A TRANSFORMATIONAL MODEL OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

The School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of Pittsburgh

2009

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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June 16, 2009

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 The study examines the previously unforeseen demand for visionary leadership in education created by the simultaneous requirement for academically proficient students to be able to navigate the reality of globalization nested in a newfound conceptual age. Globalization driven by new technologies has ushered in a new conceptual age that requires students to compete on the global stage. Students in this country are competing with the best and brightest from around the world not just with their peers. Furthermore, the new conceptual age that is upon us favors students who are creative, empathetic, artistic, innovative and holistic thinkers. .

This is a rich, descriptive, narrative qualitative study that examines the journey of regional school superintendents. Participants were selected due to their qualifications and experience following a careful protocol. Methods of data collection included semi structured interviews and a personal journal. Data was transcribed and organized into major and minor themes. A personal journal was kept for the purpose of adding reflective thoughts to the study.

This research has uncovered a curious pattern indicating visionary superintendents in Western Pennsylvania already possess the types of skills and abilities that we now are expecting our students to acquire to navigate the conceptual age. Another intriguing finding of the study was the evidence that the Western Pennsylvania region serves to create irrepressible visionary leaders. This finding is somewhat surprising as the region is typically thought of as somewhat parochial and not as innovative as other regions of the state and country. The study results which compare the present findings with previous research revealed tangible support for two specific models of visionary leadership found in the literature.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the considerable support I have received from my dissertation committee, colleagues, friends and family during the completion of this dissertation.

I am particularly grateful to my dissertation advisors Joseph Werlinich and Dr. Richard Wallace. They have provided me with tremendous professional guidance and endless encouragement. I also want to thank my additional committee members for their dedication, expertise and support to me during this dissertation project: Dr. Jerry Longo, Dr. William Bickel, Dr. Charlene Trovato and Dr. James Manley. I am especially thankful to Dr. Manley for his uplifting and positive support to me during this endeavor.

I am also thankful to my friends and colleagues who supported me during this arduous and worthwhile academic journey. Their kind and encouraging words have meant a great deal to me.

Finally, I want to thank my family for the sacrifices they have made to allow me to accomplish this goal. My children, Reid, Emily and Helen have been patient, encouraging and my biggest cheerleaders. However, I could not have completed this challenging but rewarding task without the love and support of my wife, Mimi. I am so proud to share this accomplishment with you.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

From a national perspective, public schools and the schooling that they provide are facing a unique and complex combination of challenges and opportunities. Specifically, these challenges involve the convergence of two separate but compelling agendas. The first is the school improvement and performance-based accountability agenda as outlined under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. Elmore (2004) describes these school accountability challenges by describing the process of school improvement. In particular, he discusses transformed organizations as schools that emerge from the process of school improvement as changed and stronger organizations. The accountability movement challenges all schools to improve as evidenced by high stakes assessments. Unfortunately, Elmore (2004) makes it clear that state accountability systems generally do not distinguish among schools that are engaged in a long-term improvement process and schools that have not begun such a process. The high stakes nature of school accountability and performance-based demands require innovative and visionary leadership. While authors such as Smith (2004) describe NCLB as a political spectacle and therefore question the veracity and morality of the NCLB movement, the reality for current school leadership is that schools are being held to performance-based standards and accountability as required in the NCLB legislation.

While the realities of No Child Left Behind and school-based accountability are challenging school leaders, there is a newly postulated theory that schools must also begin to think differently about their mission in response to globalization. The reality of education in a globalized society is the second compelling agenda facing school leaders. Globalization as defined by Friedman (2007) alludes to the historical shifts in thinking related to the realization that the world is a globe rather than being flat. Using this framework he articulates a technology-driven worldview in which the globe, is flattened for commerce and economic competition as a

result of equalized opportunity. The convergence and openness of technology has placed education in the United States in a position which forces it to address advances in science and technology that have simultaneously occurred in countries which were previously isolated from the United States and our economy. At the same time, Daniel Pink (2006) challenges business leaders and educators to reconsider the type of thinking and problem solving which is now required in the 21st century. Pink argues that, in a world where information is easily accessible to all, using current technologies, a conceptual age is arising. According to Pink (2006):

"The last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind – computer programmers who could crank code, lawyers who could craft contracts, MBAs who could crunch numbers. But the keys to the kingdom are changing hands. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind – creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers. These people – artists, inventors, designers, story tellers, care givers, counselors, big picture thinkers – will now reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys."

Sirotnik (2004) assiduously critiques the current accountability tradition including accountability concepts and practices. His descriptive dialogue and research studies advance a responsible approach to accountability practices noted for a successful transformation of the educational system in the United States. He argues strongly that accountability and responsibility must go hand in hand. Specifically, he argues the following:

"Finally, accountability and responsibility must go hand in hand. Responsibility includes accountability but also includes more layered meanings centered on being "able to make moral and rational decisions," being "trustworthy or dependable or reliable" and showing "good judgment." To be both responsible and accountable demands that we care deeply about the well-being of our children that we bring the best ideas, the best knowledge, and the best practices in professional judgment to bear on the educational future citizens of our society and our world."

When one combines the duel challenges described by Daniel Pink from a world futurist perspective and the responsible accountability as described by Sirotnik a vortex of contradictory

agendas is observed. This researcher asserts that a specific type of leadership defined as Visionary Leadership, is essential under these extreme conditions. Visionary Leadership is considered to be within a genre of leadership which first emerged in the mid-1970s and is described by Bryman (1993) as a class of theories known as "the New Leadership Theories". House (1997) reports that empirical studies based on this genre of leadership indicate well above average organizational performance especially under situations of crisis or uncertainty.

Collins' (2002) *Built to Last* research revealed that highly successful organizations contain visionary leaders that are able to articulate a vision which support a core ideology and simultaneously stimulate progress towards a new future. Such visionary leaders are capable of understanding how to preserve an enduring core purpose for an organization and stimulate change at the same time. The challenge of the present educational vortex described above commands a prototype visionary educational leader who is capable of producing transformational educational change which simultaneously improves core academic student skills and produces 21st century thinkers and problem solvers.

Kotter (2008) recently published a follow-up work that complements his original publication *of Leading Change* a decade earlier. This work provides a context to utilize a transformation process within a reality and foreseeable future with opportunities and hazards occurring at accelerating rates. The author refers to intensity of competition, increased globalization and the need for accelerated change. The author's recent qualitative research strongly indicates that complacency is more common and pervasive than previously thought in most organizations. At the same time, organizations must consistently change to remain competitive in a global society which requires transformation to be continuous rather than episodic. In this manner the author argues strongly that a strong sense of urgency is moving from an essential element in big change programs to an essential asset in general. The recommendation of this leading scholar in the area of transformational change and visioning supports this researcher's position that visionary leadership is an important and relevant area of study. The twin educational leadership challenges described above are valid examples of the types of hazards and opportunities occurring in education at an accelerated pace. Yukl and Lepsinger (2004) concur with Kotter and postulate that rapid adaptation in organizations is most

important when the external environment is turbulent and uncertain. Quality leaders in these environments are able to envision a better future for the organization and encourage innovative thinking.

Wallace (1996) describes the importance of a visionary leader with an agenda and skills closely linked to excellence and being able to create a clear vision statement. Specifically, Wallace states that visionary leadership is as follows: "An effective visionary leader is one who inspires workers within an organization, relates well to individuals outside the organization, and sets direction for his or her organization and enables the organization to cope with change." Furthermore, a visionary leader is explicitly committed to an excellence agenda in the schools that inherently includes a commitment to student achievement characterized by higher-order learning outcomes which require synthesizing and generalization skills.

Wallace and Engle (1997) emphasize in their book, *The Learning School: A Guide to Vision-Based Leadership,* that a vision must not be imposed, but reflects the consensus of the stakeholders in the organization. Therefore, vision-based educational leadership precludes the understanding that the school leader is able to tap the shared values of all stakeholders to create a district vision. An effective vision-based leader is capable of widely disseminating and clearly articulating the vision so it can be used as a criterion to benchmark the actions of all within the organization.

Nanus (1992) described visionary leadership as future-focused, creative, and imaginative. This work and research was the basis for many of the descriptions and definitions of visionary leadership in education.

Schwahn and Spady (1998) spend considerable time and focus in their book, *Total Leaders*, describing the visionary leadership domain. Schwahn and Spady describe the essence of visionary leaders as follows:

"The essence of visionary leaders is paradigm breaking imagination and innovation. They excel at creating novel possibilities that others don't see; chart new directions and

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destinations for their organizations; and thrive on translating shifts and trends into productive options for organizational transformation. They turn issues and problems inside out and upside down before declaring a preferred course of action, and they never mindlessly opt for the way they've always done things before."

Schwahn and Spady (1998) support Wallace's articulation that visionary leadership is essential for a school district to perform at a high level of excellence and also to be able to change or transform when necessary. More specifically, Schwahn and Spady (1998) are imaginative but realistic in their description of visionary leadership in the schools. In this sense, innovation is balanced with pragmatism and the belief that ideas must actually work. More specifically, the authors describe the purpose of visionary leadership is to explore the future and possible action steps with the ability to translate these options clearly and in a compelling manner to the organization as a whole. Also, the authors describe a moral foundation for visionary leaders that is based upon the core values of openness and courage. At the same time, visionary leaders are future-focused and are able to clearly see, feel and articulate the vision. Finally, these authors describe the performance roles necessary for visionary leaders to be successful and they include defining and pursuing a preferred organizational future, consistently employing a client focus and expanding organizational perspective and options.

1.1   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Educational leadership has been thrust into the vortex, which exists between the standards-based accountability movement and the abrupt realities of globalization in a conceptual age. The ability to lead effectively within this emerging reality demands visionary leadership. In what manner do nominated visionary superintendents in the western Pennsylvania region meet the twin challenges of standards-based accountability and globalization?

1.2   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do visionary regional superintendents describe the manner in which they have been able to lead their organizations?

2. What unique community and/or regional dispositions exist which promote or limit the development of visionary superintendents in western Pennsylvania?

3. What common patterns of leadership do regional visionary leaders exhibit which confirm or contradict current theoretical and empirical research in the area of visionary leadership?

1.3   PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to add to the growing literature and research in the area of visionary leadership. However, a second purpose of the study is to explore the impact the western Pennsylvania region may have on the development of visionary leaders. In order to conduct this study, this researcher interviewed selected superintendents who are members of the Western Pennsylvania Forum for School Superintendents of the University of Pittsburgh. The interviewing determined if they lead in a manner which is consistent with the research literature regarding visionary leaders. Also, their self-described leadership journey and their success as visionary leaders contributed to the body of literature in this domain. Additionally, in the interviewing process, I determined there are factors in the regional culture that may contribute to or inhibit the development of visionary leaders in Western Pennsylvania.

The primary research method for my study was to interview superintendents using a structured interview method designed to elicit information relative to the definition of visionary leadership specifically as outlined by Schwahn and Spady in their work, *Total Leaders,* and as defined by Richard Wallace in his book, *From Vision to Practice: The Art of Educational Leadership*. I explored whether superintendents in the region, who have been nominated by the leadership of the Forum as visionary leaders lead in a manner which is consistent with the

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description of visionary leadership in the literature. Specifically, whether the leadership journey they describe is consistent with the work by Wallace, Schwahn/Spady and other leading authors. Parenthetically, to what extent have these superintendent leaders exhibited evidence that they have been able to proactively answer to the combined expectations of standards-based accountability as well ever-changing 21st century demands particularly as they relate to globalization.

This study of visionary leadership also explored the possibility that this region may possess special sociological and cultural qualities, which inhibit or contribute to the development of successful visionaries.

1.4   DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following definitions are meant to provide specific information and for descriptions of the following information for the understanding of this study.

1. Visionary leadership is defined for the purposes of this study as those school leaders who are future focused and able to clearly see, feel and articulate the vision for an educational organization. The visionary leader is able to picture and describe the ideal school and the ideal classroom to all stakeholders. Visionary leadership is imaginative, but realistic, and is characterized by innovation balanced with pragmatism. Visionary leaders are both courageous and candid with a passion for excellence and a moral commitment to student learning. Visionary leaders possess the ability to explicitly define and pursue a preferred educational future while simultaneously employing a client focus and engaging stakeholders in the vision. Finally, visionary leadership is transformational and produces tangible results in learning outcomes for students. This definition of visionary leadership

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is drawn from the research conducted by Schwan and Spady (1998) and outlined in their book *Total Leaders.*

2. Vision-based leadership is a specific type of visionary leadership, which assumes that the school leader uses the shared value of the stakeholders to create the vision. Vision-based leadership emphasizes the concept of shared vision, and requires a vision to which all stakeholders subscribe. The role of a vision - based leader in this definition is to ensure that there is open dialogue and that all stakeholders have a clear and common understanding of the vision. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on achieving consensus on common values and the creation of a vision statement to which all stakeholders can subscribe. This definition of vision-based leadership is specifically drawn from the work of Wallace and Engle (1997) as defined in their book, *The Learning School: A Guide to Vision-Based Leadership,*

3. School or District Leader (for the purposes of this study, the terms are interchangeable) as defined by this researcher for this study as the superintendent.

4. The Western Pennsylvania Forum for School Superintendents of the University of Pittsburgh is defined by the University of Pittsburgh web site at www.pitt.edu as a continuing professional development program for western Pennsylvania regional members that provide opportunities for superintendents to stay current in emerging issues of school leadership.

5. The Western Pennsylvania region has been historically defined as the 26 counties west of a meridian drawn from the north of McKean County to the south of Bedford County.

1.5   SUMMARY

Educational leadership is facing unforeseen challenges as result of multiple concurrent realities. In the 19th and 20th Century, public education in the United States was under the purview and control of state and local governments with loosely defined expectations for student achievement. In the 21st century local control remains but federal legislation in the form of the NCLB act requires student achievement based accountability using performance-based measures that are standardized. This national emphasis and expectation that all students should acquire proficient literacy and math skills requires continuous improvement in the schools. Such an emphasis on continuous improvement and positive change requires innovative and visionary leadership.

Simultaneously, the 21st century realities as defined by Pink (2006), and Friedman (2007) present an urgent need for educational change due to global concerns. Schools must be able to transform themselves in order to prepare students to achieve in a highly competitive global economy with the best and brightest. Yet, from the futurist perspective student creativity, inventiveness and artistic design may hold the key to success in a world where information is available and accessible to all.

Leadership theory and empirical research point to a specific genre of leadership known as visionary leadership which is considered particularly effective under conditions of crisis and uncertainty. House and Aditya (1997) indicate that there are successful outcomes for organizations that utilize this genre leadership under such conditions.

Wallace (1996) postulates that visionary leadership is essential for schools to function at an optimal level of excellence and to be able to transform and change when necessary. Schwahn and Spady (2001) explicitly define visionary leaders as those who are able to lead by breaking paradigms while thinking innovatively and imaginatively. This study is designed to explore and identify the essential attributes of visionary leaders. More specifically, the study examined in what manner visionary superintendents describe the personal experiences and life journeys that have made them successful as visionaries. Finally, the study was designed to examine whether

unique societal and regional qualities may exist which could foster or limit the development of visionary leaders. Recently, the region has received national attention as one, which possesses above-average educational services as noted in the "most livable city" rankings. It is believed that this level of academic success in a region, which has faced major economic challenges, provides fertile ground for an examination of visionary educational leadership. Thus, it was determined whether regional visionaries lead in a manner which confirms or disputes current research findings in the area of visionary leadership.

2.0   REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

A review of the theoretical and empirical research literature was conducted to explore the development and validity of visionary leadership as a distinct genre of leadership.   More specifically, the literature was examined to explore the emergence of visionary leadership as a distinct theory.   Also, the literature was examined to determine how visionary leadership is subsumed under the framework of the "new leadership theories" category.   Finally, evidence for the successful demonstration of visionary leadership within organizations was explored.

An analysis of the literature in the field of visionary leadership reveals that the genesis of this field of study began in the 1980s and flourished in the early 1990s.   The conceptual research of visionary leadership began in the leadership work related to business and management.   This work was quickly analyzed by the educational leadership community and utilized in this arena quite actively in the 1990s.   The empirical research in this area examines the status of visionary leadership as a genre of leadership associated with a type described as *the new leadership theories*.   Also, theoretical research conducted by House and Aditya (1997) indicate visionary leadership is subsumed under the neo-charismatic theories of leadership.   Specifically, House and Shamir (1993) report findings that indicate visionary leadership is aligned with charismatic leadership.   The above researchers report that this genre of leadership results in well above average organizational performance especially under the conditions of crisis and uncertainty. However, there is a paucity of this research as it relates to the simultaneous demands of standards based reform and the competing interests of changes wrought by globalization on educational leadership.   With regard to these themes and development of research, this researcher has created two domains in the review of related literature.   These domains are: Foundational visionary leadership literature and Visionary leadership applied to education.

2.1   FOUNDATIONAL VISIONARY LEADERSHIP LITERATURE

In this foundational review of visionary leadership literature this researcher examined primarily theoretical and conceptual studies which address the evolving genre of visionary leadership within the business arena. This literature review is designed to support the concept of visionary leadership as a distinct domain within the general field of business focused Leadership. Also, the review acknowledges the historical basis for leadership as legitimate and important area of study and research.

Bass (2008) has reviewed and analyzed empirical and theoretical leadership research in four editions of his comprehensive handbook on leadership. In his most recent and final handbook on leadership this founder of social scientific investigation of leadership reminds us that the study of leadership is consistent with the rise of civilization. He affirms that leadership is a universal phenomenon and due to its critical role in business, educational, and military settings it remains an important subject for study and research. Bernard Bass indicates that the conceptual research in leadership indicates leadership is properly conceived as directing the attention of other members to goals and paths to achieve them. Therefore, leaders are agents of change, whose acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them.

Yukl (1989) conducted a thorough analysis of the major theories of leadership research with a focus on empirical findings. In his review he confirms that several thousand empirical studies have been conducted on leadership effectiveness with generally mixed results. The author indicates that these findings reveal that a grand theory of leadership continues to be developed. Furthermore, he suggests that major findings from the different lines of leadership research should be examined separately. In his review of research he does consider the *New Leadership Theories* which includes the domain of visionary leadership. He acknowledges that the empirical research in the areas of the *new leadership theories* such as Transformational and Charismatic Leadership is emerging but is somewhat limited, However, the author indicates that studies of this form of leadership consistently have found that is important for the leader to articulate a clear and compelling vision relevant to the needs and values of followers. It is suggested that the unique contribution of the visionary leader is to collect and integrate

components of vision provided by followers, and then make the vision come alive with persuasive articulation.

Kouzes and Posner (1987) began research in the early 1980s to explore leadership in a variety of business organizations. Essentially, the authors wanted to know what people did when they were at their "personal best" in leading others. Following some preliminary research, Kouzes and Posner devised a personal-best leadership theory. Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership resulted from extensive qualitative research to determine the leadership competencies that are essential to getting extraordinary things done in organizations. Their research found that one of the leadership competencies that leaders exhibit when they are at their personal best includes the ability to inspire a shared vision. The authors describe the ability to inspire a shared vision as follows: "Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future." Historically, this research by the authors is the beginning of the formal research and study in the genre of visionary leadership.

Nanus (1992) developed and articulated the first complete theoretical portrayal of visionary leadership as a distinct subtype of leadership. Nanus states, "there is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than the attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future widely shared." Visionary leadership is described as the essential and most important aspect of successful leadership. The visionary leader is able to have a clear picture for the organization. Thus, the essential skills of visionary leaders are the ability to have an image of the most desirable future for the organization and that this idea energizes and maximizes the talents and resources of the entire organization. Specifically, the four dimensions of a successful visionary leader are described by Nanus (1992) as possessing the following skills:

1. Direction centered
2. Change agent
3. Spokesperson

4. Coach

These roles should be viewed as the skills of the visionary leader. They are described as of equal importance in that the visionary leader must be able to balance and simultaneously support these four roles.

The challenge for the visionary leader is selecting and articulating the right vision, which consists of powerful ideas. When these ideas are achieved by the organization it will be well on its way to the realization of this vision. The selecting of the great vision is powerful as it attracts commitment and energizes people, creates meaning in workers' lives, establishes a standard of excellence, and bridges the present and future. This conceptual framework of visionary leadership postulates that human behavior in organizations is shaped by the shared vision of a better tomorrow for the entire organization. The most compelling example of a historical visionary leader is Abraham Lincoln, who used his visionary leadership to eliminate slavery and preserve the union of the states. Lincoln had a long-standing and publicly stated belief that was anti-slavery. Lincoln was able to shepherd the union through a Civil war, which eventually translated this vision of the country without legalized slavery. However, upon his election Lincoln did not immediately deliver the Emancipation Proclamation. In the ensuing years is when he shared his vision of a country without slavery and with a preserved union .

Senge (1994) emphasizes a conceptual theory of the visionary leader as one who is able to create a shared vision. It is described that while the visionary leader must be responsible for creating a vision, it is important to utilize the entire organization and thus create a shared vision and purpose. In this manner, it is noted that visionary leaders who create shared visions are able to create a deep purpose for the organization and the organization's existence. Furthermore, it is noted that an effective leader creates a vision that is tangible and immediate in quality and should be richly detailed. In this manner, the vision is compelling and the leader is able to energize and motivate.

Lowe and Kroek (1996) studied aspects of the *New Leadership Theories* that this researcher has discussed previously in order to determine leadership effectiveness. Specifically, they conducted a meta-analytic review of the literature which utilized Bass's Multifactor

Leadership Questionnaire. The general results of this empirical study determined that specific subtypes of the new leadership theories, including transformational leadership, is clearly associated with work unit effectiveness. More specifically, this type of effective leader is described as one who articulates a vision of the future that can be shared with peers and subordinates and is able to intellectually stimulate followers.

Kotter (1996) presented conceptual leadership theory specific to organizations which are able to successfully transform themselves. The work is characterized by the author as a personal attempt to publish information that provides multiple practical real-life examples of what appears to work in the transformation process for organizations. The author presents the compelling argument for an eight-stage process for creating major change. The change process is described as follows:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering broad-based action
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains in producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches to the culture

Stages three and four of the change process emphasize qualities associated with visionary leadership theory. The author purports that leadership at this stage requires a leader to create a sensible and appealing picture of the future and a logical strategy by which the vision can be achieved. Furthermore, leaders should create visions that are imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible, and communicable. Stage four of the change process emphasizes that the power of the visionary leader is unleashed when the vision is effectively communicated to all. The key elements of the effective communication of a vision must include simplicity, multiple forms, repetition and leadership by example. Finally, the author clearly emphasizes that if followers do not accept the leader's presentation of a vision, the entire transformation process will fail.

Bennis and Nanus (1997) re-articulated visionary leadership as they described their conceptual study of visionary leadership. This new vision of leadership articulates four key areas of leadership behavior. The first area articulated describes the leader's ability to use vision to create a focus for the organization. The visionary leader is one who is able to choose a direction by developing a mental image of a possible and desired future for the organization. From this standpoint, visionary leadership requires the leader to have a future vision for the organization, which is desirable and exciting for all. In this manner, the individuals' behaviors in the organization are shaped and connected to this empowering vision of the future, which the visionary leader portrays. Furthermore, visionary leadership requires the ability to select, synthesize and articulate an appropriate vision for the organization. This ability requires foresight, hindsight, and a perspective or world view. A key aspect to this leadership function is described as the ability to think in transcendent forms that yet can be articulated as a vision of the future that is easily understood, desirable and energizing to all. A skilled visionary leader is able to project in time and space so that the vision is not too far beyond the ability of members to understand it and to see it partially accomplished.

House and Aditya (1997) assess the state of the social scientific study of leadership at the conclusion of the 20th century. Overall, they carefully report that considerable progress has been made in the area of empirical research which support the prevailing theories of leadership which presently exist. The authors exhaustively review the empirical research findings which correspond with associated conceptual theories of the various genres of leadership. Specifically, they cite recently introduced theories which began to formally appear in the leadership literature in the early 1990s. The authors suggest that a paradigm shift began in the late 1970s which can be described using the term Neocharismatic Theory. They include in this genre the visionary theories advanced by Nanus (1992), Bennis and Nanus (1997) and Senge (1994). Bryman (1993) refers to these class of theories as the *New Leadership theories* and articulates that all of them stress symbolic emotionally appealingly leader behaviors, such as visionary, frame alignment, empowering, role modeling, image building, exceptional risk-taking and supportive behaviors. House and Aditya report that studies based on these *New Leadership theories* demonstratively indicate that this genre of leadership produces a high-level of follower motivation and

commitment. Also, well above average organizational performance was found especially under conditions of crisis or uncertainty.

Collins (2001) published an extensive empirical research study of business leaders that were able to transform organizations from mediocre organizations to highly effective and successful companies. A primary funding of research was the concept of Level 5 leadership. This concept of leadership involves a five level hierarchy with the Level 5 executive as the optimal leader. Such leaders are able to build enduring greatness in organizations through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. It is significant to note that the primary prerequisite for level 5 leadership is the leader's ability to catalyze commitment to a clear and compelling vision. Specifically, an effective Level 4 leader is able to lead others in a vigorous pursuit of an articulated clear vision. In this manner, the author documents results which confirm previous findings that the *New Leadership theories* are historically documented as a effective leadership theories..

2.2   VISIONARY LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Wallace (1996) acknowledges and describes the essence of visionary leadership in the practice of the superintendency. This study is based on visionary leadership theory and was developed and applied by a functioning superintendent within an urban setting. This applied research is important, as it is a description of visionary leadership as applied to the practice of school leadership in the city of Pittsburgh. Wallace articulates that the visionary leader creates a vision statement with the school or school district as the basis for implementing an Excellence Agenda. Specifically, "the Excellence Agenda extends the vision statement by making explicit the goals that must be achieved for the vision to become a reality in schools." It is stated that the functional role of the superintendent therefore is to guide the district in the ability to attain the

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goals stated in such an Excellence Agenda. These skills are the essence of educational visionary leadership. Wallace articulates a natural link between excellence and visionary leadership in education. He describes the methods and techniques for fostering excellence for students, excellence for teachers and excellence for principals. It is noted that a core goal for the superintendent is to utilize the elements of strong visionary leadership to always achieve the maximum positive outcome for all students. In order to achieve effective visionary leadership, the superintendent must have a positive understanding of the change process and also be able to anticipate change actions that may need to occur. Also, an effective visionary leader must be able to communicate his vision to the public and to various groups in ways that are meaningful to them. Thus, at the district and building levels a creation and agreement on a common vision is appropriate and effective for the visionary leader. There must be significant dialogue and discussion regarding the future state of the school district and in individual schools with participants and constituent groups. The vision statement is a summation of the shared values and beliefs that the visionary leader has cooperatively created within the school community.

Wallace ,Engle, and Mooney (1997) detail in their book, *The Learning School: A Guide to Vision-Based Leadership* an analysis of vision-based leadership with an emphasis on implementation in the schools. This research analysis of visionary leadership is based on the applied use of visionary leadership in an urban public-school. The authors effectively propose that effective vision- based leadership is immersed in an understanding of the deep beliefs regarding knowledge, learning and teaching. Furthermore, the entire premise for vision-based leadership in education is essentially to improve teaching and learning at the classroom level. Also, the authors emphasize that vision-based leaders set the course for the organization by using their own vision to create an overall vision to which all stakeholders can commit. From this perspective, while the leader must have a vision, it cannot be imposed on others without their engagement and agreement. In order to accomplish this important and critical task, the school leader must effectively communicate with the stakeholders to create a vision statement, which is agreed-upon by consensus. From this step forward, the leader must widely disseminate the vision and remind all stakeholders regarding the values to which the school community subscribes. Finally, this consensus based vision statement is utilized as a criterion to evaluate the actions and statements of individuals who engage in the work of the district. A secondary but critical context

for this vision-based leadership is the concept that it must be integrated into the functional work of the district. Therefore, the relationship between the vision statement and the curriculum-instruction-assessment practices of the district is dynamic and reciprocal in order for the vision to be realized. Finally, vision-based leadership emphasizes that the development of the vision is not a one-time event, and requires continuous benchmarking and thoughtful analysis. Effective leaders engage stakeholders in making appropriate modifications to the vision, so it guides the continuous development of an effective learning school.

Sergiovanni (1992) describes the heart of leadership as what a leader believes, values and dreams about and is committed to. This work is primarily theoretical research that applies visionary leadership to the school context. Specifically, the personal vision is a term that is utilized. This author combines the concept of vision with the essence that the organization must have a shared value and purpose as well as commitments. This is described as purposing, which involves both the vision of the school leaders and the covenant that the school shares. The author articulates that a covenant provides the added dimension of values and moral authority to make purposing count.

Schwahn and Spady (2001) produced a unified model of empirical and theoretical research regarding visionary educational leadership in breakthrough design especially for practicing school leaders. The authors described their work as a synthesis of published educational leadership literature to guide educational leaders and organizations in the 21st century. Visionary leadership is one of the five pillars of their model of effective school leadership. These pillars are defined as:

1. Authentic Leadership
2. Visionary Leadership
3. Cultural Leadership
4. Quality Leadership
5. Service Leadership

The key attributes of visionary leaders are described as those who are able to use imagination and innovation in a paradigm-breaking manner. Furthermore, these leaders are adept at developing novel scenarios that others in the organization are unable to envision and

they are able to set clear new directions and destinations for their organizations. Also, these leaders enjoy and have an appetite for change and noting trends within their organization. Finally, they are described as those who carefully analyze issues and problems so that when a preferred course of action is set they are able to clearly articulate it and move the organization in this direction. The authors note that the primary purpose of visionary leaders is to assist in the total change process and orchestrate the vision framing for their organization. The key skills to accomplish these are listed as:

1. Involve their employees and other constituents in a thorough investigation of the challenges and opportunities facing their organization's future.
2. Develop potential courses of action.
3. Translate these options into a clear and compelling vision of what their organization can and should become when addressing these future realities and functioning at its ideal best.

In addition, the authors describe visionary leaders as follows:

1. Are more realistic than those leaders focused on past accomplishments.
2. Care enough about the people in the organization to give them a proven recipe for survival and security, namely personal and organizational change.
3. Have more than an equal stake in their organization's success and for getting it to the future first.

The authors believe that when capable visionary leaders lead organizations, the organization examines cutting edge ideas and developments in a range of ways that are significant and important. Additional attributes noted are the moral foundation of visionary leaders. The authors describe four of these elements that are important and strengthen the visionary leader's ability to conduct paradigm-breaking activities and procedures. These four attributes are described as:

1. Openness.
2. Courage.
3. Future Focusing.
4. Clarity.

More specifically, openness is described as the ability to be open-minded in communication with others. This manner of visionary leaders encourages divergent thinking and

unconventional viewpoints to be discussed and explored. Courage is further described as the willingness to take positions and to follow through on actions, which have not been tried previously even though they may be supported in research and in various aspects of the organization. Future focusing is described as the thorough and persistent analysis of future trends that might redefine the organization or system. These require the leader to be a lifelong learner and to spend considerable time exploring new paradigms and frameworks of thinking. Finally, clarity is described as the ability to clearly and straightforwardly communicate the direction priorities of the vision. Clarity is the key ability to make important information known to all in the organization. From this standpoint, communication skills are an essential attribute of a visionary leader.

Finally, the authors posit that the three essential performance roles of the visionary leader are:

Defining and pursuing a preferred organizational future.

Consistently employing a client focus.

Expanding organizational perspectives and options.

More specifically, the performance role of defining and pursuing a preferred future is an emphasis on the ability for a visionary leader to create a picture image of the future for the organization. This includes the ability to picture and describe the ideal school, the ideal classroom, and the ideal leader. The performance role, which indicates the need to employ a client focus, is described as the type of leader who asks themselves and colleagues if they have met or exceeded their customer's expectations. Visionary leaders are able to listen carefully to their students and teachers as well as families. Also they must be able to be aware of what is happening and occurring in their industry and what their future holds for this industry. Finally, the performance role of expanding organizational perspective involves the ability for the visionary leader to transcend and re-conduct patterns of assumptions and beliefs on the way education is performing and functioning. From this standpoint, visionary leaders may at times call into question the theoretical framework of the schools and understand the possible outcomes of reversing paradigms and shifting to new ways of doing things. The authors present a clear and convincing profile of how visionary leadership is the innovative key to their description of total leadership skills. The effective school leader is one who has the character and ability to be a visionary leader with a creative influence that infuses the leader's actions and decisions.

2.3 RECENT TRENDS OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Following the foundational empirical and theoretical research of visionary leadership several authors and researchers applied these concepts directly to the educational leadership domain. Powe (1992) used the foundational work by Bert Nanus to conduct theoretical research to advise school boards regarding the new realities of leadership and the expectations and themes for governance of school boards. The advisement to school boards was that a visionary leadership approach is a primary responsibility for school leaders of the future. In addition to goal setting and long-range planning, true visionary leadership was described as involving significant forward thinking, innovative planning, and involving the community in these tasks. Powe indicated visionary leadership involves:

1. Critical evaluation of your past and present plans, your achievements and the need for reassessment and revision of your goals.

2. Identification of trends and emerging issues and consideration of the potential impact on your policies and programs.

3. Establishment of achievable goals based on the knowledge and experience you have gained from the past and your determination of future needs.

4. Commitment to the vision (no one ever succeeded in leading efforts to which she or he was not personally committed).

5. Involvement of others in the development of the vision and empowerment of them to act on its implementation.

6. Willingness to make the changes necessary to enhance your success potential.

The essence of the author's guidance to school boards involved recommendations regarding a practical approach to adopting and embracing visionary leadership in the governance process. Finally, the author implores school boards to recognize the paramount importance of visionary leadership. The key aspects of visionary leadership that relate to governance involve

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the ability to set an educational vision that reflects the best of the past and provides for the future. Another important quality of visionary leadership is described as the ability to develop a sense of professionalism and critical worth in teachers. The author postulates that visionary leadership is the means for achieving the education mission in America. From this standpoint, visionary leadership is described as the tool that is able to bring together the entire community in the democracy in a way to motivate and create sustaining change in the schools.

Lashway (1997) reflects on and considers the use of vision and visionary leadership in education literature of the early 1990s. The author's conceptual research restates the definitions of vision by the primary authors of the early 1990s. The author concludes that the development of vision can be argued to have arisen from strong leaders at the top of an organization or as a shared process where all in the organization are coauthors. He proposes that accepting and embracing both approaches may be the most relevant and productive. Furthermore, it is articulated that the principal plays a pivotal role in shaping visions and developing a distinctively personal vision that may be more attractive to the entire organization. The author proposes that leaders are critical in facilitating the vision. This example of visionary leadership strongly indicates that educational leaders must understand what the vision means in classroom terms. The author cautions against a vision remaining a façade and not becoming a living vital aspect of the school. From this standpoint, the author endorses the importance of visionary leaders as enthusiastic and steadfast supporters of the vision in the reality of problems and difficulties. These visionary leaders remain advocates of the new vision in spite of difficulties and many challenges. Lashway (1997) references the original visionary leadership definitions but translates visionary leadership as the ability for educational leaders to shepherd the vision to the point where differences at the classroom level occur. From this standpoint, visionary leaders are described as individuals who can motivate and energize at the classroom level so that innovative ideas are actually practiced.

In contrast to foundational theoretical and empirical research in the genre of visionary leadership, which occurred primarily in the 1990s, research and literature since the year 2000 has begun to focus on describing the professional journeys and further describing leadership style of visionary leaders. Millward's (2000) theoretical research emphasizes that creative and effective

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superintendents in the 21st century must begin to use right brain activities and skills. The author proposes that creative leadership is enhanced by utilizing visual representations and alternative models of leading. The author proposes a model of leadership, which is characterized by a sharp focus towards the organization's mission. This process is facilitated by focus and attitude towards direction which is specifically planned by the interventions of the leader. The author proposes that leadership teams and effective leaders in the change process should create visual models that represent concepts related to the future of the organization. In these visual models, the author proposes that the leader eliminate the use of words and employ pictures and photographs instead. In this model, creative leaders are able to involve the organization in developing visual models of the district's functioning and future. The emphasis in this work is that the leader must recognize and be cognizant of the reality that an organization is a living and developing institution.

Funk, Pankake and Gwen (2002) conducted an empirical research study in 2002 which specifically analyzed the personal characteristics of six outstanding female superintendents in Texas. The primary purpose of the research was to develop insights into common characteristics between these highly successful superintendents. Of the eight themes that were found in these archetypes, the first listed was vision, shared vision and visioning. In fact, this theme of visionary leadership was the most frequently mentioned by all of the female superintendents in the study. Each superintendent described themselves as having their own vision, their process of visioning and a manner to ensure that those who worked with them shared the vision. Also, the superintendents themselves described that visionary leadership was the most important quality for effective superintendent leadership. The following were specific descriptions of visionary leadership in the study:

1. "Being a visionary is part creativity and part courage; a visionary has to have some glimpse of what can be. It has to be a little out beyond where the rest of the group is but not too far beyond because if you don't share the dreams you begin to lose them."
2. "Part of being visionary is being able to put pieces of information together and come up with a new slant or a new way to look at things - that is part of what sets a leader apart from an administrator."

3. "I think leaders need vision, and I was at one time of the belief that you could teach that. I no longer have that belief. We have a lot of management people who are clearly outstanding in crisis-to-crisis management but if you give them a blank sheet of paper and ask 'what do you want to be?' They will ask 'what do you want me to do?' They can't really see what it looks like in their minds."

4. "To establish a vision for your organization cannot be done unilaterally. Probably the most important thing is to get out front and make sure that I am not out there by myself."

A second leadership theme, which was noted specifically, related to this ability of all the superintendents to have strong visioning skills, the ability to dream and be creative and introspective was also noted. Specifically, the skills of dreaming, thinking, creating, intuiting, and introspecting were noted as a key set of inward looking affective skills closely related to the visioning abilities. These skills were noted as the central components necessary to function as visionary leaders. The authors noted that these skills are felt to be a specific skill set necessary for visionary leadership. Specific quotes common to the interviewed superintendents are as follows:

1. "I think leaders are more intuitive than other people. Not everything is something for which there is a rule or law."

2. "I think that it is especially important in dealing with people to be intuitive, to be able to get a feel for what is going on because you know it."

3. "I believe firmly that a leader has to be a visionary. One of my favorite things is to ask them to dream about the future - beyond what they can do. I think it is essential that you build in thinking and dreaming - visioning time."

4. "I finally figured out what my greatest fear is … that I'm going to be so inundated with putting out fires and administrivia that I won't have time to dream … that I won't have time to look ahead. Each one of my principals knows that they have to have a designated 'dream person'."

While this study focused on the styles of leadership noted in *Six Outstanding Superintendents*, the personal characteristics noted in the study do provide insight into specific descriptions of visionary leaders. Also, the study emphasized the common importance that each successful superintendent placed on visionary leadership skills. These skills were felt to be the

paramount leadership skills necessary to function successfully. This study may be particularly relevant as it develops a practitioner-supported model of functional definitions of visionary leadership. In addition to the ability to set visions for the organization, the intuitive and creative aspects of leadership are emphasized and are noted as prominent skills.

Thompson's (2003) theoretical study furthers the discussion of the application of visionary leadership related to progress in education. The author emphasizes the daunting challenges of educational leaders in the 21st century that will require the transformational power of visionary leaders. The author's primary emphasis is to create a distinction between creating a vision statement and the vision itself that he described as a living power. In this sense the essence of visionary leadership is related to the implementation of a powerful vision that promotes deep feelings and creates a sense of inner commitment and possibility amongst educators. The author describes visionary leadership involving the ability for individuals within an organization to develop personal visions of the future and then collaboratively developing a shared vision. From this standpoint, the author indicates that effective visionary leadership includes individuals within an organization having the opportunity to create their own vision of a learning community in a manner that supports what is important to them. The author also emphasizes that visionary leadership hinges on the ability of the leader to mobilize the organization to move the current reality closer and closer to the vision of the future. From this standpoint, visionary leaders must be able to create a picture of current reality that is honest and that is a significantly different vision of the future reality, which is being sought. The effective visionary leader successfully creates these visions and communicates them to all so that a sense of urgency is created. The important ability to move an organization from a current honest vision of reality to a preferred future vision can only be accomplished using the type of visionary leadership described in this work.

Kahan's (2002) theoretical study supports Thompson's description of visionary leadership, indicating that true visionary leadership is transformative. As Thompson noted, the true visionary leadership in the 21st century is able to articulate a clear picture of what is possible and then they are closely and deeply involved in bringing this possibility to reality. The author proposes that the key qualities of visionary leaders are:

1. Imagination.
2. Engagement.
3. Getting tangible results.
4. Penetrating self-reflection.

A further in depth definition of visionary leadership is as follows: "Visionary leadership is transformative. It involves greatness, penetrating the ordinary, and reaching through time to bring out the best the world has to offer. A visionary leader anticipates events and influences the future and enables people to flourish in fundamental ways. In associations, this means perceiving challenges and growth opportunities before they happen while positioning the organization to produce extraordinary results that make a real contribution to the world."

The author emphasizes the power of imagination in the visionary leader as well as a passion for excellence. Overall, the work emphasizes the key skills of anticipating the future and the ability to transform by creating a vision and guiding an organization to achieving that vision.

Ylimake's (2006) study thoughtfully describes a new conceptualization of vision in the work of educational leaders. The author emphasizes that translating the concept of visionary leaders into practice has been difficult, especially during the era of No Child Left Behind and standards-based reform. The author proposes that today's educational leaders should look beyond the foundational definitions of vision as presented by Nanus and others. A new conceptualization of vision is proposed by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of vision in the literature and ends with a new conceptual view of vision and suggestions for future research. The author reviews the seminal work on visionary leadership and describes the ability to develop a future image, an ideal. From this standpoint, the author emphasizes that the original definition of vision focused on vision as synonymous for image with an exclusive reliance on foresight. Another historical description of visionary leaders is the ability to identify clear and measurable change targets that provide the organization the ability to reform and move towards these new targets and visions. The author notes that the notion or concept that a vision is essentially the goal may have shortcomings in the complex reality of educational problems and plans for improvement in the 21st century.

The author then begins to postulate and emphasize an interpretation of vision that is beyond the foresight of organizational goals. This concept suggests that visionary leadership is not only about future ideals but involves insight into the complex reality of today's educational problems. From this standpoint, vision is described as an interaction between a commitment to an ideal and the talent of insight into present difficulties or challenges within the educational realities. In addition to postulating the need for discussion and investigation into a new concept of visionary leadership, the author describes the visionary archetype. The author summarizes the visionary archetype as one who exhibits the following three characteristics:

1. Maintains his or her authenticity by telling the truth without blame or judgment.

2. Knows and communicates his or her creative purposes and life dreams.

3. Honors the four ways of seeing: intuition, perception, insight and holistic seeing (vision).

The author has analyzed these visionary archetypes in relationship to the application of visionary leadership in the curriculum field. Based on these interviews and research, the author postulates a new concept of vision. Specifically, the author indicates the following findings: "Based on these understandings, I suggest a new conceptualization of vision - namely that vision is a dynamic interaction among inner human resources (e.g., insight, intuition and perception) and outward perspective in the context of a particular visioning situation." There are four key elements in this definition. First, vision is an active multidimensional process. Second, vision involves inner human resources of the visionary (e.g., insight, intuition and perception) as well as information gained from an outward perspective. Thus, this outward perspective focuses on larger educational ideals as well as external research and policies. Finally, vision making is contextual and lies at least in part, within the needs of particular schools and communities. Finally, the author specifically indicates that additional research is needed to exam the vision among key educational roles, such as superintendents and those in primary leadership roles within a school district. Ylimake's new conceptualization of vision is revealing as it emphasizes that visionary leaders trust and communicate their inner intuitions about current realities with honesty and integrity. At the same time, the challenges to present leaders indicate that there is a stronger emphasis on the reality of current policies and a broader purpose for schooling. An exciting aspect of this recent study is that it emphasizes the need for visionary leaders of the future to use wisdom and all the resources available to meet the major challenges in our schools.

One of the more revolutionary aspects of this study is that it focuses on the integrating of internal and external sources of vision creating the need for creativity within the present reality. While this new theory of vision is intriguing, additional empirical research needs to be conducted to determine the validity of a dynamic concept of visionary leadership as postulated.

Collins (2006) produced a compelling companion monograph designed to accompany his research on business focused leadership which he first published in this 2001. This follow-up study is specifically devoted to the social sector organizations such as found in the education and health fields. The author has carefully analyzed written responses and inquiry in his original *Good to Great* research. The author notes that between 30% and 50% of those responding to the original research come from non-business. An analysis of these inquiries by the author suggests strongly that the good-to-great principles do apply to the social sector. It is proposed that the distinction between business and social greatness can be best accomplished with a new language of greatness. A joint understanding of greatness will allow leaders to reject the naive imposition of the language of business on the social sectors. Furthermore, Level 5 leadership can be accomplished within the diffuse power structure of social sector organizations. This inherently indicates that Level 4 effective patient vision focused leadership remains of paramount importance as the precursor to Level 5 leader in the social sector. The author proposes that greatness can be defined without using business metrics quite successfully and he provides several contextual examples. However, the author does acknowledge that these findings are based on initial impressions and not on matched pair research which he proposes he will conduct over the next 10 years.

In addition to the literature review conducted in the area of seminal visionary leadership, including the most recent conceptualization of visionary leadership described above, this researcher interviewed a local superintendent who is presently teaching at the University of Pittsburgh and leading the local superintendent's Forum. Dr. Jerry Longo was selected for this interview to gather current information regarding a practitioner's view of visionary leadership to supplement the research information obtained. Also, an interview was conducted with Dr. Charles Schwahn to gain his current insight into visionary leadership. It has been over 10 years

since the publication of his book *Total Leaders* and it was felt insight into the current vision of what true visionary leadership would be quite helpful in this study.

Dr. Schwahn refers to the true visionary leader as one who has the ability to synthesize effectively. Dr. Schwahn referenced Howard Gardner's recent work *Five Minds for the Future*. Gardner (2006) emphasizes the synthesizing mind as an important ability and skill for the 21st century. Gardner believes that the ability to combine information from a variety of sources into a coherent whole is vital in today's world. He reports that the amount of community knowledge is doubling every two to three years and sources of information are wide and at times fragmented. From this standpoint, individuals and society create coherence and integration that is essential from the synthesizing point of view. It is postulated that the mind that is at the most premium in the 21st century will be the mind that can synthesize well. At the same time, Gardner reminds us that it is difficult to think using the synthesizing mind because of the challenge to think systematically outside of one single discipline or profession. As a society, we tend to focus the main specific information in professions and we do not consistently expand expertise in the area of synthesis. Gardner indicates that interdisciplinary work and thinking is a very important skill in the 21st century. He postulates that synthesizing is challenging but that leadership in the 21st century must focus on synthesizing abilities. It is important to understand that Gardner's vision of a synthesizing mind is emphasizing that creativity and visioning is important but as it relates to the tremendous knowledge and information which is present in our society. Visionaries of the past must be able to synthesize in the future world in order to relate the many disciplines and realities of the 21st Century.

Dr. Longo is a visiting associate professor and senior fellow in the Administrative and Policy Studies Department in the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Longo is a recently retired superintendent of Quaker Valley School District who also served for six years on the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and played a leadership role in the reform of the state's curriculum standards. This interview was conducted to obtain additional relevant information for the literature review portion of my dissertation. Dr. Longo was interviewed to gain additional information regarding the attributes of visionary leaders in education. Dr. Longo shared his personal experiences as a visionary leader throughout his educational career. He

indicated that he believes that he has always been visionary within the educational field, even when he functioned as a high school English teacher. One essential attribute that he revealed was his personal ability to accept and embrace novel ideas and solutions that are produced from apparent chaos. Specifically, he described, as a high school English teacher, using contract learning with individual students based on his reading and understanding of choice theory. From a learning situation, his high school classroom appeared quite different than many other classrooms due to individual student projects. The classroom environment was less structured than other classrooms and this allowed for student engagement and improved student learning. This was Dr. Longo's initial description of his willingness to embrace the Chaos Theory as defined and written about by Margaret Wheatley.

In addition to being comfortable with chaos and novel ideas, Dr. Longo reports that an attribute of a visionary leader must include being well read in and out of the field of educational leadership. From this standpoint, it is important to be well read outside of the educational field in order to scan the environment for ideas and applicable new concepts. From this standpoint, he believes that visionary leaders must be able to think four to five years ahead of the current educational scenario and prepare the way for organizations. He believes that while it is important to manage and operate a functional educational system, the true goal of a visionary superintendent is to spend a significant amount of time thinking and planning for the future. This type of visionary leadership allowed Dr. Longo to spend much time thinking of how technology would effect education in advance of other educational leaders. Dr. Longo reports that the time spent thinking of the impact of technology in the early 1980s was critical to advances which eventually occurred in the Quaker Valley School System during his tenure there.

In addition to embracing chaos theory and being able to anticipate the unexpected, Dr. Longo reports that a culture of trust must exist within an organization in order for visionary leaders to thrive. It is critical for the educational leader to create this trust so this risk taking can occur. This trust is described as the ability to manage visions successfully. From this standpoint, visionary leaders must be courageous but not foolhardy. Establishing trust within an organization in a community allows for others to embrace visionary ideas and recognize that visions do need at times to be sculpted and altered in order to be fulfilled. From this standpoint,

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an effective visionary leader is able to reveal a vision to an organization and a community in a manner and at a pace, which can be understood and embraced. The ability to embrace and support a vision can only occur when significant professional development is devoted to new ideas and concepts within an organization. The hunger to learn and develop new skills is an essential attribute of a visionary leader. Also, it is essential that the organization be provided with the professional development necessary to support visionary and creative ideas.

Dr. Longo feels that the western Pennsylvania region is an environment, which is able to and has supported visionary leadership. He believes that the region's support and belief in the arts and the power of technology is a fertile combination for regional visionary leadership.

2.4   SUMMARY

A review of the empirical and theoretical research in the area of visionary leadership informs the study in the following manner. Based on this review it has been determined that visionary leadership does exist as a distinct subtype or genre within the leadership literature. The subtype matured and was studied in detail in the 1990s. Visionary leadership exists within a research based framework known as the New leadership theories. Furthermore, this subtype has been shown to be effective, particularly in situations of unpredictability and change. These conclusions were drawn based on analysis of the theoretical and empirical research reviewed by Bass (2008), Yukl (1989), and House and Aditya (1997) This analysis revealed limited research in the domain of visionary leadership as it applies to the twin demands of standards-based reform and the competing interests of globalization and the advent of the conceptual age (Pink 2006) However, there is compelling and relevant research by Collins (2006) and Kotter (2008) that visionary leaders may be positioned well to respond the urgent and accelerated demands for change noted during the first decade of the 21st century.

The foundations of visionary leadership, study and research began with Kouzes and Posner (1987) and then Nanus (1992), and utilized the language of the ability for the leader to image a desirable future of the organization. In addition, this foundational work included concepts presented by Senge (1994), emphasizing the ability to create a shared image or vision for the entire organization. In this manner the visionary leader, must be able to communicate an image of a desirable future to all. The critical aspect of this definition of visionary leadership is the ability for the leader to create a deep purpose within the organization and the vision is compelling. Wallace (1996) applied visionary leadership to the actual work and practice of the superintendent. Thus, visionary leadership included the concept of an excellence agenda and required continuous improvement. In this manner, Wallace (1996) transforms the work of Sergiovanni (1992) directly to superintendent level visionary leadership. Sergiovanni (1992) postulated that the core of leadership is, what a leader believes, values and dreams about. Purposing is described as the ability for the school leader to vision for all and to create shared value and purpose with a commitment from all constituents.

Schwahn and Spady (2001) produced a landmark work that unified theoretical and empirical research in visionary leadership in detail as one of the five pillars of effective school leadership. This comprehensive definition of visionary leaders emphasizes the ability for leaders to use imagination and innovation in a paradigm-breaking manner. Thus, these visionary leaders assist in the total change process by framing a vision for the organization. The essence of the visionary leader is described as the ability for the leader to transcend previous assumptions about the way education should perform or function.

Powe (1992), and Lashaway (1997) focused their study and research on increasing visionary leadership in the governance process of schools. Specifically, this work encouraged, visionary leadership and the means of achieving an education mission for America and sustaining change to support democracy. Lashaway (1997) emphasizes the importance of the visionary leadership role of the principal and understanding visionary leadership and vision in classroom terms. In essence, this description of vision and leadership includes the ability for leaders to infuse a vision, which translates into change at the classroom level.

An intriguing study of leadership was conducted by Kahan (2002) and proposes that true visionary leadership may be transformational. This definition of visionary leadership indicates that the visionary leader anticipates events in the future, enabling people to flourish in their work. This work is supported by Thompson's (2003) description of visionary leadership as essential in the progress of education in the 21st century. This work focuses on the living power of vision itself and the ability of the visionary leader to use this to mobilize the organization. Ylimake (2006) encourages visionary educational leaders to look beyond the original definition of vision as presented in the 1990s. The author suggests that vision be understood as an interaction between a commitment to an ideal and insight into the present difficulties within education. The visionary archetype is described as one who is authentic, communicative and perceptive. Finally, the author proposes that vision is the dynamic interaction between inner resources and outward perspectives with an emphasis on contextual realities.

Finally, interviews were conducted with Dr. Longo and Dr. Schwahn to expand the base of literature review for this study with practitioner level understanding and description of this concept. Dr. Longo emphasized that successful visionary leaders may reveal this attribute early in their professional career in their actions and skill set. Furthermore, he emphasized an influence on his leadership style by Margaret Wheatly's Chaos Theory. This was essentially a comfort with novel ideas applied in the educational setting. In addition, he indicated that an attribute of visionary leadership is the ability to think five years ahead of the current educational realities. At the same time, he believes visionary leaders must be well read in and outside the field of education. While operating an efficient educational system is important the visionary must spend considerable time thinking and planning for the future. Dr. Schwahn indicated that his current thinking about visionary leadership is that true visionary leaders must be effective synthesizers. Specifically, he referenced Howard Gardner's (2006) recent work, *Five Minds of the Future*. The emphasis of this study is that in the 21st century the ability to synthesize effectively is the premium skill set for effective leaders. This description of visionary leadership corroborates Dr. Longo's emphasis on visionary leaders being well read in and outside of education, and being able to reflect on these ideas with the future in mind.

3.0   METHODOLOGY

Effective educational leadership in the 21st century requires visionary leadership abilities due to the numerous challenges facing public education in the new millennium. Multiple studies and ongoing conceptual work in the area of leadership maintain the position that effective educational leaders possess robust levels of visionary leadership abilities. Effective visionary leaders have the capacity to lead in a manner, which puts them at the forefront of educational change and with the ability to deliver on an expectation for increased levels of student achievement. This research analyzes the leadership experiences of nominated superintendents from the Western Pennsylvania Forum for School Superintendents. Membership in the Forum is restricted to 50 superintendents who are selected because of their passion for education and their dedication to be masters of their profession. The criteria for selection indicate these leaders do possess visionary leadership skills and are committed to excellence and equity in public education. Furthermore, the research is designed to explore the relationship the Western Pennsylvania region may have on producing these visionary leaders. The study is designed to identify the manner in which these superintendents have been able to lead with a focus of equity and excellence in public education. Finally, the revealed leadership journeys and experiences of these superintendents will be considered in relationship to the existing empirical and theoretical research in the area of visionary leadership

3.1   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The futurists, Daniel Pink (2006) and Thomas Friedman (2005), create a compelling vision of the future where education must rise to meet challenges in ways that were previously unforeseen and unknown to educators. These realities include the move from an information age to a conceptual age within a flat world where proficient learners in the United States will compete with a very large number of proficient learners from around the world. Visionary leadership is more important than ever before because, in addition to these realities, superintendents continue to be responsible for educating all students to the level of proficiency. Therefore, educational leadership has been thrust into the vortex, which exists between the standards-based accountability movement and the abrupt realities of globalization in a conceptual age. The ability to lead effectively within this emerging reality demands visionary leadership. This research study is designed to explore in what manner nominated visionary superintendents in the western Pennsylvania region meet the twin challenges of standards-based accountability and globalization.

3.2   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research was conducted to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How do visionary regional superintendents describe the manner in which they have been able to lead their organizations?
2. What unique community and/or regional dispositions exist which promote or limit the development of visionary superintendents in western Pennsylvania?

3. What common patterns of leadership do regional visionary superintendents exhibit which confirm or contradict current theoretical and empirical research in the area of visionary leadership in education?

3.3   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the analysis and review of the theoretical and empirical research literature related to visionary leadership, it was discovered that the skills required of visionary leadership in the 21st century may be somewhat different than previously described and researched. The twin demands of educational accountability and globalization has created a vortex which demands leaders who can lead during times of accelerating change and uncertainty. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the developing body of literature, which defines visionary leadership in the role of the superintendent.

3.4   METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

In this portion of the methodology and procedures description the methodological underpinnings of the study are described. Specifically, this research study can best be described as a descriptive study, which carefully and thoroughly summarizes the journey and personal experiences of effective visionary leaders in the school setting. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) indicate effective descriptive studies are able to describe a given state of affairs as fully and carefully as possible. Most importantly, the description of phenomena is the starting point for all research endeavors.

From this perspective, this research attempts to capture an understanding of the human experience. Specifically, visionary leadership as it functions within the living and breathing educational anatomy. A phenomenological study is described by Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) as the technique of choice to gain insight into the world of his or her participants and to describe their perceptions and reactions. Furthermore, the authors describe phenomenologists as those who, a.) assume there is some commonality of perceptions that human beings have in how they interpret similar experiences, b.) they seek to identify, understand and describe these commonalities. Finally, the commonality of perception is referred to by these authors as the essence - the essential characteristics of the experience.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) proposed that the steps in conducting qualitative research are not distinct but that they often overlap and at times are conducted concurrently. However, every qualitative study is described as having a distinct starting and ending point which includes the phenomenon the researcher wishes to study and at the end the researcher draws his or her conclusions. The specific steps as described are as follows (page 433):

1. Identification of phenomenon to be studied.
2. Identification of the participants in the study.
3. Generation of hypotheses.
4. Data collection.
5. Data analysis.
6. Interpretations and conclusions.

McEwan and McEwan (2003) remind us that the qualitative researcher deals primarily in words and pictures and relies on observation and written description in the research process. Furthermore, the methodology is employed for the purpose of making inferences based on the data that has been gathered. Therefore, qualitative researchers seeking to tease out causal explanations might conduct numerous case studies in which the same treatment is studied with various types of students and then present their observational data.

An essential attribute of a credible qualitative research study is acceptable levels of reliability and validity. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) define validity as "the degree to

which the explanations of phenomenon match the reality so of the world" (p. 407). Furthermore, validity in qualitative studies refers to the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meaning between the participants and the researcher. It is argued that qualitative researchers should utilize a combination of the following strategies to enhance validity: prolonged fieldwork, multi-method strategies, participant verbatim language, low inference descriptors, multiple researchers, mechanically recorded data, participant researcher, member checking, participant review and negative cases. Reliability, in the context of qualitative research, is described as the extent to which what was recorded actually occurred. It should be noted that both reliability and validity are enhanced when data is mechanically recorded. Recorders, photographs and videotapes enhance validity and reliability by providing accurate and relatively complete record of what occurred. (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001)

External validity in qualitative studies can be described as the extension of qualitative findings. Thus, qualitative researchers produce authentic, analytical descriptions of phenomenon, which are informative and useful to research communities, readers and participants. More specifically, the researcher does not purport to maximize the generalization of results, rather the intent is to provide for the extension of the findings, which enables others to understand similar situations and apply these findings in subsequent research and practical situations. (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001)

The following paragraphs describe the thorough application of the above described methodological procedures to the sample. This research study attempts to identify and describe the essential characteristics of visionary leaders by gathering data through the phenomenological research process. The data, which was gathered, was done through interviewing of nominated candidates. It should be understood that this researcher engaged in the purposive sampling process as defined by Fraenkel and Wallen (2006). Specifically, purposive sampling is warranted when professional judgment can be utilized to acquire appropriate data.

The following is a description of Stage #1 of the two-stage purposive sampling process utilized in this research:

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STAGE #1:

All participants must have been selected and identified as members of the Western Pennsylvania Forum for school superintendents. The Forum is the regional school leadership collaborative that supports professional development of superintendents on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, the mission of the forum is to advocate for children and youth and empower superintendents to be masters of the profession with a focus excellence and equity in public education. The Forum was formed in the fall of 1996 by identifying 50 superintendent nominations. Nominations are made based on the evidence of the following specific leadership qualities:

1. A collaborator
2. Able to commit time to being a Forum member
3. Active and respected in the community at large
4. Capable of adding value to the Forum and its goals
5. Committed to personal professional development
6. Involved in a variety of professional associations and activities
7. Known as a strong advocate for children
8. Open to sharing ideas, thoughts and feelings
9. Regarded as an innovator and or problem solver
10. Respected as a leader by superintendent peers
11. Viewed as an inquisitive, lifelong learner

In addition, the superintendents selected to join the Forum represent an equitable distribution of urban, suburban and rural school districts. These founding guidelines for Forum membership continue to be utilized to ensure that a representative group of urban, suburban and rural superintendents from the region participate. An advisory committee specifically oversees the membership of the Forum to ensure that the Forum fulfills its original mission and that participants meet identified membership criteria. Pittsburgh based charitable foundations with an interest in promoting excellence in public education fund the Forum.

The Western Pennsylvania superintendents Forum was designed based on the renowned national Forum for the American superintendency founded in the early 1990s and funded primarily by the Danforth foundation. These superintendents were drawn equally from urban, suburban and rural jurisdictions to be representative of the nation. The Danforth Forum was a sustained decade long effort founded on the belief that all children from all types of communities can and should learn. The value of this organization of superintendents has been the legacy of a shared interest in quality public education for all children in spite of the differences of the communities and school districts a superintendent may represent. Also, the national Danforth Forum provided an ongoing support network and a professional learning community for the participants. This model for the professional development support for the superintendency included collaboration with Harvard's John F. Kennedy school of Government, the University of Pittsburgh's Learning, Research and Development Center, and the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

In this first step of the purposive sampling process only those superintendents who meet the specific criteria identified for Forum selection are entered into the sample pool. In this step approximately 200 possible superintendent participants from Western Pennsylvania were eliminated as they are not members of the Forum. The rationale for utilizing the Forum is that the criterion for participation in this organization aligns with the definition of visionary leadership contained in this study.

STAGE #2:

The second stage of the purposive sampling process involved the selection of participants in the study from the pool of Forum superintendents. The director of the Forum utilized the definition of visionary leadership contained in this study to guide the nomination of participating superintendents. It was determined that four of the eleven selection criteria for the Forum selection most closely align with the definition for visionary leadership contained in this study. Specifically, the director nominated superintendents for participation in the study based on

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observed career evidence of individual superintendent strengths noted in the following four Forum selection criteria:

1. A collaborator
2. Open to sharing ideas, thoughts and feelings
3. Regarded as an innovator and or problem solver
4. Viewed as an inquisitive, lifelong learner
5. Committed to personal professional development

Specifically, the nominated superintendents have clearly and consistently exhibited these qualities in their work as superintendents to a significant degree that distinguishes them from other superintendents in the Forum. These stage # 2 criteria were selected as they align most closely with the definition of visionary leadership contained in this research study.

In this step Forum member superintendents who did not meet stage #2 criteria were eliminated from possible participation and in this manner a critical sample for the study was realized. As defined by Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) a critical sample is particularly enlightening due to its unusual and exceptional nature. Specifically, this researcher proposes that this critical sample is representative of visionary leadership as defined in this study.

A primary aim of this study is to analyze and interpret the superintendents' descriptions of themselves as related to visionary leadership criteria. The common description of visionary leadership, which was utilized in this analysis and discussions with the superintendents, was the visionary leadership definition listed previously in this study. In order to conduct this study, this researcher interviewed nominated superintendents who are members of the Western Pennsylvania Forum for School Superintendents. In addition to the reasons stated above, the Forum was selected due to its established role in developing and identifying effective school leaders.

The interviewing was conducted to determine if these superintendents have experienced a leadership journey which is consistent with the research and literature regarding visionary leadership. In addition, the historical role of the Danforth Forum and the Western Pennsylvania Forum suggests a strong consideration for regional factors to be included in the study. While there is no clear published research which focuses on regional factors in relationship to the superintendency, renowned organizations such as the Southern Educational Regional Board support the rationale for a regional focus of this study. America's first interstate compact for education, the Southern Regional Education Board founded in 1948, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that assists educational leaders in its 16 member states to work together to advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region.

This above procedure defines how this researcher worked with leadership of the Western Pennsylvania Forum for School Superintendents of the University of Pittsburgh to obtain a critical sample of active superintendents to participate in the study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Dr. Jerry Longo, leader of the Superintendent's Forum of Western Pennsylvania nominated ten superintendents following the critical sampling process described above. Nine of the superintendents were utilized for the formal study and one was utilized in the pilot study. The superintendents were provided with overview information regarding the nature of my study. Participation in the study was voluntary. The superintendents were contacted by phone, and the superintendents were asked if they would continue their involvement in the study by participitating in a semi-structured interview, which would be audio taped. Following agreement to the participation in the study a mutually convenient time, date and location were arranged for the interview.

The interviews were audio taped to ensure accuracy and to assist the interviewer in analyzing the results for themes and salient information related to the research questions. Furthermore, during the semi-structured interview, the researcher took field notes to enhance the interviewing process, particularly with regard to clarification of what was said and to facilitate later analysis. Also, the researcher completed a reflection journal following each interview in order to capture as much detail as possible, regarding what actually occurred.

Interviewing the nominated superintendents is described as conducting key actor interviews. Key actors are especially knowledgeable individuals, and are often excellent sources of information. These participants offer insights that are often in the invaluable to a researcher. Semi structured interviews are quite helpful as they elicit information that can be later be compared and contrasted. Semi structured interviews are strategically utilized to obtain information to test specific hypotheses that have been postulated (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

Furthermore, (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006) highlight the informative description of the interviewing process by Patton:

> "We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observed. The issue is not whether observational data is more desirable, valid or meaningful than self-report data. The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things." (p 455)

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) reference in-depth structured interviews as key techniques to obtain data of how individuals conceptualize their world and how they make sense of it. Qualitative interviews are described as taking several forms including the conversational interview, the interview guide approach and the structured, standardized open-ended interview. The informal conversation interview, involves questions, which emerge from the immediate context and the natural course of events during the interview. In these situations informal

conversations are an integral part of the participant observation. The interview guide approach involves topics which are selected in advance in which the researcher decides the sequence and wording of these questions during the interview. These interview techniques are relatively conversational and situational. However, the standardized open ended interview consists of questions asked in the same order, thus reducing interviewing flexibility, but resulting in standardized wording of questions. It is recommended that the selection of an interview process strategy should depend on the context and purpose of the research. Fraenkel and Wallen, (2006) advocate standardized, open-ended interviews to increase the comparability of responses. This technique elicits data, which is complete for each participant on the topics addressed in the interview. Furthermore, this interview technique reduces interviewer effects and bias and permits the review of the instrumentation used in the evaluation process. Furthermore, this technique facilitates the accurate organization and analysis of the data. Also, adopting this standardized approach consistently focuses on important and salient topics.

Patton as cited by Fraenkel and Wallen, (2006) identifies six specific types of questions that can be asked during an interview. Any or all the following questions are appropriate and can be asked during an interview: background questions, knowledge questions, experience questions, opinion questions, feeling questions and sensory questions. Background questions are routine and reference the general characteristics of the respondents and may include questions about occupation and age. Knowledge questions pertain to the exact factual information respondents possess in a topic area as opposed to a beliefs or attitudes. Experience questions elicit descriptions of personal experience, behaviors, or activities that the participant has engaged in. Opinion questions are designed to uncover what participants think about specific topics or issues. Opinion questions may elicit the respondent's beliefs, attitudes or values. Feeling questions examine a respondent's emotional response to their past experiences. Feeling questions are often confused with opinion questions but can be differentiated by the respondent's emotional reaction to an experience. Finally, sensory questions directly address what the respondent has seen, heard, tasted, smell or touched.

In order to conduct a quality interview, specific interviewing behaviors are advocated and recommended. It is critical that the interview be conducted with appropriate respect for the

individual. Specifically, interviews should start and end at scheduled times and be conducted courteously. Furthermore, the culture of the group of participants being studied should be respected. This respect for the group's tradition and values will enhance the researcher's ability to obtain reliable and valid information. It is important to establish appropriate rapport with the participant and a natural manner of interaction is necessary. It is important to vary the control the flow of communication so that interview is natural, but controlled. Also, leading questions must be avoided and structured open-ended questions are highly valuable. Dichotomous questions should be avoided, as they do not encourage the respondent to talk during the interview. Finally, it is essential not to interrupt the respondent, particularly when they are talking. It may be tempting to interrupt the speaker to pursue an interesting item but this interruption will interfere with the participant's train of thought. In these situations, note taking and follow-up questions during a natural pause in the interview is recommended (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

As a school administrator, licensed psychologist and former school psychologist, this researcher, as interviewer, has extensive experience and training in active listening, reflective listening, interpersonal skill development, establishing rapport, recording and interviewing. However, audio taping interviews enhance this researcher's ability to question accurately in response to the content of the conversation rather than focusing on recording information. Furthermore, the pilot interviewing refined and improved interviewing techniques critical for an accurate acquisition of data.

The following semi-structured interview questions were selected to elicit critical and expansive information from the key actor Superintendent Interviews. The questions were chosen to specifically elicit information relative to the research questions posed regarding visionary leadership and were developed to be ensure the six types of key interview questions (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006) were represented. Interview questions # 1-5 are designed to elicit information to research question #1 and #3. Specifically, they address leadership strategies and techniques employed by the nominated visionary leaders in their personal leadership journeys. Additionally, interview questions # 6-10 are designed to elicit data to answer research question #2. Specifically, interview questions #6-10 pose questions which relate to the leadership journey

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experienced by these superintendents in the Western Pennsylvania region. These questions focus on their personal journey in the region as well as relationships with other superintendents from the region.

The following matrix lists the 10 interview questions and indicates the type of question it represents as supported by the literature which guided the methodology and procedure development (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

Type	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
Background				X		X	X			
Knowledge	X	X		X						X
Experience										
Opinion	X		X						X	
Feeling					X			X		
Sensory								X		X

Interview questions

1. What are the attributes of a visionary leader?
2. Describe what you believe are the essential attributes of visionary leadership?
3. Please rank order these above stated visionary leadership attributes by importance.
4. What are your core purposes as a superintendent and what strategies do you employ to achieve these core purposes?
5. What is your core personality trait that you believe enables you to be a visionary leader.
6. What personal events occurred in your life which you believe allowed you to develop the attributes of a visionary leader?

7. What mentorship experiences did you have, which may have contributed to or inhibited the development of visionary leadership abilities?

8. Do you believe that the Western Pennsylvania culture limited your visionary leadership abilities or did it create opportunities and foster the development of these abilities?

9. Your colleagues describe you as a visionary leader, do you think this is accurate and if so why.

10. Ten years following your final year as a superintendent, what will still remain in your former district, which could be attributed to your visionary leadership abilities?

3.6   PILOT STUDY

The purpose of the pilot study was to determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of the methodology to be used in the formal study. The overall purpose of the formal study is to capture and define the attributes of visionary leadership in the role of the superintendent. It is proposed that the skills and experiences of visionary leadership in the 21st Century may be somewhat different than previously described and researched. In addition to pilot summary data, a profile of the superintendent that was self-reported is included in the Pilot Study results. This researcher utilized the previously described semi-structured interview questions, and collected the pilot data reported.

3.7   PILOT STUDY SUPERINTENDENT PROFILE AND DATA

A review and analysis of the pilot data revealed the following summary information. For the purposes of the pilot the decision rule of 5 or more frequencies as a major theme vs. minor theme was not utilized. Rather, a summary description of the data that was able to be elicited using the structured interview questions is reported. Also, the pilot study data was not utilized in the formal study. Therefore, only the interview data from nine superintendents were utilized for the formal study and analysis of this research. The interview data reported below was only utilized in the pilot study. However, the superintendent interviewed was selected through the same nomination process utilized for the formal study.

This Superintendent interviewed for the pilot study began his educational career as a secondary social studies teacher. He held this position for eight years and then served as an elementary and secondary guidance counselor for four years. Following the counselor positions he served as elementary principal for three years. Presently, he is in his second year as superintendent of a small rural district in the northern region of western Pennsylvania. Two years ago he obtained his doctorate in education from the Pennsylvania State University in conjunction with his superintendent's letter of eligibility.

This Superintendent reported that visionary leaders have the innate ability to think in innovative ways about the future of the school district. These leaders are well-informed and knowledgeable about what the future may hold for education. Visionary leaders possess strong communication skills and understand human relationships which allow them to bring followers along with them. They are able to clearly articulate a message or vision for the district. It is also important for visionaries to be comfortable working with and facilitating constituents with a wide range of opinions and values. The core purpose of being a visionary leader is described as

holding the moral importance of educating children at the highest level. A personal life changing event which contributed to the visionary leadership development for this Superintendent involved his personal relationship with his grandfather who instilled in him a belief that we are on this earth to help others. This experience resulted in a heightened understanding of the moral importance for all children to have the opportunity to learn. From a mentorship perspective, this Superintendent praised the valuable support and guidance he received through the Western Pennsylvania Superintendents Forum as well as relationships with senior superintendents. The Forum was noted as a crucial aspect of this visionary leader's growth and understanding of the superintendency. This Superintendent articulated that the regional influence of Western Pennsylvania provides an increased challenge for visionary leadership. Specifically, the strong close knit communities and conservative views which exist in the region require the visionary leader to carefully frame the discussion of visionary ideas. Likewise, a visionary leader must find ways to channel the positive energy of the community into how the schools are operated. This nominated visionary superintendent believes that visionary educational leaders are naturally passionate leaders in their school districts but also within the superintendent community. At the same time, he indicated that humbleness and pragmatism is a hallmark of the visionary superintendent. Finally, this superintendent believes that a lasting legacy of his visionary leadership will be a system which evaluates teachers fairly and that promotes high-quality instruction.

The Pilot study has confirmed that the methodology and analysis procedures are appropriate to be utilized successfully in the completion of the study. It was determined in the completion of the pilot interviewing process that the proposed interview questions do sufficiently elicit information to provide substantial qualitative data in relationship to the research questions. However, gathering the critical background information for the superintendent did require more time and attention than expected. Therefore, it is recommended that this portion of interview process be segmented and done separately from the specific interview questions. Also, consistent information to be obtained from each superintendent will need to be developed and applied to a working matrix. This matrix will provide clearer information on each superintendent's background and history and also allow for increased rapport building prior to the interviewing using the specific interview questions. The matrix is included in Chapter 4 to assist the reader in

understanding the core experiences and educational background of the interviewed superintendents. A more organized approach to the initial stage of the interview should also enhance trust building and confidence in the interview process itself. The audio taping, in conjunction with note taking proved to be highly effective and entirely necessary. The superintendent was quite comfortable with this format and approach and appeared highly appreciative of this researchers attempt to be accurate in gathering their comments and insights into the visionary leadership. It was encouraging to note the high level of seriousness and deliberate nature of the superintendent in response to the interview procedure and process. The responses offered throughout the interview process were detailed and appeared to reflect significant candor and honesty.

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3.8   DATA ANALYSIS

The data collection technique utilized for the inquiry in this research is content analysis. Content analysis involves analyzing the communication and information obtained in the study for common themes. Essentially, this technique enables the researcher to study human behavior in an indirect way through the analysis of their communications. Content analysis, as a methodology is extremely valuable in analyzing observation and interview data. Content analysis provides the researcher a means of systematically quantifying obtained data. More specifically, content analysis procedures at some point convert descriptive information into categories. This categorization can occur by the researcher determining the categories before the analysis begins based on previous knowledge, theory and/or experience. Also, categorization can occur as the researcher becomes extremely familiar with the description information collected. In this manner the categories emerge as the analysis occurs. (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

McClelland and Schumacher(2001) describe content analysis categorization, which emerges as the analysis occurs, as the process of inductive analysis. In this procedure, categories and patterns emerge from the data rather than being imposed upon it during data collection. This process generates a more abstract descriptive synthesis of the data. The authors report that making sense of the data "depends on the researcher's intellectual rigor and tolerance for tentativeness of interpretation, until the entire analysis is completed"(p. 462)

Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) indicate the following steps are involved in a quality content analysis procedure:

- determine the specific objectives and questions that are to be answered
- define relevant terms that are important and critical to the study
- specify the unit of information to be analyzed prior to the actual analysis occurring
- locate the relevant data to be analyzed relevant to the objectives in the study
- develop a rationale that explains how the data are related to the objectives and questions
- develop a sampling plan, which could include purposive sampling designs or random sample designs
- formulate explicit coding categories that are relevant to the investigation

Carefully transcribing and reviewing the audiotapes obtained from the interviews initiated the content analysis process. The inductive analysis process was utilized to identify and categorize emerging themes. Patterns of similarity were identified and transported to individual categories and files. McMillan and Schumacher(2001) indicate "the final set of categories is not pre-determined, but is carved out of the data according to category meanings." In this manner, an organization system was developed with a specific coding system relative to the data obtained. Fraenkel and Wallen, (2006) state the following:

"Counting is an important characteristic of some content analysis. Each time a unit in a pertinent category is found it is counted. Thus, the end product of the coding process must be numbers. It is obvious that counting the frequency of certain words, phrases, symbols, pictures or other manifest content requires the use of numbers. But

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even coding the latent content of a document requires the researcher to represent those coded decisions with numbers in each category."

The critical step utilized to analyze the obtained data is through the use of frequencies. It is important to note that the process of developing categories emerge from data is often complex. McClelland and Schumacher(2001) recommend the following procedure for ordering categories:

"Ordering categories can be done several ways to discover patterns. One way is to place the categories and sequence of occurrence. Researchers ask what situation or actions came first. Do more than one belief a company the event? What was the consequence or the outcome? Arranging the categories in a sequence is useful for a process analysis to identify changes from one time to another time."

The most common way to interpret content analysis is through the use of frequencies following the categorization process. This researcher tabulated the number of specific common identified categories found within the data. This process was utilized to identify major and minor themes. Major themes were identified as occurring at a frequency of 5 or more occurrences within the data. Minor themes were noted to be occurring at a frequency of less than 5 times within the data.

3.9   RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

Following the organization, categorization and frequency counting the data was analyzed by examining major and minor themes. This portion of the data analysis constitutes the results of the researcher's analysis of his or her data. More specifically, this is the process whereby the researcher examines what the collected data reveals. It is important that qualitative data analysis

present clear descriptions that support and illustrate the results obtained through the interview process (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

4.0   FINDINGS

A primary purpose of this qualitative, descriptive study is to add to the growing literature and research in the area of visionary leadership in the superintendency. A second purpose of the study is to explore the impact the western Pennsylvania region may have on the development of visionary superintendents. The basis for this regional impact focus is the phenomenological nature of the study, the utilization of key actor interviews and historical evidence of educational leadership organizations which focus on regional factors This study attempts to capture a perspective as to how visionary leadership functions within the living and breathing educational anatomy of the region. This living and breathing educational world is essentially the towns and communities located in Western Pennsylvania. Public education, with democratically elected school board representatives, is a major organ of these living and breathing communities. In addition, the historical role of the Danforth Forum and the Western Pennsylvania Forum suggests a strong consideration for regional factors to be included in this study of visionary leadership. There is no clear published research which focuses on regional factors in relationship to educational leadership. However, organizations such as the Southern Educational Regional Board support the rationale for a regional focus of this study. This regional board has significantly influenced educational policy and practice in its region through such well known programs such as High Schools That Work. (Bottoms, Pearson and Han, 2004) America's first interstate compact for education, the Southern Regional Education Board founded in 1948, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that assists educational leaders in its 16 member states to work together to advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region.

Furthermore, the critical sample process that is being utilized in this study focuses on superintendents whose leadership journey as superintendents is occurring in Western

Pennsylvania. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) recommend that in order to gain insight into the world of his or her participants one should study their perceptions and reactions. Furthermore, the commonality of perception is referred to by these authors as the essence - the essential characteristics of the experience. From this standpoint, this research study will attempt to identify and describe the possible impact of the common experience of performing the role of a superintendent in the western Pennsylvania region.

4.1   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 9 ~~10~~ superintendents with the goal of answering the research questions directly and indirectly through the use of the interview questions (Appendix B). A total of 10 nominated superintendents were interviewed. One of the nominated superintendents was utilized for the pilot study and the remaining 9 interviews are contained and analyzed in this chapter.

The research questions answered through the semi structured interview process are:

1. How do visionary regional superintendents describe the manner in which they have been able to lead their organizations?
2. What unique community and/or regional dispositions exist which promote or limit the development of visionary superintendents in western Pennsylvania?

3. What common patterns of leadership do regional visionary superintendents exhibit which confirm or contradict current theoretical and empirical research in the area of visionary leadership in education?

This chapter contains a self reported profile matrix of each superintendent that participated in the study. This matrix is designed to provide an overview analysis of the common characteristics of the critical sample Superintendents. It is observed that all superintendents possess a doctoral degree in educational administration. However, their educational journey reveals a variety of teaching disciplines and administrative experiences. Also, the years of experience in the superintendents position range from 2 to 22 years. The profile listed is as reported by each superintendent (Appendix A). Also, the chapter includes the summary data in relation to the research and interview questions. The data that was collected by this researcher was obtained through the use of a semi-structured interview.

4.2   SELF-REPORTED SUPERINTENDENT PROFILES MATRIX

	Supt. A	Supt. B	Supt. C	Supt. D	Supt. E	Supt. F	Supt. G	Supt. H	Supt. I
Under-grad. degree	Calif. U. of Pa	IUP	Duq. U.	PSU	IUP	Duq. U	PITT	Shipp. U.	IUP

Grad. Degree	CMU/ PITT	PITT	PITT	Univ. of Roch.	PITT	Duq U PITT	PITT IUP PSU	PSU	Duq U.
Non-admin. positions	SS teacher	FCS teacher	Music teacher	Sci teacher	Eng teacher	Elem. teacher	Sci teacher	High School teacher	Math Teacher
Admin. Positions	Dir.of C/I	Prin. MS Asst Supt	Prin. HS	Prin. HS	Prin. Elem./ Sec. Asst Supt	Prin. Elem. Asst Supt	Prin. MS Asst Supt	Prin. HS Asst Supt	Prin. HS
Years of Experience as Supt.	8	12	10	22	6	10	3	2	12

Superintendent A

Superintendent A completed his undergraduate studies at the California University of Pennsylvania and was credentialed as a secondary social studies teacher. He taught social studies for 14 years at the high school level in western Pennsylvania. In addition to the teacher responsibilities during that time, Superintendent A also was highly involved in the senior high school student council leadership. Superintendent A completed graduate work at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh and obtained a Master's in Public Affairs and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. He entered the central office as a Curriculum and Instruction Director and maintained that position for 14 years. The teaching experience and

position of Director of Curriculum and Instruction occurred in the same school district. For the last eight years, Superintendent A has been superintendent of another western Pennsylvania school district.

Superintendent B

Superintendent B obtained her Bachelor and Master's degrees from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She obtained her doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh in 1985. She taught in the home economics department for 13 years. She entered administration following three years as a middle school principal. She was also responsible for curriculum coordination and special education coordination for the district. She also served for seven years as the assistant superintendent and 12 years as a superintendent. The entire 36 years of her educational professional experience occurred in the same school district.

Superintendent C

Superintendent C began teaching in public education at the high school level in Ohio. Following three years of teaching in Ohio at the high school level, he then taught for 13 1/2 years at the high school level in western Pennsylvania. He received his principalship certification from Duquesne University and obtained his doctorate degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1984. He served as a high school principal for five years. He served as a superintendent for ten years in two separate school districts, seven years in one school district in Beaver County and the last three years in a school district in Allegheny County.

Superintendent D

Superintendent D began his teaching career as a middle school science teacher. He taught science and math for six years. He began teaching in northeastern Pennsylvania. He was a middle school principal for ten years and began his superintendent career in north central Pennsylvania. He completed his doctorate at the University of Rochester and has been superintendent for the last 18 years at a school district in western Pennsylvania. Overall, he taught for six years, was a principal for ten years and was a superintendent for 22 years. He is presently the superintendent of a medium-sized district which has urban and suburban schools.

Superintendent E

Superintendent E began her educational career as a secondary level classroom teacher with 24 years of experience in this capacity. In addition to traditional classroom teaching she was involved in setting up professional development activities for the district. Following this teaching experience she became an assistant principal at the secondary level. She then moved to an elementary principal position followed by a secondary principal position at a large high performing high school. Subsequent to those administrative positions she became assistant superintendent and then superintendent at her present school district. She has served as superintendent for six years. She obtained her superintendents letter of eligibility and doctorate in education from the University of Pittsburgh. She is presently the superintendent of a district located in a small urban community.

Superintendent F

Superintendent F began his educational career as a classroom teacher. However, at age 27 his teaching career was interrupted by four years of service on the County Council as a commissioner. He returned to teaching and then became an elementary principal. During this

portion of his career he obtained a master's degree at Duquesne University in conjunction with his principal certifications. Subsequently he completed his doctorate in education at the University of Pittsburgh where he also obtained his superintendents letter of eligibility. He served as assistant superintendent in a small rural district and then served four years as a superintendent in a neighboring district. For last 10 years he has served as superintendent of a large countywide school system in western Pennsylvania.

Superintendent G

Superintendent G spent 16 years as an earth and space science teacher teaching eighth graders. During this time he obtained his masters degree in education at the University of Pittsburgh in curriculum and supervision. Subsequent to that he obtained his principal's certificate at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and served for 14 years as the middle school principal in central Pennsylvania. During that time he obtained his doctorate in education and superintendent's letter of eligibility at Pennsylvania State University. He has served as assistant superintendent and now superintendent in his present school district for three and a half years. His current district is medium-sized and is described as urban. Recently the district has experienced consolidation of schools.

Superintendent H

Superintendent H taught in the classroom for 10 years. He then obtained his principal's certificate and master's degree from Shippensburg State University. He obtained his doctorate in curriculum and instruction and superintendent's letter of eligibility at Pennsylvania State University. He served in central office administrative positions in his present district prior to taking a position as superintendent in a neighboring district for two years. He returned to his present district as superintendent two years ago. He is the superintendent of a small suburban district which is well known for high academic performance.

Superintendent I is presently the superintendent of a small but rapidly growing, high performing suburban school district. She began her educational career as a mathematics teacher and spent 15 years as a classroom teacher. However, early in her professional career she did spend two years in the marketing and business management field. She was a high school principal for six years. She has served as a superintendent for 12 years in her current district. She was just selected to become the executive director of a local intermediate unit. She obtained her undergraduate degree in math education at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She received her doctorate in educational administration from Duquesne University.

4.3   REVIEW OF THE INTERVIEW RESPONSES

RESEARCH QUESTION #1

How do visionary regional superintendents describe the manner in which they have been able to lead their organizations?

Major Theme #1:   A Gestalt/Holistic Thinking Style

Five of the nine superintendents interviewed indicated that their visionary leadership journey has been highlighted by the use of a Gestalt/Holistic thinking style. Superintendent B emphasized that successful visionary leaders must be able to think globally and see the big picture. Furthermore, in order to think in this manner, the leader must be constantly learning and internalizing new information and new conditions.   The superintendent described intuitive thinking, coupled with strong intellect as critical.   Superintendent A described visionary

leadership as requiring the ability to see beyond a particular context, or school culture. This mode of thinking was beautifully illustrated in a Polish parable, which emphasized the ability to see what was occurring in other villages beyond the parochial walls of a single village. Furthermore, the superintendent emphasized that one's integrative thinking, must be understood in the context of an individual's worldview. Superintendent D discussed holistic thinking in terms of systems theory and emphasized how important it is to make connections from a multitude of isolated segmented parts. This type of integrative thinking allows a visionary leader to assemble the various components of the system together in a unified manner that supports innovative planning. Superintendent H focused on the ability to examine problems through multiple lenses in order to problem solve. Furthermore, this approach to leadership creates a synergistic flow which enhances the functioning of the entire organization. Superintendent G discussed visionary leadership in terms of an ability to synthesize information in order to extrapolate towards the future. This ability to think holistically with the future in mind was described as critical for a visionary type leader. Such a leader, then possess the ability to think of long term goals and solutions and is able to see farther down the road than others in the organization. This approach to visionary leadership is illustrated by the superintendent's description of an analogy to hiking in the wilderness. In this analogy, the visionary leader stops occasionally to climb the highest tree or elevated hillside to survey future paths for the journey.

Major Theme #2: Creating a Collaborative Culture

Six of the nine superintendents interviewed, postulated that creating a collaborative culture is an integral aspect of visionary leadership. Superintendent D noted that successful visionary leaders are adept at knowing how to utilize collaborative leadership as opposed to traditional power and assertiveness. In order to create a collaborative culture, relationship building is essential and requires a particular skill from the superintendent as leader. Superintendent A characterized this as a collaborative work style, which enables others to carry out futuristic visions of the district. This view of collaboration emphasized the importance of clearing the path and opening opportunities for teams to develop and act on visionary ideas.

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Superintendent B illustrated this endorsement of collaboration by describing the superintendent as the conductor of an orchestra. The visionary Superintendent/conductor is skilled at helping others to work and act in harmony in order to fulfill a futuristic vision. Superintendent C described the ability to create a collaborative culture in terms of team building and relationship development. The superintendent emphasized the importance of collective support in the collaboration culture. In this context, collaboration fostered healthy discussions and disagreements, but also fostered collective support once a strategic decision had been made. Superintendent F carefully discussed how an effective use of collaborative leadership enables the entire leadership team to move in the right direction. In practice this approach allows for open and honest internal debates on the issues. Such debate leads to new ideas but following the internal debate leads to an agreed-upon solution by the entire team. This process leads to consistency in message and follow through. Superintendent G detailed an approach to leadership which created an environment which enables others on the leadership team to get the job done. An atmosphere of trust exists that allows the team to work towards the district vision without constant oversight and guidance. Superintendent I outlined an approach to the adroit selection of a leadership team which works together in a manner which results in a collaborative working environment. This leadership environment leads to increased innovation because the team members are able to challenge each other to think differently and creatively.

Major Theme #3: Communication Skills to Share a Vision

Five of the nine superintendents interviewed detailed that communication skills enhanced their ability to share a vision effectively and is critical tool for a visionary leader. Superintendent C commented that, effective communication skills, allows the interpersonal relationships to develop which engenders support for a leader's vision. These effective communication skills allow the leader to connect with many constituencies and support the creation of a cohesive community. Effective listening contributes to a visionary leader's ability to solve problems, and therefore fosters the fulfillment of a vision. Superintendent D also emphasized the importance of effective listening skills in support of vision fulfillment. This leader emphasizes that well developed listening skills, allows leaders to realistically hear the questions that must be addressed by a successful visionary leader. Superintendent B described this important ability as

one which she developed as she became more experienced in her role as Superintendent. This experience and confidence allowed her to be more openly communicative of the mission and vision which she believed in. She described a positive relationship between her experience in her role as Superintendent and her ability to effectively communicate in a confident manner. Superintendent I reports that strong communication skills are an essential tool for a visionary leader to allow for the delivery of a passionate and positive view of the future for the district. Such communication assists others in understanding the forward thinking ideas and foreseeable future that awaits students. Superintendent H reported that communication skills are critical for a visionary leader in order to effectively use one's core values in a leadership arena. Both speaking and writing skills are noted as key assets to the visionary leader as he attempts to communicate his picture image of the future to others.

Major Theme #4: Personal Integrity and Commitment to Beliefs

Five of the nine superintendents interviewed, responded that personal integrity and commitment to beliefs are inherently important to visionary leadership. Superintendent A passionately described his belief that personal integrity, and a commitment to one's core beliefs is at the heart of a true visionary leader. This ability to maintain a belief structure in the midst of change and at times confusion is a quintessential example of courageous visionary leadership. This personal integrity also fosters trust, and creates excitement and mobilization towards the vision. Superintendent D listed integrity, honesty and loyalty as essential attributes of visionary leaders. This leader stated that when one's character is rock solid, trust develops naturally and the visionary leader can proceed quite successfully. Furthermore, such honesty and personal integrity, serves to control one's ego, which can interfere with effective visionary leadership development. Superintendent F proposes that the most important aspect of the visionary leader is the leader's commitment to personal integrity and to one's core beliefs. He specifically highlights the importance of personal ethics and integrity. He describes courage as the ability to do the right thing when many are openly observing one's actions. Contrastingly, integrity is described as the ability to do the right thing when no one is watching. Superintendent G describes this commitment to integrity and personal beliefs as a devotion to hard work and a calling to constantly find a better way of conducting business. Furthermore, this constant drive to work

hard and find new solutions is conducted with a manner of humbleness and a respect for other leaders. Superintendent H believes that the visionary leader's commitment to core values is paramount and at the center of leadership. It is only with this solid foundation of core values that a visionary leader is able to move forward and utilize all other complementary leadership abilities. In essence, a leader must truly know his own strengths and weaknesses before being able to move an entire organization and lead into the future.

Major Theme #5: Constantly Learning and Studying New Information

Five of the nine superintendents interviewed reported that constantly learning and studying new information is one hallmark of a visionary leader. Superintendent A enthusiastically described the close relationship between visionary leadership and an understanding of the educational field in general. Continuous learning, and an understanding of the changing realities in the field of education were noted to be quite important, in relationship to futuristic and innovative thinking. Superintendent B clearly defined the relationship between the ability to think globally, and the commitment to constant learning and reading of new information. The learning process and the studying of new information enhance the visionary leaders ability to think innovatively and go beyond current practice. Thus, the ability of thinking intuitively is supported by an interest in intellectual development, as well as being open-minded about new ideas and new developments in and outside of the field of education. This leader emphasized the critical role that the Western Pennsylvania Superintendents Forum serves as a conduit for acquiring new information. Superintendent F emphasized that it is critical for a visionary leader to be well read to look forward to anticipate the future. This knowledge coupled with an understanding of current programs allows for an informed debate about the right moves for the future direction of the district. Superintendent G reiterates the importance of being well-informed and knowledgeable on a global perspective in order to understand what might lie ahead for students. This knowledge is essential in order for one to think of the long-term needs of students versus short-term interests. In order to accomplish this it is suggested that active participation and membership in learning focused organizations such as the Superintendents Forum and Pennsylvania Association for Curriculum Development is necessary. Superintendent I describes the importance of preparing children for your future that awaits them. In order for

this to be accomplished a visionary leader must be quite knowledgeable of changes in the world landscape so that one's futuristic thinking is well informed.

Major Theme #6: Future Vision for the District

Six of the nine superintendents interviewed indicated that having a vision of a preferred future for a school district is a positive attribute of a visionary leader. Superintendent A reflected on this attribute by describing it as the ability to have a clear vision of the big picture. While the big picture may change over time, a visionary leader can see it rather clearly, even as it is influenced by change and evolving priorities.   Superintendent B creatively described the importance of the ability of a visionary leader to have a vision of a destination that can be described and shared with others. The accuracy of this visual destination is not always as important as the understanding that the future vision will be different for all. The effective visionary leader creates pathways, and makes the road to this future as smooth as possible for all participants on the common educational journey. Superintendent E vividly described her ability to actually see what her school district could look like some day in the future. This picture image was in great contrast to the physical plant and organizational structure of the present state of the district. However, having a clear vision of the future district allowed her to provide a sense of purpose for the entire organization. Superintendent F described his experiences as a visionary leader involving the ability to look ahead and see this future quite clearly. While it is important to be able to understand the day-to-day operations of the district it is critical to be able to look beyond the day-to-day and into the future. This allows one to anticipate the types of programs and services that students may need that do not presently exist. Superintendent G describes this vision of a future destination as the ability to look far down the road and develop a sense of where the district must go. He believes that the ability to do this involves active and stimulating thinking experiences coupled with high effort. This development of a future vision involves constant questioning of where we are now and is there a better way to get where we need to go. Superintendent I believes the primary goal of a visionary Superintendent is to think of a possible future that may await students. This involves much time spent anticipating what

may happen and thinking beyond the here and now. In order to accomplish this a visionary leader must create opportunities for students to develop skills which will make them successful in this anticipated future environment.

Major Theme # 7 Strategic Selection of Personnel

Five of the nine superintendents interviewed indicated that visionary leaders are able to strategically and carefully select the best personnel for the right positions in the district. Superintendent I emphatically stated that the hiring process is the most essential aspect of her role as a visionary leader. She reports that she believes the transformation of her district has occurred primarily due to her ability to carefully select high performing employees and to place them in the proper roles. This has created a leadership environment where excellent thinkers debate and create new ideas for the future of the district. Superintendent A describes this personnel selection process as the ability to put others in place to carry out the vision of the district. Furthermore, the visionary leader is able to remove roadblocks to pave the way for a leadership team to accomplish the vision. Superintendent B details a somewhat more elaborate process focusing on the management skill of selecting the right person and being sure they are in the right role to do their jobs successfully. She uses the analogy of a conductor of an orchestra to describe the complex task of selection, placement, and maintaining a sense of timing for a visionary leader. Superintendent F referenced how important it is for a visionary leader to have the opportunity to select excellent employees and put them in the proper leadership roles. This Superintendent emphasized that the character and integrity of the member of a leadership team should align with that of the Superintendent. The quality and integrity of the leadership team is of particular importance when difficult and unpopular decisions must be made to support a positive future vision. Superintendent G reports that one is unable to enact the entire vision without the support of the leadership team. Thus, a visionary leader must have trust in others he has hired and placed in positions of leadership to get the job done. However, the role of the Superintendent is to set an example of hard work and humbleness in leadership environment.

Minor Themes: As the superintendents responded to the interview questions, the following minor themes emerged. Those themes include:

- Connecting to the community
- Risk Taking
- Democratic educational perspective
- Provide support during crises
- Clear focus and sense of urgency
- Focus on student achievement
- Flexible thinking skills
- Organizational and planning abilities
- Observing other visionary leaders
- Passion for excellence

The superintendents interviewed reported multiple attributes that have made them successful in their current and previous superintendent positions. It is interesting to note that the superintendents expressed these personal beliefs passionately and in significant detail. They appear to enthusiastically embrace the opportunity to explain and describe the skills and abilities that they believe have enabled them to be successful visionary leaders.

Visionary superintendents possess the ability to use a gestalt type thinking style with a high degree of frequency and intensity. This style of thinking allows them to intuitively understand and visualize the entire school district's needs and current functional status. This holistic thinking style fosters integrative thinking to understand how various components of the system unify to create a successful overall system. Also, there is a synergistic effect that occurs when one is able to understand how the pieces of a future picture must fit together. Furthermore, the ability to simultaneously think of the future and anticipate probable change and paths to that anticipated future is critical.

Visionary superintendents also are able to create and maintain a collaborative culture in their school community. The ability to create and maintain a collaborative culture appears to be one of the hallmarks of a productive visionary superintendent. This collaboration among the leadership in employees is felt to be of critical importance and necessary for the development of creative and novel ideas and solutions. The ability to foster a collaborative culture appears

dependent upon several additional related techniques such as strong communication skills and the ability to connect with the school community as a whole.

The communication techniques are specifically described as the ability to listen and also to share one's vision clearly and effectively. This connectivity to the community relates to the essential skill that enables a visionary superintendent to become immersed into the local community and to understand its unique culture. Strong expressive verbal and written skills are noted as obvious enhancements that support visionary leaders as they develop and share a future vision for the district.

In this manner, visionary leaders can create a vivid and tangible picture of a destination noted to be of a high importance for all. Visionary superintendents have a clear vision or a big picture of what should occur over time. This ability involves the actual imagining of a picture of what the future looks like in visual terms. However, in order to vision effectively, the superintendent must be constantly learning and studying new information related to education as well as the fields of futuristic and innovative thinking. Visionary superintendents have a keen interest in intellectual development and are also open minded to novel ideas in and outside of the field of education. This commitment to learning combined with the ability to vision the future is a powerful combination in the functioning role of a visionary superintendent.

A visionary superintendent has the forethought to make strategic personnel decisions that place high performers in the correct roles within the district. These careful personnel decisions create leadership teams which think creatively and in innovative terms. Also, these leaders are able to assist in additional personnel decisions which are based on the core values of the visionary superintendent.

Finally, visionary superintendents demonstrate high levels of personal integrity and the commitment to a belief structure which is able to withstand the multiple forces that impact the superintendency. Integrity is specifically described as honesty and loyalty to one's core beliefs as an educator. This personal integrity may also include a democratic educational world view. In this manner visionary leaders are able to lead effectively as they can effectively demonstrate a

connection between high quality public education and a healthy democracy. A sense of urgency is created for visionary leaders as they have a strong belief that quality education is of great importance in preparing students for an anticipated future. It is not surprising that in addition to personal integrity, professional courage is considered to play a role in the development of a visionary leader. Visionary leadership inherently requires acting courageously in a manner consistent with one's personal integrity and commitment to educational beliefs. In summary, these superintendents clearly believe that a visionary leader must exhibit several complementary leadership techniques in order to lead effectively in the 21st century educational arena.

Overall, the major and minor themes reported appeared to be in concert with each other. However, there are some aspects of the revealed major and minor themes which do seem contradictory. The major theme of *creating a collaborative culture* revealed information suggesting visionary leaders are able to create an environment which fosters open discussion and divergent thinking. Specifically, the interviewed superintendents reported collaborative team meetings with creative discussions never used to reach unique decisions and new visions. However, the minor theme of *flexible thinking* was only endorsed by three of the nine superintendents and inconsistently even by those endorsing a collaborative culture theme. This juxtaposition is difficult to explain as one would expect similar levels of endorsement for both themes. One explanation for this discrepancy could be that visionary leaders rely on the creative and collaborative thinking that occurs during team planning. This type of creativity may be more valuable than the individual flexible and creative thinking of the superintendent as an individual. Another, unusual finding is the apparent juxtaposition of the major theme of *holistic thinking* and the minor theme of *organizational and planning ability.* When one considers the extremely high demands of operating a complex educational organization planning ability as a minor theme is unexpected. Also, holistic thinking suggests the ability to see how an organization functions in an integrated manner. A possible explanation for this apparent discrepancy could be that visionary leaders are able to employ the skills of others in the organization to focus on the detailed planning tasks related to successful operations. Therefore, the time that might be devoted to planning and organizing is devoted to creative thinking and integrative problem-solving. However, this finding does suggest that there may be risks inherent in visionary leadership with regard to executing the vision.

RESEARCH QUESTION #2

What unique community and/or regional dispositions exist which promote or limit the development of visionary superintendents in western Pennsylvania?

Major Theme #1: Strong Close-knit Communities

Five of the nine superintendents interviewed reported that strong close-knit communities that respond to community needs support the development of visionary leaders in Western Pennsylvania. Superintendent A spoke passionately about the vibrant connection between family, community and education in our region. In essence, because people care so much about their family and community, a high functioning educational system is valued. Also, the value of the neighborhood school is high because it is so closely connected with the community. Superintendent F found that this attachment to the neighborhood school can be a major challenge to visionary leaders when right sizing requires closure of such schools. In order to overcome this challenge a visionary leader must constantly employ positive and strong communication abilities. Superintendent C concurred that the strong close-knit communities of Western Pennsylvania contribute to the development of visionary leadership. This superintendent indicated that the historic connection between local industry and the community as a whole has enabled even distressed communities to remain intact and are responsive to the needs of an education system. Superintendent D while supporting the positive nature of a close-knit community, also indicated that such communities can be a challenge in the initial stages of visionary leadership in a school district. Superintendent E believes that such communities can channel and promote change in effective way but in order to do this the visionary leader must have political awareness. If one is not politically astute then change within such close-knit communities is a significant challenge

Major Theme #2: Resistance to Change

Five of the nine superintendents interviewed reported that resistance to change in the Western Pennsylvania culture actually promotes visionary leadership. This counterintuitive notion is that while the Western Pennsylvania culture can be resistant to change in general, it produces indomitable visionary leaders. It is suggested that this change resistant culture serves as a crucible which fosters especially durable and vibrant visionary leaders. Superintendent E describes this crucible effect as the process of visionary leaders as making change in spite of the change resistant culture. In this manner she believes that visionary leaders here are capable of visionary leadership anywhere. However, creating change does require political acumen combined with very strong communication skills. Superintendent D suggests that when one is able to channel cultural rigidity towards a new vision that a visionary leader can achieve lofty goals. However, in order to accomplish this, a leader must commit to high levels of engagement and participation within the community beyond simply operating the school district. Superintendent H concurs but he believes that many local school leaders use the rigid Western Pennsylvania culture as an excuse that serves to limit their visionary leadership opportunities. He suggests that if leaders begin to put aside this concept of a rigid change resistant culture that even more visionary leadership will develop in the region. Superintendent F also believes the change resistant culture does produce strong visionary leaders but that at times with great risk to the leader. He suggests that the various waves of economic downturn in the region have allowed opportunities for visionary leadership which might not have otherwise occurred. Such economic despair leaves communities somewhat vulnerable and has tempered the change resistant culture. Superintendent I fervently believes that the change resistant culture creates some of the most positive visionary leaders in Pennsylvania. In a sense, the culture pushes visionary leaders to extremes and therefore sharpens and develops their techniques and strategies to be visionaries. Therefore, it is believed that visionary leaders from this region can be successful throughout the state and in other regions of the country. However, she reports that the converse is not true as leaders from outside the region often experience great difficulty in attempts to employ visionary leadership in the region. It is suggested that these leaders underestimate the depth of the change resistant culture and are quickly overwhelmed.

Major Theme #3: Loss of Steel Industry

Five of the nine superintendents interviewed reported that the loss of the steel industry as the sole economic force in Western Pennsylvania has enhanced the development of visionary superintendents. Had the collapse of the steel industry not occurred, it was felt that the parochial nature of Western Pennsylvania culture would have limited the ability of visionary educational leaders to develop and thrive in the region. Superintendent B outlined the powerful impact the collapse of the steel industry had on communities in the Western Pennsylvania region. As a lifelong resident of the region, this superintendent chronicled the multiple changes in the region that occurred when the steel industry collapsed and the region was forced to deal with severe economic challenges. The ability of the region to reinvent itself and to remain viable required the acceptance of change and thus fostered the ability of educational leaders to think and act in visionary terms. Superintendent C noted that the strong labor unions which existed in the heyday of the steel-making days live on in the culture even though the steel industry is gone. From this standpoint, the unions have transferred their strength to the belief in community and family as important aspects of the region. This transfer supports the development of visionary leadership in the schools as they are highly invested in the continuing vitality of their communities. It is proposed that it is critical that visionary leaders in the region understand that engagement and support of the teachers union is essential. Superintendent A chronicles his experience which led to a transformation of the relationship between the superintendent's role and the teachers union. He views this change as a major legacy achievement which will continue to support ongoing growth and change within the district. The strong unions which developed in the region prior to the collapse of the steel industry live on in regional teacher unions. This superintendent believes that this reality can be a positive contributor to change when the union is engaged by a visionary superintendent. Superintendent F believes the major economic downturn which occurred when the steel industry collapsed resulted in a renewal of regional pride which resulted in economic diversification and the eventual survival of the region. In this manner, while the region resists change it has seen that embracing change can lead to survival and success in the region. Therefore, it is believed that an astute visionary leader can tap into this deep well of regional pride to create positive change in the educational arena. Superintendent G believes that the region has developed a problem-solving and adventurous spirit in response to past economic

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devastation.   In this manner regional problems become opportunities and visionary superintendents can capitalize on this outlook if they think in strategic terms.

Major Theme #4: Opportunities for Professional Growth

Five of the nine superintendents emphasized the need for involvement in professional organizations which emphasize personal growth and professional development. An example of such an opportunity is cited as the positive influence of the Superintendents' Forum on the development of visionary educational leaders. Superintendent B remarked that the culture of the Forum was the most positive influence on the superintendency from a visionary leadership standpoint. The Forum served as a counterbalance to the somewhat parochial and regional focus of the Western Pennsylvania culture as a whole.   The positive influence of the Forum was particularly evident and important in districts geographically isolated from the metropolitan Pittsburgh area. Superintendent D emphasized the power and value of the Forum with regard to its ability to assist new superintendents to the region to understand the culture and to assist them in the development of visionary leadership abilities. The Forum serves as a critical support system to the superintendent who might only have a cursory understanding of Western Pennsylvania culture.   In this manner, visionary leaders could become acculturated into the region and at the same time benefit from shared leadership and the visionary attributes of other superintendents associated within the Forum.   This superintendent clearly indicated that a leader's relationship with the Forum was invaluable in the early stages of the development of visionary leadership skills within the Western Pennsylvania culture. Superintendent I acknowledged the tremendous leadership training available from many of the superintendent mentors that are participating in the Forum. She indicated that by observing these leaders she is able to select visionary leadership skills which she is able to employ in her visionary leadership activities. She also reports that her participation in the Leadership Pittsburgh initiative has also significantly contributed to her growth as a visionary. Superintendent E also praised the valuable professional mentoring and growth which has occurred due to membership and the professional association with leaders in the Forum. She reports that the increased confidence she obtained by working with members of the Forum was integral to the development of and practice of visionary leadership in her district. Superintendent G clearly believes that participation and

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involvement in organizations which foster professional development and personal growth are critical in support of visionary leadership development. This leader believes that he is privileged to have the opportunity to observe and work with experienced visionary leaders in the Forum, and continues to learn a great deal by this association. In addition, he believes that organizations such as the Pennsylvania Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development provide on opportunities for visionary leaders to gather the professional knowledge necessary for futuristic thinking.

Minor Themes: As the superintendents responded to the interview questions related to Western Pennsylvania culture, the following minor themes emerged. Those themes include:

- Prudent risk taking is necessary
- Public education as a link to freedom and opportunity
- Loyalty to community can both foster and inhibit change
- Geographic isolation may limit visionary leadership
- Collaboration is necessary to counteract stagnation
- Cultural belief in the power and value of public education
- :

The superintendents interviewed report several unique community and regional dispositions which primarily promote the development of visionary leaders in Western Pennsylvania. In fact, eight of the superintendents interviewed enthusiastically indicated that Western Pennsylvania contributes to the development of visionary leadership. Only one Superintendent felt that the stereotype of the Western Pennsylvania region prohibits visionary leadership development. It is interesting to note that some of these regional dispositions were described as inhibitory as well as fostering visionary leadership. All of the superintendents did advise that they believed the Western Pennsylvania culture and region is of a particular nature and type that is unique and must be carefully considered when one is developing and/or utilizing visionary leadership abilities. The most interesting theme appears to be the belief that the region may serve as a crucible which produces irrepressible visionary leaders. Unique aspects of the

Western Pennsylvania culture promote very strong community involvement which promotes a strong interest in the overall health and functional aspects of community schools. This very powerful belief in community and family enhances the development of visionary and educational leadership. A highlight noted in the regional culture was the Superintendents' Forum. The superintendents strongly endorsed the Forum as a critical factor in promoting visionary leadership as a counter balance to the parochial tendencies inherent in the region. Five of the superintendents remarked that the influence of the Forum was truly transformational for them personally and believe that the Forum is of extreme value in the support of visionary leadership in the region.

The existence of historically strong labor unions was noted to have the potential for fostering the development of visionary leadership but with great risk to the leader. Specifically, the superintendents noted that the historic strength of unions is often a challenge for superintendents, particularly those who are unfamiliar with the region. However, if union leadership is properly engaged in the visioning process they are highly influential in the operational success of visionary leaders.

The superintendents indicated that the dramatic loss of the steel industry resulted in economic upheaval in the region which appears to have promoted the development of visionary leadership. Absent this economic transformation, it was felt that the region may have remained overly parochial and entirely unresponsive to visionary leadership. However, because the region was forced to reinvent itself economically, it has become more responsive to change in the educational leadership arena. Other historical aspects of the region which are felt to be positive influences on the development of visionary leaders include the tendency for immigrants who settled in the region to embrace the power of public education. In this manner public education was seen as one of the most important institutions in a functional democracy.

It is interesting to note that the superintendents all had a reasonably strong belief that the Western Pennsylvania culture does have a positive influence on visionary leadership. However, they did acknowledge that there are unique attributes and qualities of the region that are challenging and require visionary leaders to be significant risk takers. It was proposed that

regional visionary leaders can be successful in a variety of environments beyond Western Pennsylvania. The challenges that they experience in this region quickly sharpen their visionary leadership skills which serve them well outside the region. Contrastingly, the superintendents report anecdotal experiences which suggest visionary leaders from outside the region have difficulty applying their leadership skills locally.

Perhaps the experience of this single superintendent should be studied more closely. Certainly, one cannot discount the considerable challenges and barriers to the development of visionary leaders in the region. Most of the attributes which are listed in the major and minor themes could be viewed as barriers rather than facilitators of visionary leadership. These critical sample particular visionary leaders firmly believe that the region contributes to the development of visionaries. However, at least one of them is not so enthusiastic and cautions against the inferiority complex he perceives to exist in the region. While these leaders are exemplars of irrepressible visionary leaders within the region, it is possible that many other aspiring visionary leaders that have been frustrated by their experiences and the region has served to defeat them. From the standpoint the region could also be interpreted as inhibitory to the development of expansive numbers of visionary leaders in education. Due to the challenging aspect of the change resistant region it would appear that there may be underlying special skills which this study has not clearly identified. One possible domain which is not attended to is the inherent skill these superintendents have in accurately reading the political pulse of the communities they serve. It is surprising that this particular theme did not arise as it would appear to be essential for visionary leadership in the close knit and change resistant region.

RESEARCH QUESTION #3

1. What common patterns of leadership do regional visionary superintendents exhibit which confirm or contradict current theoretical and empirical research in the area of visionary leadership in education?

In order to address this research question the five comprehensive models of visionary leadership in education analyzed in this researchers literature review are being utilized for comparison. The models for comparison are described below in the chronological order of publication. The first model for comparison is the model articulated by Wallace (1997) in late 1990s and is described here as the Excellence Model. The second is the integrative approach developed by Schwan and Spady (2001) and is described for our comparison purposes as the Total Leaders Model. The third model is articulated by both Thompson (2003) and Kahan (2002) and is described as the 21st-century Model. The fourth model is articulated by Funk (2002) and is described as the Texas Model. The final model for comparison was developed by Ylimake (2006) it is described as the Archetype Model.

Excellence Model Description

Wallace describes visionary leadership in terms of the actual work and practice of the superintendent. Thus, visionary leadership included the concept of an excellence agenda and required continuous improvement. Furthermore, the core of visionary leadership is, what a leader believes, values and dreams about. Purposing is described as the ability for the school leader to vision for all and to create shared value and purpose with a commitment from all constituents.

Rubric questions:
1. Is there compelling evidence of an excellence agenda?
2. Is there compelling evidence of commitment to continuous school improvement
3. Is there compelling evidence of creation of a shared vision?

4. Is there compelling evidence of commitment from constituents?

An analysis of the superintendent's leadership journey indicates:

Superintendent	Question #1	Question #2	Question #3	Question #4
A	-	+	-	+
B	-	-	+	+
C	-	+	-	+
D	-	+	-	+
E	+	+	+	+
F	-	+	-	+
G	+	+	-	-
H	-	+	-	-
I	+	+	+	+
TOTAL	**3**	**8**	**3**	**7**

The results of this analysis suggest that nominated practicing visionary superintendents describe a leadership journey that has partial alignment with the Excellence Agenda Model of visionary leadership. The strongest evidence of alignment with this model leadership is noted in the areas of a commitment to continuous school improvement rather than a clear overarching

excellence agenda. There was considerable evidence of a commitment to a shared vision but limited support for evidence of creating a shared vision.

Total Leaders Model Description

Schwan and Spady (2001) propose that there are three essential performance roles of the visionary leader. Specifically, the performance role of defining and pursuing a preferred future is an emphasis on the ability for a visionary leader to create a picture image of the future for the organization. This includes the ability to picture and describe the ideal school, the ideal classroom, and the ideal leader. The performance role, which indicates the need to employ a client focus, is described as the type of leader who asks themselves and colleagues if they have met or exceeded their customer's expectations. Visionary leaders are able to listen carefully to their students and teachers as well as families. Also they must be able to be aware of what is happening and occurring in their industry and what their future holds for this industry. Finally, the performance role of expanding organizational perspective involves the ability for the visionary leader to transcend and re-conduct patterns of assumptions and beliefs on the way education is performing and functioning. From this standpoint, visionary leaders may at times call into question the theoretical framework of the schools and understand the possible outcomes of reversing paradigms and shifting to new ways of doing things. The authors present a clear and convincing profile of how visionary leadership is the innovative key to their description of total leadership skills. The effective school leader is one who has the character and ability to be a visionary leader with a creative influence that infuses the leader's actions and decisions.

Rubric questions:
1. Is there compelling evidence of defining and pursuing a preferred organizational future?
2. Is there compelling evidence of consistently employing a client focus?
3. Is there compelling evidence of expanding organizational perspectives and options?

An analysis of the interviewed superintendent's leadership journey indicates:

Superintendent	Question #1	Question #2	Question #3
A	+	+	+
B	+	-	+
C	-	+	-
D	+	+	+
E	+	+	+
F	-	+	+
G	-	+	-
H	+	-	+
I	+	+	+
TOTAL	**6**	**7**	**7**

The above analysis of the leadership journey of the nine superintendents indicates considerable support for the key performance roles described in the Total Leaders model of visionary leadership. Considerable evidence and support were noted for utilizing a client focus along with the ability to expand an organizational perspective. The evidence of defining and pursuing a preferred organizational future was less clear. Nevertheless, all of the superintendents described experiences suggesting that at least indicate two of the three performance roles were being utilized consistently.

21st-Century Model Description

Kahan's (2002) and Thompson's (2003) description of visionary leadership suggests that true visionary leadership is transformative. As Thompson noted, the true visionary leadership in the 21st century is able to articulate a clear picture of what is possible and that they are closely and deeply involved in bringing this possibility to reality. A further in depth definition of

visionary leadership is as follows: "Visionary leadership is transformative. It involves greatness, penetrating the ordinary, and reaching through time to bring out the best the world has to offer. A visionary leader anticipates events and influences the future and enables people to flourish in fundamental ways. In associations, this means perceiving challenges and growth opportunities before they happen while positioning the organization to produce extraordinary results that make a real contribution to the world." The author emphasizes the power of imagination in the visionary leader as well as a passion for excellence. Overall, the work emphasizes the key skills of anticipating the future and the ability to transform by creating a vision and guiding an organization to achieving that vision.

Rubric questions:
1. Is there compelling evidence of Imagination.
2. Is there compelling evidence of Engagement.
3. Is there compelling evidence of Getting tangible results.
4. Is there compelling evidence of Penetrating self-reflection.

An analysis of the superintendent's leadership journey indicates:

Superintendent	Question #1	Question #2	Question #3	Question #4
A	-	+	-	+
B	-	-	+	+
C	-	+	-	+
D	-	+	-	+
E	+	+	+	+
F	-	+	-	+
G	+	+	-	-
H	-	+	-	-
I	+	+	+	+
TOTAL	3	8	3	7

The above analysis of the leadership journey of the nine superintendents indicates relatively inconsistent patterns of evidence of the 21st-century model of visionary leadership. The leadership journeys of the superintendents confirmed that all have been able to demonstrate the ability to obtain tangible results in their districts. However, only three of the superintendents described leadership journey that revealed compelling evidence of high levels of imagination within leadership experience. Finally, evidence of engagement was much more consistent than evidence of penetrating self reflection within the leadership experiences analyzed.

Texas Model Description

This model of visionary leadership is drawn from a study of several superintendents from Texas. Of the several themes that were found in these Superintendent archetypes, the first listed

was vision, shared vision and visioning. In fact, this theme of visionary leadership was the most frequently mentioned by all of the female superintendents in the study. Each superintendent described themselves as having their own vision, their process of visioning and a manner to ensure that those who worked with them shared the vision. Also, the superintendents themselves described that visionary leadership was the most important quality for effective superintendent leadership. The following were specific indicators of visionary leadership that were study drawn directly from the words of the superintendents themselves:

Rubric questions:

1. Is there compelling evidence of the following: Being a visionary is part creativity and part courage; a visionary has to have some glimpse of what can be. It has to be a little out beyond where the rest of the group is but not too far beyond because if you don't share the dreams you begin to lose them.

2. Is there compelling evidence of the following: Part of being visionary is being able to put pieces of information together and come up with a new slant or a new way to look at things - that is part of what sets a leader apart from an administrator.

3. Is there compelling evidence of the following: I think leaders need vision, and I was at one time of the belief that you could teach that. I no longer have that belief. We have a lot of management people who are clearly outstanding in crisis-to-crisis management but if you give them a blank sheet of paper and ask 'what do you want to be?' They will ask 'what do you want me to do?' They can't really see what it looks like in their minds.

4. Is there compelling evidence of the following: To establish a vision for your organization cannot be done unilaterally. Probably the most important thing is to get out front and make sure that I am not out there by myself.

An analysis of the superintendent's leadership journey indicates:

Superintendent	Question #1	Question #2	Question #3	Question #4
A	-	+	-	+
B	-	-	+	+
C	-	+	-	+
D	-	+	-	+
E	+	+	+	+
F	-	+	-	+
G	+	+	-	-
H	-	+	-	-
I	+	+	+	+
TOTAL	**3**	**8**	**3**	**7**

Overall an analysis of the leadership experiences of the interviewed superintendents revealed reasonable support for the Texas model of visionary leadership. There is considerable evidence to indicate that all the superintendents engage their community to develop a vision they did not do this unilaterally. Also, the majority of superintendents revealed patterns of experiences supportive of courage and the ability to anticipate what may occur in the future. Furthermore, there was evidence that the majority of the superintendents did describe experiences indicative of being able to assemble information into a meaningful new picture. A single domain which remained an area of inconsistent support was related to the ability to develop a picture vision naturally.

Archetype Model Description

This model suggests that visionary leadership is not only about future ideals but involves insight into the complex reality of today's educational problems. From this standpoint, vision is described as an interaction between a commitment to an ideal and the talent of insight into present difficulties or challenges within the educational realities. In addition to postulating the need for discussion and investigation into a new concept of visionary leadership, the author describes the visionary archetype. The author summarizes the visionary archetype as one who exhibits the following three characteristics:

Rubric questions:

1. Is there compelling evidence of the following: Maintains his or her authenticity by telling the truth without blame or judgment.
2. Is there compelling evidence of the following: Knows and communicates his or her creative purposes and life dreams.
3. Is there compelling evidence of the following: Honors the four ways of seeing: intuition, perception, insight and holistic seeing (vision).

An analysis of the superintendent's leadership journey indicates:

Superintendent	Question #1	Question #2	Question #3
A	-	-	-
B	-	-	-
C	-	-	-
D	-	-	-
E	-	+	-
F	-	-	-
G	-	-	-
H	-	-	-
I	-	+	-
TOTAL	**0**	**2**	**0**

An analysis of the leadership journey and experiences as described by the interviewed superintendents reveals scant support for the Archetype Model. While several of the superintendents described being courageous and focusing on integrity it is difficult to determine evidence of more broad concepts such as telling the truth. Also, there is certainly evidence that the superintendents interviewed discussed creativity and innovation in their leadership journey. However, communicating creative purposes in life dreams were not clearly noted in the descriptions. Finally, within the final domain only indicators of holistic thinking were noted in the described journeys.

4.4   SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do visionary regional superintendents describe the manner in which they have been able to lead their organizations?

Nine superintendents discussed the following identifier in their life experiences as a superintendent. The following major (five or more responses) and minor (less than five responses) themes were revealed.

Major Themes

Identifier Description	Superintendent's Who Identify Theme
Creating a Collaborative Culture	6 of 9 identifies/A,B,C,D,F,I
Future Vision for the District	6 of 9 identifies/A,B,E,F,G,I
Gestalt/Holistic Thinking Style	5 of 9 identifies/A,B,D,H,G
Communication Skills to Share Vision	5 of 9 identifies/B,C,D,H,I
Personal Integrity and Commitment to Beliefs	5 of 9 identifies/A,D,F,G,H
Constantly Learning Studying New Information	5 of 9 identifies/A,B,F,G,I
Strategic Selection of Personnel	5 of 9 identifies/A,B,G,F,I

Minor Themes

Identifier Description	Superintendent's Who Identify Theme
Connecting to the community	4 of 9 identifies/ B,C,E,F
Passion for excellence	4 of 9 identifies/A,E,G,I
Risk Taking	4 of 9 identifies/B,D,G,H
Focus on student achievement	4 of 9 identifies/B,E,H,I
Clear focus and sense of urgency	3 of 9 identifies/D,F,I
Democratic educational perspective	3 of 9 identifies/A,C,D
Observing other visionary leaders	3 of 9 identifies/D,F,I
Flexible thinking skills	3 of 9 identifies/G,H,I
Provide support during crises	2 of 9 identifies/A,F
Organizational and planning abilities	2 of 9 identifies/A,C

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What unique community and/or regional dispositions exist which promote or limit the development of visionary superintendents in western Pennsylvania?

Nine superintendents discussed the following identifier in their life experiences as a superintendent. The following major (five or more responses) and minor (less than five responses) themes were revealed.

Major Themes

Identifier Description	Superintendent's Who Identify Theme
Strong Close-knit Communities	5 of 9 identifies/A,C,D,E,F
Resistance to Change	5 of 9 identifies/D,E,F,H,I
Loss of Steel Industry	5 of 9 identifies/A,B,C,F,G
Opportunities for Professional Growth	5 of 9 identifies/B,D,E,G,I

Minor Themes

Identifier Description	Superintendent's Who Identify Theme
Prudent risk taking is necessary	4 of 9 identifies/B,D,F,I
Loyalty to community foster/inhibit change	4 of 9 identifies/B,G,H,I
Collaboration/necessary/ counteract/ stagnation	4 of 9 identifies/D,F,H,I
Geographic isolation /limit/visionary/leadership	3 of 9 identifies/A,D,G
Cultural belief /power /value/ public education	2 of 9 identifies/A,D
Public education/ link/ freedom/ opportunity	2 of 9 identifies/A,C

WORD FREQENCY STUDY

A word frequency study was conducted of the transcribed interviews with the nine superintendents. The entire transcribed interview text consisted of 31,613 words. Critical words were selected from the literature and then applied to the transcribed text to determine frequency of use.

Selected Term	Frequency
Visionary	136
Future	22
Communication	12
Forum	9
Pride	9
Creative	9
Commitment	8
Courage	7
Integrity	7
Competitive	5
Strategic	5
Collaboration	4
21st Century	3
PSSA	2
Failure	2

4.5   SUMMARY

This chapter includes a profile of each district superintendent that was self-reported during the interview. Their self-reported superintendent profile is also in the appendix. Data related to the research questions was collected during the interview process and was analyzed. Major and minor themes were identified for each of the research questions. Major themes were defined as having responses from five or more superintendents. Minor themes were defined as having less than five superintendent's responses.

The themes which emerged from this analysis suggest a constellation of unique thinking abilities and leadership skills which can be associated with visionary superintendents. Visionary leaders possess a gestalt thinking style, create and maintain a collaborative school community, use communication techniques effectively and are able to connect effectively to the community at large. Visionary leaders utilize these skills simultaneously to create the picture of a preferred future for their school districts which can be embraced by all constituents. In addition, visionary superintendents are well read and clearly interested in developments in and outside the field of education. They are able to utilize and effectively channel creative and innovative thinking by carefully making strategic personnel selections. A hallmark of a visionary superintendent is a commitment to personal integrity and honesty. These superintendents have a sense of urgency about excellence in education. This urgency is coupled with an underlying belief that there is an essential relationship between high quality public education and a healthy democratic republic. Personal and professional courage coupled with integrity allow visionary superintendents to lead effectively in the 21st century.

Visionary superintendents believe that unique community and regional dispositions promote the development of visionary leaders in western Pennsylvania. It was acknowledged that visionary leaders must be cognizant of the change resistant culture which does exist in western Pennsylvania. However, it is suggested that this change resistant culture ironically allows for the development of irrepressible and dynamic visionary leaders. The crucible effect of developing visionary leadership skills in Western Pennsylvania is enhanced by the powerful

belief in community with a direct connection to the desire for quality public schools. A regional highlight revealed as a critical factor which promotes visionary leadership is the superintendent's Forum. The Forum was explicitly identified as a positive factor which functions to ameliorate the parochial tendencies inherent in the region. The majority of the superintendents interviewed revealed that the Forum experience was transformational and of high-value for their personal development as visionary leaders. Additional unique aspects of the region that appear to have an impact on visionary leadership include historically strong labor unions and the economic devastation caused by the loss of the steel industry. The ability to engage positively with labor unions is a challenge for visionary leaders unfamiliar with the region. However, adept visionary leaders are able to promote change by partnering with strong union leadership. It is believed that the economic transformation which began following the economic devastation after the loss of the steel industry enhanced the position of visionary leadership in the region. Furthermore, descendents of immigrants to the region continue to embrace the power of education as an important institution in a functional democracy. These regional dispositions require visionary superintendents to be risk takers and allow them to develop robust visionary leadership. It is therefore believed that these irrepressible and indomitable visionary superintendents have the ability to lead as visionaries in almost any region of the country. However, superintendents from outside the region are often significantly challenged as they attempt to apply visionary leadership strategies in Western Pennsylvania.

Descriptive rubrics were created for five major visionary leadership models in education as noted in the literature review. The rubric questions were considered in light of the leadership journey and experiences described by the superintendents. Finally, a word frequency study was conducted utilizing the transcribed interview text with selected visionary leadership vocabulary noted in the literature.

A summative analysis of the leadership experiences described in the interviews revealed reasonable support for the two of the models of visionary leadership. Comprehensive support for the key performance roles described in the Total Leaders model of visionary leadership is found. There is convincing evidence and support for the utilization of a client focus along with the ability to expand an organizational perspective. While the evidence of defining and pursuing a

preferred organizational future is less clear, all of the superintendents described experiences suggesting that at least indicate two of the three performance roles were being utilized consistently. Reasonable alignment and support is noted for the Excellence Agenda Model. There is compelling evidence in the data to confirm community engagement to develop a vision, the ability to anticipate what may occur in the future and the skills to assemble information into a meaningful new picture for the district. However, only tentative support is revealed related to the ability to develop a picture vision naturally. Relatively poor alignment is noted with the 21st-Century Model of visionary leadership. There is partial evidence that the superintendents interviewed have been able to demonstrate the ability to obtain tangible results in their districts. Furthermore, the majority of the superintendents interviewed did not display evidence of high levels of imagination within the leadership experience. Also, relatively minor evidence of engagement and no clear evidence of the penetrating self reflection are noted. Finally, very limited support for the Archetype Model is revealed in the analysis. Several of the superintendents described being courageous and focusing on integrity but it is difficult to find evidence of more broad concepts such as telling the truth. There is certainly some evidence of innovation but communicating creative purposes in life dreams is not indicated in the data and within the final domain only indicators of holistic thinking is found. As one might have expected the word frequency study revealed be ubiquitous usage of the term Visionary. Aside from this term, the top five terms of usage in order of frequency were Future, Communication, Forum, Pride and Creative. It is interesting to note that the frequency of the word Forum is aligned with most of the key terms associated with visionary leadership in the literature

5.0   CONCLUSIONS

The genesis for this research study is the previously unforeseen demand for visionary leadership in education created by the simultaneous requirement for academically proficient students to be able to navigate the reality of globalization nested in a newfound conceptual age. National education policy has created the reality that education leaders are responsible for providing a quality education experience so that all students develop proficient academic skills. Concurrently, globalization driven by new technologies has ushered in a new conceptual age that requires students to compete on the global stage. Our students are competing with the best and brightest from around the world not just with their peers in our country. Furthermore, the new conceptual age that is upon us favors students who are creative, empathetic, artistic, innovative and holistic thinkers.

Educational leaders are supremely challenged by the vortex that is created by these twin and often incompatible realities of globalization and a new conceptual age. It is the proposition of this researcher that the skills required for educational visionary leadership in 21st-century may be different than previously described and researched. At the same time, empirical and conceptual research in the area of visionary leadership confirms that this model of leadership is well-suited for the challenges of educational leadership in the 21st-century. House and Aditya (1997) report that visionary leadership is considered as desirable under these circumstances as it has been shown to produce above average organizational performance during situations of crisis and uncertainty.

This researcher has conducted a descriptive study in order to carefully summarize and study the journey and personal experiences of nominated visionary superintendents in Western Pennsylvania. In this study the actual functioning of visionary leadership within the living and

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breathing world of education has been conducted. Visionary regional superintendents have described the manner in which they are able to lead their organizations with passion and with an emphasis on integrity and honesty.

The findings indicate visionary superintendents in Western Pennsylvania have several common qualities which have emerged during their professional superintendent journeys. These visionary educational leaders possess a gestalt thinking style, create and maintain a collaborative school community, use communication techniques effectively and are able to connect effectively to the community at large. Visionary superintendents studied utilize these skills adroitly to create a picture of a preferred future for their school districts which can be embraced by all constituents. In addition, visionary superintendents are well read and keenly interested in developments in and outside the field of education. They are able to utilize and effectively channel creative and innovative thinking by carefully making strategic personnel selections.

It is particularly interesting to note that many of these leadership skills and demonstrated patterns of leadership can be described as conceptual age type skills. Specifically, visionary superintendents were found to have common leadership abilities in the areas of holistic thinking, collaboration and communication. Also, the leadership skill of being able to work with groups to create a common picture vision of the future appears entirely consistent with the type of thinking that is required in the new conceptual age. While this surprising finding does not inherently mean that students will develop such skills in school districts where visionary leaders exist, it is a curiously relevant finding. Fortunately, these superintendents do have a sense of urgency about excellence in education. This urgency coupled with the recognition of what is required for student success in the 21st-century conceptual age suggests a positive outcome for students. Furthermore, the evidence of this study indicates that personal and professional courage is a hallmark of visionary leaders. It is proposed that the transformational type of visionary leader, as defined by these findings, is especially well equipped to lead our schools during this demanding era in education.

The findings with regard to the influence of the Western Pennsylvania region on the development of visionary superintendents are intriguing. These results indicate that the unique cultural and regional dispositions which exist serve to support the development of a special breed of visionary leaders. The leadership journey of the superintendents studied is characterized by many challenges which therefore require the careful and consistent employment of visionary leadership skills. While a change resistant culture may appear as a limitation to visionary leadership, it ironically serves as a crucible for well honed visionary leadership skills. Visionary superintendents who develop these leadership skills in an environment which at times is inhospitable to visionaries must become adept at what they do in order to survive and thrive. The leaders in this study can be described as indomitable and irrepressible in their approach to visionary leadership. Furthermore, while there is a change resistant culture in Western Pennsylvania, regional school districts are likely to embrace visionary leadership due to the economic transformation of the region. In a sense, while the region does not seem to like change, it has been forced to accept change in order for communities to survive. Thus, a region which is often described as parochial and stagnant is capable of producing exemplary visionary leaders. A critical component of this process includes the capacity for visionary superintendents to engage in professional development and collegial study. This need appears to be well addressed through the opportunity for participation in the superintendent's Forum.

An analysis of the study results which compare the present findings with previous research revealed tangible support for two specific models of visionary leadership found in the literature. Reasonable evidence and support were found for the Total Leaders Model and Excellence Agenda Model of visionary educational leadership. It is interesting to note that both of these models of visionary education leadership were authored by scholars who had served as school superintendents. Furthermore, their careers as superintendents were marked by novel and innovative practices highlighted by external recognition that their schools were of high quality. Also, both of these conceptual models of visionary educational leadership were developed with a strong focus on the conceptual research in the field of educational visionary leadership developed in the 1980s and 1990s. The confirmatory evidence of this study certainly provides empirical information that these models of visionary leadership are legitimate and valuable in formulating the type of transformational visionary leadership required in the 21st-century. Both

of these models place a high priority and emphasis on excellence, creating a preferred vision of the future, collaboration and being able to communicate effectively. As was noted previously, these are important skills for students to acquire to navigate effectively in the new conceptual age.

5.1   IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study was initiated to attempt to define a particular type of visionary leader who could respond to the complicated challenges of 21st-century public education in the United States as well as in Western Pennsylvania. A review of the literature revealed that empirical and conceptual research in the area of visionary education leadership was conducted with earnest in the 1980s and 90s. Evidence emerged in this analysis that visionary leaders are desirable during a time of upheaval and crisis. This researcher also has found considerable evidence that 21st-century public education is facing a crisis as it is being forced to confront duel realities which are often incompatible. Globalization and new information technologies have rewritten the rules for students and schools alike. It was previously thought that our schools and students could be competitive if all students acquired proficient academic skills prior to graduation. Unfortunately, this is not enough for students and schools to be sure that they are now competitive on the global scene. The reality is that our students must compete with millions of proficient academic students from all over the world. The new conceptual age requires that in addition to proficient academic skills students must think creatively, innovatively and holistically. They must be able to collaborate effectively, communicate well with others and be comfortable in a design type environment.

This research has uncovered a curious pattern indicating visionary superintendents in Western Pennsylvania already possess the types of skills and abilities that we now are expecting

our students to acquire to navigate the conceptual age. Further studies should be conducted to determine if these visionary superintendents are predisposed to create schools which are able to promote the development of these skills. There is evidence that these transformational visionary education leaders have the capacity to significantly promote and effect change in their schools. However, is the change that these leaders are promoting translating into the student acquisition of the important conceptual age skills? This study revealed that these visionary leaders value excellence and high quality education for all. What remains unclear is whether these particularly capable visionary leaders are focused on meeting the twin demands of academic proficiency coupled with conceptual age thinking ability in their school districts. This author recommends studying both district wide academic proficiency levels in conjunction with the types of educational programs offered within the schools which are led by visionary superintendents. One possible indicator of initiatives which foster the development of conceptual age thinkers might be robust programs in the fine arts, performing arts and humanities. These programs have traditionally focused on fostering creative thinking, innovative problem solving, communication skills and collaboration. In Western Pennsylvania, another indicator might be the district's engagement and relationship with the Arts Collaborative organization.

Another intriguing finding of the study was the evidence that the Western Pennsylvania region serves to create irrepressible visionary leaders. This finding is somewhat surprising as the region is typically thought of as somewhat parochial and not as innovative as other regions of the state and country. It would be useful for educational leaders in the region to become aware of this finding so that might reshape their thinking about themselves and the importance and value of being an educational leader in this region. Further study would be useful to confirm or disconfirm that visionary leaders from western Pennsylvania are able to thrive in other regions of the state and country. The study suggests that visionary superintendents from this region have the special ability to be successful in many other areas. Also, further study would be useful to examine the experiences of superintendents that come to Western Pennsylvania from other regions of the state or country with respect to their visionary leadership capacity. There is anecdotal evidence superintendents who have been able to lead change effectively in other regions are unable to do so in Western Pennsylvania because of the labor relations tradition in

the region. It would be helpful to study this scenario carefully in order to determine how superintendents make the transition into Western Pennsylvania from other regions.

These findings would also be useful for university-based superintendent training programs as they screen applicants and create internships and opportunities for mentorship with functioning superintendents. This evidence would suggest that there are special opportunities for superintendents in Western Pennsylvania to develop robust visionary leadership skills if given the proper training and support. Also, Superintendent internships and training in the Western Pennsylvania region may be preferable if one is seeking to develop visionary leadership skills. The results also suggest that the opportunity for professional collaboration, as is available through the superintendent's Forum, is an important component of the development of transformational visionary superintendents. Concurrently, further study appears warranted to examine the type of support which would be helpful to aspiring superintendents who may not understand the unique opportunities and challenges in becoming a visionary leader in Western Pennsylvania.

The study serves to suggest that Western Pennsylvania is a positive and unique environment for creating transformational visionary leaders that are equipped to lead in the 21st-century. However, it is recommended that a similar study be conducted in either central or eastern Pennsylvania to confirm or disprove the regional implications of the study.

When one considers theses overall research findings it is important to recognize the limitations of generalization in qualitative research. This study reveals interesting ideas relative only to the voices and experience of the nine superintendents in the study. The study has created a portrait of visionary leadership specific to the experiences of these nine superintendents in the Western Pennsylvania region. Certainly, there is the need for further investigation relative to the findings regarding visionary leadership in other regions and with other sample superintendent sample groups. The need for additional research to confirm or disprove the findings is essential so that this discussion and exploration of visionary leadership can be continued.

5.2   REFLECTIONS

This researcher conducted this study to contribute to the developing body of literature in the field of educational visionary leadership. In order to obtain the data to complete the study, nominated superintendents were interviewed and the interviews were then transcribed and analyzed. During this interview process the researcher made field notes and journal notes following these interviews and experiences. These field notes and journal notes provided an opportunity for personal reflection.

An unexpected outcome from the interview process was the impact that the passion and professional insight of the superintendents had on this researcher as an aspiring superintendent. The confidence, exuberance and straightforward honesty expressed by each superintendent during the interview process was inspiring and infectious. The superintendents focused on integrity and excellence to a higher degree than expected and this was another source of personal inspiration for the researcher. While these successful visionaries clearly believed in themselves they did not display unnecessary levels of arrogance. Overall, they were humble, approachable and genuinely interested in the nature of the research project. This was considered to be a very positive aspect of the study as it allowed for a comfortable interview process with open sharing and candid discussions.

An additional revelation during the interview process was the fact that all interviewed superintendents referenced one or both of their parents in very favorable terms. This reference usually was made to explain the core values of the superintendent and the importance of education as a career. These parental tributes were heartfelt and it appeared that these superintendents attributed their core values as well as their commitment to education to one or both parents. This researcher had not reflected on parental relationships and its effect on a calling towards education leadership. However, during the journaling process it became clear to this researcher that a long-standing family commitment to service in education has a very strong positive influence on the interest in conducting this study and serving in the educational field.

An additional motivational aspect of this experience was the varied educational career background of each of these visionary superintendents. This finding confirmed this researcher's belief that there is not necessarily a preferred educational background or avenue to become a visionary superintendent. The superintendents studied were able to develop and utilize their special visionary leadership skills in a wide variety of educational roles. The interviews and evidence obtained suggest that visionary performance roles could be developed and refined in many alternate educational leadership situations.

Finally, it was particularly encouraging to this researcher and aspiring superintendent, that the Western Pennsylvania region may hold special opportunities in the creation of transformational visionary leaders. The knowledge that this region may actually be a highly desirable place to acquire and refined transformational visionary leadership skills is empowering.

APPENDIX A

Letter of Invitation to Potential Participants

Dear Forum Member,

You have been nominated to voluntarily participate in a research study designed to explore transformational visionary leadership in the schools. You have been nominated due to the visionary leadership abilities you have exhibited by becoming a member of the superintendents forum. Your participation will contribute to the body of research in the field of visionary leadership in education. If you are interested in voluntarily participating in the study, please contact me at your earliest convenience. Please be aware that no identifying information will be used in the study.

The investigator, Michael Loughead, will contact you directly using the preferred contact information you provide in your response to this letter.

Thank you for your consideration of participation in this research study.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Loughead
Director of Pupil Services
Pine Richland School District

Interview Questions

1. What are the attributes of a visionary leader?
2. Describe what you believe are the essential attributes of visionary leadership?
3. Please rank order these above stated visionary leadership attributes by importance.
4. What are your core purposes as a superintendent and what strategies do you employ to achieve these core purposes?
5. What is your core personality trait that you believe enables you to be a visionary leader.
6. What personal events occurred in your life which you believe allowed you to develop the attributes of a visionary leader?
7. What mentorship experiences did you have, which may have contributed to or inhibited the development of visionary leadership abilities?
8. Do you believe that the Western Pennsylvania culture limited your visionary leadership abilities or did it create opportunities and foster the development of these abilities?
9. Your colleagues describe you as a visionary leader, do you think this is accurate and if so why.
10. Ten years following your final year as a superintendent, what will still remain in your former district, which could be attributed to your visionary leadership abilities?

APPENDIX C

Self-Reported Superintendent Profile

Superintendent A

Superintendent A completed his undergraduate studies at the California University of Pennsylvania and was credentialed as a secondary social studies teacher. He taught social studies for 14 years at the high school level in western Pennsylvania. In addition to the teacher responsibilities during that time, Superintendent A also was highly involved in the senior high school student council leadership. Superintendent A completed graduate work at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh and obtained a Master's in Public Affairs and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. He entered the central office as a Curriculum and Instruction Director and maintained that position for 14 years. The teaching experience and position of Director of Curriculum and Instruction occurred in the same school district. For the last eight years, Superintendent A has been superintendent of another western Pennsylvania school district.

Superintendent B

Superintendent B obtained her Bachelor and Master's degrees from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She obtained her doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh in 1985. She taught in the home economics department for 13 years. She entered administration following three years as a middle school principal. She was also responsible for curriculum coordination and special education coordination for the district. She also served for seven years as the assistant

superintendent and 12 years as a superintendent. The entire 36 years of her educational professional experience occurred in the same school district.

Superintendent C

Superintendent C began teaching in public education at the high school level in Ohio. Following three years of teaching in Ohio at the high school level, he then taught for 13 1/2 years at the high school level in western Pennsylvania. He received his principalship certification from Duquesne University and obtained his doctorate degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1984. He served as a high school principal for five years. He served as a superintendent for ten years in two separate school districts, seven years in one school district in Beaver County and the last three years in a school district in Allegheny County.

Superintendent D

Superintendent D began his teaching career as a middle school science teacher. He taught science and math for six years. He began teaching in northeastern Pennsylvania. He was a middle school principal for ten years and began his superintendent career in north central Pennsylvania. He completed his doctorate at the University of Rochester and has been superintendent for the last 18 years at a school district in western Pennsylvania. Overall, he taught for six years, was a principal for ten years and was a superintendent for 22 years. He is presently the superintendent of a medium-sized district which has urban and suburban schools.

Superintendent E

Superintendent E began her educational career as a secondary level classroom teacher with 24 years of experience in this capacity. In addition to traditional classroom teaching she was involved in setting up professional development activities for the district. Following this teaching experience she became an assistant principal at the secondary level. She then moved to an elementary principal position followed by a secondary principal position at a large high performing high school. Subsequent to those administrative positions she became assistant

superintendent and then superintendent at her present school district. She has served as superintendent for six years. She obtained her superintendents letter of eligibility and doctorate in education from the University of Pittsburgh. She is presently the superintendent of a district located in a small urban community.

Superintendent F

Superintendent F began his educational career as a classroom teacher. However, at age 27 his teaching career was interrupted by four years of service on the County Council as a commissioner. He returned to teaching and then became an elementary principal. During this portion of his career he obtained a master's degree at Duquesne University in conjunction with his principal certifications. Subsequently he completed his doctorate in education at the University of Pittsburgh where he also obtained his superintendents letter of eligibility. He served as assistant superintendent in a small rural district and then served four years as a superintendent in a neighboring district. For last 10 years he has served as superintendent of a large countywide school system in western Pennsylvania.

Superintendent G

Superintendent G spent 16 years as an earth and space science teacher teaching eighth graders. During this time he obtained his masters degree in education at the University of Pittsburgh in curriculum and supervision. Subsequent to that he obtained his principal's certificate at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and served for 14 years as the middle school principal in central Pennsylvania. During that time he obtained his doctorate in education and superintendent's letter of eligibility at Pennsylvania State University. He has served as assistant superintendent and now superintendent in his present school district for three and a half years. His current district is medium-sized and is described as urban. Recently the district has experienced consolidation of schools.

Superintendent H

Superintendent H taught in the classroom for 10 years. He then obtained his principal's certificate and master's degree from Shippensburg State University. He obtained his doctorate in curriculum and instruction and superintendent's letter of eligibility at Pennsylvania State University. He served in central office administrative positions in his present district prior to taking a position as superintendent in a neighboring district for two years. He returned to his present district as superintendent two years ago. He is the superintendent of a small suburban district which is well known for high academic performance.

Superintendent I

Superintendent I is presently the superintendent of a small but rapidly growing, high performing suburban school district. She began her educational career as a mathematics teacher and spent 15 years as a classroom teacher. However, early in her professional career she did spend two years in the marketing and business management field. She was a high school principal for six years. She has served as a superintendent for 12 years in her current district. She was just selected to become the executive director of a local intermediate unit. She obtained her undergraduate degree in math education at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She received her doctorate in educational administration from Duquesne University.

APPENDIX D

FINDINGS

D.1 RESEARCH QUESTION NUMBER ONE

Major Themes

Identifier Description	Superintendent's Who Identify Theme
• Creating a Collaborative Culture	6 of 9 identifies/A,B,C,D,F,I
• Future Vision for the District	6 of 9 identifies/A,B,E,F,G,I
• Gestalt/Holistic Thinking Style	5 of 9 identifies/A,B,D,H,G
• Communication Skills to Share Vision	5 of 9 identifies/B,C,D,H,I
• Personal Integrity and Commitment to Beliefs	5 of 9 identifies/A,D,F,G,H
• Constantly Learning Studying New Information	5of 9 identifies/A,B,F,G,I
• Strategic Selection of Personnel	5 of 9 identifies/A,B,G,F,I

Minor Themes

Identifier Description	Superintendent's Who Identify Theme
• Connecting to the community	4 of 9 identifies/ B,C,E,F
• Passion for excellence	4 of 9 identifies/A,E,G,I
• Risk Taking	4 of 9 identifies/B,D,G,H
• Focus on student achievement	4 of 9 identifies/B,E,H,I
• Clear focus and sense of urgency	3 of 9 identifies/D,F,I
• Democratic educational perspective	3 of 9 identifies/A,C,D
• Observing other visionary leaders	3 of 9 identifies/D,F,I
• Flexible thinking skills	3 of 9 identifies/G,H,I
• Provide support during crises	2 of 9 identifies/A,F
• Organizational and planning abilities	2 of 9 identifies/A,C

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D.2 RESEARCH QUESTION NUMBER TWO

Major Themes

Identifier Description	**Superintendent's Who Identify Theme**
• Strong Close-knit Communities	5 of 9 identifies/A,C,D,E,F
• Resistance to Change	5 of 9 identifies/D,E,F,H,I
• Loss of Steel Industry	5 of 9 identifies/A,B,C,F,G
• Opportunities for Professional Growth	5 of 9 identifies/B,D,E,G,I

Minor Themes

Identifier Description	**Superintendent's Who Identify Theme**
• Prudent risk taking is necessary	4 of 9 identifies/B,D,F,I
• Loyalty to community foster/inhibit/change	4 of 9 identifies/B,G,H,I
• Collaboration/necessary/ counteract/ stagnation	4 of 9 identifies/D,F,H,I
• Geographic isolation /limit/visionary/leadership	3 of 9 identifies/A,D,G
• Cultural belief /power /value/ public education	2 of 9 identifies/A,D
• Public education/ link/ freedom/ opportunity	2 of 9 identifies/A,C

D.3 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

Excellence Model Data

Superintendent A	1. no	2. yes	3. no	4. yes
Superintendent B	1. no	2. no	3. yes	4. yes
Superintendent C	1. no	2. yes	3. no	4. yes
Superintendent D	1. no	2. yes	3. no	4. yes
Superintendent E	1. yes	2. yes	3. yes	4. yes
Superintendent F	1. no	2. yes	3. no	4. yes
Superintendent G	1. yes	2. yes	4. no	4. no
Superintendent H	1. no	2. yes	3. no	4. no
Superintendent I	1. yes	2. yes	3. yes	4. yes
Totals for All	1. 2/9	2. 8/9	3. 3/9	4. 7/9

Total Leaders Model Data

Superintendent A	1. yes	2. yes	3. yes
Superintendent B	1. yes	2. no	3. yes
Superintendent C	1. no	2. yes	3. no
Superintendent D	1. yes	2. yes	3. yes
Superintendent E	1. yes	2. yes	3. yes
Superintendent F	1. no	2. yes	3. yes
Superintendent G	1. no	2. yes	3. no
Superintendent H	1. yes	2. no	3. yes
Superintendent I	1. yes	2. yes	3. yes
Totals for all	1. 5/9	2. 7/9	3. 7/9

21st Century Model Data

Superintendent A	1. no	2. yes	3. yes	4. yes
Superintendent B	1. no	2. no	3. yes	4.yes
Superintendent C	1. no	2. yes	3. yes	4. no
Superintendent D	1. no	2. yes	3. yes	4. yes
Superintendent E	1. yes	2. yes	3. yes	4. yes
Superintendent F	1. yes	2. no	3. yes	4. yes
Superintendent G	1. no	2. yes	4. yes	4. no
Superintendent H	1. no	2. yes	3. yes	4. no
Superintendent I	1. yes	2. yes	3. yes	4. yes
Totals for All	1. 3/9	2. 7/9	3. 9/9	4. 6/9

Texas Model Data

Superintendent A	1. yes	2. no	3. yes	4. yes
Superintendent B	1. no	2. no	3. no	4. yes
Superintendent C	1. no	2. yes	3. yes	4. yes
Superintendent D	1. yes	2. yes	3. no	4. yes
Superintendent E	1. yes	2. yes	3. yes	4. yes
Superintendent F	1. yes	2. no	3. no	4. yes
Superintendent G	1. yes	2. yes	4. no	4. yes
Superintendent H	1. no	2. no	3. no	4. yes
Superintendent I	1. yes	2. yes	3. no	4. yes
Totals for All	1. 6/9	2. 5/9	3. 3/9	4. 9/9

Archetype Model Data

Superintendent A	1. no	2. no	3. no
Superintendent B	1. no	2. no	3. no
Superintendent C	1. no	2. no	3. no
Superintendent D	1. no	2. no	3. no
Superintendent E	1. no	2. yes	3. no
Superintendent F	1. no	2. no	3. no
Superintendent G	1. no	2. no	3. no
Superintendent H	1. no	2. no	3. no
Superintendent I	1. no	2. yes	3. no
Totals for all	1. 0/9	2. 2/9	3. 0/9

Word Fluency Count

Selected Term	Frequency
Visionary	136
Future	22
Communication	12
Forum	9
Pride	9
Creative	9
Commitment	8
Courage	7
Integrity	7
Competitive	5

Word Fluency Count

Selected Term	Frequency
Strategic	5
Collaboration	4
Trust	4
21st Century	3
PSSA	2
Failure	2

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