonstrate that, across the range of topics, the need for improving practice in preparation programs is indelibly linked to research. Chapter 5 presents analyses of the data and the conclusions which naturally emerge. Along with that discussion, the researcher will include implications for theory, policy, and practice.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Emergent Themes

During the data collection process and the coding of the interview transcripts, several broad themes emerged. In the interviews with superintendents, the three prevalent themes that emerged were a) more grounding of preparation in practice, b) field-based orientation, and c) change in the nature of the superintendency. Throughout the comments shared by superintendents, and regardless of the topic upon which the interview focused, these themes were predominant and their presence tended to pervade the discussion across the field of interview participants. In the interviews with scholars, two themes that naturally emerged were a) radical shift in preparation program design, and b) dissatisfaction with the status quo.

The grounding of preparation in practice was also an evident focus in the interviews with the scholars. As practitioners, however, superintendents are able to reflect on how they could have possibly come into their roles better prepared to lead their first day on the job. What some shared is that many job-related aspects of their positions had to be learned once they'd arrived. For instance, this comment regarding how one participant had to rely on his own ingenuity to learn some aspects of school funding:

Now as far as the finance of the district, how to manage it, I thought that was in there but really preparing you on how schools are funded and coming up with funding formulas to fund schools that point in your career you had to brush up on your own. But again...I mean...

The emergent theme of field-based orientation is quite closely connected with the grounding of preparation in practice. As preparation programs begin to examine how they might better-equip their aspiring school executives to perform successfully, many are developing internship or mentorship components as a part of their existing programs. Both practitioners and scholars made reference to how the nature of the superintendency has evolved tremendously in complexity with the implication being that leadership preparation programs have remained stagnant during this period of change.

The radical shift in preparation program design theme emerged as the researcher coded the interview data. Numerous instances were observed in which scholar participants became extremely passionate about their displeasure with the current state of university-based superintendent preparation programs. Their repeated references to “bulldozing” or “taking everything off the table” or “closing a lot of them (ed schools)” left the researcher with the impression that the changes they anticipated and recommended were, at the very least, radical.

Dissatisfaction with the status quo was another theme which emerged as we linked together groups of commonalities into a larger category of observations. The dissatisfaction was not limited to particular issue, such as faculty attributes or curricular coherence, but rather extended across a broader expanse of issues.

The Grounding of Preparation in Practice

In Chapter 4, the presentation of the data, many of the comments that superintendent practitioners shared reflected their perspective regarding how the preparation programs might be improved to make them more responsive to the needs of

aspiring practitioners. The comment below would seem as though it was a response to the faculty characteristics question, but it is actually a portion of a participant's response to the most beneficial aspect of his program. Note the attention given to preparation and practice:

...most important to me as I've looked back over the years was the preparation from those individuals that had been on the firing line that had been superintendents, or been in the school business. There was a clear distinction between those that had done it and those who had read about it in a book.

The researcher observed this theme's presence as one that was woven throughout the transcriptions and recognized it as prevalent in that regard. The significance of this theme is further supported by the literature on this topic.

School superintendents and other educational leaders speak jokingly of all the theories we learned in graduate school—and how our real education in our craft occurred on the job. Leadership education must connect university training with practice. We must bring theory and craft knowledge together in order to prepare leaders who have the skills needed in our schools today (Hall, 2006, p. 524).

The marriage that must take place between preparation and practice has been long in waiting, and some UBSPP's are making an effort to at least get these two started up the aisle. The Cooperative Superintendency Program (CSP) at The University of Texas at Austin is presently immersing its current cadre of doctoral superintendency CSP Fellows in an extended field experience process.

Hall (2006) discusses the significance of such program efforts:

The second element of training for aspiring leaders should be early placement, through internships and mentoring activities, in real world settings. It is ineffective to require administrators to learn theories of educational leadership in their first semester and then wait for three semesters before putting their new knowledge and skills into practice. (Hall, 2006).

This discussion provides a rather natural into the next theme, a field-based orientation. That the two are closely related and go hand-in-hand is obvious.

A Field-based Orientation

The ongoing debate about needed changes for UBSPP's rarely ignores the need for a more field-based approach to the effective preparation of school executives.

Several of the superintendent interview participants emphasized how that much needed shift will move UBSPP's in the direction of improvement. Consider this participant's perspective:

I think it did a really, really good job. I haven't come across only one other experience since that really helped me. I think it was comprehensive and it was field based and to me that was the best part which kind of gets to your number 2.

The participant is referring to her experiences as a doctoral fellow in a field-based setting that allowed her to travel to school districts around the state and to be involved in those districts in curriculum and instruction and budget-based efforts. The literature supports her position and encourages more field-based involvement over a program that's totally classroom-based.

The ten functions include all of the various responsibilities that a successful superintendent manages as he leads a school district. They are as follows: governance operations; curriculum and instructional services; instructional support services; human resource services; finance/budget operations; administrative/business operations; facilities planning and plant services; accountability, information management, and technology services; external and internal communications; and safety and security services (Olivarez, 2008).

One approach that is gaining popularity is the extrapolation of practices initially devised for teachers and campus leaders to the superintendency. One example is the use of mentoring—which initially started out as an induction practice for new teachers. Mentoring is clearly one of the field-based practices that has been successfully retrofitted for a different category of school professionals. As the strategy transitioned from usage with teachers to usage with principals, it seemed practical that superintendents were to be next in the succession.

A program at Ball State University “immerses students in field-based, experiential projects aligned with ISLLC standards” (Weidmer, 2007, p. 17). Accordingly, the program describes the challenges that many professors of educational administration face:

...to make their courses meaningful, substantive, and authentic. Theoretical and research-based are essential components to effective leadership in all professions; however, there must also be practicalities that are grounded in reality and application. (Weidmer,2007).

Placing the UBSPP in a field-based orientation opens up the possibilities that the concepts and theories which aspiring school executives are taught in classroom settings are internalized and embraced in a real-world setting. It moves the students from the ideas of preparation to the realities of practice.

One of the scholar interview participants expressed their view in these terms:

There are no superintendent’s programs outside universities that can bring together all those resources. In addition, universities where all is going well, bring together both practitioners and scholars, which means it’s first preparing for the role of superintendent is offered both theory and practice, is offered both

the academics and the realities of on-the-job work. That's a very nice combination as well.

In other words, UBSPP's must discover ways to merge these types of practices into the larger preparation program experience. Graduates of the programs who exit the pipeline without the benefit of a structured field-based experience will undoubtedly arrive in their first district leadership experience not fully equipped to lead on Day One.

Change in the Nature of the Superintendency

In reflecting back to the literature review and the interviews with superintendents and scholars, the emergent theme of change in the nature of the superintendency was evident throughout all of the data. The literature review described this development in several instances, the most notable of which might be this statement:

Recent changes in the nature and direction of school reform eclipsed management-focused professional preparation programs that aligned with administrators' work during previous decades. Reports also concluded that inasmuch as reform initiatives were changing schools, educational administration had to be realigned to fit new circumstances which would involve adopting work-embedded preparation approaches as well as performance-based assessment to ensure that aspiring school and district leaders could successfully perform job requirements (Björk, Kowalski, and Young).

According to Björk, et al, these changes in the context within which superintendents operated unfortunately were not accompanied by corresponding changes in the manner in which they were prepared professionally. Recall that Kowalski described the new superintendent of the 80's as someone who was expected to be a: 1) teacher-scholar, 2) manager, 3) democratic leader, 4) applied social scientist, and 5) communicator instead of simply the leader of principals (Kowalski).

You need a roadmap because schools are changing and the superintendency is changing. When I went through my program a superintendent's job was still an extended version of the principal as keeper of the keys. As long as you made the budget, pass it on to the next year and make sure you taxed accordingly the rest took care of itself. In the last 20 years, in this business not only are you a CEO, you literally are a CEO but the people skills are just what you have to have now. We deal with people's two most precious commodities, their children and their money.

The connections between the literature and the interview participants in this instance need no explanation. In fact, many of the scholars' comments ran parallel to those of the superintendents. Consider this comment, for instance:

Most importantly, things that have emerged over the last 20 to 25 years is that there has been a real shift in how to think about the superintendency as the leader of education, not simply the manager and steward of the schools, which I think is what it has historically been viewed as, but rather someone who can really be the curriculum and instructional leader for the district.

The same alignment that we observe between the research and data collected from both sets of interviews is supported by survey data. A review of the courses that are being taught in some of the UBSPP's is proof that there is a seeming disconnect between preparation and practice. For example, in reviewing the courses offered at the twenty-eight preparation programs which participated in the surveys, only eight didn't offer a course with the word "superintendent" or "superintendency" somewhere in the title. Now, consider in the same light how many of those universities fail to offer some sort of field-based experience to bring preparation closer in closer proximity to practice. The researcher found that eleven of the twenty-eight programs offered their students an experience that is best structured to assist them with coming to terms with the massive change that has occurred and is occurring in the nature of the superintendency.

Hierarchical, centralized structures are effective in organizations like armies or factories which have clear goals, strive for uniformity, seek adherence to widely accepted standards, and provide members with explicit roles and exact procedures for meeting their responsibilities....

This is not the case in public education, where the organizational environment is no longer stable or predictable. First, the purposes of public education are hotly contested throughout the country and from school to school...second, educators now acknowledge that students are not uniform raw materials ready to be processed in an education factory....

The steady conditions that once supported public education no longer exists, and therefore schools must develop new, more flexible organizational structures that can adapt to uncertain conditions (Johnson, p. 271-273).

The references to attributes or descriptions such as “instability”, “inflexibility”, and “challenging” doesn’t suggest that the nature of the superintendent’s role will change anytime in the near future. In fact, the natural assumption is that the position will continue to be unpredictable and that superintendents will have to know how to think on their feet. The National Education Association’s Policies Commission wrote in 1965, that

The superintendency of schools is one of the most crucial and perhaps most difficult public positions in American life today. The occupant of this position, more than any other single person in the community, influences the shape of public education. Thus he has a basic role in determining what will become of the young people in his community, and through them what his community and the nation will become.

Combine the phenomenal and frenetic pace with which the profession has evolved with the multi-faceted roles in which the superintendent must perform effectively, and one is forced to wonder why an individual would knowingly seek an assignment. This very factor is partially responsible for the scrutiny under which ed

schools find themselves. They must take all these considerations into account as they contemplate how they must reinvent themselves.

In *Balancing Act: The Political Role of the Urban School Superintendent*, Barbara Jackson explains it in these terms:

For today's superintendent, the expectations and constituencies are many, requiring a balancing act between internal and external forces over which he or she has little control. Often events are unpredictable. The position's political side is often complicated by the public's views about the importance of education, the relation of schools to the political process, and the reputation of politicians. The school superintendency is similar to other executive positions in that it carries responsibility for what may be a multimillion-dollar enterprise. Finally, while the position's public role resembles that of other public officials, there is a significant difference: the superintendent is also perceived as a teacher, scholar, and leader—a professional expert—and in addition is viewed by many as the guardian of the community's children. The three major roles of executive, public official and politician deserve special attention (Jackson, 1995, p. 2).

While it is clear that much has changed between the early twentieth century requirements explained in the literature review and the context Jackson describes above, what remains constant is the responsibility that the superintendent has for overseeing public education. This constant in the face of change is what has contributed to the need for a radical shift in preparation program design, our first emergent theme in the scholar data.

Radical Shift in Preparation Program Design

The scholars interviewed tended to have a perspective that was a bit more passionate and expressive than what we typically observed with our superintendent participants. What tended to leap out to the researcher was the obvious inflexibility of the scholars with regard to considering options for solutions other than those which they

offered. On one hand, it speaks to their level of conviction for the views to which they cling so firmly. On the other, it indicates their unwillingness to take into account the opinions of other stakeholders in this debate.

This comment is typical of the determined views held by some of the scholar participants with regard to the need for a radical shift in preparation program design:

Second, and I've alluded to this, the curriculum ends up being disconnected from practice. Very few faculty [members] have had the experience of being a superintendent. It's in the single digits, the low single digits. The end result is that people preparing for the job are being taught by others who aren't on the job or by adjuncts that haven't had superintendency experience. The programs being created by non-former superintendents for the most part and people have as advisors who don't have experience in the area. They're doing dissertations with people who haven't been superintendents. There's a disjunction between the university and the world of practice.

Despite the seeming solidarity among many of the scholar participants, some degree of consideration must be given to the fact that they make a strong case for the change they suggest. Earlier, however, a superintendent interview participant argued that the transition of early career superintendents to the professoriate was a cost prohibitive issue. He makes this point:

There's a lot to be said for a good mixture of the scholar and the practitioner. I believe any program that doesn't blend itself well and make sure they encompass people that have actually been there. That's hard, I understand. First of all, I understand what universities pay and to get a successful individual that he or she has a doctorate degree and successful superintendent experience they're going to be making between two or three times what that university pay is. So that's a great challenge.

This perspective suggests that while the need for more faculty members with superintendency experience is certainly a valid one, attracting capable and qualified faculty with that background is not nearly as simple as one might suppose. This leads us

to a final aspect of the radical change theme—the focus on actual interaction of doctoral superintendency students involved in an actual work setting with practicing and successful superintendents. As one of the scholar interview participants expressed in the comment below:

Third, critical experience is weak. There isn't a lot of time to watch top superintendents on the job. Too often what happens is that the future superintendent ends up working full time on whatever job he or she has so that the internship ends up being shadowing somebody that's already on the job that may or may not be doing a good job at being a superintendent. Another difficulty of the program is the marketplace forces programs to become quick and easy. People entering many superintendents programs don't want only the credential. They're not interested in the rigorous education that teaches superintendency.

Whether the perspective of this scholar has some validity would vary according to whom we asked to speculate, but clearly here is another instance of the scholar/expert's opinion having convincing finality. Apparently, his point is that aspiring superintendent students who work full-time in teaching or in assistant principalships are so overwhelmed that they are unable to give the energy and focus necessary to receive the full benefit of an internship. The issue, the scholar suggests, is further exacerbated when the student superintendent is linked with a mediocre or poor mentor superintendent in an internship arrangement.

Dissatisfaction with the Status Quo

The last emergent theme that was identified through the coding process was dissatisfaction with the status quo. This theme did not emerge initially in the coding process, but rather was identified through consideration of the survey data in conjunction with the interview data and the review of the literature. That the entire superintendent

preparation structure requires rethinking is the suggestion that many in the field are pushing forward.

The job is impossible, the expectations are inappropriate, the training is inadequate, and the pipeline is inverted (Lashway, 2002, p. 2)

This statement is fraught with dissatisfaction and places squarely on the table that the challenges range far beyond simply the leadership preparation issue that is the focus of this study. It supports the positions of both superintendent and scholar participants as well as the research findings that the preparation aspect does require considerable rethinking. It also takes us back to a comment from one of our interview participants:

The second thing is that you have to get away from the university architecture being the architect for the program. The program has to be the architect on what is it superintendents need to know and be able to do to be successful. And you don't get to define that just because you're a university professor. You just don't get to say, 'well I think they need to do x.' It's a practice-based question. The issue has to become how do you build the program, how do you scaffold the program around practice of superintendency. That we don't do. We certainly don't do it well. We don't do it at all really in most places. Even when we try, we don't do it well.

The factor which figured most prominently in the emergence of the dissatisfaction theme was the perspective of the scholars that the design of UBSPP's should not be the responsibility of university professors alone. They suggested that in order to effectively address issues of preparation program pedagogy, curriculum specialists and professional development folks needed to be invited to the table along with practitioners who could bring enlightenment regarding the important aspects of practice.

The dissatisfaction factor was also observed with superintendent interview participants although they tended not to state their cases nearly as emphatically as the scholars. Recall this comment from one of our superintendents:

But most important to me as I've looked back over the years was the preparation from those individuals that had been on the firing line that had been superintendents, or been in the school business. There was a clear distinction between those that had done it and those who had read about it in a book. The most beneficial part of my program was learning from those that could share actually experiences and knew how to tell us how to keep the main thing the main thing and what were the pitfalls and how to prioritize that which may trip us up.

This superintendent, although appreciative of what he gained from other courses during his preparation experience, was able to hold a greater appreciation for course content that he perceived as tied more closely to the practice of the superintendency. This tendency toward dissatisfaction was heard with other superintendent interview participants. While they clearly felt that they had gained tremendous insight and knowledge from their preparation programs, there was compelling evidence that they felt some changes were needed to make the programs more responsive to their needs.

Conclusions

Much of the intense public pressure that is brought to bear upon the individual who would become school superintendent is typically anticipated, but is all of it deserved? The public school superintendent has a responsibility very similar to the CFO of any large company. The most glaring dissimilarity of the position is undoubtedly the frequency with which she finds herself the center of controversy for matters over which she has no control.

The ideal response to what emerged from our study through the literature review as well as the scholar and practitioner interviews would be what we customarily tend to refer to as that “happy medium”. But happy mediums, in this particular instance, would represent nothing more than preparation program pipe dreams that we could never hope to realize.

The fact of the matter is that all of the stakeholders in this community of preparation programs have to admit that the time is long overdue for them to discontinue the balking. They must have the necessarily frank and substantive discussions that are selflessly grounded in the reality that many preparation programs are faltering badly in many places and require some degree of rethinking. Those in this community of stakeholders who enjoy the luxury of working in the “well-aligned” programs have to develop a certain level of discomfort.

They must recognize that they have to step beyond their typical comfort levels to join the movement to assist the “poorly-aligned” and the “somewhat well-aligned” programs in improving. Barring that, they must join the growing chorus of voices that are calling for their closure. One of the scholar participants expressed what many of his colleagues must feel—no one wants to be accused of trying to put their fellow preparation programs out of business. But this researcher proposes a different approach for ridding sympathetic group members of sentiments bordering guilt.

When I worked as a principal years ago, I was encouraging teachers to partner together as a means of improving their skills. Naturally, the faculty of that campus had some extremely capable teachers, some that were not as capable, and a couple who were

in need of lots of training and assistance. I explained something that I'd heard many times before—that we're only as strong as the weakest among us—that we have a duty to assist our fellow teachers who may not be as instructionally strong as we are. We eventually established a process for pairing inexperienced teachers and marginal teachers with experienced, capable mentors.

For the purpose of the challenge that lies before the leadership preparation program establishment, this researcher suggests that the attention that is currently focused on underperforming programs will eventually be shifted to the better operated programs. Some may call this, although unfairly, guilt by association. But is it not the nature of our society to collectively group and categorize people who share common attributes? It is a rather routine occurrence. If what was reflected in the literature and the interviews has genuine substance, it is already beginning to happen with UBSPP's. We are behind the proverbial "eight ball"; the need for action is immediate.

Implications for Further Research

This study of university-based superintendent preparation programs opens up many possibilities for further research. Several of the interview participants in this study shared their perspectives regarding how UBSPP's might be improved. Further, some of what the researcher has gleaned from the literature opens up yet additional possibilities for future research.

As the researcher stated, a large chasm between the views of scholars and practitioners exists and deserves further investigation. Recall that scholars generally felt that the crisis which faces UBSPP's is extremely serious and that the response to the

crisis necessarily requires radical action. A practical place to begin would be one of the scholars' suggestions that nontraditional programs were not as effective as those operated by UBSPP's. A research study might be conducted to review the success rates of graduates of nontraditional programs in comparison with those of more traditional superintendent preparation programs.

Other scholars as well as superintendents felt that programs should include internships or field-based experiences to give the aspiring superintendent more exposure to experiences in practice. The literature also supported the belief that field experiences are critically connected to success in the superintendency. A study to determine how students perform who have the basis of such an experience as opposed to students who do not is another prospective study.

One of the factors of focus from the UCEA survey of twenty-eight UBSPP's was the make-up of the faculty as they relate to background experience in leadership. Practitioners and scholars alike tended to agree that more faculty experience in the superintendency would serve a tremendous benefit in better preparing students in the programs. This opens the door for possible research efforts that might review the extent to which faculty with superintendency experience contribute to more effective preparation programs. Comparison studies might be conducted to investigate whether programs with more faculty members with superintendency experience tended to have graduates with better success rates in the superintendency.

Many participants in the study alluded to the huge changes in the nature of the superintendency, particularly in "over the last 20 to 25 years". The participants referred

to how there “has been a real shift in how to think about the superintendent as the leader of education, not simply the manager or steward of the schools”. Research opportunities abound for possible studies to explore exactly how the roles of superintendents have changed with respect to the day-to-day functions of school chiefs.

Additional research possibilities might also be found in the significant changes that have taken place as they relate to the ethnic and socio-cultural composition of school districts. This is particularly the case with the trend of districts that were historically regarded as ‘suburban’ but are instead presently considered “urban suburban”. As these communities have transitioned from predominately “white” to mostly “ethnic minority” areas, many of the social, economic, and academic circumstances that were previously exclusively associated with large urban school systems have begun to manifest themselves in these reconstituted settings. The numerous research possibilities that exist in this scenario are far too extensive to estimate.

Having suggested this line of thinking for potential research leads us to yet another avenue of options. A review of the number of surveyed UBSPP’s that identified “low-performing schools” as their targeted contexts (Table 4.3) discloses that only four programs considered this issue in preparation of its aspiring school leaders. Across this nation, we can find extensive evidence that population shifts between large metropolitan areas and their surrounding municipalities has caused resultant transformations in both types of school districts.

One of the premier educational research organizations for urban schools, the Council of Great City Schools, has taken a very insightful look at how the superintendency has changed. A coalition of 61 of the nation's largest urban districts, the Council has collected data on any number of issues related to urban schools, including the superintendency. In particular, it has speculated about how the role of the superintendent has evolved over the past several years. One research possibility that exists as an outgrowth of these perceived changes is an investigation of whether or not there is a relationship between the diminished tenure of superintendents and the role shifts. This same research focus might be applied to the changes in central administration over the same period of time.

The research possibilities that spring from this study are not described exhaustively in this brief narrative. The researcher has hoped instead to prime the thinking of readers of the study as to what some of those possibilities are. Other potential research topics that have not been explained include studies that look at the longevity of preparation programs as well as how long their graduates have worked in the field in the roles for which they were prepared. Several studies which have taken a look at the roles that race and gender played in various regards in the superintendency have emerged over several years. Similar studies which take into account the same factors with a focus on preparation program faculty members remain a strong research possibility.

APPENDIX A

Superintendent Interview Protocol

1. To what extent do you believe that your experience as a student in a university-based superintendent preparation program adequately prepared you to perform successfully as a superintendent?
2. Describe the aspect(s) of the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated that benefited you most?
3. Describe the aspect(s) of the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated that benefited you least?
4. Taking into account the skills that you now know are needed to perform successfully as a superintendent, what major changes would you make to improve the effectiveness of the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated?
5. In as brief a response as possible without sacrificing the substance of your comments, how would you describe the purpose of the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated?
6. Similarly, how would you describe the university-based superintendent preparation program's curricular coherence and balance, i.e., how well did the range of courses

offered converge to form a comprehensive menu of academically and professionally appropriate content?

7. How would you describe the suitability of the faculty for the demands of providing academic guidance in the courses they taught in the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated?
8. To what extent do you believe that the standards for admission in the university-based superintendent preparation program in which you participated were adequate for ensuring that only qualified students were selected?
9. Taking into account your experience as a superintendent, how do you generally foresee university-based superintendent preparation programs being re-conceptualized or redesigned to maximize their effectiveness for aspiring superintendent practitioners?

APPENDIX B

Scholar/Expert Participants' Interview Protocol

1. To what extent do you believe that university-based superintendent preparation programs adequately prepare their students to perform successfully as superintendents?
2. Describe the aspect(s) of university-based superintendent preparation programs that you believe are most beneficial to students/aspiring superintendents?
3. Describe the aspect(s) of university-based superintendent preparation programs that you believe are least beneficial to students/aspiring superintendents?
4. Taking into account the evolution of the role of superintendents over the past twenty or so years, what major changes would you suggest to improve the effectiveness of university-based superintendent preparation programs?
5. In as brief a response as possible without sacrificing the substance of your comments, how would you describe the purpose of an ideal university-based superintendent preparation program?
6. Similarly, how would you describe the curricular coherence and balance of most university-based superintendent preparation programs, i.e., how well should the range of courses offered converge to form a comprehensive menu of academically and professionally appropriate content?
7. How would you describe the suitability of the faculty for the rigorous demands of providing academic guidance in the courses they teach in the typical university-based superintendent preparation program?

8. To what extent do you believe that the standards for admission in most university-based superintendent preparation program are adequate for ensuring that only qualified students are selected?
9. How do you generally foresee university-based superintendent preparation programs being re-conceptualized or redesigned to maximize their effectiveness for aspiring superintendent practitioners?

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VITA

Stanton Eugene Lawrence was born in Port Arthur, Texas. He is the second of twelve children (six sons and six daughters) born to Warren and Bessie Lawrence. Stanton graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in 1974. He attended Prairie View A&M University and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. Later, Stanton was a developmental writing instructor at Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas for two years. He then taught English, reading development, practical writing and creative writing at H. Grady Spruce High School in Dallas Texas for five years. He was selected into a leadership development program for aspiring administrators in Dallas ISD. He became administrative assistant to the Associate Superintendent for Management Services. Afterward, Stanton attended the University of Texas at Austin, graduating with a Master of Education degree. During his time in Austin, he was employed at the Texas Education Agency in the Department of Accountability. He was selected as the principal of Colonial Learning Center (Martin Luther King Elementary School) in Dallas ISD in 1991 (after serving five months as assistant principal on the same campus). He returned to TEA and served as Senior Division Director in the Division of District Effectiveness and Compliance. Stanton was selected as superintendent of schools for the Wilmer-Hutchins ISD. He later served as an administrator in the Facility Services Department in Dallas ISD and as a high school principal in the Houston ISD at Kashmere High School. Afterward, he was selected as Leadership Development Manager in Houston ISD. In 2006, he was readmitted to the Cooperative Superintendency Program at the University of Texas at Austin to complete the doctoral superintendency program. In 2008, Stanton was selected as superintendent of schools for the Normandy School District in St. Louis, Missouri. He is married to the

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