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# EXAMINING INFORMATION CONSIDERED IN TEXAS SCHOOL BOARD SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATIONS: A MODIFIED REPLICATION STUDY

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**EXAMINING INFORMATION CONSIDERED IN TEXAS SCHOOL BOARD  
SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATIONS: A MODIFIED REPLICATION STUDY**

by

AUDREY G. YOUNG BS, MA, Ed.S

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Education

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY  
(August 2019)

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to identify the information, through a modified replicated study, that Texas public school board trustees utilize as part of their evaluation of the district superintendent. This modified replicated study used a survey with ranking and multiple choice. The survey in this study was developed by Dr. Phil Gore for Washington school board members and modified by the researcher for Texas. A convenience sample of 168 school board trustees across the state of Texas was invited to participate in the study

The findings in this study identified the various elements from which schoolboards derive information to provide background for the superintendent evaluation. It also identified areas to improve the current structure of the Texas superintendent evaluation tool. The comparison of the two studies showed similarities in responses. Both studies found that information used for the superintendent evaluation came from personal interactions and observations.. They both ranked staff surveys as not extremely important for the superintendent evaluation. In both studies the largest responding group was from rural school districts. Texas school board members reported sufficient communication from the superintendent. The Washington study found the possibility of misleading information from the superintendent. Fifty percent of the Texas respondents used the TEA process and performance standard for the superintendent evaluation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ultimately, this research topic surfaced by way of a chance encounter at a Legislative Summit in Austin 2017, where Dr. Phil Gore witnessed a “finger pointing” incident of my doing. For once, my ornery behavior resulted in a positive outcome and struck up an ongoing academic conversation with Dr. Gore related to our mutual interest in the concerns of public education, school board member training, and superintendent responsibilities. This professional friendship led to requesting a copy of Dr. Gore’s dissertation, his co-authored book, and permission to utilize his survey in Texas. Over the past two years, Dr. Gore’s willingness to allow me the freedom to re-design his survey, his unfailing support of my research and his faith in my efforts to work toward improving public education will forever be at the forefront of my appreciation and gratefulness. Dr. Gore, without you and your work, I would not be achieving this long awaited goal. YOU are my dissertation HERO. A deeply felt thank you to Dr. Pauline Sampson, for her patience, time, direction, quiet space, and wisdom. She has been a persistent and caring leader in helping me accomplish this goal. My appreciation and respect for her will continue for a lifetime. Dr. Brent Hawkins, whom I met in a pig barn in San Antonio nearly a decade ago, answered the call to provide guidance through my superintendent internship as well as his time and input on the dissertation committee for which I am most grateful. His questions and comments stimulated further reflection and

discussion. Thank you, Dr. Janet Tareilo, who assured me it is okay to be an average white woman with a purpose in the world and provided me the added confidence to go forward with my dissertation and reach this goal. Her opinions and queries, grounded in concerns for equality, assisted in shaping the commentary. Thank you to Dr. Qualls, for stepping up, pushing me forward, and always expressing just the right thing to say (eg: literary hygiene). Thank you, District 57 Representative Trent Ashby, member of the House Education Committee, who provided the “first ever” doctoral political internship in 2016 and continues to encourage my interest in educational policy, public education and community programming. I would also like to thank SFA doctoral cohort 19 and the professors who helped me along the way. My deepest gratitude goes to Dr. Rutherford and my Leadership TASB colleagues, Master Trustees, and Executive Board, for your reassurance, inspiration, and support. Thank you to TEA Special Advisor to the Commissioner of Education AJ Crabill and the TEA Governance Team, for the opportunity to participate with the Advisory Committee, LSG, and taking the time to “geek out” with me on important education topics and policy. Lastly, all of these aforementioned interactions, brainstorming sessions, and support for my passion helped draw forward questions to seek answers to, and I believe, will assist in building a more thorough superintendent evaluation and improve board trustee understanding of the process.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Jessie Carthel, Frances Maxine, and Rebecca Cleone – three preceding generations of Texas women who represent the embodiment of strong, independent, well-articulated, brilliant women. They set the course for growing and leading generations of successful women through public education to include my daughters – Amanda Gwen, Amy Beth and Addyson Ann. The women before me and the women after me are wonderful examples of being resilient and resourceful, especially when facing life’s challenges. I am eternally grateful for my sister and best of friends (you know who you are), their wisdom, zest for life, love, and support. Our lives are all intertwined with experiences and decisions (some worthy of revisiting, some not) and this dissertation is a reflection upon our friendship = an investment of passion, persistence, grit and determination. I am especially appreciative of my silent supporters (J/R) whom, when my patience was exhausted (as writing this dissertation was exasperating and irritations emerged) their support remained positive, calming and constructive. Balancing the teeter-totter of my life, the men who provided unfailing support, : my dad Chuck; sons Jessie, Dakota, Dustin and grandson Cohen Wayne. I would like to extend a big Texas, “Bless His Heart” to Chip, who was brave enough to marry me and help raise three daughters. Existing in a house full of unpredictable estrogen is a feat unto itself and you



have survived despite all of the challenges. Although the “The A Team” is by far our best accomplishment, I consider this OUR second best accomplishment.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	vi
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Problem.....	1
Texas and Washington School Boards.....	2
The Function and Role of the Superintendent.....	4
The Function and Role of School Boards.....	5
The Opportunity of Superintendent Evaluation.....	10
Problem Statement.....	13
Purpose Statement and Research Questions.....	13
Significance of the Study.....	14
Definition of Terms.....	17
Assumptions.....	20
Limitations.....	21
Delimitations.....	22
Summary and Organization of the Study.....	22

II.	LITERATURE REVIEW .....	24
	Introduction.....	24
	Board-Superintendent Relationships .....	26
	School Board Trustees’ Roles and Responsibilities .....	29
	School Board Trustees’ Background and Experiences.....	32
	Elements of Information .....	32
	Superintendent Evaluation in Texas .....	35
	School Board Trustee Ethics.....	40
	Collaborative Leadership .....	42
	Culture and Climate of Community.....	44
	Summary .....	45
III.	METHODOLOGY .....	47
	Introduction.....	47
	Research Questions.....	48
	Research Design.....	52
	Research Participants .....	54
	Sample.....	54
	Data Collection .....	55
	Instrumentation .....	56
	Data Analysis .....	73
	Summary .....	74

VI.	FINDINGS .....	75
	Elements of Information School Board Members Consider .....	76
	Board Members’ Importance of Consideration .....	80
	Connection between Board Members’ Background and Perspectives .....	89
	Connection between Board Members and the Superintendent .....	95
	Connection between Board Members’ Perceived Role .....	103
	Summary .....	108
V	CONCLUSION.....	109
	Introduction.....	109
	Summary of Findings.....	110
	Conclusion .....	115
	Recommendations for Future Research .....	116
	Reflections .....	117
	REFERENCES .....	118
	APPENDIX A.....	128
	APPENDIX B .....	130
	APPENDIX C .....	132
	APPENDIX D.....	134
	APPENDIX E .....	136
	APPENDIX F.....	138
	APPENDIX G.....	141

VITA .....	148
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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction to the Study**

#### **Background of the Problem**

The Texas public school system currently consist of more than 1,200 school districts with superintendents, 7100 board of trustee members and 4.7 million school children (Texas Parent Teacher Association, 2019). Superintendents are tasked with leading the district in issues related to instruction, finance, management, and community relations. The board of trustees govern school districts and superintendents manage the district. Trustees are tasked with setting the vision and goals that will help bring that vision to fruition through policies, hiring, and evaluating the superintendent. Every board of trustees member brings to the table his or her own expertise and background knowledge. Elected board members are local citizens making decisions affecting students based on shared values, student needs and community expectations.

School board members are expected to possess acumen related to political, financial, educational and policy decisions of Texas public schools. Texas Education Code §11.1511 (b) 1-15, details the following duties and powers of Texas school boards: adopting a vision statement, adopting comprehensive goals, monitoring progress toward

goals, establishing performance goals, monitoring progress toward performance goals, and ensuring the superintendent is accountable (Plough, 2014).

### **Texas and Washington School Boards**

The state of Washington and the state of Texas have similar administrative codes that define the authority of the school boards. In 2006, Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) published a report that created the foundation for developing an understanding and commitment to a shared set of values and a common vision for public education in Texas, our public schools, and their success on which our democracy depends (TASA, 2006). According to Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), trustees are Texas school board members elected by the community to make important decisions about the local school system. Trustees in Texas are not paid, so school boards bring together people who are passionate about quality education and commit their time to this public service (TASB, 2019). Training throughout the term of a board member, is necessary for providing support as part of managing the business of a school district. According to superintendents as part of the 2008 Visioning Institute, “Trustees cannot take a passive role and expect the organization to continue to be successful” (Zlotkin, 1993, p. 23). The creation of a system of public education is a primary responsibility of the state; however, the operation of the system is a local function (TASA, 2006). However, the responsibility of the trustee team is to work with the superintendent with an overall effect on student outcomes. “One of the most critical decisions a board makes is whom to hire as superintendent. The superintendent, as chief executive officer of the district, is responsible for implementing policies set by the board and is the person held

accountable for the smooth and successful operation of its schools” (My Texas Public School, TASB, 2019). Texas Education Code Chapter 11. Sec. 11.002. states:

“responsibility of school districts for public education ... have the primary responsibility for implementing the state's system of public education and ensuring student performance in accordance with this code”.

In Washington, the Revised Code (RCW) 28A.150.230(2) entitled “District school directors’ responsibilities states:

It shall be the responsibility of each common school district board of directors to adopt policies to:

(a) Establish performance criteria and an evaluation process for its superintendent, classified staff, certificated personnel, including administrative staff, and for all programs constituting a part of such district’s curriculum.

(b) Determine the final assignment of staff, certificated or classified, according to board enumerated classroom and program needs and data, based upon a plan to ensure that the assignment policy

(c) Provide information to the local community and its electorate describing the school district’s policies concerning hiring, assigning, terminating, and evaluating staff.

(d) Determine the amount of instructional hours necessary for any student to acquire a quality education in such district.

(e) Determine the allocation of staff time.



(f) Establish final curriculum standards consistent with law and rules of the superintendent of public instruction.

(g) Evaluate teaching materials, including textbooks, teaching aids, handouts, or other printed material, in public hearing upon complaint by parents, guardians or custodians of students.”

Another authority Washington state law (RCW 28A.400.010) affords to a school board is the right to hire a superintendent as the chief administrator to lead and oversee daily and routine operations of the school district. The law grants discretion to the school board to determine the qualifications and longevity of a superintendent (Gore, 2016).

### **The Function and Role of the Superintendent**

The school superintendent is the senior leader of a district. Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) cites the average tenure of a superintendent in a given Texas school district is three years (ASA, 2019). The district superintendent requires an exceptionally well-rounded set of skills to lead and represent the district as a whole. Possessing strong interpersonal skills is an essential quality for a school superintendent so that they can develop positive relationships with parents, school board members and district employees (Meyer, 2018). A base knowledge in policy, finance, personnel, and student and community needs, are some of the areas in which superintendents must tap into their intellectual resources in order to manage the day-to-day operations.

“In Texas, nothing in the education code expressly requires a school district to hire a superintendent. Even so, numerous statutes in the state exclusively authorize the superintendent to perform certain duties, with many others

completed under the direction and supervision of the superintendent.” (Bingham, 2018, p. 1)

For example, Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 11.251 (d) states:

The board shall also ensure that an administrative procedure is provided to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, district-level committee members, and campus-level committee members in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization.

### **The Function and Role of School Boards**

The Texas system of local school districts and boards of trustees embodies representative and community-centered government. Elected board members are local citizens making decisions affecting students based on shared values, student needs and community expectations. Leadership is important for a successful public school environment because the success of the future is dependent on our current school population. School leaders in Texas are held accountable for the academic improvement and transformation of public schools and play a significant role as community leaders. The shift in power in setting education policy from the local community to the state and federal government has resulted in a system where districts feel more accountable to the Legislature than to their students and their communities (TASA, 2006).

The responsibility of the board of trustees has grown exponentially over the past few decades. The responsibility of the board can be grouped into five areas: (1) adopt goals and priorities and monitoring the success of those goals; (2) adopt

policies and review policies; (3) adopt a budget and set tax rate; (4) hire and evaluate the superintendent; (5) communicate with the community” (My Texas Public School, TASB, 2019, p.1 ).

Within the role of the school board member, there are varying ideas as to what obligation each member has and, consequently, the displacement of that concern becomes the responsibility of the superintendent. “School boards, as the governing bodies of a school district, are responsible for the overall vision and direction of the district. They enact policies as parameters that direct the administration of the school district” (Gore, 2016, p. 11). Recently, the working relationship of boards of trustees and superintendents has been characterized as more complex and stressful due to educational reform and high expectations (Wright, 2002). When district leaders, including boards of trustees and district superintendents, work together effectively, students benefit from the outcomes. To meet the challenges of public education, school boards and superintendents must function together as a leadership team (TEA, 2012).

As written in *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas* by the superintendent participants as part of the Visioning Institute through TASA in 2008:

“The local/state partnership in providing public education is founded on a set of core values: equity, adequacy, and liberty. Equity and adequacy are associated with the state’s responsibility to fund public education, while local control of decisions that matter is embedded in the concept of liberty. The value of local control, however, has been superseded by the dominant value of state control.” (p.

8)

As board members elected by voters, trustees face difficult choices. Board members come to their role carrying with them their own preferences, experiences, and backgrounds. Trustees experience self-sacrifice and expose themselves to public scrutiny. “The individual board member’s major responsibility is to study issues facing the district, evaluate needs and resources, and, after due consideration, vote in the best interest of all students” (TASB, 2019 p.1).

Increased expectation by the state, of public school districts, in the areas of accountability and standards have emphasized the pressure placed on school boards to meet these demands (Beckham & Willis, 2019). Training, knowledge, skills and preparation are all characteristics that help build leadership teams. However, Danzberger, Kirst, and Usdan (1993) reported that lack of accountability and failure to improve deficiencies are what plague school boards and their success as a whole team. In 2008, superintendents of the TASA Visioning Institute wrote, What Texas school board members envision comes directly from the aspirations of the citizens, parents, community leaders, students, teachers, and school board members who we interact with every day (TASA, 2008). Challenges facing public school systems are difficult and uncertain, especially when external factors are involved. Texas has delegated much of the responsibility for education to the local school board and superintendents (TASB, 2019).

Amplified attention afforded to public education in the state of Texas has augmented the demands on superintendents and school boards through accountability standards. The commissioner of education, the State Board of Education (SBOE), and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) guide and monitor public education in Texas. The

State Board of Education (SBOE) provides leadership and state level administration as prescribed by law, and the commissioner and TEA staff implement state education policy (TASB, 2019). Following in the same authority, the organizational hierarchy of the Independent School Districts in Texas places the responsibility for the employment of superintendents in the hands of elected school board members.

Board members are to annually determine district needs with their team by reviewing the Framework for School Board Development (TEA, 2012). The Framework, known colloquially as “The Framework”, is a TEA document, developed by the State Board of Education (SBOE) in 1996 and revised in 2012, that outlines the tasks a board performs in its governing capacity to ensure effectiveness and efficiency and to provide the critical areas of development for all public school boards. The Framework focuses on five areas: vision, structure, accountability, advocacy, and unity and provides specific guidance for boards. Most importantly, the framework serves as a job description of trustees. Table 1 shows the five research-based components of the framework and the board’s responsibility (Plough, 2014, p. 40).

Table 1

*Texas Framework for School Board Governance*

<b><u>Critical Area:</u></b>	<b><u>Board Responsibility</u></b>
Vision	Ensure creation of a shared vision
Structure	Provide guidance and direction to accomplish that vision
Accountability	Measure and communicates how well the vision is being accomplished
Advocacy	Promote the vision
Unity	Work with the superintendent to lead district toward vision

*Note.* Information on Texas *Framework for School Board Governance* available at [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us)

In addition, the amount of time board members spend on board work is increasing (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000; Mountford, 2004). Members of boards of trustees in Texas serve on a volunteer basis, without compensation, in service to their students and communities (Texas Education Code, Local Organization and Governance, Sec. 11.061d). School boards, as defined by Texas Education Chapter 11, Subchapter D, are also responsible to:

- Adopt policies that inform district actions.
- Hire a superintendent to serve as the chief executive officer of the district and evaluate the superintendent's success.

- Ensure creation of a vision and goals for the district and evaluate district success.
- Approve an annual budget consistent with the district vision.
- Communicate the district’s vision and success to the community (TASB, 2019).

### **The Opportunity of Superintendent Evaluation**

Understanding the elements of information that affect superintendent evaluations, board-superintendent relationships, and communication between the two entities helps board of trustees and superintendents better serve the needs of their communities in both present and future situations of public school education. According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §150.1031, General Provisions for Superintendent Appraisal, “each school district shall appraise each administrator annually using either the commissioner’s recommended process and criteria or a locally developed and board approved process and criteria”.

Carter and Cunningham (1997) recognized “four peculiar conditions:

(1) individual board members are often elected; (2) school boards are tightly regulated by state or provincial authorities; (3) school boards preside in the public spotlight over an emotional topic; and (4) everyone thinks he or she is an expert because, after all, we all went to school” as part of what creates a difficult arena in which school boards function” (p. 215).

According to Gore (2016), inappropriate superintendent evaluations directly impact the quality of superintendent-school board relationships. “School boards, parents, teachers, students, community members, and other stakeholders have always evaluated superintendents informally” (Sonedecker, 1984, p. 2). The interaction between the two

main entities, the superintendent and board of trustees, as they focus on their respective roles of management and policy, has been given varied attention, including motivation for becoming a school board member, power struggles, effect on overall school performance, and group functioning (Glass, 2001; Kowalski & Brunner, 2011). Other research has pointed to elements of critical areas that place value on the impact of leadership behaviors (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Glass, 2001).

“The complexity of evaluation and the significance of the job performed by the superintendent are what make the evaluation problem so fascinating” (Bolton, 1980, p. viii). Examples such as personal agendas, illegal meetings held in private, lack of mutual accountability and support for the superintendent’s recommendations are some of the documented ways that school boards collect and utilize information (Flores, 2017; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). The communication with the superintendent and perceived elements of information influencing each corresponding part of the rapport amongst district leadership lends itself to further investigation.

School board members assign a value to what they believe are important measures by which a superintendent is performing when they evaluate the superintendent. Some of these values may include a school board member’s perception of the superintendent’s quality of leadership, implementation of policy, overall student achievement data, financial management of the district’s local, state and federal funds, passing a bond or tax ratification and collaboration with other governmental entities (Kirp & Jensen, 1986; Konnert & Augenstein, 1985; Marzano & Waters, 2009). Alsbury (2008) reported other areas of board member’s concern may be overall parent, teacher, and staff satisfaction,



how well the superintendent facilitates student recognition, district safety, and the superintendent's reaction to emergency crisis.

According to Mountford (2004), "it is important that board member-superintendent teams critically examine the effect their agendas and their conceptions of power have on their behaviors and discuss how these factors may be affecting both their relationships with each other and districtwide improvement" (p. 735). In Texas, the superintendent evaluation remains a mixed bag. There is no singular working superintendent evaluation document available to school boards. Local control over which combination of available resources remains in effect. The following instruments are currently available from the state for the superintendent evaluation:

- Texas Education Agency – superintendent recommended evaluation tool (Education Service Center Region 13, 2019).
- Lone Star Governance – sample superintendent evaluation (TEA, 2019).
- Texas Association of School Boards – model of superintendent evaluation tool (TASB, 2019).

Additional elements of information, potentially impactful to the superintendent evaluation and not explicitly defined or calculated into the current Texas superintendent performance may be a school board member's personal observation of the superintendent in action and their own interaction with the superintendent. Influential elements to board members may be fellow board member's, parent's, staff, student, teacher, and community member's opinion about the superintendent, religious affiliations, and emotional or social

intelligence demonstrated by the superintendent (Dawson & Quinn, 2000; McCurdy, 1993).

### **Problem Statement**

School board members are expected to make important decisions that directly impact students without having been provided the political, financial, educational, or statutory training necessary for such monumental tasks. In Texas, “lay-elected citizens function as a collective to oversee and govern the administration of our schools” (Gore, 2016, p. 1). The responsibility of the board trustee team to work with the superintendent, which ultimately affects the outcomes of the district, is not without its own set of challenges. Boards are as honest to their role as superintendents are to theirs. The problem addressed by this study was the connection between the school board, within their perceived roles and responsibilities and their relationship with the superintendent, which affect the results of the performance evaluation. The researcher explored the elements of information, board members’ evaluation training, and examined the use of the board’s acquired knowledge as part of the superintendent evaluation process.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to identify the elements of information, through a modified replicated study, that Texas public school board members utilize as part of their evaluation of the district superintendent. A study of the elements of information used by school board trustees, as part of the superintendent evaluation, is important to provide an understanding into the board-superintendent relationship, board members’ expectation of

the superintendent, and responsibility that board members perceive as it relates to their role.

The research questions that guided the study included:

1. What elements of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent?
2. What do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent?
3. What is the connection between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?
4. What is the connection between board members' communication with the superintendent and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?
5. What is the connection between how school board members conceive of their role and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?

### **Significance of the Study**

This modified replicated study fills a gap in the existing research by investigating the ways, where from, and to what extent, elements of information collected by school board members impacts the superintendent evaluation (Gore, 2016). The research in this study provides some insight into the nature of superintendent evaluation as it relates to the responsibility of the board of trustees using multiple elements of information.

Specifically, this modified replicated study investigated “the information school board

members consider when evaluating a superintendent and where they gather information regarding the superintendent's performance" (Gore, 2016, p. 8).

Dr. Phil Gore conducted the original study in Washington, and his methodology was performed in phases. The findings from his research state that "school boards want superintendents to exercise consistent, comprehensive, thorough, respectful, and effective leadership with staff, the community, and the board" (Gore, 2016, p. 143). Whereas Dr. Gore's study utilized observations and interviews, this current survey used a questionnaire that included multiple choice and ranking. This research is unique in that it focuses on school boards in the state of Texas, therefore, the findings of this study may be applied specifically to school districts throughout Texas and utilized for future trainings. The current trend in a reduction of highly qualified superintendents vying for positions is worrisome and serves to highlight the importance of studying and analyzing factors and dynamics that impact one of the most complex and unique roles in public education (Flores, 2017, p. 40).

It is important to dissect the information that school boards consider as part of the superintendent evaluation. Smoley (1999) contended members of school boards and superintendents must genuinely address the status of their relationship, as these elements may affect district outcomes through evidentiary measures, specifically the superintendent evaluation. School board members choose varying methods by which they communicate with the superintendent as it relates their own expertise and background. "The functional relationship between the school board and the

superintendent is a critical connection which stands at the apex of the organizational pyramid in education” (Tallerico, 1989, p. 1).

The interplay between boards of trustees and superintendents is imperative to efficaciously meeting the changing demands required by legislation through policy implementation (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Hess & Meeks, 2010). Communication is a vital part of the success in any organization and affects everyone at every level in the district. The method in which the superintendent facilitates the communicative collaboration is found by analyzing the process by which the board agenda is created, the contents of the monthly agenda, and compliance with state required policies. The communication with the superintendent impacts scheduling and accomplishing training for school board trustees, the overall timeliness of the board’s completion of tasks, their receiving of continuing education credits, and the development of local projects.

The school board and the superintendent, as a “Team of 8”, feel the pressure from stakeholders to meet the perceived standards of success (TEA, 2007). The superintendent is the most visible, most vulnerable, and potentially most influential member of the organization (Campbell & Greene, 1994). Although the leadership roles between the board and superintendent appear to be clearly defined, there are a number of relationship dynamics that are subtly at play in the governance of the district (Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, & Sybouts, 1996). This modified replicated study provides context for boards of trustees as to the elements they consider important to them when evaluating superintendents.

## **Definition of Terms**

This section provides conceptual definitions of key terms that are used throughout the study. In this research, the following terms are defined:

### **Board Member/Trustee.**

For this study, this term refers to an individual person or member of a board given control or powers of administration of property in trust with a legal obligation to administer it solely for the purposes specified (Merriam-Webster.com)

### **Board of Trustees.**

The board of trustees is an appointed or elected board that supervises the affairs of a public or private organization. This term was used interchangeably throughout the study with the term school board. The board of trustees has primary responsibility for ensuring that the district or school complies with all applicable requirements of state educational programs (TEA, 2017).

### **Formative.**

Assessment in the midst of a cycle (LSG, 2019, p. 46).

### **Independent School District.**

A group of public schools in the state of Texas governed by its own independent and local school board (TEA, 2017).

### **Lone Star Governance (LSG).**

The State of Texas' continuous improvement framework for governing teams (TEA, 2019).

**Public education.**

Federally funded elementary and secondary education (K-12) in America (Feng, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Sass, Flores, Claeys & Perez, 2012).

**School board.**

A local board or authority responsible for the provision and maintenance of schools. This term was used interchangeably throughout the study with Board of Trustees (TASB, 2017).

**Stakeholders.**

(Not limited to): Students, parents, community residents, staff members, and tax payers (LSG, 2019, p. 45).

**State Board of Education (SBOE).**

The State Board of Education (SBOE) adopts rules and establishes policies that govern a wide range of educational programs and services provided by Texas public schools. (Texas Parent Teacher Association, 2019).

**Summative.**

Assessment at the end of a cycle (LSG, 2019, p.48)

**Superintendent.**

A person who manages or superintends an organization or activity.

Superintendents are the chief executive educational leaders in local school districts.

Specifically, in this study, the term refers to those that hold the title of Superintendent of Schools in the State of Texas (TEA, 2007).

**Superintendent evaluation.**

The process of assessing the quality of work of superintendents by Texas school boards based on varied criteria and recommended state guidelines directed at determining superintendent performance (DiPaola, 2010).

**Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA).**

Texas Association of School Administrators, founded in 1925, is the professional association for Texas school administrators, providing networking and professional learning opportunities, legislative advocacy, and targeted communications to support the work of superintendents and other school leaders (TASA, 2002).

**Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP).**

Established in 1922, its purpose is to build an active network of educators that want to take responsibility for the quality of school leadership (TASSP, 2019).

**Texas Association of School Boards (TASB).**

Texas Association of School Boards is a voluntary, nonprofit, statewide educational association that serves and represents local Texas school boards and was established in 1949 (TASB, 2019).

**Texas Education Agency (TEA).**

Texas Education Agency. This is the agency established by the state legislature to govern education in the state of Texas (TEA, 2002).

**Team of 8.**

Referring to the superintendent and the standard number of seven board members working as a unified whole (TEA, 2012).



**Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA).**

Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association, formed in 1917, relates to the education industry, particularly the PreK to Grade 8 (TEPSA, 2014).

**Assumptions**

The study used data analyzed from a convenience sample of school board trustees about the sources of information they considered when performing their most recent superintendent evaluations (Gore, 2016; Hess & Meeks, 2010). The data were specific to Texas public school boards. The researcher applied understanding from the data to answer the research questions that aligned with the purpose of the study. According to Gay and Airasian (2000) commented, an assumption “is any important ‘fact’ presumed to be true but not actually verified”. This insight could help school prospective superintendents understand the characteristics desired by school boards (Wright, 2002).

The researcher assumed, in conducting the study, that:

1. the data provided in the survey was clear and specific;
2. the research was conducted in a specific time-frame;
3. the participants were truthful in their responses;
4. the methods used to gather and evaluate the data yielded data with significance to school board training and superintendent-board of trustees’ relationship; and
5. the board member had access to the internet to complete the survey.

The assumptions that the researcher had entering this study were based on experience as a current board of trustees’ member, as well as an employee of the public school system functioning under the authority of a board of trustees. The researcher

assumed that board members utilized their personal belief systems, own idealistic views, and their personal experiences to form opinions that provided a basis for their decision-making.

### **Limitations**

According to Gay and Airasian (2000), a limitation “is some aspect of the study that the researcher knows may negatively affect the study but over which he or she has no control” (p. 108). As Van Dalen (1979) noted, “verbal symbols lack precision; words do not hold the same meaning for all people for all times and in all contexts” (p. 203). When interpreting the results of this study, the following limitations were taken into consideration

1. not every school board member in the state of Texas was included in the survey;
2. email contacts for school board members may not be accurate;
3. the list of school board members did not include district changes in boards;
4. trustees were from the state of Texas so results may not be generalizable outside the state of Texas;
5. attitudes, perceptions, and lens through which the responses were provided are subjective; and
6. results are dependent upon the honesty, accuracy, and individual clarity of the respondents.

## **Delimitations**

When interpreting the results of this study, the following delimitations were taken into consideration:

1. This study was delimited by being restricted to Texas public school boards.
2. This study was delimited by new and experienced Texas public school board members who participated in this study.
3. This study was delimited by denying access of the researcher's current board, on which the researcher was elected, to the survey.

## **Summary and Organization of the Study**

Public school boards and superintendents play a critical role in the measured success of their school students and districts as a whole. The elements surrounding the considerations made with consideration to the superintendent evaluation, by the board of trustees, and the impact on superintendent evaluation should be uncovered. This modified replication study examined the information considered by Texas school board trustees as part of the superintendent evaluation.

This study was organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduced the study. Chapter II synthesizes the literature related to board and superintendent relationships, school board trustees' roles and responsibilities, school board trustees' background and experience, elements of information, superintendent evaluation in Texas, school board member ethics, collaborative leadership, and the culture and climate of community. Chapter III outlines the design of the modified replication, the study participants, data collection, data analysis, comparison to the original study and a summary of the research.

Chapter IV analyzes and reports the findings of the study with a comparison to the original study. Chapter V examines the conclusions of the study, discusses implications of the study, limitations of the study, and presents additional considerations for future research, with a comparison to the original study.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

Literature examining the relationship between Texas boards of trustees and superintendents is a growing body of research. The study of existing literature on the quality and complex nature of relationships between the superintendent and board of trustees presents an opportunity to further explore the dynamics of this relationship and the impact on the superintendent evaluation. “What school boards need is mentorship of new board members along with a carefully crafted inventory of best practices in board governance that both directs and constrains their actions” (Lorentzen, xvii, 2013). Two major guiding entities within the state of Texas that assist administrators and board members with training are Texas Association of School Administrators and Texas Association of School Boards.

Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA) Deputy Executive Director Mark Terry identified a growing gap between the duty of the Texas legislature to provide suitable support and maintenance of an efficient system of free public schools throughout the state and the realities and perceptions facing those schools from the citizens of the state (TEPSA, 2017). The superintendent and local citizens of

each school district, in the state of Texas, are the primary informers of school board members concerning public school issues. Higgins and Abowitz (2011) contemplated a framework for considering the extent to which schools are fulfilling public aims. “The political position of school board members, as an elected representative from their community, could suggest that board members are beholden to their electorate and inclined to retain favorability with a majority of voters. Consequently, the superintendents hired by these elected boards may be in a politically volatile role” (Gore, 2016, p. 24).

Chapter Two is divided into nine sections with the purpose of highlighting the existing research and supporting the need for this modified replicated study in Texas. The first section introduces the study. The second section focuses on the relationship between the board of trustees and superintendent and the dynamics that influenced that relationship. The third section defines the roles and responsibilities of the school board and board’s function. The fourth section highlights school board trustees’ background and experiences that they bring to the superintendent-board member team. The fifth section describes elements of information by which board members collect data from stakeholders. The sixth section provides the foundation for the superintendent evaluation, the current evaluation tools available in Texas and available training related to the superintendent evaluation. The seventh section discussed school board member ethics and required training of the school board member and the superintendent team. The eighth section shares trends concerning collaborative leadership between and amongst the

superintendent and the school board members. The ninth section asserts the value of culture and climate of community to the public school system.

### **Board-Superintendent Relationships**

Superintendents new to a district must build relationships with school personnel and community (Hackett, 2015). Johnson and Payne (1997) attributed board-superintendent differentiations to backgrounds and perceptions:

“Board and superintendents have troubled relationships because they are from different tribes. Board members are amateurs in education, superintendents are professionals; board members are volunteers, superintendents are paid; board members are part-time, superintendents are full-time; board members are usually elected, superintendents are usually appointed; board members hold their power collectively, superintendents hold their power individually” (p. 47).

The inability to establish the relationships may impact a superintendent’s longevity in a district (Grissom & Anderson, 2012). Flores (2017) stated that aside from a supervisory capacity, there are few mandates for school boards to nurture and foster meaningful trusting two-way relationships with their superintendents. “The traditional trustee-superintendent relationship is based on:

(1) a lack of independent knowledge, or direct access to knowledge, on the part of trustees; and (2) an expectation—by both parties—that the paid employee (the superintendent) should be the expert and do the work. By and large, the culture of school districts and superintendent organizations has fostered the continuation of this relationship” (Zlotin, 1993, p. 22).

The superintendent-school board relationship is a cornerstone for effective school governance (Alsbury 2008; Flores, 2017; Marzano & Waters, 2009). Data from the 2002 dissertation of Eric K. Wright, *A Study of Texas Public School Superintendents' Perceptions of Board/Superintendent Relations*, stated “With the proliferation of school board members who are elected on single-issues or private agendas, superintendents today are faced with conflict and the task of unifying goals for their school boards” (p. 2). The study also “indicated that conflict is rarely perceived to exist between superintendents and school boards in Texas” (p. v.). Wright (2002) indicated that the way in which to reduce conflict is to focus decision and policy on what is best for students and to communicate constantly and effectively with each board member.

The state of Texas requires collaboration between the superintendent and school board as defined in Texas Education Code (TEC) Sec. 11.1512. The code states: “(a) In relation to the superintendent of the school district, the board of trustees of the district has the powers and duties specified by Sections 11.1511(b) and (c).

The superintendent shall, on a day-to-day basis, ensure the implementation of the policies created by the board.

(b) The board of trustees and the superintendent shall work together to:

- (1) advocate for the high achievement of all district students;
- (2) create and support connections with community organizations to provide community-wide support for the high achievement of all district students;
- (3) provide educational leadership for the district, including leadership in developing the district vision statement and long-range educational plan;



(4) establish district-wide policies and annual goals that are tied directly to the district's vision statement and long-range educational plan;

(5) support the professional development of principals, teachers, and other staff; and

(6) periodically evaluate board and superintendent leadership, governance, and teamwork.”

Superintendents are responsible for every aspect of the performance of the organization (Duvall, 2005). “As changes have occurred in the school board/superintendent relationship, the chief executive had to devote an increasing amount of time maintaining and nurturing relationships with the governing board” (Sonedecker, 1984, p. 65). School board relationships with superintendents showed that the superintendent position is challenging; therefore, some certified candidates choose not to apply for the superintendent position because of concerns with finances, accountability, as well as community and board relations (Kowalski & Brunner, 2011). “As public education continues to be under the microscope, and as schools are being held more and more accountable for results, tension and pressure seem to be inevitable in the superintendency” (Wright, 2002, p. 18). Duvall (2005) developed an instrument aimed at measuring the quality of relationship between the school board and the superintendent (called the Strength of Relationship scale, or SOR) and found that —high levels of agreement and higher overall Strength of Relationship between the board and the superintendent correlate with higher district student achievement” (p. 75).

Existing literature recognizes that a major stressor and tension for superintendents is a poor relationship with the school board (Decman, Badget, & Shaunessey 2018; Gore, 2016). According to Sonendecker (1984), “if board members and superintendents are “coming and going” in a school district, establishing the desired working team is difficult, let alone putting an effective superintendent evaluation program in place” (p. 61). By involving stakeholders in the process of studying current trends and making collaborative decisions related to the direction of a district, a superintendent can mitigate some of the consternation that often accompanies the change process (Decman, Badget, & Shaunessey, 2018). This research provides an opportunity to study and reflect upon such aspects as relational perceptions, roles, dynamics, and mutual expectations between both parties so these can be identified, considered and clarified (Gore, 2016). “Beyond a few statutory provisions, the relationship between the school board and the superintendent is controlled more by common sense than by law” (Sonedecker, 1984, p. 60).

### **School Board Trustees’ Roles and Responsibilities**

The superintendent of a district affects all parts of the organization as well as student learning (Honig, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Marzano & Waters, 2009). Gore (2016) recognized the relationship between the board of trustees and superintendent as an intersection of where the skills and expertise of the hired professionals (e.g.: superintendent) meeting the will of the people they serve (e.g.: the school board). School board members familiarizing themselves with the broad challenges facing public education throughout the state, even if those challenges do not necessarily challenge their

particular district in the immediate future, will aid in their understanding of how superintendents manage their school district (Dawson & Quinn, 2000).

Ravitch's (2013) *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools* showed many of the present challenges facing public schools. Ravitch (2013) highlighted challenges that educators should be aware of as potential pitfalls that should be identified and addressed within their own schools. One of the most critical responsibilities that local school boards must carry out is the selection of the superintendent (Glass, 2001; Oishi, 2012, Romano, 2017).

“The nature of school politics is wrought in conflict and as such, the relationship between superintendents and local school board members is already predispositioned to collide. It is precisely because of this nature that school boards and superintendents exert earnest efforts to establish solid relationships between themselves” (Flores, 2017, p. 47).

There are, and will continue to be, personal elements of trust and expertness as it relates to the perceived competency of the superintendent as well as the board. McCurdy (1993) demanded a clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the board trustees and of the superintendent that will support effective and successful relationships between them. The evidentiary product of the communicative collaboration is found in the process by which the board agenda is created, the contents of the agenda, compliance with state required policies, continuing education credits, scheduling and accomplishment of training, and overall timeliness of the board's completion of tasks (Glass et al, 2000; Gore 2016; TEA, 2007).

First-hand knowledge from school boards and superintendents in Texas provides current and future superintendents, as well as current and future school board trustees, insights into the preferences and perceptions of school boards impacting the evaluation of superintendents (Browne-Ferrigno, Bjork, & Kowalski, 2018).

“Leaders in many school systems - specifically trustees and other appointed or elected officials - often fail to understand or practice their statutory role of advocacy for public schools in their local communities, at the grassroots level, or in the legislature. If these gaps in leadership were to be closed, there would be a more efficient and effective public school system in Texas, as “a successful educational enterprise involves co-operation between trustees and superintendents” (Awender, 1985, p. 194).

“Superintendents must ensure that his or her teammates—the trustees—are ready: it is disastrous to empower unqualified people with critical decision-making power” (Zlotin, 1993, p. 23). Finally, leadership (board-superintendent) in public education is struggling to understand the public it serves, while making decisions “amidst continuing societal changes” (Plough, 2014, p. 42). Mountford (2004) cited that some board members feel that the increased governmental control of schools has made the decision making process by the board and superintendent team more difficult. Whereas other board members have reported that the increased control has caused them to become apathetic in their role (Danzberger et. al., 1993; Kowalski, 1999; Tallerico, 1989).

### **School Board Trustees' Background and Experience**

What motivates a community member to run for the elected position of public school board member is a bit of an anomaly. Altruistic belief in civic duty, personal interest, a stepping-stone to obtain political experiences or representation of a particular organization and/or group of citizens could be the motivating factor for placing one's self in the proverbial lime-light. A major role of school boards is the hiring of the superintendent (Sharp & Walter, 2009). Many school board members feel that this is a major reason they chose to run for the school board (Trujillo, 2013).

In the state of Texas, the requirements to run for school board are minimal. Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 11.059 states the qualifications to run for school board are: residence one year in state and six months in the school district prior to the filing deadline. (Brown v. Patterson, 609 SW 2nd 287; Texas Elec. Code, Section 141.001(a)) minimum age, 18 years old and must be a registered voter in the territory elected from by the filing deadline. Grissom (2014) found that... district characteristics, school board ratings of their own functioning, and board members' assessments of the superintendent's performance were predictors of other kinds of exits (of superintendents) within three years.

### **Elements of Information for the Superintendent Evaluation**

The state of Texas' legislature and the insistence for higher test scores, creates an atmosphere of mistrust in which the general public quickly loses faith that our schools are actually doing anything of value with their students. Ravitch (2013) stated, that "In every state...experts in education...know what their students need, and their collective voice

should be part of any public decision about school improvement” (p. 22). Although there are changes in the superintendent evaluation criteria and forms, the elements continue to be a concern for many years, even decades. Most importantly, summative evaluations are not a “garbage can for dumping an entire year of unresolved issues, unanswered questions, and untouched peeves onto the superintendent” (Cuban, 1977, p. 6).

In 1977, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) published an executive handbook series in which included a piece by Robert Olds entitled “Administrative and Supervisory Evaluation”. Olds (1977) added aspects to the evaluation of the superintendent stating:

“(1) it is usually associated with negativism; a means of flunking, firing, or demoting. The purpose was generally seen as punitive. (2) It was often carried out in imperialistic fashion, with conclusions based not upon facts and analysis but upon impressions, questionable data, doubtful checklists, misinformation, and biases. (3) Evaluation, especially in non-personnel matters, may be so dressed with verbal camouflage from start to finish that its primary purpose of creating confusion is the main achievement” (v.4).

Results from a survey conducted by Sampson, Peddy, Roberts and Young (2018), elicited responses from school board members which compared the school board members’ ranking of their current superintendent with the current superintendents’ ranking of themselves. The ranking of item number one by the school board members for their current superintendent was the ability to establish and communicate non-negotiables. The current superintendents ranked their school finance experience and their

ability to establish and communicate non-negotiables as number one. Next, the school board members ranked their superintendent for the ability to collaborate and communicate well with others as second.

Sampson, et al. (2018) reported that the superintendents ranked their ability to manage the district tied in different areas between number one, four, seven, and ten. The item of school finance experience was ranked the last by the school board members. The school board members also ranked their superintendents' ability to manage the district well and their ability to monitor and create quality teaching for student learning respectively ninth and eight. The current superintendents ranked nine, the item of the ability to establish and communicate non-negotiables (Sampson, et al., 2018).

There were many differences between the school board members and the superintendent according to the Sampson, et. al. 2018 survey. The school board members ranked the ability to establish and communicate non-negotiables high while the superintendents ranked it low. The school board members ranked school finance experience last while the superintendents had school finance experience ranked first. The school board members and superintendents ranked the ability for systemic change in the top third of rankings. Also, the ability to provide staff with support and feedback was ranked by school board members and superintendents in the lowest third of rankings. Tapping into these differentiations in priority may be the way that superintendents impact their own evaluation, as school board members are part of the community that receives the publicized information (Sampson, et. al, 2018). According to John Wayne Sonedecker (1984),

“casual, unspecified evaluations of the superintendent do not work. Unspecified evaluations will not help avoid misunderstandings that develop between a board and its chief executive officer and they do not facilitate the efficient conversion of board policy into school system practice” (p. 39).

Bolton identified the following problems of measurement in his guide *Evaluating Administrative Personnel in School Systems*:

“(1) Prejudice, bias or poor judgment of the person(s) doing the evaluation. (2) Inconsistency of the reaction of the person(s) doing the evaluation to the behavior of the administrator evaluated. (3) Rating devices that require a conclusion about several bits of information and a response to a single scale. (4) Each person who is responsible for measuring any process or product of an administrator is influenced by his/her own physical and mental health (internal feelings) as well as by surroundings. (5) Attempts to measure too much. (6) Continuation of a prior viewpoint into other situations even though the behavior of the individual changes. (7) Consistent over – or under – evaluation. Some people have a tendency to be consistently lenient while others tend to be harsh” (Bolton, 1980, p. 68-70).

### **Superintendent Evaluation in Texas**

When considering the challenges of moving public education away from strictly high stakes testing and its focus on quantitative outputs, people within the superintendency are challenged to make a change. There is little argument over the pressures, legislative demands, and public scrutiny that the position of superintendency



experiences. “The evaluation of leadership continues to be an elusive goal” (Sonedecker, 1984, p. 26). Consequently, implementing changes are the most difficult part of the role of the superintendent. Furthermore, projecting a clear idea of what district management means and how to successfully guide the board and the stakeholders along with it, are also an essential part of the superintendent leadership role. Areas that contribute to the overall quality of the superintendent evaluation is the lack of school board preparation, appropriate evaluative tools and instruments and professional development (Flores, 2017).

Ansar (2015) contended that in order to measure the performance of superintendent, “it is necessary to know the scope of superintendent roles, which involve academic and managerial supervision” (p. 103). One major challenge of the superintendent is to get all stakeholder groups working together and headed down the same path while avoiding bias and inconsistency. Superintendents should let control go and “...allow the growth of responsibility and development of leadership abilities to make shared decision making... function smoothly” (Zlotin, 1993, p. 23).

“School boards should be able to appraise the performance of their superintendents in a constructive and effective manner if they are to delegate proper authority for the administration of school affairs to the superintendent and still maintain their accountability to local citizens and to the state” (Booth & Glaub, 1978. p. 19).

As set forth by Texas Education Code 39.306, the district’s annual performance report should be utilized as part of the superintendent’s appraisal on student performance. It is

the responsibility of the school board to determine, through the utilization of tools as prescribed by the Texas Education Agency and legislation, a superintendent's success and or failure in reaching the school district's goals. Texas Education Code 21. 354 and Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 provide two options for the annual appraisal of the superintendent: (1) Texas Education Agency (TEA) Commissioner recommended appraisal process and performance criteria and (2) District developed appraisal process in consultation with the district and campus-level committees (adopted by the board).

Subsection (b) of the Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 (Appendix F) states: the commissioner's recommended appraisal process and criteria for a superintendent shall include, at a minimum: (1) an annual evaluation of the superintendent; and (2) a student performance domain. Most recently adopted, as of January, 2019, is an additional choice for the superintendent evaluation. Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 allows for the option of: Completion of the Lone Star Governance superintendent evaluation to meet the requirements of subsection (b).

Data creates a skewed portrait of Texas schools, especially as it applies to evaluations, without the backstories from superintendents describing the challenges, struggles, triumphs and successes working with students and parents. According to Flores (2017), it must be noted that not included in the state of Texas rules and guidelines for superintendents are the intangible political demands and relational dynamics, which add layers of complexity to this intricate relationship. Sonedecker (1984) stated that if “the single most important task of the school board is choosing the superintendent,

common sense demands that the second most important task is to direct and shape his/her performance” (p. 36).

“Statistics are rarely meaningful in and of themselves. Statistics will, and should, almost always be used to illustrate a relationship. It’s more important for people to remember the relationship than the number” (Heath & Heath, 2007, p. 143). In Dan Heath and Chip Heath’s (2010) book *Switch* the authors identify the challenges posed by trying to coordinate the actions of the group with the goals of the organization, and how there is frequently a challenge. Further, Heath and Heath (2007) encourage leaders to look for what is working, and how can we do more of it? In reality, this obvious question is almost never asked. Instead, the question we ask is more problem focused: “What is broken, and how do we fix it?” In public education, the superintendent and board of trustees are constantly inundated with the public’s expectations for fixing what is broken instead of pushing forward with programming that is working and repeating more of the identified success. Flores (2017) stated that it must be acknowledged that the superintendent evaluation process can provide a great opportunity to analyze all aspects of the quality of the relationship between school boards and superintendents.

The performance expectations for the superintendent are in the Texas Education Code. (TEC) 11.201, subsection d, states the duties of the superintendent:

“(1) assuming administrative responsibility and leadership for the planning, organization, operation, supervision, and evaluations of the education programs, services, and facilities of the district and for the annual performance appraisal of the district staff; (2) except as provided by Section 11.202, assuming

administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment, supervision, and evaluation of all personnel for the district other than the superintendent; (3) overseeing compliance with the standards for school facilities established by the commissioner under Section 46.008; (4) initiating the termination or suspension of an employee or the nonrenewal of an employee term contract; (5) managing the day-to-day operations of the district as its administrative manager, including implementing and monitoring plans, procedures, programs and systems to achieve clearly defined and desired results in major areas of district operations; (6) preparing and submitting to the board of trustees a proposed budget as provided by Section 44.002 and rules adopted under that section, and administering the budget; (7) preparing recommendations for policies to be adopted by the board of trustees and overseeing the implementation of adopted policies; (8) developing or causing to be developed appropriate administrative regulations to implement policies established by the board of trustees; (9) providing leadership for the attainment and, if necessary, improvement of student performance in the district based on the indicators adopted under Sections 39.053 and 39.301 and other indicators adopted by the commissioner or the districts' board of trustees; (10) organizing the districts central administration; (11) consulting with the district-level committee as required under Section 11.252(f); Section 11.252(f) ensures: (A) adoption of a student code of conduct as required under Section 37.001 and enforcement of that code of conduct; and (B) adoption and enforcement of other disciplinary rules and procedures as necessary; (13) submitting reports as required

by state or federal law, rule, or regulation, and ensuring that a copy of any report required by federal law, rule or regulation is also delivered to the agency; (14) providing joint leadership with the board of trustees to ensure that the responsibilities of the board and superintendent are carried out” (Texas Education Code 11.201, Subchapter E, paragraph d, 2017).

“Trustees must be prepared and expected to perform as caring, competent, consensus-based leaders” (Zlotin, 1993, p. 25). Training is an integral part of being a school board member. “The paramount question for boards today is deciding which levers in the system to pull in order to effect desired change without creating deleterious and unintended consequences. For boards, it becomes a near-acrobatic feat” (Lorentzen, 2013, p. 67-68). Currently in Texas, there are several training opportunities for trustees on the topic of superintendent evaluation:

- Preparing for Superintendent Evaluation
- Setting Superintendent Performance Goals
- Preparing for and Conducting the Board's Summative Evaluation
- Lone Star Governance Superintendent Evaluation Training
- Local training provided by the superintendent

### **School Board Trustee Ethics**

At this time, the state of Texas has not created an Ethics Review Board and there are few avenues by which a board or board member may be called to task. School boards are as honest as they allow themselves to be. Accountability for self and for others lies

within the integrity of its own board and superintendent. TEA's authority is limited to the entire body as they review, process and investigate complaints. If a board member is found to violate the law, only the local district attorney has jurisdiction over the individual board member. The use of public resources to assist students and the community, as if their own private resources, is one example of questionable ethical behavior by board members. A complaint about a school board can be filed in writing with the TEA Complaints Division (TEA, 2019).

In 1991, the state of New Jersey created a School Ethics Commission. "Supported by laws that allow the commission to deliver sanctions, as approved by the state education commissioner, reprimands ranged from a private letter, a public reprimand, to suspension or removal from a board" (Reide, 2017, p. 1). The TASB website provides school board members a sample version for a code of ethics:

"As a member of the Board, I shall promote the best interests of the District as a whole and, to that end, shall adhere to the following ethical standards:

**Equity in attitude:** I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions; I will accord others the respect I wish for myself; I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.

**Trustworthiness in stewardship:** I will be accountable to the public by representing District policies, programs, priorities and progress accurately; I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in District affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns; I will work to ensure prudent and

accountable use of District resources; I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance of my responsibilities.

**Honor in conduct:** I will tell the truth; I will share my views while working for consensus; I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board; I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.

**Integrity of character:** I will refuse to surrender judgment to any individual or group at the expense of the District as a whole; I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures; I will keep confidential information that is privileged by law or that will needlessly harm the District if disclosed.

**Commitment to service:** I will focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation; I will diligently prepare for and attend Board meetings; I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.

**Student-centered focus:** I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students of the District” (TASB, 2019).

### **Collaborative Leadership**

Godin’s (2011) *Linchpin: Are You Indispensable?* challenged the status quo by encouraging leaders to find and nurture creative and effective individuals:

“someone more human, connected, and mature. Someone with passion and energy, capable of seeing things as they are and negotiating multiple priorities as

she makes useful decisions without angst. Flexible in the face of change, resilient in the face of confusion. All of these attributes are choices, not talents” (p. 190).

The day-to-day operations of the district, compounded by the heightened focus on complex demands from stakeholders, coupled with state and federal government requirements, make filling the role of superintendent with a well-rounded candidate difficult. “Ultimately, the work of the school board members and superintendent is highly interdependent and cannot be accomplished without each other” (Flores, 2017, p. 28). “Similarly, when a board member, or worse yet the board chair, believes he or she can exert authority by being intimidating, verbally abusive, challenging, demeaning, or manipulative, the entire district is diminished” (Lorentzen, 2013, p. 61) . According to the National School Board Association’s (NSBA) *Key Work*, communications between the superintendent and board members must be timely, consistent, and focused on the needs and expectations of both with mutual respect (Rice, 2017).

Marzano and Waters (2009) contended,

“School board members need to hire a superintendent who skillfully fulfills key leadership responsibilities. They need to support district goals for achievement and instruction. They need to support district- and school-level leadership in ways that enhance, rather than diminish, stability. When focused on effective classroom, school, and district practices, appropriate achievement and instructional goals, and effective leadership responsibilities, it is clear that school district leadership matters” (p. 23).



### **Culture and Climate of Community**

Culture provides identity, establishes the standard of character and can unite or divide a community. The cultural values shared across a community or social group embed a sense of belonging within the community. As illustrated by Lumby (2013), organizational power is exercised by an individual or individuals as representatives of a community. The strength of a concept like culture is that every organization has one that is, presumably, influenced by its governing board (Ford, 2013). Culture is a strong part of a community and it influences views, values, loyalty, successes and failures. “A culture of transparency and collaborative leadership to build upon success is necessary” (Rice, 2017, p. 1).

Ho and Ng (2016) reported that another important area of superintendent leadership in shared decision-making is the ability to cultivate a culture where shared decision-making is valued. The cultivation of such a culture is one that requires reflection, preparation and intentionality. Anderson and Grissom (2012) suggested that “existing conceptualization of board roles should be broadened to incorporate the interpersonal dynamics that inform board decision making” (p. 289).

“Americans’ perceptions of public education reveal a puzzling phenomenon” (Lorentzen, 2013, p. 62). In districts with higher levels of student achievement, the local board of education is aligned with and supportive of the non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction. The board ensures that these goals remain the top priorities in the district and that no other initiatives detract attention or resources from accomplishing these goals (Marzano and Waters, 2009). “Cultural tendencies impact the

way children participate in education. Much of what they say, the way they say it, and their relationship with students, parents and colleagues are deeply influenced by the way they have been socialized” (Futterman, 2015, p. 1).

### **Summary**

Chapter II synthesized the literature related to board-superintendent relationships. This review of the literature examined the research on board training, superintendent evaluation, and elements of concern for school board members. The day-to-day operations of the district, compounded by the heightened focus on complex demands from stakeholders, coupled with state and federal government requirements, make filling the role of superintendent with a well-rounded candidate difficult.

School board trustees’ roles and responsibilities include the superintendent evaluation. It is the responsibility of the school board to determine, through the utilization of tools as prescribed by the Texas Education Agency and legislation, a superintendent’s success and or failure in reaching the school district’s goals. School board trustees’ background and experience bring a number of varying ideas to the team. Training is an integral part of being a school board member and within that training is the shaping of ideas and the alignment of statutory requirements for the superintendent and the board of trustees.

Elements of information that school board members consider rely heavily on the teams’ own accountability for self and for others. The value of ethics lies within the

integrity of its own board and superintendent, which is demonstrated within the superintendent evaluation. The cultural values shared across a community or social group embed a sense of belonging within the community and are representative through the schools and decisions made by the board of trustees and superintendent.

Summarizing the literature on school boards and the superintendent evaluation, it clearly indicated that an appraisal system that provides a comprehensive review of a superintendent's performance can provide the focus necessary for improving student outcomes, building collaborative leadership, and fostering success for students in the public education system.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

Dr. Phil Gore (2016) conducted a study utilizing sequential exploratory design examining the factors and sources of information that school board members consider as part of the superintendent's evaluation. His study, conducted in the state of Washington, used a mixed methods design. Dr. Gore's (2016) utilization of sequential exploratory design used data collected from observations, a survey, and interviews.

Furthermore, Gore (2016) completed his study in three phases: Phase I included observations of board members and superintendents, findings to utilized as part of creating a survey instrument and interview questions. In Phase II, Dr. Gore conducted a survey of school board members across the state of Washington, analyzed the data to differentiate relationships compared to components of the collected information, and then built a protocol of interview questions for superintendents and board members. Phase III finalized the sequential exploratory design process by "integrating the information from Phase I and Phase II into Phase III, conducting an additional round of interviews which clarified and enriched the information, and lastly, identified themes throughout the data" (Gore, 2016 p. 57).

The purpose of this study is to replicate his research, through modification of the instrument and tailored to the state of Texas. This modified replicated study examined information considered by the board of trustees and the specific importance placed on the considered information on the superintendent's evaluation. The Texas research sought to glean if the same elements of information are similar to, or different from, what Gore discovered in 2016 from Washington.

Chapter Three details the methods used to collect and analyze data. Furthermore, Chapter Three details the modifications between the original study by Gore and this study. The current study reflects on the research questions and their modifications; describes the modified research design; details the differences between the original survey and the current survey; identifies the convenience sample and the sample in Washington; and describes the procedures used in both studies for data collection.

The next section restates the original research questions from Gore (2016) as well as the modified questions for this replication study.

### **Research Questions**

The original study by Dr. Gore (2016) set out to answer six questions. Those questions were:

1. What factors and sources of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent, and what do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent?
2. What is the relationship between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?

3. What is the relationship between board members' prior knowledge and experience in education or with performance evaluation and the factors and sources of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?
4. What is the relationship between how school board members conceive of their role—in particular, whether they think of their role as a trustee or a delegate—and the factors and sources of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?
5. What is the relationship between how board members conceive of their responsibility—to whom and for what they feel responsible—and the factors and sources of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?
6. What do board members believe to be sufficient information on which to evaluate a superintendent? (Gore, p. 56, 2016).

The current study sought to answer five research questions:

1. What elements of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent?
2. What do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent?
3. What is the connection between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?
4. What is the connection between board members' communication with the superintendent and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?

5. What is the connection between how school board members conceive of their role and elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?

Table 2 shows the original six research questions and the five modified research questions.

Table 2

*Research Questions Model of Modification*

Original Research Question by Gore (2016)	Modified Research Question by Young (2019)	Difference of Research Question
(RQ1): What factors and sources of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent, and what do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent?	(RQ1): What elements of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent?	(RQ1): The current question modified the original RQ1 into two parts. Factors and sources has been changed to elements.
Refer to (RQ1)	(RQ2): What do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent?	(RQ2): RQ2 is the original RQ1 separated into two parts.
(RQ2): What is the relationship between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?	(RQ3): What is the connection between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?	(RQ3): RQ3 changed the original RQ2 word of "relationship" to connection.

Table 2 (continued).

<p>(RQ3): What is the relationship between board members' prior knowledge and experience in education or with performance evaluation and the factors and sources of information, they consider when evaluating a superintendent?</p>	<p>(RQ4): What is the connection between board members' communication with the superintendent and elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?</p>	<p>(RQ4): The modified question eliminates the language: "prior knowledge", "experience in education", "performance evaluation" and "factors and sources" and addresses the area of communication instead, while maintaining the remainder of the question "of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent". The words: factors and sources were changed to: elements. The word relationship was changed to connection.</p>
<p>(RQ4): What is the relationship between how school board members conceived of their role – in particular, whether they think of their role as a trustee or a delegate – and the factors and sources of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?</p>	<p>(RQ4) and (RQ5) are modified and consolidated.</p>	<p>(RQ4): For the current study, the original (RQ4) was modified to contain elements from the original survey, particularly research questions four and five.</p>



Table 2 (continued).

(RQ5): What is the relationship between how board members conceive of their responsibility to whom and for what they feel responsible- and the factors and sources of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?	(RQ5): What is the connection between how school board members conceive their role and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?	(RQ5): The word factors was removed. The word relationship was changed to connection. The researcher modified the question to consolidate “of their responsibility to whom and for what they feel responsible” to the words: role and elements; while maintaining the remainder of the original question “of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent”.
(RQ6): What do board members believe to be sufficient on which to evaluate a superintendent?	(RQ6): None	(RQ6): The researcher chose not to utilize the last research question from the original research.

### Research Design

In the original study, Gore (2016) used a sequential-exploratory design that resulted in three phases. Using mixed-methods, Gore (2016) described the challenges and strengths within this style of research as he reported through each step. Additionally, Gore (2016) described “two forms of triangulation: multiple methods and multiple sources of data to increase the credibility of his findings” (p. 59).

Phase I: Qualitative Observations and Qualitative Data Analysis. Combining the literature review with observations from Phase I, Gore was able to extrapolate information directly related to factors and sources that board members refer to during evaluations of the superintendent to design the survey instrument. Phase II: Quantitative

Survey and Quantitative Data Analysis. While collecting the existing data, Gore simultaneously analyzed the observations from Phase I.

Phase III: Qualitative Clarifying Interviews. Completing the sequential exploratory design, Dr. Gore closed out the survey, analyzed trends to develop the final interview protocol and then again, simultaneously analyzed the data from interviews. The format by which Dr. Gore utilized sequential exploratory design solidified the overall description of mixed methods research.

In the case of this study, the researcher used a modified replicated design. “Well-constructed replications refine our conceptions of human behavior and thought” (Brandt, Hans, Dijksterhuis, Farach, Spies, 2014, p. 214) Replication studies seek to recreate the previous research in an effort to acquire additional or similar data on a particular subject. Herzog (1996) stated,

“A replica is a copy. To replicate a research study is to copy that study. The goal is to see if the earlier results can also be duplicated. If the same results are obtained a second time, confidence in the statistical reliability of the findings is greatly increased” (p. 257).

“Replications are therefore essential for theoretical development through confirmation and disconfirmation of results” (Brandt, et. al., 2014, p. 227). “Scientists have become more aware of the importance of replication, especially of experiments that have far reaching implications for the development of both theory and applications” (Brandt, et. al., 2013, p. 1). The data for this research was modified for Texas and compared to the results from Washington.

## **Research Participants**

Board member information from Gore's dissertation stated that participants "represented the diversity of school board members and superintendents in the state of Washington" (Gore, 2016, p. 76). "Board members were selected for interviews that represented the characteristics and background of survey respondents from Phase II" (Gore, 2016, p. 75). Gore (2016) reported that none of the board members or superintendents that participated in the observations in Phase I also participated in the interviews and that no board members or superintendents participating in his interviews were from the same district. Gore (2016) reported that participants represented male and female, white and minority members, eastern and western regions of Washington state, and variance in age, district size, urbanicity, and length of service. Participants for this study included a convenience sample of board trustees from the Master Trustee program and the Lone Star Exemplar Cohorts from the state of Texas.

## **Sample**

Texas school board members are the largest group of publicly elected officials in the state and serve nearly 5 million public school students. A convenience sample of 528 Master Trustees and Lone Star Exemplar Cohort Boards were emailed the link to the survey by the researcher from a SFA student email account (Appendix A).

The Master Trustee status is the highest designation recognized by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB, 2019). Board members complete an intensive, cohort based, leadership program developed and lead by TASB. The program guided trustees into becoming better leaders and more knowledgeable about issues facing Texas

schools and education. As approved by the commissioner of education, Lone Star Governance exemplar board cohort was designed for high-performing local governing teams (school board members and their superintendents), that want to continue honing their primary objective: improving student outcomes through a one-year long program instituted by TEA (TEA, 2018).

### **Data Collection**

Gore (2016) developed the survey instrument being used to conduct this research and was modified in 2018-2019 by the researcher with guidance and collaboration from Dr. Gore. The response rate for Gore's study (2016) included 283 completed surveys for a completion rate of 24%. This research survey was created using Survey Gizmo. Participants were emailed a link to the survey by the researcher from a Stephen F. Austin (SFA) student email account. The selection criteria included the electronic email addresses from Master Trustees and Lone Star Exemplar Cohort Boards. The survey email link was sent to the corresponding email addresses of 728 school board trustees. 63 emails were returned undeliverable and four trustees responded that they were no longer active on a board. The survey link went live on June 17, 2019, during the Summer Leadership Institutes (SLI)s. TASB SLIs, held in San Antonio and Fort Worth are conferences well attended by Texas board members for training in leadership and governance. The survey link remained open through July 15, 2019. Of those invited to participate, 168 completed the survey, for a completion rate of 25%. Table 3 provides the rate of response of survey questions by the week.

Table 3

*Waves of Response for Survey*

Week 1 June 18-25	Week 2 June 26- July 02	Week 3 July 03 -09	Week 4 July 10-15
71	34	14	48

The participants were asked to complete all sections of the survey. Participants were not required to provide their name or identifying school board affiliation.

Confidentiality and privacy of the survey participant were maintained and the study met the requirements of sound ethical protocols involving human subjects. The survey instrument and research procedures were preapproved, before dissemination, by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA).

(Appendix B). In an effort to maximize the participation of the survey, the link was posted to members in the TASB Member Center (see Appendix C), on the closed Leadership TASB Alumni Facebook page (Appendix D), TASB Executive Jim Crow provided a reminder of participation to Directors in his online letter F.Y.I. (Appendix E) and TASA mentioned the survey on Twitter (Appendix F).

### **Instrumentation**

A survey can be used as a valuable tool to collect information and as such, an introduction to the survey included how the results of the study will be utilized (Cherry, 2019). The prior study (Gore, 2016) was conducted using several steps including a survey conducted with Survey Monkey. According to Thomas Herzog, (1996) “surveys are self-reporting instruments” (p. 111). Some of the questions and response options

were from the original survey. This allowed for comparison of the original research to the results from the study and analysis of how Texas board member responses compared with their Washington counterparts. After receiving permission to replicate the survey (Appendix E), the researcher and the original author communicated throughout the process while modifying the survey for Texas.

The following modifications from the original survey (Gore, 2016) to current survey are as follows: The original survey instrument included 34 questions and the modified survey instrument was comprised of 31 questions (see Appendix G). The modifications are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

*Research Survey Model of Modifications*

Modified Survey Question and Answer Choices	Difference in Survey Question, Answer Choices and Source of Modification
(SQ1): How many years (collectively) have you served on your school board? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 1 year</li> <li>• 1 to 3 years</li> <li>• 3 to 5 years</li> <li>• 6 to 10 years</li> <li>• 11 to 20 years</li> <li>• More than 20 years</li> </ul>	(SQ1): The question was modified by incorporating the word: collectively.
(SQ2): In the most recent election, were you an incumbent? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes or No</li> </ul>	(SQ2): The question is a modified version of question three in the original instrument. The question changes the categorization of the respondent from president/board chair to incumbent and further modifies the survey by replacing the word evaluation with the word election.

Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ3): Choose two, from the following selection, for what motivated you to become a board member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• civic duty</li> <li>• personal interest</li> <li>• obtain political experiences</li> <li>• representation of a particular organization/or group of citizens</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ3): This is an original question designed by the researcher.</p>
<p>(SQ4): As a board member, have you participated in formal training directly related to the superintendent evaluation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes or No</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ4): The original survey numbered this question as 13 and the researcher modified the question by removing the time limit of “the past 12 months”.</p>
<p>(SQ5): Which of the following superintendent evaluation trainings have you accessed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for Superintendent Evaluation</li> <li>• Setting Superintendent Performance Goals</li> <li>• Preparing for and Conducting the Board's Summative Evaluation</li> <li>• Lone Star Governance Superintendent Evaluation Training</li> <li>• Local training provided by the superintendent</li> <li>• None of the above</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ5): The original survey incorporated an answer choice in question number 13 that the researcher expanded on and created a new question for the modified survey.</p>

Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ6): From this training were adequate knowledge gained and resources provided to evaluate the superintendent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes or No</li> <li>• I have not received training</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ6): This is an original question designed by the researcher.</p>
<p>(SQ7): Have you participated in a formative and/or summative evaluation of a superintendent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes or No</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ7): The original survey numbered this question as 2 and the researcher modified the question by adapting the wording from “formal evaluation” to “formative/summative evaluation” in conjunction with the language taught by TEA/TASA/TASB as part of training for the superintendent evaluation in Texas.</p>
<p>(SQ8): In what month did your school board perform its most recent superintendent evaluation? (fill in the blank)</p>	<p>(SQ8): The original survey numbered this question as 4 (month) and the researcher modified the question by removing the options for reporting and created an option for open text response.</p>
<p>(SQ9): In what year did your school board perform its most recent superintendent evaluation?</p>	<p>(SQ9): The original survey numbered this question as 4 (year) and the researcher modified the question by removing the options for reporting and created an option for open text response.</p>



Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ10): Texas Education Code 21. 354 and Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 provide two options for the annual appraisal of the superintendent. What option did your board use for the most recent superintendent evaluation?</p> <p>(1) Texas Education Agency (TEA) Commissioner recommended appraisal process and performance criteria</p> <p>(2) District developed appraisal process in consultation with the district and campus-level committees (adopted by the board)</p> <p>(SQ11): As set forth by Texas Education Code 39.306, the district’s annual Performance report is utilized as part of the superintendent’s appraisal on student performance. From this data, how many goals did your board adopt? (fill in number)</p> <p>(SQs 12, 13, 14, 15): Subsection (b) of the Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 states: the commissioner's recommended appraisal process and criteria for a superintendent shall include, at a minimum: (1) an annual evaluation of the superintendent; and (2) a student performance domain. Of the goals adopted by your district (as reported in question 11):</p> <p>(SQ12) how many specifically decree what administrative input will be applied to achieve the student performance goal(s)?</p>	<p>(SQs 10,11): The original survey numbered these questions as 6, 7, 8 and 14. The researcher modified the questions in collaboration with Dr. Phil Gore and Dr. Bill Rutherford by incorporating elements of the original questions as they related to the superintendent evaluation and removed the adjective “satisfied”. The researcher utilized current Texas Education Codes and requirements to focus the questions specifically to Texas.</p>
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Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ13) how many specifically prescribe (what, how, and when) student knowledge will be gained?</p> <p>(SQ14) how many of the goals include expectations for adult inputs (eg: quality teachers, effective use of funds, appropriate facilities, satisfied parents, etc)?</p> <p>SQ15) how many of the goals describe student outcomes (eg: literacy rates, numeracy rates, graduation rates, etc)?</p>	<p>(SQs:12, 13, 14, 15, 16): Survey questions 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 are original question developed in collaboration with A.J. Crabill and the researcher.</p>
<p>(SQ16): Based on Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031, did your school board utilize option (c): Completion of the Lone Star Governance superintendent evaluation to meet the requirements of subsection (b)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes or No</li> </ul>	
<p>(SQ17): If additional input to the superintendent's progress on meeting district goals was sought (outside of the Team of 8) which of the following would you consider recommending?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) staff survey</li> <li>(B) parent survey</li> <li>(C) community survey</li> <li>(D) all stakeholders of the ISD</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ17): Survey question 17 is an original question developed by the researcher based on casual conversation with Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Glenn, a former administrative colleague to the researcher.</p>

Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ18): At the time of the most recent evaluation of the superintendent, how long had the superintendent served in that position for the district?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First year</li> <li>• Second/Third year</li> <li>• Fourth/Fifth year</li> <li>• Sixth – Ninth year</li> <li>• Ten or more years</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ18): The original survey numbered this question as 5, no modification was required.</p>
<p>(SQ19): In scoring the superintendent evaluation, did your board use a numeric (eg:1- 5) or ordinal (eg: exceptional, proficient, needs improvement, etc.) ranking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numeric</li> <li>• Ordinal</li> <li>• I did not participate</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ19): This original question was created with input from Dr. Bill Rutherford, Ph. D., Leadership TASB</p>
<p>(SQ20): Are the results of the superintendent evaluation used to guide district goal setting and/or planning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes or No</li> <li>• Unsure</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ20): This original question was created by the researcher in direct correlation to the interest of the study.</p>

Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ21): From your perspective, how did participating in the process of the superintendent evaluation impact the Team of 8?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified areas of strengths among each other</li> <li>• Identified areas of weakness among each other</li> <li>• Demonstrated an exercise in futility</li> <li>• Demonstrated an exercise in cohesiveness</li> <li>• Provided a stretching opportunity for collaborative communication</li> <li>• Provided a reassurance that our team is making positive strides</li> <li>• Created an atmosphere for mistrust and divisiveness</li> <li>• Created an atmosphere to build trust and comradery</li> <li>• I did not participate</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ21): This original question was created by the researcher based on the researcher's own experience as a board member and the process by which the superintendent evaluation currently functions.</p>
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Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ22): As a board member, how important do you consider the following factors while evaluating the superintendent? (Extremely; Very; Moderately; Somewhat; Not at all)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of leadership</li> <li>• Implementing policy</li> <li>• Student achievement data</li> <li>• Student recognition</li> <li>• Parent satisfaction</li> <li>• Teacher/Staff satisfaction</li> <li>• Financial management</li> <li>• District safety</li> <li>• Reaction to/handling of district emergency crisis</li> <li>• Bond passage/Tax ratification</li> <li>• Political navigation of other local governmental entities</li> <li>• Community engagement/participation</li> <li>• Effective working relationship as Team of 8</li> <li>• Meeting district goals</li> <li>• Written and Oral Communication with employees &amp; community</li> <li>• Inclusive practices that involve board members</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ22): The original survey questions were numbered as questions 9 and 10. The researcher modified the question by incorporating elements of both original questions into one question.</p>
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Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ23): As a board member, indicate how often you use the following sources of information to evaluate the superintendent's performance: (Very often; Occasionally; Not often; Never)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal observation of superintendent in action</li> <li>• Personal interaction with the superintendent</li> <li>• Opinion of fellow board members about the superintendent</li> <li>• Compliments/Complaints of parents about the superintendent</li> <li>• Superintendent interaction and/or affiliations with community members</li> <li>• Reported student satisfaction/dissatisfaction with superintendent decisions</li> <li>• Religious affiliations of superintendent</li> <li>• Political advocacy at the local/state/national level by the superintendent</li> <li>• Respect of superintendent by administration</li> <li>• Emotional/Social Intelligence demonstrated by the superintendent</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ23): The original survey numbered these questions as 11 and 12. For this research, the two original questions were combined and the researcher further modified the question by adding rank from very often to never.</p>
<p>(SQ24): Which Regional Education Service Center does your district belong to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 -20</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ24): The original survey listed this question as number 22. The researcher modified the question by changing the answer choices to those available in Texas.</p>

Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ25): How important to you is it for a school board to do each of the following: (Extremely; Very; Moderately; Somewhat; Not at all)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak with a unified voice</li> <li>• Act according to public opinion</li> <li>• Support recommendations of the superintendent publicly</li> <li>• Consider multiple and diverse opinions</li> <li>• Discuss and debate all aspects of an issue</li> <li>• Make informed decision by doing homework prior to board meetings</li> <li>• Demonstrate political wisdom</li> <li>• Address student outcomes and achievement as a whole</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ25): The original survey listed this question as number 16. The researcher utilized the question in exact format and added three more options in the answer section.</p>
<p>(SQ26): Prior to assuming your role on the school board, had you occupied in education (check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> <li>• Substitute teacher</li> <li>• Volunteer</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Teacher</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Higher Education</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ26): The original survey listed this question as number 25. The researcher modified this question to consolidate the answer choices.</p>
<p>(SQ27): Do you currently have a family member/relative employed in the school district for which you serve on the board?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes or No</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ27): The original survey listed this question as number 26. The researcher utilize the question within the same format as the original question.</p>

Table 4 (continued).

<p>(SQ28): While serving on the board of trustees, have you had a child attending school in the same district?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes or No</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ28): The original survey listed this question as number 29. The researcher modified the question to include all children of any board member.</p>
<p>(SQ29): How would you describe the relationship between you and the superintendent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• somewhat personable</li> <li>• friendly</li> <li>• strictly professional</li> <li>• neutral</li> <li>• disengaged</li> <li>• poor</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ29): This question is an original question developed by the researcher.</p>
<p>(SQ30): Please indicate how often you use the following form of communication to communicate with superintendent: (Often; Occasionally; Rarely; Never)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In person</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Text</li> <li>• Telephone conversation</li> <li>• Only at scheduled board meetings</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ30): This question is an original question developed by the researcher.</p>
<p>(SQ31): From these 8 categories, established by TEA, choose your district type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major urban</li> <li>• Major suburban</li> <li>• Other central city</li> <li>• Other central city suburban</li> <li>• Non-metropolitan – fast growing</li> <li>• Non-metropolitan - stable</li> <li>• Independent town</li> <li>• Rural</li> </ul>	<p>(SQ31): The original survey listed this question as number 21. With guidance from Dr. Phil Gore, the researcher modified the categories based on Texas Education Agency (TEA) recommendations for categorization of district type.</p>



Of the 31 questions in the modified survey, fourteen of the questions are identical, consolidated or slightly modified from the original survey by Gore (2016). The survey questions that were created based on the original survey are listed in the modified survey as numbers: 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 14, 18, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, and 28. In Table 5, the following survey questions from the current research aligned to the modified survey are as follows:

Table 5

*Research question alignment with survey questions*

Modified Research Question	Survey Question Alignment	Survey Questions
(RQ1): What elements of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent?	23, 27, 28, 31	<p>23. As a board member how often do you use the following sources of information to evaluate the superintendent's performance:</p> <p>27. Do you currently have a family member/relative employed in the school district for which you serve on the board?</p> <p>27. While serving on the board of trustees, have you had a child attending school in the same district?</p> <p>31. From these 8 categories, established by TEA, choose your district type:</p>

Table 5 (continued).

<p>(RQ2): What do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent?</p>	<p>17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 29</p>	<p>17. If additional input to the superintendent's progress on meeting district goals was sought (outside of the Team of 8) which of the following would you consider recommending?</p> <p>18. At the time of the most recent evaluation of the superintendent, how long had the superintendent served in that position for the district?</p> <p>20. Are the results of the superintendent evaluation used to guide district goal setting and/or planning?</p> <p>21. From your perspective, how did participating in the process of the superintendent evaluation impact the Team of 8?</p> <p>22. As a board member, how important do you consider the following factors while evaluating the superintendent:</p> <p>29. How would you describe the relationship between you and the superintendent?</p>
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Table 5 (continued).

<p>(RQ3): What is the connection between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 24, 26, 28</p>	<p>1. How many years (collectively) have you served on your school board?  2. In the most recent election, were you an incumbent?  3. Choose two, from the following selection, for what motivated you to become a board member:  24. Which Regional Education Service Center does your district belong to?  26. Prior to assuming your role on the school board, what roles had you occupied in education?  28. While service on the board of trustees, have you had a child attending school in the same district?</p>
<p>(RQ4): What is the connection between board members' communication with the superintendent and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?</p>	<p>8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13,14,15,16, 25, 30</p>	<p>8. In what month did your school board perform its most recent superintendent evaluation?  9. In what year did your school board perform its most recent superintendent evaluation?  10. Texas Education Code 21.354 and Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 provide two options for the annual appraisal of the superintendent. What option did your board use for the most recent superintendent evaluation?  11. As set forth by Texas Education Code 39.306, the district's annual performance report is utilized as part of the superintendent's appraisal on student performance.</p>

Table 5 (continued).

		<p>From this data, how many goals did your board adopt?  *Subsection (b) of the Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 states: the commissioner's recommended appraisal process and criteria for a superintendent shall include, at a minimum: (1) an annual evaluation of the superintendent; and (2) a student performance domain. Of the goals adopted by your district (as reported in question 11):</p> <p>12. how many of the goals specifically describe what administrative input will be applied to achieve the student performance goal(s)?</p> <p>13. how many specifically prescribe (what, how, and when) student knowledge will be gained?</p> <p>14, how many of the goals include expectations for adult inputs (eg: quality teachers, effective use of funds, appropriate facilities, satisfied parents, etc)?</p> <p>15. how many of the goals describe student outcomes (eg: literacy rates, numeracy rates, graduation rates, etc)?</p>
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Table 5 (continued).

		<p>16. Based on Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031, did your school board utilize option (c): Completion of the Lone Star Governance superintendent evaluation to meet the requirements of subsection (b)?</p> <p>25. How important to you is it for a school board to do each of the following:</p> <p>30. Rank the following forms of communication you use most frequently to communicate with the superintendent:</p>
<p>(RQ5): What is the connection between and how school board members conceive their role and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?</p>	<p>4, 5, 6, 7, 19</p>	<p>4. As a board member, have you participated in formal training directly related to the superintendent evaluation?</p> <p>5. Which of the following superintendent evaluation trainings have you accessed?</p> <p>6. From this training/these trainings was adequate knowledge gained and resources provided to evaluate the superintendent?</p> <p>7. Have you participated in a formative and/or summative evaluation of a superintendent?</p> <p>19. In scoring the superintendent evaluation, did your board use a numeric or ordinal ranking?</p>

The researcher, with input from Dr. Phil Gore, Dr. Bill Rutherford, Dr. Jeremy Glenn, and A.J. Crabill, modified the survey for this research. Phil Gore, Ph. D., currently serves as the Division Director for Leadership Team Services at the Texas Association of School Boards. Prior to joining TASB in 2016, Dr. Gore worked with National School Boards Association and the Washington School Directors' Association. Dr. Gore's 2016 dissertation was the guiding document for this research study. Bill Rutherford, Ph. D., began with TASB as a consultant in 2006, for the Leadership Team services of TASB as well as the program manager for Leadership TASB. He is a lifelong educator and started his teaching career at Bangs ISD in 1976. Dr. Rutherford served on the Ector County school board for many years, prior to joining the TASB team. Jeremy Glenn, Ed.D., became the Superintendent of Schools for Granbury ISD in August 2018. Dr. Glenn has 18 years of educational experience. His prior experience includes leading Waxahachie, Central Heights, service as assistant superintendent, and high school principal in Trinity and as an English teacher and coach in Mineola. A.J. Crabill currently leads governance efforts at the Texas Education Agency and is the Lead Coach for Lone Star Governance training. Prior to his work at TEA, Crabill served eight years on the board for Kansas City Public Schools.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher examined data using survey questions, generated from this modified survey, which included multiple-choice and ranking. All completed survey responses were utilized in the reporting of findings. The response rate of each survey question was reported with the number of completed responses. The pattern of missing

data was examined to determine whether there was a connection with the demographic data. There was no pattern in the missing data, therefore the researcher did not do anything with the missing data (Sauro, 2015). Findings were reported through percentages and frequency counts and were compared to the original study to determine any similarities or differences.

### **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this study was to identify the elements of information, through a modified replicated study, that Texas public school board members utilize as part of their evaluation of the district superintendent. The research design was a modified replication study. The survey instrument utilized in this study was sent electronically to a convenience sample of Texas public school board members. The survey was a modified survey from the research of Dr. Phil Gore (2016). The data identified the various elements from which schoolboards derive information to provide background for the superintendent evaluation and attempted to grasp a better understanding of the relationship between the board and the superintendent. The analysis was a comparison of the original study with this study.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

Chapter four reports findings from the original study by Gore (2016) and this modified replicated study. The data include results from a modified replicated survey from a convenience sample of Texas school board trustees. The survey and convenience sample were used to gather data about the current superintendent evaluation tools available in Texas, school board training related to the superintendent evaluation, and elements of information that trustees perceive to be important.

Gore (2016) reported the overall findings for his study revealed that the focus of school board members when evaluating the superintendent is that they “want a superintendent to develop and maintain consistent, comprehensive, respectful, and influential relationships with the community, parents, staff and the board” (p. 79). “Board members want results... they are looking for and expecting ...improved student success” (p. 79). This study found that Texas school board members expect the same as their Washington counterparts, that being: improved student outcomes through joint collaboration.

This study revealed that board of trustee members in the state of Texas are dedicated advocates for students and communities, and are willing to work as a team alongside the superintendent for the betterment of the public school system. Furthermore, this research indicates that board members have access to training on the



superintendent evaluation, yet a consistent method of superintendent evaluation has not been established in Texas.

The modified research questions provided a guide for this chapter:

1. What elements of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent?
2. What do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent?
3. What is the connection between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?
4. What is the connection between board members' communication with the superintendent and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?
5. What is the connection between how school board members conceive of their role and elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?

### **Elements of Information School Board Members Consider**

Research Question One (RQ1): What elements of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent? RQ1 was answered by survey questions (SQ): 23, 27, 28, and 31.

Table 5 provides responses to SQ23: As a board member, indicate how often you use the following sources of information to evaluate the superintendent's performance. The original survey numbered these questions as 11 and 12 (Gore, 2016). For this research, the two original questions were combined and the researcher

further modified the question by adding a ranking from never to very often. Overall, responses from Texas board members are similar to Washington board members.

“Board members and superintendents alike talk about the fact that superintendent’s performance is always on display and undergoing evaluation by staff, parents, community members and board members” (Gore, 2016, p. 79). In Texas, as indicated by the Table 6, personal observation and personal interaction rank the highest as the source of information used by board members when evaluating the superintendent. 89.8% of board members surveyed in Washington reported that personal observation was extremely and very important (Gore, 2016, 104).

Table 6

*How Often Board Members Use Sources of Information*

	Never	Not often at all	Occasionally	Very Often
	Count	Count	Count	Count
Personal observation of superintendent in action	2	13	51	98
Personal interaction with the superintendent	1	11	48	104
Opinion of fellow board members about the superintendent	21	42	68	33
Compliments or complaints of parents about the superintendent	5	48	87	24
Superintendent interaction and/or affiliations with community members	1	20	89	54

Table 6 (continued).

Reported student satisfaction/dissatisfaction with superintendent decisions	10	56	73	25
Religious affiliations of superintendent	123	30	7	4
Political advocacy at the local/state/national level by the superintendent	39	36	55	34
Respect of superintendent by administration	4	17	64	79
Emotional/social intelligence demonstrated by the superintendent	2	17	60	84

Table 7 provides responses to SQ27: Do you currently have a family member/relative employed in the school district for which you serve on the board? The original survey listed this question as number 26. In Washington, 19.7% of respondents answered yes and 80.3% answered no (Gore, 2016, Appendix H). The researcher utilized the question in the same format as the original question.

Table 7

*Family Member/Relative Employed in Board Member District*

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	18.8%	31
No	81.2%	134
	Totals	165

Table 8 provides the responses to SQ28: While serving on the board of trustees, have you had a child attending school in the same district? The original survey listed this question as number 26 (Gore, 2016). Forty percent of the respondents to the Washington survey reported that they had a child in pre-k 12<sup>th</sup> in the district that they serve. The researcher modified the question to include all children of any board member.

Table 8

*Board Member Student Attendance in District*

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	69.1%	114
No	30.9%	51

Table 9 provides the responses for SQ31: From these eight categories established by TEA, please choose your district type. The original survey listed this question as number 21 as it related to Washington (Gore, 2016). Rural, urban, and suburban were the three choices for district type in Washington. The original survey reported that 74.8% claimed rural, 21.9% claimed suburban, and 3.3% claimed urban. The researcher modified the categories based on Texas Education Agency (TEA) recommendations for categorization of district type.

Table 9

*District Type*

Value	Percent	Count
Major urban	7.5%	12
Major suburban	31.3%	50
Other central city	1.9%	3
Other central city suburban	2.5%	4
Non-metropolitan - fast growing	8.8%	14
Non-metropolitan - stable	4.4%	7
Independent town	11.3%	18
Rural	32.5%	52

Additional information collected as part of RQ1 reveals that although 81.2% of board members surveyed do not currently have a family member or relative working in the district, 69.1% of board members have (at one time or another) had a child attending in the district at which they are a board member. With 32.5% of the respondents claiming a rural school district, it can be surmised that avoiding the familial relationship or child relationship to a board member in a rural school district would be difficult.

### **Board Members Importance of Consideration**

Research question two (RQ2): What do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent? RQ2 is answered by survey questions (SQ): 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, and 29.

Figure 10 provides responses to SQ17: If additional input on the superintendent's progress toward meeting district goals was sought (outside of the Team of 8), which of the following would you consider recommending? The recommended input for the superintendent evaluation show the use of staff surveys (30.8%), parent surveys (14.7%), community surveys (14%) and all stakeholders (72.7%). Survey question 17 is an original question developed by the researcher based on casual conversations with Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Glenn, a former administrative colleague to the researcher.

Figure 10. Recommended Input for Superintendent Evaluation

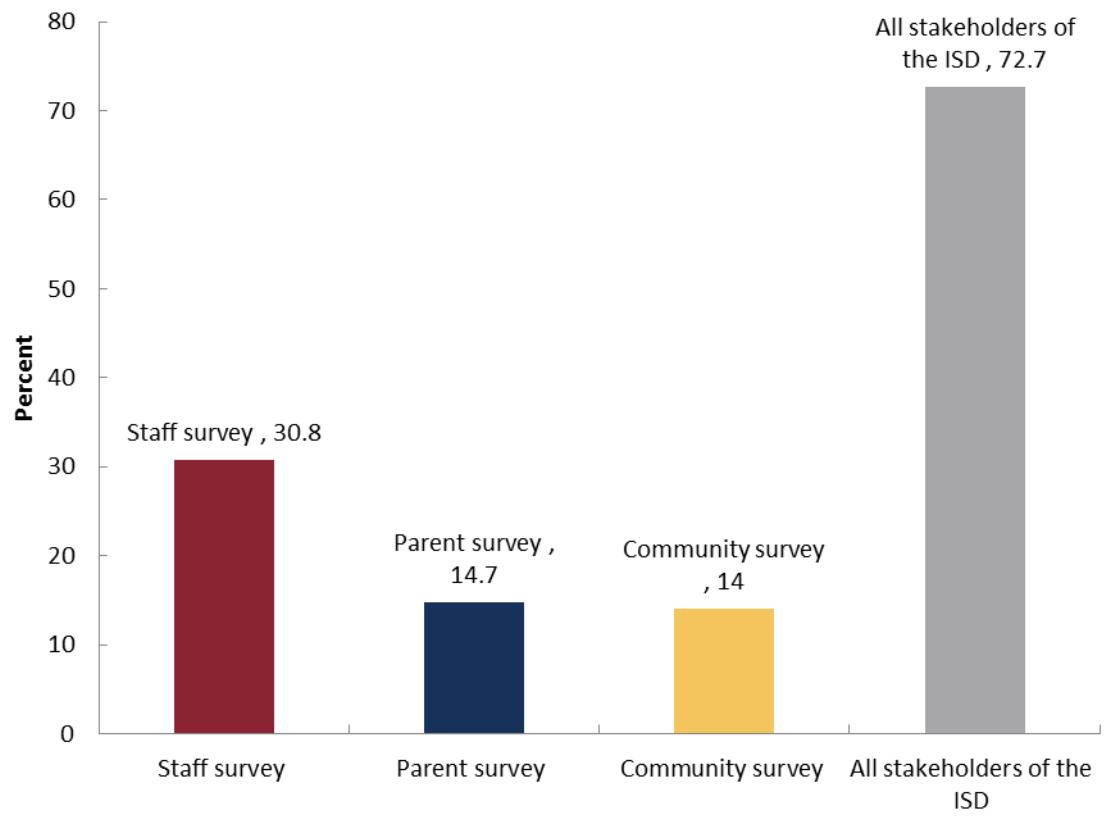


Figure 11 provides responses to SQ18: At the time of the most recent evaluation of the superintendent, how long had the superintendent served in that position for the district? The original survey numbered this question as 5 (Gore, 2016). In Washington, at the time of the most recent evaluation, 12.4% were first year superintendents; 30.1% were in years 1-3; 21.2% were in years 4-5; 21.4% were in years 6-10; and 11.3% exceeded 10 years or more. The researcher made no modification to this survey question. In Texas, 11% were first year superintendents; 41% were in years 1-3; 22% were in years 4-5; 16% were in years 6-10; and 10% of respondents reported that their superintendent exceeded more than 10 years in the leadership role.

*Figure 11. Superintendent Tenure.*

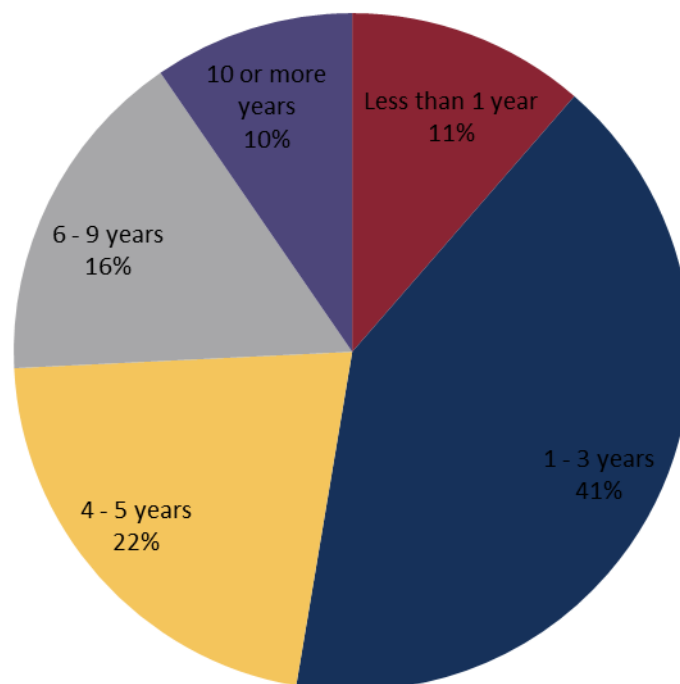




Table 12 provides responses to SQ20: Are the results of the superintendent evaluation used to guide district goal setting and/or planning? The researcher, in the interest of the Texas study, added original research and this question was not in the original survey. Of the respondents, 124 claimed “yes” to using the superintendent evaluation to guide district goal setting, 26 respondents claimed “no”, and 17 respondents were unsure if the superintendent evaluation provided guidance.

Table 12

*Superintendent Evaluation and Goal Setting for District*

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	74.3%	124
No	15.6%	26
Unsure	10.2%	17
	Totals	167

Table 13 provides response to SQ21: From your perspective, how did participating in the process of the superintendent evaluation impact the Team of 8? This question was added to the research and was not part of the original survey. School board members in Texas reported that the process of the superintendent evaluation impacted the team positively because it identified strengths among each other (47.0%); provided a stretching opportunity for collaborative communication (39.6%); demonstrated an exercise in cohesiveness (37.2%); provided reassurance that the team was making positive strides (45.1%); and created an atmosphere to build trust and camaraderie (43.9%). Also, school board members reported that the process impacted the team negatively because identified areas of weakness among each other

(35.4%); demonstrated an exercise in futility (11.0%) and created an atmosphere of mistrust and divisiveness (15.2%).

Table 13

*Process of Superintendent Evaluation Impact on Team*

Value	Percent	Count
Identified areas of strengths among each other	47.0%	77
Identified areas of weakness among each other	35.4%	58
Demonstrated an exercise in futility	11.0%	18
Demonstrated an exercise in cohesiveness	37.2%	61
Provided a stretching opportunity for collaborative communication	39.6%	65
Provided a reassurance that our team is making positive strides	45.1%	74
Created an atmosphere for mistrust and divisiveness	15.2%	25
Created an atmosphere to build trust and camaraderie	43.9%	72
I did not participate	1.2%	2

Table 14 provides responses to SQ22: As a board member, how important do you consider the following factors while evaluating the superintendent? The original survey questions were numbered as questions 9 and 10 (Gore, 2016). Financial management (97.8%), communication (97.4%), effective working relationship (96.3%), and district safety (90.7%), were among the top four areas of importance to Washington board members. The researcher modified the question by incorporating

elements of both original questions into one question. For this survey, respondents claimed that the most important elements considered were quality of leadership (119), meeting district goals (115), financial management (114) and effective working relationship as a team of 8 (105).

Table 14

*Board Member Factors for Superintendent Evaluation*

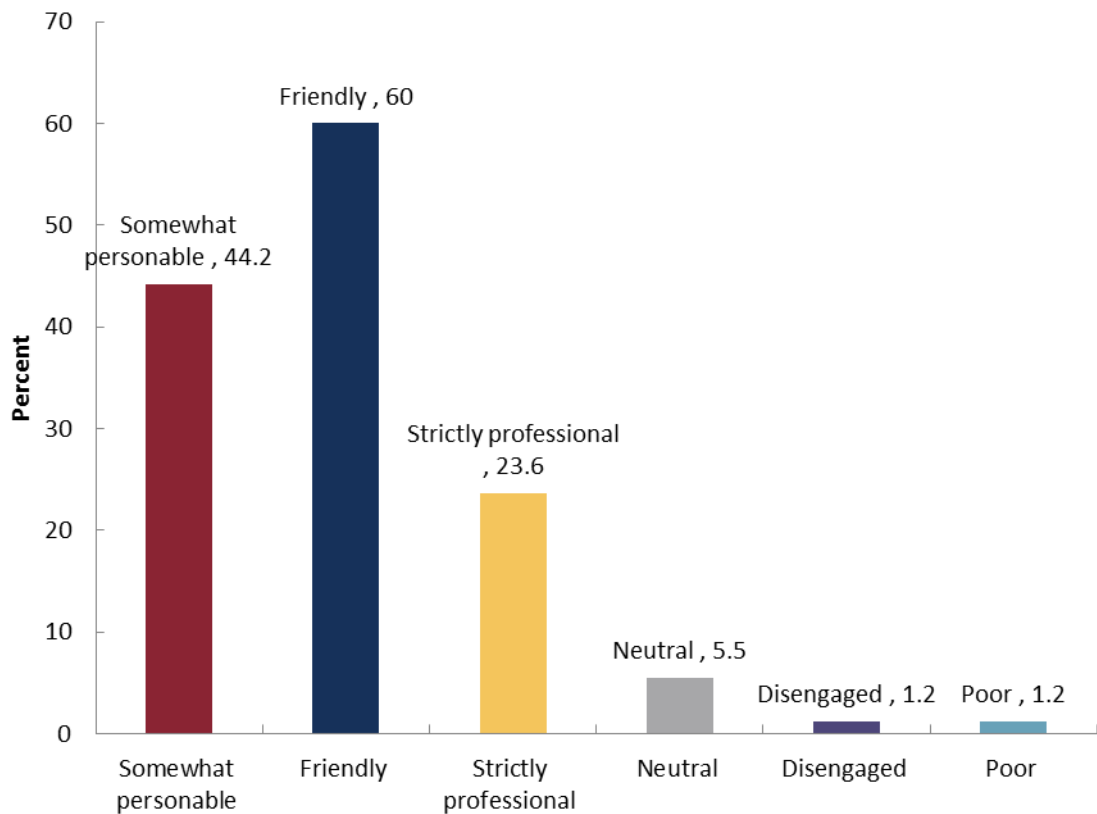
	Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely important
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Quality of leadership	0	2	0	43	119
Implementing policy	0	1	8	81	74
Student achievement data	0	3	14	49	98
Student recognition	7	10	36	75	36
Parent satisfaction	1	14	50	73	26
Teacher/staff satisfaction	0	6	25	72	61
Financial management	0	2	5	43	114
District safety	0	3	7	50	104
Reaction to/handling of district emergency crises	0	2	10	61	91
Bond passage/Tax ratification	7	10	49	60	37
Political navigation of other local governmental entities	7	19	50	59	29
Community engagement/participation	2	3	15	71	73

Table 14 (continued).

Effective working relationship as Team of 8	1	1	4	52	105
Meeting district goals	0	1	3	45	115
Written and oral communication with employees and community	0	6	18	74	66
Inclusive practices that involve board members	2	9	22	71	60

Figure 15 provides responses to SQ29: How would you describe the relationship between you and the superintendent? This question is an original question developed by the researcher. Respondents claimed that their relationship with the superintendent is friendly (60%), somewhat personable (44.2%), strictly professional (23.6%), neutral (5.5%), disengaged (1.2%), and 1.2% perceive their relationship with the superintendent to be poor

Figure 15. Board Member Perception of Relationship with Superintendent



The data displayed in tables 11-13 and figures 9, 10, and 14 provide information of interest about what board members consider important to the superintendent evaluation. With 44% of the superintendents from the responding board members' districts having 1-3 years of experience, 60% of the respondents felt their relationship with the superintendent is friendly, and 119 respondents believe that quality of leadership is extremely important. Additional information collected as part of RQ2 revealed that although 50 respondents ranked parent satisfaction was moderately important in his or her ranking of important elements to consider, 72.7% of respondents would recommend a survey of all stakeholders for input into the superintendent evaluation.

### **Connection between Board Members' Background and Perspectives**

Research question three (RQ3): What is the connection between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?

RQ3 was answered by the following survey questions (SQ): 1, 2, 3, 24, and 26.

Figure 16 provides responses for SQ1: How many years (collectively) have you served on your school board? The researcher modified the survey question by incorporating the word: collectively. This question was survey question one in the original survey: How long have you served on your school board? (Gore, 2016). The results from Dr. Gore's survey stated: 3.6%, less than 1 year; 22.8%, 1 to 3 years; 23.4%, 3 to 5 years; 26.0%, 6 to 10 years, 17.1%, 11 to 20 years; and 7.1%, more than 20 years.

Figure 16. Board Member Service Years

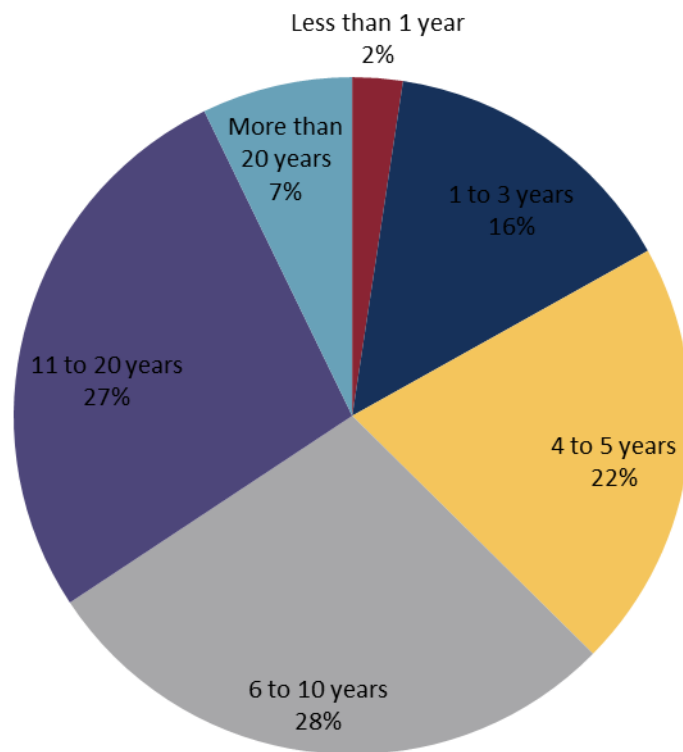


Table 17 provides the responses for SQ2: In the most recent election, were you an incumbent? (Gore, 2016). The question is a modified version of question three in the original instrument. The question changed the categorization of the respondent from president/board chair to incumbent and further modifies the survey by replacing the word evaluation with the word election. The results of the Washington survey and the Texas survey for this question are not comparable.

Table 17

*School Board Election Status*

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	71.1%	118
No	28.9%	48

Figure 18 provides responses for SQ3: Choose two from the following selection for what motivated you to become a board member. This question was not in the original survey and was added by the researcher. Ninety-four percent of the respondents claimed motivation to become a school board member was based on civic duty. The second most frequently reported answer was personal interest (82.3%), with (21%) cited personal interest and (1.8%) ran for school board to gain political experience.



Figure 18. Motivation to Become a School Board Member

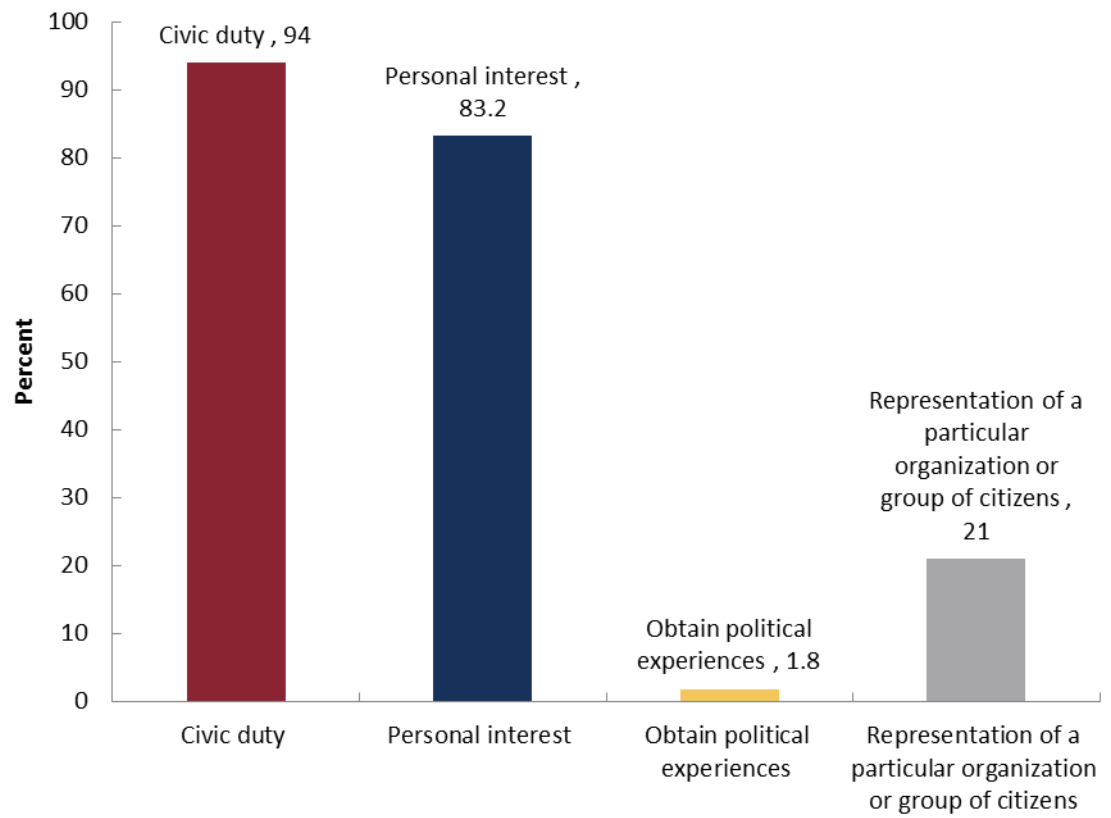


Figure 19 provides responses for SQ24: Which Regional Education Service Center does your district belong to? The original survey listed this question as number 22 (Gore, 2016). The researcher modified the question by changing the answer choices to those available in Texas. The Washington and Texas survey questions were not comparable. Of the 20 Education Service Centers (ESC) in Texas, ESC 17 was the only non-respondent. ESCs 13 and 10 claimed the most responses (15%), ESC 11 reported (14%), and ESC 7 (9%) returned the top three highest response rates.

*Figure 19. Regional Education Service Center*

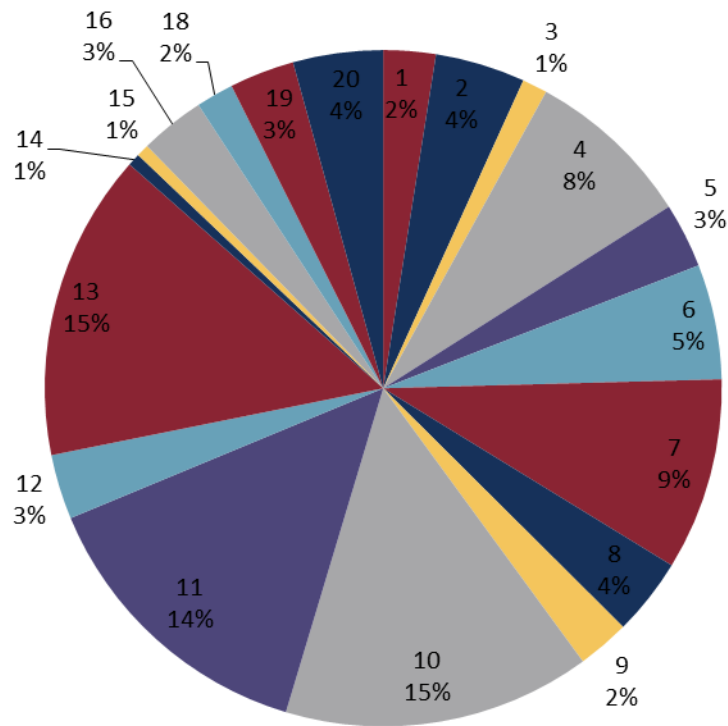
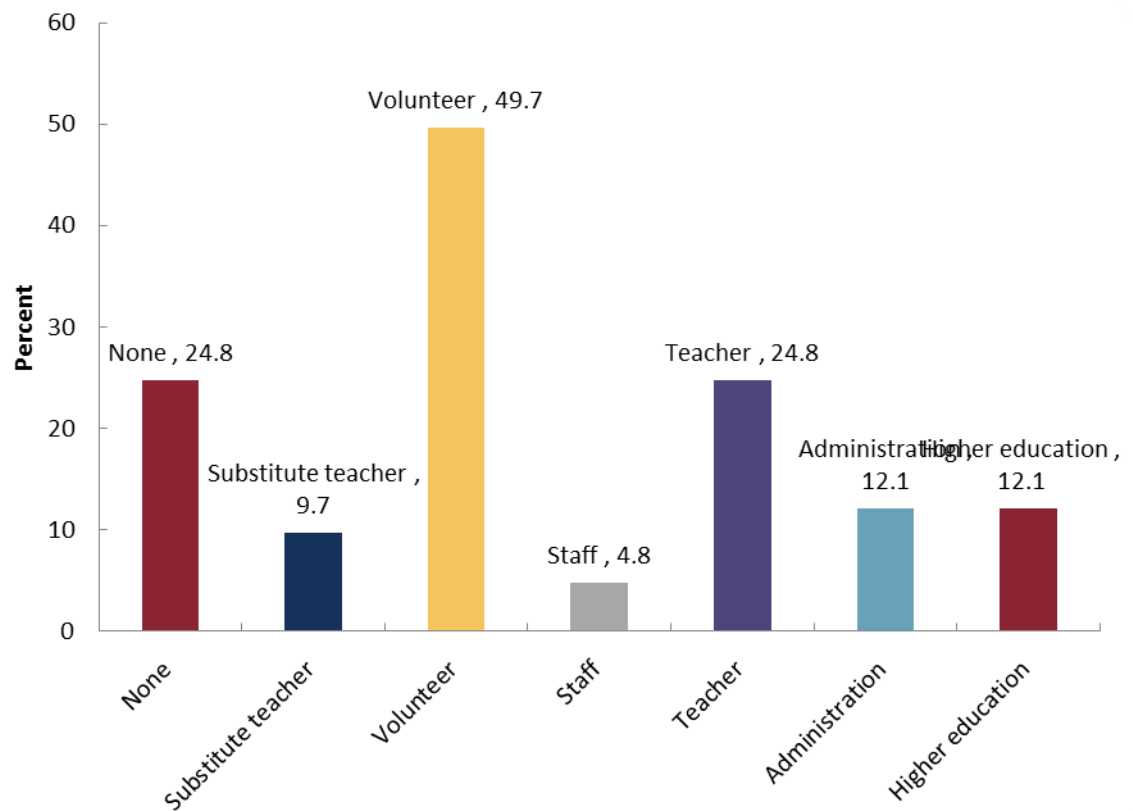


Figure 20 provides responses for SQ26: Prior to assuming your role on the school board, what roles had you occupied in education? The original survey listed this question as number 25 (Gore, 2016). In Washington, 66.5% of the board members reported not to have any previous employment in education. The researcher modified this question to consolidate the answer choices. The board member participants in Texas reported only 24.8% of the respondents had no prior background in education.

*Figure 20. Occupied Roles in Education*



According to Figure 19, of the 168 school board members participating in the survey, across the state of Texas, 19 of the 20 region service centers were represented. Region 17 was the only service center without a board participant in the survey. Of the respondents, 61.9% have or had a child in the district in which they sat on the board and 83.2% state personal interest as their reason for running for election to the school board. In Figure 20, 49.7% of respondents previously volunteered in the educational setting prior to being elected to the board and a total of 55% of board members have occupied employment in education at the staff, teacher, administration or higher education levels.

#### **Connection between Board Members' and the Superintendent.**

Research question four (RQ4): What is the connection between board members' communication with the superintendent and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent? RQ4 alignment to survey questions was (SQ): 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13,14,15,16, 25, and 30.

Figure 21 provides the responses for SQ8: Month of superintendent evaluation. The original survey numbered this question as four and the researcher modified the question by removing the options for reporting and created an open text response (Gore, 2016). Due to the modification to the survey question, the answers were not comparable. In Texas, school board members reported that at (34%) the month of January was the most popular month in which the superintendent evaluation was completed. June comes in as the second most popular month with (16%) and February the third most popular with (11%).

Figure 21. Month of Superintendent Evaluation

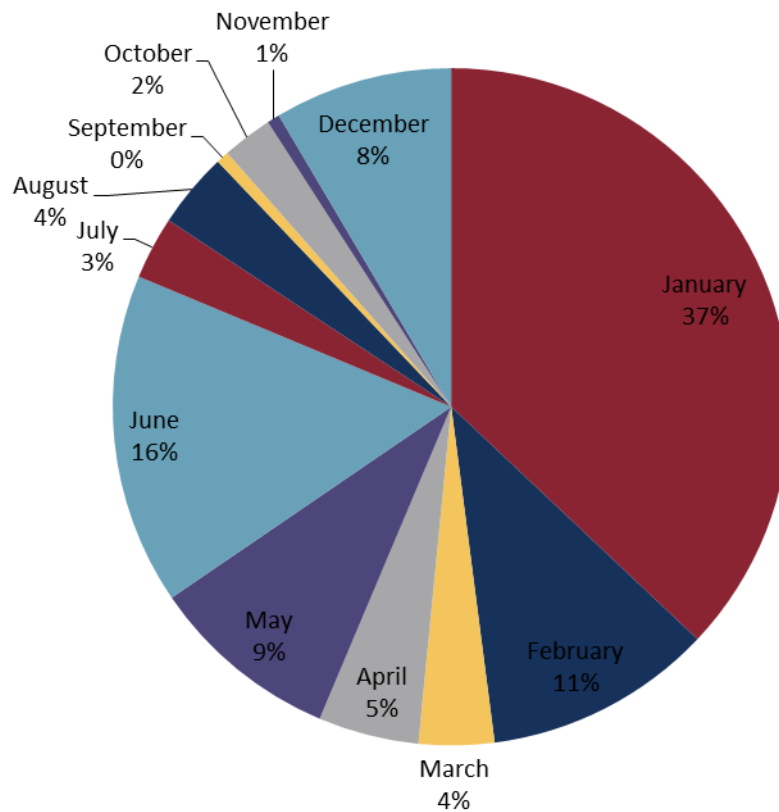


Table 22 provides the responses for SQ9: Year of superintendent evaluation between 2017 and 2019. The original survey numbered this question as four and the researcher modified the question by removing the options for reporting and created an open text response (Gore, 2016). Due to the modification to the question, the answers were not comparable. In Texas, of the 165 board members reporting, 117 school board members completed the superintendent evaluation in 2019.

Table 22

*Year of Superintendent Evaluation*

Value	Percent	Count
2019	70.9%	117
2018	27.3%	45
2017	1.8%	3
	Totals	165

Table 23 provides the responses for SQ10: Texas Education Code 21.354 and Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 provide two options for the annual appraisal of the superintendent. What option did your board use for the most recent superintendent evaluation? The original survey numbered these questions as 6, 7, 8 and (Gore, 2016). The researcher modified the questions, in collaboration with Dr. Phil Gore and Dr. Bill Rutherford, by incorporating elements of the original questions as they related to the superintendent evaluation. The researcher utilized current Texas Education Codes and requirements to focus the questions specifically to Texas.

Table 23  
*Option for Superintendent Evaluation*

Value	Percent	Count
Texas Education Agency (TEA) Commissioner recommended appraisal process and performance criteria	50.3%	82
District developed appraisal process in consultation with the district and campus-level committees (adopted by the board)	49.7%	81
Totals		163

The responses for survey questions 11 through 15 ranged from 1 goal to 15 goals. Survey question 11 (SQ11) stated: As set forth by Texas Education Code 39.306, the district's annual performance report is utilized as part of the superintendent's appraisal on student performance. From this data, how many goals did your board adopt? The most frequent response was one goal, the second most frequent response from Texas board member participants was three goals. The original survey numbered these questions as 6, 7, 8 and (Gore, 2016). The researcher modified the questions, in collaboration with Dr. Phil Gore and Dr. Bill Rutherford, by incorporating elements of the original questions as they related to the superintendent evaluation. The researcher utilized current Texas Education Codes and requirements to focus the questions specifically to Texas. Due to the nature of the modification for Texas, the survey responses from Washington did not compare to Texas.

Table 24 provides the response for (SQ12): How many of the goals specifically describe what administrative input will be applied to achieve the student performance goal(s)? The responses to this question ranged from 1 to 15 goals. Forty Texas board members reported that one goal was adopted with administrative input to achieve student performance.

Table 24

*Goals with Administrative Input*

Number of Goals	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	15	All
Respondents	4	40	14	38	22	14	4	2	1	1	5
											Total
											145

Table 25 provides the responses to (SQ13). How many of the goals specifically prescribe (what, how, and when) student knowledge will be gained? Thirty-four respondents stated that two goals specifically prescribe what, how, and when student knowledge will be gained. Thirty respondents stated that three goals were specific to student gains and twenty-one stated that three goals were adopted.

Table 25

*Specific Prescription in Board Adopted Goals*

Number of Goals	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	15	All
Respondents	6	21	34	30	25	14	4	2	1	1	5
											Total
											143



Table 26 provides the responses for (SQ14): How many of the goals include expectations for adult inputs (e.g., quality teachers, effective use of funds, appropriate facilities, satisfied parents, etc.) ? One Texas board member respondent stated that their board adopted two goals and three constraints. Constraints are an element taught through TEA’s Lone Star Governance training. The most frequently reported number of goals was three, followed by one and then by two.

Table 26

*Expectations for Adults in Board Adopted Goals*

Number of Goals	None/ Not sure	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	15	All
Respondents	12	37	24	38	12	9	4	2	1	1	5
											Total
											145

Table 27 provides the responses for (SQ15): How many of the goals describe student outcomes (e.g., literacy rates, numeracy rates, graduation rates, etc.)? Eight Texas board members responded that none of their adopted goals described student outcomes. One goal was reported by 43, two goals by 30 and three goals by 33 board members reported to include a description of student outcomes.

Table 27

*Goals Describing Student Outcomes*

Number of Goals	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	15	All
Respondents	8	43	30	33	9	5	2	1	2	1	1	5
												Total
												140

Table 28 provides the responses to SQ16: Based on Texas Administrative

Code 19 §150.1031, did your school board utilize option (c): Completion of the Lone Star Governance superintendent evaluation to meet the requirements of subsection (b) The Lone Star Governance superintendent evaluation tool was utilized in the state of Texas. This question was added for new research.

Table 28

*Lone Star Governance Evaluation Tool*

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	33.1%	54
No	66.9%	109
	Totals	163

Table 29 provides the responses for SQ25: How important to you is it for a school board to do the following? The original survey listed this question as number 16 (Gore, 2016). The researcher utilized the question and modified by adding three more options in the answer section. School board members in Washington stated it was extremely or very important to speak with a unified voice (92.5%), consider multiple and diverse options (93.2), discuss and debate all aspects of an issue (88.7%), support recommendations of the superintendent (74.1%), and act according

to public opinion (30.2%). The participating board members in Texas stated their top three choices, as extremely important, were to address student outcomes and achievement as a whole (118), make informed decisions by doing homework prior to the board meeting (110), and speak with a unified voice (77).

Table 29

*Elements Important to School Board Members*

	Not at all important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Speak with a unified voice	1	3	16	68	77
Act according to public opinion	35	42	56	24	8
Support recommendations of the superintendent publicly	1	8	21	83	52
Consider multiple and diverse opinions	2	4	13	76	69
Discuss and debate all aspects of an issue	0	7	24	60	74
Make informed decisions by doing homework prior to board meetings	1	0	0	52	110
Demonstrate political wisdom	11	9	46	65	31
Address student outcomes and achievement as a whole	0	0	5	40	118

Figure 21 and Table 22 present some interesting data. In Table 22, 117 respondents reported that they completed the superintendent evaluation in 2019 and in Figure 21, 34% of those evaluations were completed in the month of January. In Table 23, 50.3% reported using the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Commissioner recommended appraisal process and performance criteria for the superintendent evaluation and in Table 28, 33.1% utilized the Lone Star Governance superintendent evaluation tool. According to the information presented in Table 29, 118 board member participants selected addressing student outcomes and achievement as a whole, as extremely important.

### **Connection between School Board Members' Perceived Role and Superintendent Evaluation.**

(RQ5): What is the connection between and how school board members conceive their role and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent? Aligned with survey questions (SQ): 4, 5, 6, 7, and 19.

Table 30 provides the responses for SQ4: As a board member, have you participated in formal training directly related to the superintendent evaluation? The original survey numbered this question as 13 and the researcher modified the question by removing the time limit of "the past 12 months" (Gore, 2016). Board members in Washington reported that (64.5%) of them had not participated in formal training in the past 12 months. The survey for Texas participating school board members indicated that 89.9% have participated in formal training for the superintendent evaluation.

Table 30

*Formal Superintendent Evaluation Training*

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	89.8%	150
No	10.2%	17
	Totals	167

Table 31 provides the responses for SQ5. Which of the following superintendent evaluation trainings have you accessed? The original survey incorporated an answer choice in question number 13 that the researcher expanded on and created a new question for the modified survey (Gore, 2016). The majority of the Texas respondents claimed to have accessed setting the superintendent evaluation goals provided by TASB. The second most frequent evaluation training accessed was preparing for superintendent evaluation. Six percent of respondents stated that there was not an appropriate choice in the list.

Table 31

*Superintendent Evaluation Trainings*

Value	Percent	Count
Preparing for superintendent evaluation	62.9%	105
Setting superintendent performance goals	70.1%	117
Preparing for and conducting the board's summative evaluation	43.7%	73
Lone Star Governance superintendent evaluation training	25.7%	43
Local training provided by the superintendent	26.9%	45
None of the above	6.0%	10

Table 32 provides the responses for SQ6: From this training/these trainings, was adequate knowledge gained and resources provided to evaluate the superintendent? This question was not included in the original survey and was added for new research. Responding trustees from Texas (77.2%) reported that they gained adequate knowledge and resources from the training.

Table 32

*Knowledge Gained and Resources Provided*

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	77.2%	129
No	15.0%	25
I have not received training	7.8%	13
	Totals	167

Table 33 provides the responses for SQ7: Have you participated in a formative and/or summative evaluation of a superintendent? The original survey numbered this question as two and the researcher modified the question by adapting the wording from “formal evaluation” to “formative/summative evaluation” in conjunction with the language taught by TEA/TASA/TASB as part of training for the superintendent evaluation in Texas (Gore, 2016). Washington school board members reported that 93.0% had participated in the most recent superintendent evaluation. Texas board members reported that 95.2% had participated in a formative and/or summative evaluation of the superintendent.

Table 33

*Participation in Formative and/or Summative Evaluation*

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	95.2%	157
No	4.8%	8
	Totals	165

Table 34 provides the responses for SQ19: In scoring the superintendent evaluation, did your board use a numeric (e.g., 1 - 5) or ordinal (e.g., exceptional, proficient, needs improvement, etc.) ranking? This question was created with input from Dr. Bill Rutherford, Ph. D., Leadership TASB and was not included in the original survey. Texas board members reported that (47.0%) utilized numeric ranking for scoring the superintendent evaluation and (50.6%) utilized ordinal ranking.

Table 34

*Ordinal or Numeric Ranking*

Value	Percent	Count
Numeric	47.0%	78
Ordinal	50.6%	84
Unsure	2.4%	4
	Totals	166

The data presented in Table indicates that 89.9% of public school board members have received training on the superintendent evaluation with 95.2% of the population reporting in Table 33, that the trustee has also participated in a formative and/or summative evaluation of the superintendent. According to Table 34, 50.6% of the superintendent evaluations completed used ordinal ranking and in Table 31 the data show that 70.1% of board members have been trained on TASB's setting superintendent performance goals.



### Summary

Texas school board members consider a number elements of information when evaluating a superintendent. Data from the survey indicate that board members from the participating study in Texas prefer personal contact with the superintendent and value being part of a strong leadership team. Trustees relied on his or her own personal observation of the superintendent in action and the opinion of the community as elements of consideration when evaluating the superintendent. Board members believed that student outcomes are a major determinant of the superintendent's success and this element of measurement continues to be of importance when evaluating a superintendent. The connection between board members' background, particularly in a rural area, are interwoven within the community authority that is afforded to a trustee. Board members' perspectives regarding the superintendent are shaped by direct and indirect involvement of campus and community activities. The connection between board members' communication with the superintendent and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent are based on board members' perceiving their relationship with the superintendent to be friendly. Trustees reported that they communicate on a regular basis via telephone, text, and face-to-face conversations with the district superintendent. When board members function as a team member, demonstrate respect by coming to the meeting prepared, and exhibit an understanding of their role in the process of the board, the superintendent evaluation instrument becomes self-reflective.

## CHAPTER V

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the elements of information, through a modified replicated study, that Texas public school board members utilize as part of their evaluation of the district superintendent. A study of the elements of information used by school board trustees, was part of the superintendent evaluation, was important to provide an understanding into the board-superintendent relationship, board members' expectation of the superintendent, and responsibility that board members perceive as it relates to their role.

The research questions that guided the study included

1. What elements of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent?,
2. What do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent?,
3. What is the connection between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?,
4. What is the connection between board members' communication with the superintendent and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?, and

5. What is the connection between how school board members conceive of their role and elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?.

### **Summary of Findings**

The findings of this study were based on data collected through the use of a modified replicated survey with a convenience sample of Texas school board members. This is the first time that this particular survey instrument has been utilized in the state of Texas. It is anticipated that the data revealed in this research will become the baseline measurement for improvement of board training on the elements of an effective superintendent evaluation. By exploring the elements of information utilized by the board of trustees, this study provided some insight into the board-superintendent relationship, board members' expectation of the superintendent, and responsibility that board members perceive as it relates to their role. As with Gore's study (2016), this study offers insight that could be valuable to superintendents by learning what is important to the board members.

#### **Research Question 1: What elements of information do school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent?**

From the survey, the data showed that board members were inundated with a lot of noise from many sources of information. Through experiential learning, training, and a focus on positive relationships with the team, a board member will learn to filter the noise for quality and applicability toward improving student outcomes. It is important that board members learn, through governance training, and practice, what is best for students and the community. Authentically attending to the

needs of the district as a whole and behaving as functional team allows for the district to move forward and make progress toward established goals.

This study found that most often personal interaction and personal observation of the superintendent were elements that a board member utilizes as part of their decision making during course of evaluating a superintendent. In Texas, 104 out of 168 ranked personal interaction as the highest area and 98 out of 168 chose personal observation second. In Washington, 89.9% of board members reported both personal interaction and personal observation as extremely to very important. Two additional sources of information came from complaints or compliments by parents and the superintendents' interaction with community members/affiliations. The study completed by Dr. Gore (2016) revealed "members pay attention to how he or she interacts with and responds to staff, community members, parent and board members" (p. 80). His results also indicated that items such as the board agenda, materials and reports from others (district personnel) reflect upon the superintendent as an indicator of successful management.

**Research Question 2: What do board members believe might be important to consider when evaluating a superintendent?**

This study revealed that school board members did not rank staff surveys and staff satisfaction in the "extremely important" category. The findings of Gore's research indicated the same as this study. Staff satisfaction was not necessarily a priority as an element in the superintendent's evaluation. In Washington, 66.5% of the board members reported not to have had any previous employment in education,

however board members in Texas reported less than 25% of the respondents had no prior background in education.

The survey numbers suggested that Texas board members felt a civic duty to run for the board of trustees and those that sit on a board arrived with a healthier background knowledge in the field of education than their counterparts in Washington. Findings from the survey recognized that local school board members understand there is no place in the superintendent's evaluation for extraneous information, hearsay or gossip. "Board members believe it might be important to consider specific information in a formalized manner" (Gore, 2016, p. 110).

**Research Question 3: What is the connection between board members' background and their perspectives regarding superintendent evaluation?**

Washington board members reported that their vocation and community involvement, children in the district that they serve, length of time the superintendent has worked in the district the amount of time a board member and the community in which they reside. Likewise, this survey for Texas studied the same elements with similar results. Board members who served more than five years were the highest percentage of respondents on the current study. This indicated to the researcher, that the respondents had received several years of training, were an incumbent on their board, and would likely understand the responsibility of the superintendent and the role of the board. The literature review supports the belief cultural values shared across a community or social group embed a sense of belonging within the community.

The survey revealed that 35.4% of the respondents felt the process of participating the superintendent evaluation identified areas of weakness amongst the team and 11.0% reported that it demonstrated an exercise in futility. This revelation may afford an opportunity for board members to address behavior as it relates to responsibility on the team. Nearly three-fourths of respondents to the Washington survey reported their district to be considered rural and the largest number of respondents (32%) to the Texas survey also categorized their district as rural.

**Research Question 4: What is the connection between board members' communication with the superintendent and the elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?**

The literature review supported a necessity for collaboration and communication between the superintendent and the school board. Misalignment with what board members consider important and what superintendent's consider of importance was indicated in a study by Sampson, et. al (2018). The results of one question revealed the surveyed superintendents ranked their school finance experience and ability to establish and communicate non-negotiables as number a top priority, whereas the board member surveyed ranked school finance experience was ranked the last. The utilization of linguistic hygiene while communicating amongst and between the board-superintendent team could be very transparent, almost as blunt as the Spice Girls when rapping "just tell me what you really, really want" (Spice Girls, 1996).

Texas board members reported that they perceive their relationship with the superintendent to be friendly and that the frequency and method by which they communicate with the superintendent is sufficient for their individual needs. The

Washington interview results brought forward the possibility of misleading and untruthful information shared by the superintendent to the board (whether intentionally or unintentionally) and the responsibility of the board member to complete their due diligence by preparing for meetings, being involved in school and community activities and asking clarifying questions.

The survey for Texas. showed that 110 respondents to the survey out of 168, felt it was extremely important to make informed decisions by doing homework prior to board meetings and to demonstrate (publicly) political wisdom. A way to ensure that a board member is politically wise (through proper training) or prepared for the meetings in advance is to place a value on this expectation and incorporate it into the overall scoring of the district.

**Research Question 5: What is the connection between how school board members conceive of their role and elements of information they consider when evaluating a superintendent?**

As stated in the literature review, “ultimately, the work of the school board members and superintendent is highly interdependent and cannot be accomplished without each other” (Flores, 2017, p. 28). Texas board members conceived of their role as vital part of representing the voice of the community and laying the foundation for success of the public school district. The formative and summative evaluations of a superintendent vary by district. However, respondents reported essentially a 50-50 split on the use of the TEA process and performance and a district designed appraisal process. Stakeholder input, in both the Washington and Texas surveys, surfaced as a

suggested element to incorporate into the calculation of the overall assessment for the superintendent.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this study, there is a need to focus on the consistency of the prescribed superintendent evaluation instrument for the state of Texas and the subsequent training for board members on the utilization of the evaluation assessment. Gore's study found that board members request what they describe as a "professional" relationship with the superintendent (2016). The findings of this study also imply that trustees are on the honor system for meeting the responsibilities set forth by the state for board members, as there is no established ethics review board and only the local district attorney would handle the most serious offenses.

In interviews with superintendents, Dr. Gore (2016) learned that superintendent preparation programs may not cover everything that a new superintendent may encounter early on. One superintendent interviewee shared that the skill of thinking ahead about what the board needed to be successful and how he could get that for them in time was imperative to being a proactive leader. Another superintendent expressed that a critical skill for a superintendent is discerning and confirming areas and items of agreement among board members. Collectively, both Washington and Texas confirmed that school board members look for superintendent leadership attributes such as visibility, communication, and meeting goals.

Although TEA has the authority to establish a board of managers in districts that are experiencing difficulty, the department does not spend time or resources on investigating or mitigating complaints against trustees. The results also revealed that



the school board members have a hand on the pulse of the community and the superintendent evaluation may benefit from casting a wider net to its stakeholders by systematically surveying the community and drawing conclusions from the results.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

This study revealed several areas of weakness within the Texas public school board member system. One area that would benefit from further study would be the value of an ethics review committee. The results of this study found that student outcomes is the top priority for trustees, and yet there are no checks and balances in place for insuring that our students, who are the direct beneficiaries of the policies boards adopt, are governed by a highly qualified board. No one is fact checking the Team of 8 in Texas.

Boards, through the superintendent evaluation, establish accountability in a top-down method, however, a team is only as honest as its leader. Would people feel as civic-minded if there was legal accountability tied to the authority held while participating on a school board? A second area of weakness within the Texas public school board trustee system is the consistent use of a well-structured superintendent evaluation tool. TASB created and suggests the use of their superintendent assessment and the commissioner of education has offered up one updated portion of the superintendent evaluation directly related to student outcomes, but where do all of the extraneous elements fit in the assessment tool?

### **Reflections**

It is without hesitation, that I pronounce Texas school board members as the most passionate advocates for students in public education. Serving as a school board member can be as complex or as simple as the member chooses for it to be. The position of a school board member requires no background knowledge, a minimal amount of training and just enough votes to garner a seat at the team table. I recommend that Texas public education institute a system of checks and balances in the areas of ethics, behavior, continuing education, and superintendent evaluation. I believe that a the credentialing of school board members through prescribed training and mentoring as well as fulfilling statutory obligations ought to be part of the overall district grade. School boards should be held as equally accountable for performance as superintendents, teachers, and students. If school districts are going to be graded, then the state may want to consider including an element within the scoring system that incorporates board performance and holds teams accountable as part of the overall district score. The positive impact of the superintendent-school board team on the life of a student is immeasurable. Read that again.

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## **APPENDIX A**

**Survey Introduction for Email**  
**(Copyright permissions from Dr. Phil Gore 05/05/2017)**

Dear Texas Public School Board Member,

Thank you for your service as a public school board member in Texas.

We need your help to understand better what school board members consider when evaluating a superintendent and board/superintendent relationships. Information from this study may help to improve the process and quality of superintendent evaluations as well as communication between the school board and superintendent. It may also help to inform school board members, superintendents, researchers, and others seeking to understand board-superintendent relationships and school governance.

By completing this survey, you will help us find new ways to improve the governance of public schools. This survey has been kept as short as possible to make it convenient for you to complete. Answers to questions are intended to be reported only by group response and all individual responses will remain anonymous.

Your participation in this survey is valued and appreciated. Thank you in advance for your time and effort.

Best regards,

Audrey Young

## **APPENDIX B**



## STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research  
 P.O. Box 13019, SFA Station • Nacogdoches, Texas 75962-3046  
 Phone (936) 468-1153 • Fax (936) 468-1573

Principal Investigator: Pauline Sampson  
 sampsonp@sfasu.edu

Co-investigators: Audrey Young ([youngag@sfasu.edu](mailto:youngag@sfasu.edu)), Janet Tareilo, May Hawkins,  
 Barbara Qualls

RE: Project Title "Examining Information Considered in Texas School Board  
 Superintendent Evaluations: A Modified Replication Study" Case # AY2019-  
 3011

TYPE OF RESEARCH: Thesis/Dissertation

FROM: Luis E. Aguerrevere, Chair, IRB-H

*Luis E. Aguerrevere*

DATE: June 12, 2019

I would like to thank you for submitting your project entitled "Examining Information Considered in Texas School Board Superintendent Evaluations: A Modified Replication Study" to the IRB for review. It has been reviewed and has been **Approved as Exempt** based on the following criteria:

CFR §46.101(b)(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

Your project has approval through **June 12, 2020**, should you need additional time to complete the study you will need to apply for an extension prior to that date. The IRB should be notified of any planned changes in the procedures during the approval period, as additional review will be required by the IRB, prior to implementing any changes, except when changes are necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the research participants. The researcher is also responsible for promptly notifying the IRB of any unanticipated or adverse events involving risk or harm to participants or others as a result of the research.

All future correspondence regarding this project should include the case number **AY2019-3011**.



## **APPENDIX C**

The screenshot shows the top portion of a newsletter. At the top left is the logo for 'the STAR' with 'TASB' in a red box. To the right of the logo is the text 'A member newsletter of the Texas Association of School Boards'. Further right is a 'Printer Friendly' icon. Below this is a navigation bar with 'June 2019', 'Issue Archive', 'Texas Lone Star Archive', 'tasb.org', 'Contact', and 'myTASB'. The main content area features a blue link 'Back to issue main page', a red heading 'Share your input for a research project', and a paragraph of text about a survey. At the bottom of the content area is a footer with contact information and copyright details.

**the STAR**  
TASB  
A member newsletter of the Texas Association of School Boards  
Printer Friendly

June 2019   Issue Archive   Texas Lone Star Archive   tasb.org   Contact   myTASB

[Back to issue main page](#)

**Share your input for a research project**

Texas trustees, your help is needed in a survey on the board-superintendent relationship and superintendent evaluation. The survey is part of governance research being conducted by Audrey Young, a school board member on the Apple Springs ISD Board. The survey is available to trustees in the Member Center. [Check Your Action Items on the Member Center dashboard to participate in the research project.](#)

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## **APPENDIX D**



**June 28, 2019**

**Reminder: Trustees Invited to Participate in Survey**

Audrey Young (Apple Springs ISD), one of our Governance Research Scholarship recipients, is looking for trustee input on the board-superintendent relationship and the superintendent evaluation. The survey is available to trustees in the Member Center. [Check Your Action Items on the Member Center dashboard to participate](#). The survey will close July 5.

The FYI is a regular update from TASB Executive Director Jim Crow to the TASB Board and affiliated entity board members. Set your e-mail to view HTML to read the FYI in its proper format. You are receiving this special communication because of your service on one of our boards

## **APPENDIX E**



**TASAnet** @tasanet · 1h



Audrey Young, an Apple Springs trustee and Nacogdoches administrator, is surveying trustees about their perceptions and practices regarding superintendent evaluation. Trustees are invited to take the survey linked to in her tweet. #txed



**Audrey Young** @AudreyY... · 22h

Currently active Texas public school board members are invited to complete the following survey:  
[surveys.tasb.org/s3/TX-Superint...](https://surveys.tasb.org/s3/TX-Superint...)  
@tasanet @tasbnews @TexasTribune

The purpose of this study is to identify the sources of information that Texas Public School Board Members utilize as part of their evaluation of the District Superintendent and to provide some insight into board members' relationship with and expectations of the superintendent.

Completion of this survey is my consent to

## APPENDIX F

## Request for Permission

**From:** Audrey Young [mailto:oit2god@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 5, 2017 2:00 PM  
**To:** Phil Gore <Phil.Gore@tasb.org>  
**Subject:** Survey and Interviews: Permission for Use

Greetings Dr. Gore,

Thank you for your time, discussion, and shared interest in all subjects related to public education. At this moment, I am writing you in my capacity as a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX. I am pursuing research centered around the communicative interactions between the superintendent and school boards, as well as factors that school boards consider as part of superintendent evaluation. In pursuing this topic, I have found your dissertation survey and interviews are fitting tools for my purposes. My goal is to replicate your study, which was conducted in Washington, across the state of Texas. I am writing to request your permission to utilize your survey and interview questionnaires, with minor modifications to fit Texas. I would credit your work and provide appropriate citations.

If you have any questions regarding how I intend to use the survey, or planned modifications, or if you need more information, please let me know. Any insight or questions you might have would be welcomed. I will be happy to provide any additional information. I am looking forward to meeting with you again to discuss the progress of my work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Best regards,

Audrey G. Young, Ed.S.

Doctoral Student, Educational Leadership  
Stephen F. Austin State University  
Nacogdoches, TX  
[Oit2God@yahoo.com](mailto:Oit2God@yahoo.com)



## Response for Request for Permission

Phil Gore <[Phil.Gore@tasb.org](mailto:Phil.Gore@tasb.org)>

May 5, 2017 at 2:47 PM

To: [Audrey Young](#)

Hi Audrey, yes, you have my permission to use the survey, interview questions, and other aspects of my dissertation with attribution. Feel free to modify to fit your needs.

Let me know how/if I can be of further assistance to you.

Best regards,

**Phil Gore, PhD**

*Division Director*

*Leadership Team Services*

Texas Association of School Boards

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## **APPENDIX G**

**Modified Survey for Texas**  
**(Copyright permissions from Dr. Phil Gore 05/05/17)**

1. How many years (collectively) have you served on your school board?
  - Less than 1 year
  - 1 to 3 years
  - 3 to 5 years
  - 6 to 10 years
  - 11 to 20 years
  - More than 20 years
  
2. In the most recent election, were you an incumbent?
  - Yes or No
  
3. Choose two, from the following selection, for what motivated you to become a board member:
  - civic duty
  - personal interest
  - obtain political experiences
  - representation of a particular organization/or group of citizens
  
4. As a board member, have you participated in formal training directly related to the superintendent evaluation?
  - Yes or No
  
5. Which of the following superintendent evaluation trainings have you accessed?
  - Preparing for Superintendent Evaluation
  - Setting Superintendent Performance Goals
  - Preparing for and Conducting the Board's Summative Evaluation
  - Lone Star Governance Superintendent Evaluation Training
  - Local training provided by the superintendent
  - None of the above
  
6. From this training were adequate knowledge gained and resources provided to evaluate the superintendent?

- Yes or No
  - I have not received training
7. Have you participated in a formative and/or summative evaluation of a superintendent?
- Yes or No
- 8 & 9 In what month and year did your school board perform its most recent superintendent evaluation?  
(fill in the blank)
10. Texas Education Code 21. 354 and Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 provide two options for the annual appraisal of the superintendent. What option did your board use for the most recent superintendent evaluation?
- (1) Texas Education Agency (TEA) Commissioner recommended appraisal process and performance criteria
- (2) District developed appraisal process in consultation with the district and campus-level committees (adopted by the board)
11. As set forth by Texas Education Code 39.306, the district's annual performance report is utilized as part of the superintendent's appraisal on student performance. From this data, how many goals did your board adopt? (fill in number)
- 12-15. Subsection (b) of the Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031 states: the commissioner's recommended appraisal process and criteria for a superintendent shall include, at a minimum: (1) an annual evaluation of the superintendent; and (2) a student performance domain. Of the goals adopted by your district (as reported in question 11):
- A. how many specifically decree what administrative input will be applied to achieve the student performance goal(s)?
- B. how many specifically prescribe (what, how, and when) student knowledge will be gained?

16. Based on Texas Administrative Code 19 §150.1031, did your school board utilize option (c): Completion of the Lone Star Governance superintendent evaluation to meet the requirements of subsection (b)?
- Yes or No
17. If additional input to the superintendent's progress on meeting district goals was sought (outside of the Team of 8) which of the following would you consider recommending?
- (A) staff survey
  - (B) parent survey
  - (C) community survey
  - (D) all stakeholders of the ISD
18. At the time of the most recent evaluation of the superintendent, how long had the superintendent served in that position for the district?
- First year
  - Second/Third year
  - Fourth/Fifth year
  - Sixth – Ninth year
  - Ten or more years
19. In scoring the superintendent evaluation, did your board use a numeric (eg: 1- 5) or ordinal (eg: exceptional, proficient, needs improvement, etc.) ranking?
- Numeric
  - Ordinal
  - I did not participate
20. Are the results of the superintendent evaluation used to guide district goal setting and/or planning?
- Yes or No
  - Unsure
21. From your perception, how did participating in the process of the superintendent evaluation impact the Team of 8? (pick up to four)
- Identified areas of strengths among each other
  - Identified areas of weakness among each other

- Demonstrated an exercise in futility
  - Demonstrated an exercise in cohesiveness
  - Provided a stretching opportunity for collaborative communication
  - Provided a reassurance that our team is making positive strides
  - Created an atmosphere for mistrust and divisiveness
  - Created an atmosphere to build trust and comradery
  - I did not participate
22. Though the lens of a board member, assign a value to how important you personally consider the following factors while evaluating the superintendent: (4 = Extremely; 3 = Very; 2 = Moderately; 1 = Somewhat; 0 = Not at all)
- Quality of leadership
  - Implementing policy
  - Student achievement data
  - Student recognition
  - Parent satisfaction
  - Teacher/Staff satisfaction
  - Financial management
  - District safety
  - Reaction to/handling of district emergency crisis
  - Bond passage/Tax ratification
  - Political navigation of other local governmental entities
  - Community engagement/participation
  - Effective working relationship as Team of 8
  - Meeting district goals
  - Written and Oral Communication with employees & community
  - Inclusive practices that involve board members
23. Though the lens of a board member, rank from most often to least often, you use the following sources of information to influence your perception of the superintendent's performance:  
(3 = Most often; 2 = Occasionally; 1= Least often; 0 = Never)
- Personal observation of superintendent in action
  - Personal interaction with the superintendent
  - Opinion of fellow board members about the superintendent
  - Compliments/Complaints of parents about the superintendent
  - Superintendent interaction and/or affiliations with community members
  - Reported student satisfaction/dissatisfaction with superintendent decisions
  - Religious affiliations of superintendent

- Political advocacy at the local/state/national level by the superintendent
  - Respect of superintendent by administration
  - Emotional/Social Intelligence demonstrated by the superintendent
24. Which Regional Education Service Center does your district belong to?
- 1 -20
25. How important to you is it for a school board to do each of the following:  
(4= Extremely; 3 = Very; 2= Moderately; 1= Somewhat; 0 = Not at all)
- Speak with a unified voice
  - Act according to public opinion
  - Support recommendations of the superintendent publicly
  - Consider multiple and diverse opinions
  - Discuss and debate all aspects of an issue
  - Make informed decision by doing homework prior to board meetings
  - Demonstrate political wisdom
  - Address student outcomes and achievement as a whole
26. Prior to assuming your role on the school board, had you ever been employed in education?  
(check all that apply)
- Not at all
  - Substitute
  - Volunteer
  - Staff
  - Teacher
  - Administration
  - Higher Education
27. Do you currently have a family member/relative employed in the school district for which you serve on the board?
- Yes or No
28. While serving on the board of trustees, have you had a child attending school in the same district?
- Yes or No
29. How would you describe the relationship between you and the superintendent? (up to two choices)

- somewhat personable
- friendly
- strictly professional
- neutral
- disengaged
- poor

30. Rank the following forms of communication you use most frequently to communicate with the superintendent:

(3 = Most often; 2 = Occasionally; 1= Least often; 0 = Never)

- In person
- Email
- Text
- Telephone conversation
- Only at scheduled board meetings

31. From these 8 categories, established by TEA, choose your district type:

- Major urban
- Major suburban
- Other central city
- Other central city suburban
- Non-metropolitan – fast growing
- Non-metropolitan - stable
- Independent town
- Rural



## VITA

Audrey Young is the Director of Student Support Services for Nacogdoches Independent School District. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders, a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership. She is a member of the Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education, Texas Association of School Boards Legislative Advisory Council, Executive Board of Directors for Leadership TASB Alumni Association, and is in her second term on the Apple Springs ISD Board of Trustees. While on the school board, she has served as a member, Secretary, President, and earned the title Master Trustee in 2018. In 2019, Audrey was nominated to serve on the Texas Education Association (TEA) Advisory Council. Audrey is a lifetime member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Nacogdoches Branch and is an Executive Board Member, serves on the Board of Directors for Lufkin Community Partners, and is a member of Nacogdoches Junior Forum. She completed her doctorate in Educational Leadership on August 17, 2019.

Permanent Address: 20135 N ST HWY 94 Apple Springs, Texas

Style manual designations: *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*

Typist: Audrey G. Young