

A STUDY OF FEMALE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS'  
SOCIAL NETWORKS

By

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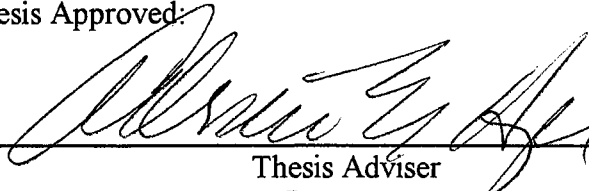
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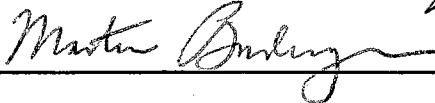
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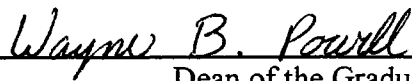
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## CHAPTER I

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Ella Flagg Young, superintendent of Chicago public schools, made the following prediction in 1909:

In the near future, we shall have more women than men in charge of the vast educational system. It is a woman's natural field, and she is no longer satisfied to do the larger part of the work and yet be denied the leadership. (McGraft, 1992, p.62)

Nevertheless in 1999, only five percent of superintendents are women, even though teaching remains a predominantly female profession (McGraft, 1992).

Her prediction has yet to come forth. Talk about clouded crystal balls. More than eight decades later, that prediction still is far from accurate (Gotwalt & Towns, 1986). As schools enter the twenty-first century, Young's prediction remains a dream deferred. Despite the enactment of equal opportunity legislation and the women's liberation movement in the 1960's, women continue to be sorely underrepresented in school administration. Johnson (1995) states that women are underrepresented and underutilized in school administration and that the public school superintendency in the United States is an occupation dominated by white men. Women may have come a long way in some fields, but school administration is not one of them (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993).

According to McGraft (1992), the executive position is still considered a man's role. Public school superintendency in the United States is an occupation dominated by

white men. Nationally, in 1992 there were approximately 15,449 superintendents. Males comprised 93.4 percent and females 6.6 percent. In the field of education, women predominate in number but men dominate in power (Johnson, 1995).

Nineteen years ago a female superintendent of schools was rare. Yet today in times of equal opportunity, females serving as superintendent of schools are still grossly lagging behind. As a female superintendent for 19 years, I know from experience what it has been like to be a female superintendent in a male dominated position. At the first Administrator's Summer Conference hosted by the State Department of Education that I attended, I experienced isolation at the meeting. I seemed to be one of about 10 women at the meeting. Superintendents that I worked with on a monthly basis spoke to me and included me in their conversations briefly. They introduced me as a fellow superintendent and once introductions were over it was obvious that they wanted to continue their conversations without my presence. It was then that I realized that women truly were underrepresented and, that in order to survive in this setting, I was going to have to form ties to be accepted into the network. I was going to use these ties to enter the male dominated world, the superintendency.

Even though men dominate the superintendency in education, women today earn over 50 percent of the advanced degrees in educational administration (Noland, 1995). In preparing for the twenty-first century, women enrolled in graduate programs for administrative degrees would indicate that their representation in the job field will allow them to become more competitive for the leadership positions such as the superintendency of schools (McGraft, 1992).

Currently in my home state, there are a total of 547 school districts: 432 independent school districts and 115 elementary school districts (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1999). Currently only seven percent of the superintendents in this state are women. This state has 20 women superintendents of independent school districts and 17 women superintendents of elementary school districts (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1999), 37 total. Shakeshaft (1989) notes that women in public schools have more chance of being top-level administrators in small districts or in elementary school districts. This seems to be true in my home state. Of the 37 female superintendents in the state, all but six are the superintendents of a small rural prekindergarten through grade twelve (PREK-12) school district or prekindergarten through grade eight (PREK-8) rural school district.

Ella Flagg Young's prediction in 1909 still is not true in our state. Women are not leading our school systems. The leadership of our school systems is still male dominated.

### Statement of the Problem

Women are underrepresented in the top executive position in school administration—the superintendency. Despite the fact that throughout the United States more women are enrolled in educational administrative university programs and are certified as school administrators, most are not employed in the top position—the superintendency (Whitaker & Lane, 1990). While many professional fields are showing increasing numbers of women in managerial and executive positions, the same cannot be said for public education. Women are not moving rapidly up the career ladder into administration of public schools (Whitaker & Lane, 1990).

Networks Analysis (Granovetter, 1973) would explain this underrepresentation in terms of the underdevelopment of cultural ties, strong or weak. Strong ties (Granovetter, 1973) are those ties among members of an association as a result of having similar backgrounds, sharing philosophies, and developing close working relationships, that allow the association to form. Strong ties are characterized by relationships with family and close friends. Weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983, 1986) are those of less formal interpersonal networks such as acquaintances or friends of friends. These ties diffuse influence, information, and mobility opportunities. These weak ties, Granovetter (1973) argues, are the channels through which ideas that are socially distant from an individual may reach him or her.

Networking is a term used frequently in the field of technology which emphasizes connections. According to Hill and Ragland (1995), establishing networks is an essential connection for anyone wanting to grow personally or professionally. Networking can enhance one's knowledge base, extend social interactions, and provide support on achieving career goals.

It appears that women in small districts have not tapped into the network of rural administrators in such a way that they have become recognized as worthwhile candidates for a superintendency. This lack of recognition has come in different ways no doubt, but probably in part through the underdevelopment of a weak tie between the aspiring superintendent and the network of male superintendents. Theoretically, it is also possible that female superintendent aspirants have not yet developed the strong ties of charter members of the network of small rural school administrators.

## Purpose of the Study

Through the lens of Network Analysis (Granovetter, 1973, 1976, 1995), the purpose of this study was to examine the cultural networks of female, small rural school district superintendents in an effort to explain their success in ascending to this executive position and maintaining their positions in the small rural superintendency. Specifically, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How do female superintendents in small rural districts explain their ability to be hired in a male-dominated profession?
2. How do the realities they explain reflect the lens of network analysis' strong and weak ties?
3. What other realities are described?
4. How useful is network analysis in understanding the phenomenon of the female small school district superintendent?

## Theoretical Framework

According to Granovetter (1973), analysis of social networks is suggested as a tool for linking micro and macro levels of sociological theory. The procedure is illustrated by elaboration of the macro implications of one aspect of small or micro-scale interaction: the strength of dyadic ties. It is argued that the degree of overlap of two individuals' friendship networks varies directly with the strength of their ties to one another. For example, Wells and Crain (1994) found that black students who attend desegregated colleges are more likely to gain social contacts that would benefit them more later in life

when applying for jobs, in attaining higher occupational status and more income later in life.

The impact of this principle on diffusion of influence and information, mobility opportunity, and community organization is explored. Stress is laid on the cohesive power of weak ties. Most network models deal implicitly, with strong ties, thus confining their applicability to small, well-defined groups. Emphasis on weak ties lends itself to discussion of relations between groups and to analysis of segments of social structure not easily defined in terms of primary groups (Granovetter, 1973).

Granovetter (1973) states:

the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie. Each of these is somewhat independent of the other, though the set is obviously highly intracorrelated. (p. 1361)

Strong ties are characterized by close friends, relatives and cliques. Weak ties are those found among acquaintances. Granovetter (1982) asserted that “our acquaintances (‘weak ties’) are less likely to be socially involved with one another than are our close friends (‘strong ties’)” (p.105). Accordingly, since weak ties are “more prone to move in circles different from one’s own,” there is a “structural tendency for those to whom one is only weakly tied to have better access to job information one does not already have” (Montgomery, 1992, p. 588).

Granovetter (1986) notes the importance of weak ties in bridging the often separate cliques of white and nonwhite teenagers:

School desegregation studies frequently show that cross-racial ties formed are not very strong. But even such weak ties may significantly affect later economic success. Because employers at all levels of work prefer to

recruit by word-of-mouth, typically using recommendations of current employees, segregation of friendship and acquaintance means that workplaces that start out all white will remain so. (p.102-3)

Weak ties are like bridges that link one point to another. These bridges create more, and shorter, paths (Granovetter, 1973). Weak ties are stronger and more powerful. One example, as a superintendent looking for another job, their strong ties would be other female or male superintendents and their weak ties would be outside people such as salesmen, state school boards association, or superintendent's professional organization. Their strong ties could let them know of the vacancy and provide a recommendation for them, but the weak ties could link them or recommend them to board members in the community, other administrators in the school, and the secretarial staff. Weak ties would be more useful to the superintendent looking for another job.

The same may hold true for women in school administration. Women must dialogue with male coworkers, make opportunities to speak, build a network of contact, find a mentor, and increase their visibility to achieve the superintendency they are seeking. They must use these weak ties to promote themselves. These weak ties link women to the superintendency positions that are available.

Male superintendents who were friends of mine (strong ties) introduced me to other male superintendents (weak ties). It is the other male superintendents that I developed into my network. I believe they provided the bridge necessary to pursue the superintendency. They provided reciprocal services such as job vacancies, comradeship, acceptance and making me their equal. This did not happen overnight, but over time, sharing ideas about our schools and how to work with school boards, they let me in. I had earned their respect. An emotional intensity and intimacy were established. These male

superintendents were the ones that promoted me to others when I was seeking the superintendency. They provided the necessary link to land me the superintendency.

Therefore, Granovetter's strong and weak ties helped establish the network needed for me as a female superintendent to be "one of the guys" in a male dominated field.

### Procedures

The explanatory case study method (Yin, 1994, p. 5) was used for my study. The case study, like other research strategies, is a way of investigating an empirical topic by following a set of prespecified procedures. A basic categorization scheme for the types of questions is the familiar series: "who," "what," "where," "how," and "why" (Yin, 1994).

### Researcher

I have been in education for 25 years. Six of those years I was an elementary teacher, but the last 19 years I have been a superintendent. During those 19 years, I have noticed that there are not many women who attend the administrator's conferences. Few are listed in the State Directory of Education as female superintendents.

During my studies for the doctoral program most of my classmates were women who had not had experience in the superintendency. This sparked the interest about what networks are needed for women to become superintendents.



### Data Needs and Sources

To answer the research questions, a study about women in the superintendency needed to be conducted. Eight female school superintendents in the state, that I am familiar with, served as sources. They were selected because of their positions and their success in their positions.

I selected at random eight female superintendents out of the 37 female superintendents who are employed in the state with which I am familiar. These eight women are superintendents in small rural independent, PREK-12 school districts or in small rural elementary, PREK-8 school districts. The small rural PREK-8 school districts are those districts which have fewer than 550 students. The PREK-12 school districts are small rural districts which have no more than 1,700 students. Alternates have been chosen from the remaining pool of women superintendents. These women superintendents are currently practicing as the executive administrator of their school district.

### Data Collection

I conducted interviews with each superintendent. The focus of the interview instrument was what networks existed for the woman superintendent aspirants, what ties were needed to become a woman superintendent and why were these women superintendents. The interviews were open-ended and this allowed the respondents and me to interact. The questions permitted the respondents to freely give information about women in the superintendency, as well as, their own experiences.

### Data Analysis

The procedures used to analyze the data in this study were those of the explanatory case study (Yin, 1994). “The explanatory case study is to explain the casual links in real-life interventions” (Yin, 1994, p.15). I tied the explanatory case study to Granovetter’s (1973) four characteristics: 1) time; 2) emotional intensity; 3) intimacy; and 4) reciprocal services.

Theoretically, these four characteristics were necessary to form networks between female and male superintendents. Female aspiring and/or superintendents must establish weak ties with other superintendents, who introduces them to other acquaintances. These acquaintances have become additional weak ties the female aspiring and /or superintendents need to have to move around the within the male dominated world of superintendents.

### Significance of this Study

The findings of this study should provide insight to the areas of theory, research and practice in school administration.

### Theory

This study used Network Analysis to describe the current professional ties of women and other superintendents in small rural districts. Granovetter’s (1973) concept of cultural ties, strong or weak, will provide a better understanding of the networks of

women superintendents. The results of this study should add to, clarify and confirm the uses of network analysis in educational research.

### Research

In this state, limited research on the superintendency has been done and research about women superintendents is virtually non-existent. This study helps educators, and school boards, along with others who face the same or similar situations when it comes to understanding the limited number of women in the superintendency. This study should provide necessary information to widen the research base.

### Practice

Using the information from this study helps other females to network within the superintendency. This has the potential to bring about change and improve the practices in public education. This research study helps those who are interested in the superintendency understand the direct link between theory and practice.

### Summary

Women continue to significantly lag behind men in attaining the superintendency. The purpose of this study is to use Network Analysis to examine the ties of women superintendents and their impact upon women in the superintendency. This qualitative research provides an in-depth look into the superintendency as viewed by a female superintendent.

## Reporting

Chapter II reviews the literature. Chapter III presents all data that has been collected. An analysis of the data are in Chapter IV and Chapter V includes a summary of the study and findings, conclusions, discussions, and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It has been frequently stated, if a woman fills the role of an educational administrator with success, then she must be different from the average woman. This commonly held belief in American society is usually accompanied by a value judgment that such differences are negative. This is a concern to some that these negative attitudes toward women are depriving our society of a valuable source of leadership. As stated by one writer, there is a perpetuation of a stereotype that "leadership and administrative aptitude are not human qualities found in gifted persons, but are the property of the male sex alone." (Pope, 1982, p. 1)

In an effort to review the problems at hand in the area of employment and advancement of women in education to the superintendent's position, this chapter will focus on four broad areas of research:

1. The history of the superintendency;
2. Characteristics of the superintendent;
3. Women and the superintendency; and
4. Network analysis, strong or weak ties which open the door of opportunity for women superintendents.

## The History of the Superintendency

“In the early days of public schooling in the United States, the teacher did everything, including administration” (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 30). These teachers were predominately females.

During 1820 and 1830 several events happening in the United States changed the administration of our schools. Growth in industry, population growth in the United States and the creation of free public schools for all children led to a need for more teachers. Industries were popping up in cities which brought more jobs into the communities. Males had left the teaching field to pursue more lucrative job opportunities in industry (Shakeshaft, 1989). Therefore, more women became teachers.

Our cities populations were ever increasing and thus, more students were needing to be educated. According to Griffiths (1966), the creation of free public schools in the 1820s gave the states more control over the schools. Boards of education were created to oversee the entire school operation (Griffiths, 1966).

Superintendents were hired to run or oversee the schools. These administrators were men. Hansot and Tyack (1981) note that since the 1880s, men have consistently held administrative positions in which “power, pay, and prestige were greatest” (p.82). The birth of school administration had arrived and was here to stay.

Shakeshaft (1989) states that in 1918, teaching and administration were two separate professions. Due to the rapid growth of our cities, our school systems had to keep up with the growth. This growth in our student populations caused the boards of education to realize that schools were big business and it was not appropriate for the

teachers to carry out all of the duties. Therefore, the increase of students caused more employees to be needed to keep the schools in working order. The working order of schools became more complex and as bureaucratization was imposed upon schools, the functions of administrator and teacher became more distinct (Shakeshaft, 1989). The creation of a hierarchy came into existence. Administrative and teaching roles in education were identified. According to Shakeshaft (1989), if schools were to be transformed from fairly autonomous organizations with loosely coupled classes headed by strong school men and women into bureaucracies under the role of one administrator, superordinates and subordinates had to be manufactured. Male teachers were put in charge and women were looked to as the ideal subordinate. This created the two-tiered system.

Since the 1820s there has been an increased number of school superintendents. Their roles have changed along with the times. They are the administrative leader in that school district and they are recognized as the school's chief executive manager. "In educational administration the top of the organizational ladder is the superintendency" (Ortiz & Marshall, 1988, p. 313).

### Characteristics of the Superintendent

A typical superintendent is one who has moved from the classroom into the principalship of a school and moved up to the superintendency. Even though this is the typical way to become a superintendent, there are definite differences between male and female superintendents other than their gender. Schuster and Foote (1990) found that the major disparity in the backgrounds of male and female superintendents was not in the

classroom or the boardroom, but rather in the locker room. More than 57 percent of male respondents to the study's survey replied that they had served as coaches or athletic directors before becoming superintendents; only 13 percent of the woman could claim such experience.

Women in the superintendency tend to be in their mid-to-late 40s (Shakeshaft, 1989). They tend to be firstborn and remained single. They had higher IQs and were more academically successful. More held doctoral degrees, belonged to professional organizations, and read more professional books (Witmer, 1995).

Women superintendents tend to have a more caring attitude about their employees. In their leadership styles, they tend to be more of a transformational leader (Witmer, 1995). This transformational leadership style according to Witmer identifies five characteristics: (1) able to reconcile a concern for bottom-line results with a concern for people, (2) able to focus on both ends and means; (3) good at planning and communicating; (4) reality based, and (5) able to comprehend all important aspects of existence. Women administrators tend to be more people oriented. They are more concerned about academic achievement of students. Women know more about curriculum and student individual differences.

Typical leadership styles are followed by men. They range from authoritarian (autocratic) to participative (democratic) (Witmer, 1995). Men tend to be direct and lead from the front, attempting to have all the answers for their subordinates. They want to be in control and also control. Men stay focused on their careers and can because they do not have to worry about taking care of the family each night when they get home (Edson, 1988).



In summary, women and men both show similar characteristics in the superintendency. They possess strong leadership styles, good communicators, and have high expectations.

### Women and the Superintendency

The white, male dominance of the superintendency has existed since the position of superintendent was first created by school boards in the late nineteenth century (Brunner, 1999). Shakeshaft (1998) states that in the United States, we lack a reliable, uniform, nationwide database that lets us know just how many women are school administrators and at what levels. The latest national data on school staff was collected for 1993-94 (Henke, Choy, Geis, & Broughman, 1996).

Blount (1998) compared the number of women in the superintendency from 1910 to 1990 and found that, overall, the representation of women in the 1930s had not yet been equaled by 1990. More recent data show that in the past five years, women have surpassed their representation in the superintendency in the 1930s, but not by much (Table I adapted from Shakeshaft, 1998).

Gender structures the field of educational administration. Even though more women are entering administrative positions, men still occupy and control positions of power (Chase, 1995). Because women are underrepresented, people assume they are either unsuited for school management or they do not desire those careers. Literature on educational administration proclaimed it, both female and male educators believed it, and consequently, even some female administrative aspirants internalized it (Edson, 1988).

TABLE I  
COMPARISON OF WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION  
1910 TO 1990

Year	% of Women in State Superintendencies	% of Women in Intermediate Superintendencies	% of Women in Local District Superintendencies	% of Women Overall
1910	4	14.1	6.2	8.9
1930	8	27.4	1.7	11
1950	10	23.2	1.5	9.1
1970	2	13.3	0.7	3.4
1990	12	23.1	3.9	4.9

Source: Adapted from Blount, 1998, p. 181.

The superintendency is a field where few women hold the highest leadership role in a school district. They have virtually no role models to look to. This causes them to not consider the superintendency as a career option.

While a lack of role models often poses a barrier and challenge to women seeking leadership roles (Ortiz & Marshall, 1988), this lack also leaves women who ascend to leadership more free to innovate and create. Innovation occurs in different domains—content and role. Content innovation is more likely without role models. It occurs with changes in the way a new leader performs her role through the ideas and processes she encourages people to adopt. While she accepts traditional norms and goals, the new leader adopts new tactical alternatives and tasks and draws on a new knowledge base for support. (Sadker, Sadker, & Klein, 1991, p. 118)

Therefore, “women administrators tend to be highly motivated and to have records of outstanding achievements” (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993, p. 68). Their leadership styles are different from their male counterparts. Dunlop (1995) claims that women’s typical

leadership styles are superior to those of men and better suited to running effective schools. Sadker and colleagues (1991), for example, portray women administrators as typically possessing valued traits such as

concerns for others; a greater focus on teaching and learning; a more democratic, participative style; greater effectiveness in representing the school and working with the community; more emphasis on using outside resources to apply new ideas to improve instruction; and increased attention to monitoring student participation and evaluating student learning. (p.50)

Women continue to seek the superintendency in spite of being underrepresented.

“Who are these women, and how do they remain interested in a field with a reputation for barring women?” (Edson, 1988, p. 3). These women who pursue the superintendency have the same goal in mind as far as career choice as do their male colleagues, but they do not have the same opportunities afforded them.

A woman wishing to be a superintendent of schools must adopt the same definitions and uses of power as the male power wielders in a given community in order to be selected for position of power most often filled by a man. (Brunner, 1999, p. 64)

### Network Analysis

An obvious requisite for ascending to top administrative positions in education is being prepared. The problems for women are not the formal, tangible barriers, such as educational certification, but the intangible, informal ones that require an aspirant to be accepted as “one of us” by those already at the apex of the organization (Gupton & Slick, 1996). This networking must be made available to women.

In networking there are strong ties and weak ties which link one to another. The strong ties are the formal ties and the weak ties are the informal ones. The strong ties are

those ties with family or close friends. Weak ties are those ties one encounters through acquaintances or friends of friends. It is through these weak ties that women need to network with their male counterparts.

Gupton and Slick (1996) view that the major problem for women in the culture of educational administration is the lack of adequate networks, positive role models, and support systems in general. Women had traditionally not benefitted from having sponsors and mentors to encourage and support their career advancement. On the other hand, the network among men—informally referred to as the “good old boy system”—is strong and, although sometimes viewed pejoratively, is often considered a major vehicle used in selecting job candidates. Many successful women executives indicate the importance of being accepted into or at least being recognized by the male network because it is the dominant power group in the profession.

Men still dominate the gatekeeping to the superintendency. They make deals with other male superintendents before the job is posted to be available. These deals are often made out on the golf course, on a fishing trip, the basketball court or the club. Women are not usually privy to those venues or to decisions made outside the work setting (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

The “good old boy” network exists so strongly in many school districts that many men can tell you their number in line to the superintendency. They are just waiting their turn. (Hill & Ragland, 1995, p. 11)

Witmer (1995) states, as a rule, women’s strongest relationships are with other women; however, such relationships do not usually provide entry into professional networking. In the educational workplace, women do not congregate, leaning against the windows and chatting prior to the first morning class.

Women need to network with men, and not just with other women, because men still hold the power positions in most organizations, especially in educational institutions, even those with women as board presidents. Men have the experience and status, and they can provide sound advice. The trick is to learn from them and use what you learn to your advantage (Witmer, 1995). These weak ties must be established between the women and male administrators in order for her to know about job openings and in acquiring the top position in education, the superintendency.

Networking is essential for women to move within the ranks of other male superintendents. The weak ties that are established with other male superintendents are necessary to secure the top position that women want in education. Networking can enhance one's knowledge base, extend social interactions, and provide support on achieving career goals (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Brunner (1999) states that "studies have shown that search consultants rely heavily on a network of friends, professional associates, and associations to develop a field of candidates to present to boards of education for consideration" (p. 51). Therefore, women who aspire to leadership, must network because entrance to the superintendency remains to be a challenge. In sum, Brunner (1999) states that

women are discouraged from seeking leadership positions and are made to feel unwelcome and even to endure discrimination when they attain top positions. Women have to be asked to dance, and the dance is still male dominated and controlled. (p. 163)

## Summary

School administration is basically a man's world, set up by men (Costick, 1978). The superintendency is still perceived as a man's job. History has shown us that the school superintendent's position has always been dominated by men. Women who want to be superintendents may benefit from networks and from ties, strong and weak.

## CHAPTER III

### DATA PRESENTATION

The purpose of this study was to examine the cultural networks of female small rural school district superintendents in an effort to explain their success to ascending and maintaining their positions in the small rural superintendency. An explanatory case study method of inquiry was used to research the problem (Yin, 1984). Eight female small rural school district superintendents were selected as participants for the study. Each superintendent is presented individually and a collective summary follows.

The eight female small rural school district superintendents were selected because they were currently practicing as a small rural school district superintendent and they were the first female superintendent in these districts.

#### Case Study Procedures

The primary data collection strategy was the interview. In addition to conducting the interviews, if available, the school district's criteria for hiring a superintendent was reviewed, the superintendent's job description, when available, was reviewed and the size of the district and the facility was examined. The Institutional Review Board approval form required for all studies involving human subjects is included in Appendix A.

## Respondents

These women were superintendents in rural school districts in the northeast and southwest sections of a centrally located state within the United States. Two of those school districts were elementary school districts which educate PREK-8 students. Six of those school districts were independent school districts, which educate PREK-12. All of these school districts are publicly funded through federal, state, county and local funds. Fictitious names were assigned to each female small rural school district superintendent.

## Interviews

The respondents were contacted by telephone to set up an interview at a place and time of their convenience. All the interviews were conducted in the superintendent's office of their school districts. The interview questions began with their backgrounds and experience, but concentrated on how they were selected as a superintendent, who they depended on for support and help, and how they fit in with other male superintendents. The interview protocol is attached in Appendix B.

Following each interview, participants were provided a copy of the transcription of the interview to review for accuracy. Each participant was asked to report if she wished to modify, delete, or add any additional information to her transcription. No changes were requested. Copies of all written correspondence with the participants were included in Appendix C. After the follow up of each participant, it was decided that there were not any additional categories to consider and that enough data were collected.



### Document Review

Superintendent job descriptions were reviewed. The purpose of reviewing these job descriptions was to examine the requirements of the superintendent's job and to see if a written job description existed in order to assist the superintendent in performing their duties as a small rural school district superintendent.

### Reporting

Each case study was arranged into four categories: female superintendents in small rural districts, success as a female superintendent, networks within the superintendency and the existence of ties, strong or weak. Each case study was presented individually and was collectively summarized. These case reports answer the first research question of the study: "How do female superintendents in small rural districts explain their ability to be hired in a male-dominated profession?"

### Brooke

Brooke holds bachelors', masters', and doctoral degrees. She began teaching in 1973 and received her first job in administration in 1989 right after she received her doctorate. She was an elementary principal for three years and then became a superintendent. She is completing her seventh year as a superintendent of schools. This particular job that she held was her second superintendency, and she was currently in her third year at this small rural independent school district.

### Female Superintendents in Small Rural Districts

Brooke serves under a five member board of education. Four board members are female and one is male. She has a certified staff of 118 and 67 noncertified staff.

Her school district encompasses 150 square miles. She has 1,681 students in her school district.

At the beginning, Brooke was not acquainted with any other female superintendents. She said, "there was no role model there" (Brooke, 11-10-99, 2). The only people available were other male superintendents. As a first year school superintendent, she was assigned a male superintendent as her mentor by the State Department of Education. She found him to be very helpful.

Brooke believes that she was hired in this small rural district because the board was impressed that her masters and doctorate were in curriculum and instruction. She added that "they also wanted someone who was not dictatorial. They thought a woman would not be dictatorial. I really think it was a gender thing that in this particular instance helped me get my foot in the door." Once her foot was in the door, she found that a difference existed when looking at female superintendents. She thinks "there is still a lot of old traditional thinking that the superintendency is a leadership role, that only a male can do that a female cannot" (Brooke, 11-10-99, 4). She believes that "it has been a male dominated world and the world's line of thinking still goes on" (Brooke, 11-10-99, 4). Her notion is supported by Costick (1978), school administration is basically a man's world, set up by men and by Edson (1988), stating that in many districts, male administrators still

refuse to see women as legitimate candidates for school leadership, despite all the legal guidelines and affirmative action programs.

She has learned in serving as a superintendent that you must be well prepared, organized and even more polished than a male in the same position. She expresses that you cannot use the fact that you are a female as a crutch. Brooke says “we need to be aware that it is there and gather all the ammunition we can to get up past it” (Brooke, 11-10-99, 6).

### Success as a Female Superintendent

Brooke really enjoys being a superintendent. She thinks she has made a difference. As a superintendent “I can make a big difference and I can do it today. I have the authority to make big changes and do it right away and put things in motion” (Brooke, 11-10-99, 2).

She has been taught as a young girl by her parents that she could do anything she set her mind to. She contributes this to her success as a superintendent. She believes one must believe in themselves and know that they are the right person to do the superintendent’s job. “One must be able to make decisions and stand by them” (Brooke, 11-10-99, 1).

Brooke views herself as being a “successful female small rural school superintendent” (Brooke, 11-10-99, 1).

### Colleagues in the Superintendency

Her mentor guided her during her first year as a school superintendent. After that period, she did not continue her tie with him. Networking among superintendents does not exist for Brooke. She has never experienced that, but adds “at least not to my knowledge, if I was, it was behind my back” (Brooke, 11-10-99, 5). She feels if she was “treated any differently because she was a female, it was being offered more courtesy” (Brooke, 11-10-99, 3).

Brooke is a member of several professional organizations and serves on the board for one of these professional organizations. She is the only female on this board. These organizations have provided a means for her to know other male superintendents. It has allowed her to establish friendships with them. Brooke was made to feel comfortable with the superintendents in her professional organizations. “In fact, I have even heard one say, she is just one of the guys. And that to me is just a high compliment” (Brooke, 11-10-99, 3).

She believes that female superintendents are included in the male dominated job as school superintendents. She views them as her equal and states that “I have never been treated less than equal” (Brooke, 11-10-99, 2).

### Support in the Superintendency

Being a female superintendent in a small rural school district has been a challenge. Brooke knows that she needs assistance or help from time to time when making decisions

concerning her school district. She also knows that if she planned a move to another superintendent's position, she would rely on certain individuals to help her.

Brooke has no problem with calling upon other superintendents when a situation arises when she needs help. These superintendents have become close friends with her. She would depend on their expertise to assist her in her day to day operations of her school district.

The male superintendents who are close friends with her, "are all very willing and will try to help in any way that they can to get you in and get you started" (Brooke, 11-10-99, 6). They would let you know about the availability of other superintendent's jobs, but they are not necessarily the ones called upon to help secure another job. They would be called first to find out the openings, but when a job is sought after she would call upon acquaintances such as salesmen and the Cooperative Council of School Administrators (CCSA).

These acquaintances would be utilized to go after the job. CCSA and salesmen are "a great wealth of information" (Brooke, 11-10-99, 3). These outside contacts are out and about and know key people and information about the job.

### Summary

Brooke has been a superintendent of a small rural independent school district for seven years. As a female superintendent, she realized that there were no female role models to pattern after. Brooke believes that the good old boy network does not exist. She believes that she is accepted and respected by other male superintendents. She feels that she is just one of the guys.

## Cheryl

Cheryl has been a female school superintendent for four years in a small rural elementary school district. Cheryl holds a bachelors' and a masters' degree. She went on to receive her elementary principal's certificate and petitioned the state for a superintendent's emergency certificate when the law changed that required each person head of a PREK-8 school district to hold a superintendent's certificate. She has been a superintendent for four years in the same school district.

### Female Superintendents in Small Rural Districts

Her school is governed by a three member board of education. The board of education has one female and two males.

She has 13 certified staff which includes her. She has to teach one-half of the day in addition to her duties as superintendent of schools. She employs nine noncertified staff.

Cheryl's district has between 130 to 140 students during the school year. Her school district encompasses ten square miles.

Being a superintendent of a small school is totally different than that of a large school. "I do everything that a superintendent does, plus whatever has to be done. It is not unusual to see me going down the hall with a plunger over my shoulders" (Cheryl, 11-12-99, 1).

She was faced with a declining enrollment. In order to remedy that, she brought in new programs to uplift the current academic programs. Students from a surrounding

district were transferred in to her school. Eventually, she gained all the students from another surrounding district when they consolidated.

Cheryl finds that as superintendent in her small rural district she has to wear many hats. Whatever needs to be done, she is the one who is in charge of making sure the job is completed. She does not have anyone to delegate the responsibility to. Most of the time that means she is the one to do the job.

Cheryl believes that if a female is going to be a superintendent, she needs to be better educated than the male superintendents. This is important in order to get a job over a male superintendent and to establish credibility.

#### Success as a Female Superintendent

Cheryl is a very independent, strong willed woman who believes that she has to do what is right for the students in her school district. She sees herself as the one for the job.

She is very confident. She states "I know who I am and I know how to be a superintendent" (Cheryl, 11-12-99, 2). She believes that she has a good school and contributes that to her securing new programs to meet the academic needs of her students.

#### Colleagues in the Superintendency

Networks among other superintendents in the state do exist. Cheryl chose not to be included into the network. She states, "I never try to get into the network, I do my own thing" (Cheryl, 11-12-99, 3).

She is included in her local superintendents' meetings, but is rarely in attendance due to her having to teach. She feels that she cannot be away from her school due to her teaching.

Cheryl believes that the good old boy network is a problem with superintendents across the state, but feels comfortable with her surrounding male superintendents to call upon them for help with a problem. She says that they also call her for advice.

She said that, even though she chooses not to be a part of the network, it is a problem for female superintendents to break through.

#### Support in the Superintendency

Cheryl being the loner that she is does not really have any ties that offer assistance to her. She feels she is isolated partly due to her job, but she states "that as a superintendent one must have contacts to survive or to promote themselves" (Cheryl, 11-12-99. 3).

She has acquaintances such as salesmen or the people within the State Department of Education which she depends on for information. The neighboring male superintendents are mere acquaintances. She is not close to any of them and does not meet with them on a regular basis..

The salesmen and the State Department of Education are the two that she heavily relies on for information and help. When asked why, she replied "they are your best ones" (Cheryl, 11-12-99, 3). She believes that they are the one who know what is going on.



Cheryl is a small rural school district superintendent who relies on outside contacts to help her administer her school. She would contact salesmen if she ever decided to change jobs. They are the ones with the contacts.

### Summary

Cheryl has been a female superintendent for the past four years in a small rural PREK-8 elementary school district. She realizes that she is it at her school and is a job needs to be done, she is the one to do it or the job will not get done.

She is a very confident person. She wants to do what is best for her school and her students.

Cheryl knows the good old boy network is out there and believes that it is a problem for other female superintendents across the state. She chooses not to be included in the network.

She has established ties with other male superintendents that are close to her own district. She also has ties with salesmen and the people within the State Department of Education. She would rely on them to help or assist her with problems. She would also rely on salesmen for securing other jobs in different school systems.

Cheryl is content with who she is and with what she is doing at her school district. She feels she is doing what is right for her students.

### Helen

Helen has been a small rural school district superintendent for the past 15 years. She presently has been at her current district for the past five years. This is the third

superintendency for her to hold. Helen has a bachelors' degree in elementary education and a master's in school administration. She taught for three years before beginning her reign as superintendent in 1980-81. She is completing her fifteenth year as a female small rural school district superintendent.

#### Female Superintendents in Small Rural Districts

She serves under a three member board of education. Two of the board member are female and one is male. One of the females and the male work in professional settings. She has 61 employees, 34 certified teachers and 27 noncertified staff.

Her school district encompasses 59 square miles. Her student population of 511 students are usually the children of graduates from her school.

Helen was influenced by a female elementary teaching principal, where she served as her teaching assistant, to go back to school and complete her degrees. She became acquainted with other female superintendents during the time that she served as county superintendent of schools in the third largest county in this state.

Helen's perception of why the board of education hired her at her present school is "I think the board at the time that I applied wanted something different" (Helen, 11-12-99, 2). The school district had a superintendent that was elderly, 65 and had held the position for ten years. He "was real set in his ways, and was retired military" (Helen, 11-12-99, 2). "And I think they wanted just something that was completely different and I was different. I was female, and I was quite a bit younger" (Helen, 11-12-99, 2-3).

Also in interviewing with the board of education, she felt like she impressed them because she stated up front to them that she “might not know all the answers, but I knew where to call to get the answers” (Helen, 11-12-99, 3).

Women as school district superintendents have to work harder. We must “get along with everybody because if we do not we are the bitch and we dare not have any kind of relationship with anybody on our staff” (Helen, 11-12-99, 4). She strongly feels that as a female if one did have some kind of a relationship then they would be perceived to “not have good taste or have a brain” (Helen, 11-12-99, 4). “We have to do a better job, work harder and we better not screw up if we want another job. We better leave while we are still on good standing because we will not be able to screw up and go get another job somewhere else” (Helen, 11-12-99, 4). To support Helen, Gupton and Slick (1996), state that if a woman is to obtain or maintain their position, and perhaps even to be considered for a position, they must be better than their male counterparts.

Gupton and Slick (1996), went on to say:

that women express their value of integrity and advised aspiring women in the profession to safeguard their values, remain true to themselves, and never forsake their principles. They appear to be saying that a woman in a position of leadership must never stray from exemplary integrity; her conduct and values must be unapproachable. It is almost as if the woman must be perfect in morals, ethics, conduct, and principles. The female administrator has no room for error lest she be judged by the male-dominated world of educational administrators as lacking in integrity and ethics. And so it seems that once again, female administrators must work harder even at being ethical. Suffice it to say that especially in the area of ethics, the female administrator does not get to play on the same field as her male counterparts. (p.57)

Helen believes that female superintendents need to have a doctoral degree to pursue a superintendency in a larger school district. This does not apply to the males who are pursuing a superintendency.

As a female superintendent of schools, Helen believes that the respect is not the same as it is for the male superintendents in dealing with parents, community, and other superintendents. This is especially true if you are the superintendent of a PREK-8 school.

“Being a female superintendent is not easy. One must prove themselves over and over again. As a female superintendent you had better be well educated and do the best every day” (Helen, 11-12-99, 3). To further support Helen, Witmer (1995) says that if you are female the “burden of proof” that one can do the job will occur daily. People will wait not for you to make a decision, but for you to make a mistake.

Witmer (1995), went on to say:

the female superintendent must present a professional appearance in every situation. She cannot ever “escape” from the duties or the expectations of the position. The public is not yet completely comfortable with a “woman in charge,” so more eyes, both literally and figuratively, will be upon her. She will find that she is always “on.” (p. 297)

### Success as a Female Superintendent

As a superintendent of a small rural school district, Helen sees herself as successful.

I feel like I do a really good job, but I also had a parent tell me about six months ago that she was sick and tired of hearing me pat myself on the back, but if you do not pat yourself on the back, who does? (Helen, 11-12-99, 2)

When Helen talks to other superintendents in other districts she comes away feeling that she is successful. One reason for that is she does not have some of the severe problems at her school and part of that is because she does not tolerate that type of behavior. She realizes that she might have the advantage here, simply because of the small rural school where she is superintendent.

Helen has made several changes in the small rural school district. She has been able to pass a bond issue during her tenure and has completed the new facilities. A new computer lab has been added along with extra staff. Even though, she was able to implement change, she states that her school district is better off financially than it ever has been.

She has a good rapport with her staff and parents. According to Helen, "I think I am a pretty good administrator" (Helen, 11-12-99, 2).

#### Colleagues in the Superintendency

Helen knows the male superintendents in her county. For 18 years she has never been accepted. She said "it might just be my personality" (Helen, 11-12-99, 3). Regardless of whether it is her personality, she has been a superintendent for 15 years and to not be accepted has to show that the good old boy network is hard to penetrate.

She views the good old boy network a hindrance because trying to intermingle with them is next to impossible. At the big meetings, as a female superintendent of schools, one would not force herself on them such as, entering the golf tournaments, partying in the hospitality room and entering their discussions on sports. A female is not welcome.

If a female should go hang out in the hospitality rooms, she is looked at as a target for them. The same respect is not there for a female.

Helen believes that the good old boy network protects their own. For example, a man can go to a school district, he can screw up, he can steal, he can bang his secretary, he can get fired and he can go get a job two months later in a bigger district, with a higher paying salary and have more prestige. (Helen, 11-12-99, 3-4).

The network takes care of their male members.

It is a great hindrance being a female superintendent of schools. Helen feels that the network exists and is alive and well.

#### Support in the Superintendency

Helen definitely depends on outside contacts when she needs assistance. She would seek out salesmen and people from the State Department of Education. She feels that these acquaintances would be the ones to provide her with the best answers or solutions to her problems. The salesmen definitely would be someone she would heavily rely on if she were to pursue another superintendent's position in another school district. She says "they always know what jobs are open" (Helen, 11-12-99, 3).

She would not rely on another superintendent of the district she was applying for to help her "because I do not think they always have the best interest of the district when they are leaving" (Helen, 11-12-99, 3). Her contacts would be people that she thinks could help her in securing a job because of who they are and who they know.

When Helen applied for her current job, she used the salesmen to let her know what jobs were open. She also contacted board members at the school district where she was applying for a job. They are the key people to help you.

Her colleagues, who are her strong ties, are ones that meet each month to discuss overall problems in the school districts in their county. These other superintendents are the ones that she is closest to in her position as superintendent of schools, but they are not the ones who she calls upon when she needs people to promote her as a superintendent of schools.

### Summary

Helen has been a superintendent for the past 15 years. She was encouraged by her female principal to go into school administration. She expresses several times that being a female school superintendent is not easy. Everyone treats you different than they do the men who are in charge.

She thinks overall that she does a good job as a small rural school district superintendent. In her school district she has been able to make positive change for the district, whether it be for the students, or the teachers, or the facility itself.

Helen is well aware that the good old boy network exists. She has not been able to break through in the 15 years she has been a superintendent of schools. She feels that the males are protective of one another. They seem to look out for one another and take care of each other. Within this network, the male superintendents are allowed more freedom than a female superintendent would be. The male superintendents get by with a lot more and still are able to maintain the respect from everyone.

Her neighboring male superintendents are the ones she meets with at monthly meetings on a regular basis and talking on the phone for help and assistance. She has acquaintances with salesmen and people within the State Department of Education. They are the ones with whom she relies on to promote her as a female superintendent.

Helen has been a good superintendent and is well respected by her staff. She feels that she does a good job overall and that sometimes you have to be the one to let people know that you are doing a good job.

### Karen

Karen has been a small rural district superintendent for five years. This is her second superintendency, but her first year as a PREK-12 superintendent of schools at a small independent school district. The first four years as a superintendent were spent in a small elementary school district. Karen has spent 28 years in education. She has several different fields of certification. Her bachelors degree was in home economics. Her master's degree is in guidance and counseling. She has both elementary and secondary counseling certifications. She said, "the only thing I cannot do is librarian" (Karen, 1-11-00, 1).

### Female Superintendents in Small Rural Districts

Karen is currently the superintendent of a small rural independent school district. Her certified staff of 50 are older and have been teaching for many years. "Most of them grew up here and went away to college, came back and have been here ever since" (Karen, 1-11-00, 1). About two thirds of her teachers have their master's degree. Karen



expresses that “they probably will retire here, die here from this classroom, since they like it so well” (Karen, 1-11-00, 2). She has 23 noncertified staff.

Her school district has an enrollment of approximately 525 students. Her school district encompasses 90 square miles.

She serves under a five member board of education and is quick to add “when we have them all” (Karen, 1-11-00, 2). Two of the board members do not attend many of the board of education meetings. The makeup of the board of education is one female and four males. She has one board member who refuses to earn his hours for a newly elected school board member. These hours are a requirement from the state in order to serve on the board of education. This has created some tension among the other board members.

Karen feels that she was not adequately trained to be a superintendent of schools.

She freely states,

many times the classes are so theory driven, that they had no practical purpose when you get out here. I just do not think they prepare them at all. People who are, unfortunately, teaching the classes have not been out there in a long time and do not have a clue as to what is going on. (Karen, 1-11-00, 3)

Karen does emphasize that, while attending K State for her master’s degree, the university was experiential based, when you attended classes, you had to go out in the field and find someone that was practicing and learn how to do the job. For instance,

for a counselor, when it came time to be a counselor, schedules and those kinds of things, building a schedule whatever, you went and found someone who was building one and you worked with them to put it together. (Karen, 1-11-00, 3)

She relies on other superintendents for support and guidance and all of them that she relies on are male. She believes that you must rely on other superintendents’ expertise

and help in order to survive. To support Karen, Witmer (1995) states women in particular need to establish relationships. Her former superintendent is the one she depends on heavily for answers. He is one that Karen calls on and asks for help in solving problems. He was also her role model and the one that encouraged her to go back to school for her superintendent's certificate.

As a female superintendent, she thinks you must be "very knowledgeable about the law" (Karen, 1-11-00, 4). One must be able to know where to seek out the answers in order to survive. Being a female superintendent, one cannot just shoot from the hip to get by. The public and the board of education expect more from you because you are a woman. In fact, they expect a woman "to do everything and get paid nothing" (Karen, 1-11-00, 6).

Being a female superintendent of a small rural school district is challenging. You are always under the watchful eye of the community.

### Success as a Female Superintendent

There may be things that as a superintendent you think need to be changed, but depending on how the community feels, you may not be able to institute the change. If you are going to be successful, you must know what the community expects.

Karen views herself as a successful superintendent. She is very confident that she can get the job done. Her strength is the ability to write grants and receive them. This has allowed her district to receive additional money that it normally would not have received.

She feels very strongly that “you are only as good as the staff you work with” (Karen, 1-11-00, 4). The superintendent of schools must have a staff that buys into the goals of the superintendent. The staff has to be able to support the leadership of their superintendent. Being in a small community, if the staff does not think you are effective, then you can bet that you will be looking for a different job.

Karen believes that she have the necessary tools to do the job. She adds that “this has come after several years of experience and some very good people that have allowed me to make some mistakes” (Karen, 1-11-00, 4). She is a person that takes on responsibility and looks for ways to make a difference.

She emphasizes that she is very knowledgeable about the law. This is due in part to her previous position. That experience has forced her to know the laws dealing with education. This is a must to be successful.

#### Colleagues in the Superintendency

Karen knows the good old boy network is alive and well. “I do not care what organization that you go to, it is alive and well, but if you can find one person who will help you, who will open the door, then you can make some headway” (Karen, 1-11-00, 4).

She knows that she has an advantage because she was a former basketball coach. During this time she learned that in order to survive, one must be able to take everything in good measure, but be ready to dish it right back. This permitted her to be somewhat accepted among an almost all-male group.

At her last superintendency, Karen never was accepted among the other superintendents in her surrounding school districts. “Those guys have been there the last

hundred years. It made them so mad when I was at the meetings because they could not scratch, sniff, chew and cuss because I put a stop to it” (Karen, 1-11-00, 4). She let them know that she did not appreciate their behavior and ask them to refrain from it in her presence. They were quick to let her know, after she left, that their “meetings have been more fun” (Karen, 1-11-00, 5) since she is gone.

Karen has found that when she attends the state meetings, that “it takes a long time for them to include you to go to lunch. You just have to pick up and just go with them. Sit down with them and butt right in” (Karen, 1-11-00, 5).

It helps if you have another male superintendent “who is well known, who will take you along with them” (Karen, 1-11-00, 5) so you can be included. The other male superintendents will include you, but they may not totally accept you. She feels that “they do not know quite how to accept you” (Karen, 1-11-00, 5).

The expectations for a female superintendent of schools are different than that of a male. “I think the men expect the female when they come” (Karen, 1-11-00, 5) to the meetings that “it is almost like a gentlemen’s club and you should not be there unless you are going to be the stripper. I mean you are supposed to sit in the corner and be quiet. When you finally do open up and have something intelligent to say, they all act like, well, hey she does have a brain, they just never thought about that way” (Karen, 1-11-00, 5-6).

Karen does not mean to sound derogatory. She feels like the men do not know how to deal with the female superintendents being a part of their group.

The female superintendents will find that the good old boy network is very much alive and well. They will never be totally accepted. They must know how to interact and

have someone who is willing to introduce them and include them with other male superintendents.

### Support in the Superintendency

Karen has one male superintendent that she depends on for everything. He is the one that helps her when problems arise and he is the one who makes sure that she feels comfortable around the other male superintendents in this state. He has become a very close friend that provides the much needed support a female superintendent of schools needs to have.

The fact that this superintendent is there for her helps in the day-to-day problems that she might need assistance with in effectively running a school. He has been there since day one. He was the one who encouraged her to go into the superintendency.

She knows that all superintendents, male or female, must have someone that they can trust to help them. Connections with other superintendents need to exist for all superintendents.

If she were needing some help in looking at the possibility of moving to another school district, she would not only contact her close friend, but would seek out other contacts that deal with schools. Salesmen are very knowledgeable about what jobs are open and who to contact about the position. Other superintendents in the area of the job may provide some inside information about the position. Also, CCSA, the superintendents professional organization, would be contacted about what vacancies are out there.

These people would be her acquaintances through her work. These people are the ones that are in the know. They are the ones who know the details about the school.

They can tell Karen what problems exist and what the school board is looking for. They can inform her about the make up of the community.

These ties for a small rural female superintendent have to be available. She has to have them to get an interview. These people outside the school provide the necessary contacts.

### Summary

Karen has been a successful female small rural school superintendent for the past five years. She feels that you must be able to have or be able to seek out knowledge concerning the running of a school district.

She knows that the good old boy network is alive and well. It is hard for a female to be accepted by other male superintendents. She is not so sure that you are ever truly 100% accepted. More than likely, she is accepted by those who her male superintendent friend runs with. Being accepted by other male superintendents is impossible in this state.

Karen has one strong tie that helps her all the time. He is another male superintendent who had encouraged her to pursue the superintendency. He is the one that she depends on for advice.

She has ties that she calls upon when looking for advancement. These ties are her professional organization and salesmen that call on her district. They provide her with the necessary information that she can use to promote herself.

Karen sees herself as a person who can get the job done. She knows being a female small rural school district superintendent is not easy, but feels that she has the necessary tools to get the job done right.

## Loretta

Loretta is a small rural female school district superintendent. She has been a female administrator of schools for the past seven years. She served as an elementary principal and vice principal K-12 for five years and the last three years she has served as a female small rural school district superintendent. Loretta has been in education for 33 years. She has a bachelors' degree in elementary education. She has two masters' degrees.

### Female Superintendents in Small Rural Districts

Loretta has a total staff of 30. She has 19 certified staff and 11 noncertified staff. Her school district encompasses 72 square miles.

Her school district is very rural. There are no industries in her district, just a local grocery and gas station combination, a post office, and a senior citizen's center.

Loretta's student population of 140 students are predominantly Native American. Ninety percent of her students are card carriers and they still speak their native languages. English is their second language. She has an interpreter on staff to communicate with the parents because they do not speak English. "The children come not really prepared for school due to their environment and background with the other language" (Loretta, 1-12-00, 1). The "little ones who come to school do not know their colors, do not know their alphabet, and some of them have never held a crayon" (Loretta, 1-12-00, 2). "It is a very tight culture and they have tried to preserve it and that is good, but educationally, it

probably has not been real good for their children” (Loretta, 1-12-00, 3). She finds this to be very frustrating as their superintendent.

Loretta serves under a five member board of education. She has four males and one female that makeup her board of education. Three of the males are retired and the other male has three children in the school; while the female board member has one child in the school and has had two other children graduate from the school. Each board member is a graduate from that school.

Her graduate college work was very beneficial, but “nothing that I had in college really prepared me for this environment, or the student population” (Loretta, 1-12-00, 3). That is not the colleges fault. The area where this district is located is so different from other areas in this state. It is as if this area is “from another time zone”(Loretta,1-12-00, 3).

Loretta thinks that is it hard for a female to even be considered for a principal’s job, let alone a superintendent of schools position. “They do not think a woman can handle it” (Loretta, 1-12-00, 8). However, if you ever get the opportunity to be a superintendent as a female, they will “wish that had hired a woman years ago because, let’s face it, we do the work and we make the school look good” (Loretta, 1-12-00, 8).

#### Success as a Female Superintendent

Loretta feels that it has been really hard being a small rural school district superintendent in her district due to her being “culture shock for these people” (Loretta, 1-12-00, 4). She thinks that “they were real suspicious of me” (Loretta, 1-12-00, 4) because I was not Native American.



She finds that it is hard to involve the parents and the community in the school. This is very frustrating for her as a superintendent of schools.

The job is very challenging, but she enjoys it. She feels that you must try harder and always do your best. She is very much on display in her job. Loretta tries to do the best for the students in her district.

### Colleagues in the Superintendency

The network among male superintendents is out there. "I truly think that there is a good old boy network and I think it is getting better" (Loretta, 1-12-00, 8). The network exists and "I cannot believe that it is that strong" (Loretta, 1-12-00, 6).

When Loretta applied for her first job in administration she was practically hired sight unseen on the phone. "My brother-in-law is a superintendent and he recommended me" (Loretta, 1-12-00, 5). From word of mouth, I was basically hired.

She is the only female from her county at the monthly meetings and she feels that she has been pretty well accepted. "They have been very nice to me and they have been very helpful" (Loretta, 1-12-00, 7). The other school superintendents from her county have been superintendents for many years and are near retirement or are eligible for retirement.

On the state level, she has a totally differently opinion of the good old boy network. She feels "that when you go to things at the state level, there are still a lot of them that look down on the women. It is evident. You can feel it. You are talked down to" (Loretta, 1-12-00, 7). The male network is present. They do not want you there.

In the three years as a small rural female school district superintendent, Loretta feels that a female is not welcome among the other male superintendents. On the local level, they are helpful and seem to be receptive of a female. You feel like you are accepted. On the state level that is a completely different ball game. As a female, you know that they had rather not have you around at their meetings and in the hospitality rooms. She is a very social person and seems to be very comfortable among the male superintendents. One would not guess that she felt like she did not belong to that group of superintendents.

Loretta feels that the male superintendents have kept women from being a superintendent. She also thinks that some “of those same people, if they had a good experience working with a woman that was competent” (Loretta, 1-12-00, 8). would change their attitude about us.

#### Support in the Superintendency

Loretta has ties with her surrounding superintendents. She uses them for information and assistance in administrating her school district and with problems that arise within her district. These male superintendents are her colleagues with which she is quite familiar. She meets with them regularly on a monthly basis.

In promoting herself as a female superintendent, she would rely on acquaintances for contacts. These acquaintances are salesmen that call on her school. She does not “think you are going to get your foot in the door without them” (Loretta, 1-12-00, 7). They are the ones that she depends on when she it trying to get ahead within the network of superintendents.

As a female superintendent, you must have contacts to exist. They are the ones that help you, promote you, and permit you to have a sounding board.

### Summary

Thirty-three years is a long time to be in education. Loretta has been a superintendent for three of the 33 years. She is in a very small PREK-12, independent school district in a very rural community. Her students are made up mostly of Native Americans.

She is frustrated at her district because she has a hard time communicating with the parents of her students. Over all she feels that she is making a difference in the lives of her students.

The good old boy network is very much in existence and is very strong. She feels that on the state level the male superintendents do not want the women present. She feels that they are talked down to and that they keep women from being superintendents of school districts.

Loretta believes that if given the opportunity, men would be more receptive to women in the superintendency if they had worked with one that is competent. She feels that their attitudes would change.

She has developed ties with her area group of male superintendents and salesmen that call on her school. She knows that without them, one would never get their foot in the door. Ties are very important if you are wanting to become a female superintendent or if you as a female superintendent want to move up the career ladder.

Loretta, in spite of her frustrations, feels that she is a very effective superintendent. She knows that as a female school district superintendent, you must be the one that strives for the best. She realizes that people around the state continually look at you and pass judgment. It is the general feeling that a woman cannot do the job as a superintendent of schools. Being a female superintendent in this state is hard. the female superintendent is the minority and does not have very many other females to serve as role models for them. Therefore, as a female superintendent of schools, one must always do what is best for your school district.

#### Pamela

Pamela has been a small rural school district superintendent for 17 years. She serves a consolidated school district. Pamela received her bachelor's degree in elementary education and kindergarten. Her master's degree she received was in reading. She went back to school and received her elementary principal and superintendent's certifications.

#### Female Superintendents in Small Rural Districts

Being a female superintendent in a small rural school district is nothing new to Pamela. Her first superintendency was in the smallest school in the state; she had 26 students and two teachers. This district was an elementary school and "the neat thing about it was you got a lot of experience" (Pamela, 1-13-00, 1). "You did everything, I could never delegate anything to anybody 'cause I had two other teachers" (Pamela, 1-13-00, 1). She even had to drive the school bus to take the students home.

Her next superintendency, and where she is now, was for a K-12 independent school. Her first year as superintendent, she taught reading to 7th and 8th grade boys. That school year her small rural school consolidated with another small rural school district in the provisions provided through HB 1017. The consolidated district encompasses 350 square miles and is located in two separate towns three miles apart.

Pamela believes that “if you consolidate small schools, you hurt teachers” (Pamela, 1-13-00, 3). When you combine the classes together, you will eliminate teacher positions.

Pamela has a seven member board of education. There are four board members from one town and three from the other town. Her board members are all males.

The district enrollment is 570 students. She has 48 certified staff and 26 noncertified staff.

As a small rural school district superintendent, one has to do many things and be prepared for all emergencies. One usually has to teach some classes in addition to her administrative duties. She knows that you must be organized and ready to take on any job that arises.

### Success as a Female Superintendent

Pamela does not really know how successful she is.

One of the reasons I decided to become a superintendent is, so I could do my thing and make changes that would make a difference. That is kind of a disillusion, but I think you can make more change than a classroom teacher. (Pamela, 1-13-00, 4)

She views herself as a manager because she is responsible for the job. She feels that you must be involved and be a more hands on person. She knows that being a superintendent, one needs to be crisis manager.

She as a superintendent of schools institutes change. "It is hard to institute change when there is not trust" (Pamela, 1-13-00, 4). Teachers and support personnel have to trust the superintendent in order for them to be successful.

Pamela has finally earned the trust among her complete staff at this time. She knows that it was hard, due to the consolidation of the two schools and the rumors that went back and forth from town to town. Since she was willing to work and build trust between the two districts, she has been successful as a female small rural school district superintendent.

#### Colleagues in the Superintendency

The good old boy network definitely exists. Pamela believes that this network at one time "could be used to our advantage" (Pamela, 1-13-00, 6). She knows that a trust must be established in order to use this network to our advantage. Today even with the trust, she believes that "there is not comradeship among us" (Pamela, 1-13-00, 6).

The women superintendents do not seem to mix well with the men. When they go to the hospitality rooms or the meetings, the women tend to stay to themselves. On the other hand, the men seem to gather in their own groups and do not allow one in.

"It seems like everybody is for themselves" (Pamela, 1-13-00, 7). Pamela does not see the young superintendents building relationships with one another. That makes it difficult to call upon another superintendent for help.

The network among the male superintendents makes it extremely difficult for a female to get a job. They might serve as a reference, but will not hire you. The relationship between male and female superintendents is not there.

### Support in the Superintendency

As a female small rural school district superintendent, it is very important to build relationships with other superintendents. One should know that there is support for one another and to encourage each other.

Pamela attends the superintendent meetings within her county. That particular group support each other and call on one another if they have any problems. These superintendents have included her and another female superintendent into the group. She meets with them at regular monthly meetings held in the county. She feels that there is a closeness among them.

These superintendents are depended on for advice and support. This particular group of superintendents have been together for the last ten years. There is an established trust.

Even though this group is pretty thick, when I asked Pamela who she would seek out to help her gain another superintendent's position, she replied that she would turn to salesmen, people from the state department of education and people from a negotiations firm. These people she feels would be full of information and would know who she should contact. They would be able to recommend you and help you get an interview with the board of education.

This particular group of people she knows on a casual basis. They are the ones who she believes would be the best source to help her get ahead.

She knows that you must have ties. Ties help one survive the superintendency. These ties help to promote you and provide you with information.

### Summary

Pamela has been a female superintendent of schools for many years and she knows that it is hard in the male dominated world that she works in. She knows that it is left up to her to see that the job of the superintendent gets done along with other responsibilities she has simply because she has no other staff to do it.

She has been through a school consolidation between two school districts. Each district is located in two separate towns. Through the consolidation, she had to dismiss teachers due to combining classes. This was not viewed as positive in either district.

She feels that her school district has established a trust in her. She views that as being successful and effective.

Pamela knows that the good old boy network is definitely out there among the male superintendents. She sees evidence of the good old boy network in the working at the state meetings and in the hospitality rooms. The female superintendents are not included. She feels that the newer or younger male superintendents seem to be out for themselves. She fears that they will not build relationships that they need to have.

Within the local county, the superintendents and her are close. They rely on each other when they need help or support. These ties provide her with assistance she needs while running her school district.



She sees salesmen, the State Department of Education and people who work for a negotiations firm as the ones who she would call upon to promote her or to help her get a better position.

Pamela is content with her position. She works well with her board of education and her staff.

### Sonya

Sonya has been in education for 30 years. She has been a small rural school district superintendent for 18 years. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in fashion merchandising and marketing. She pursued this career for several years. When she had her two sons, she decided that she would like to do something where she could be home with them after school and on their holidays, so she went back to school and received her master's degree in education. At that time, she also received her elementary principal's certification and her superintendent's certification.

Sonya was a classroom teacher in this district for five years. She then became the elementary principal and served in that capacity for five years. She then became the assistant superintendent under the superintendent who hired her for the superintendent's job. She was the assistant superintendent of this school system for four years. Sonya is the only female that was interviewed that moved up through the ranks of the school system.

### Female Superintendents in Small Rural Schools

Sonya is a female superintendent in a small rural independent school district. This is the school district that she graduated from high school. Her father and two sons graduated from this school too. Her mother was a teacher at this school until her retirement. Sonya's office is located in her mother's old classroom. There are many memories that she can share about the school district when she attended and she can shed light on the many changes that this particular school district has been through.

During the time she was going to school for her administrative certificates, she was enrolled in the doctorate program. She had never set this as one of her goals and, when she decided to that she was going to stay at her present school and not move on, she decided to drop out of the doctoral program since the doctorate "was not something you had to have to be a superintendent and it was such a hassle. Three times the rules changed on what I had to take while I was in the doctorate program" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 3).

At each level of advancement, Sonya was encouraged by the person who was her immediate supervisor. All of these people were males. She feels that one reason that she was picked for the jobs was her ability to write grants. These grants brought in some much needed funds to the school district. She never thought she would be a superintendent of schools. "That was never my goal" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 3). When the opportunity knocked, she was prepared and ready.

Her school district encompasses 559 square miles and she educates just under 1,000 students in a PREK-12 independent school. She has had a declining enrollment which means that her school district is losing funds at the state level.

Sonya had a certified staff of 83 which includes her. "I have a great teaching staff. Wonderful teachers that work so hard and try every way in the world to educate students" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 6). She has 60 noncertified staff.

She has a five member board of education. All five of them are males.

On January 11, 2000 this school district passed a \$750,000.00 bond issue by 72.6%. This shows that the community and parents support the school and what it does. They have confidence in the job that the school is doing and they support improvements to the school district and its students.

Sonya sees her job as being important. She knows that decisions that she has to make ultimately affects every student in her school district. She wants to be certain that each decision is in the best interest of her students.

#### Success as a Female Superintendent

Sonya views herself as a successful superintendent in a small rural school district. She has initiated change that has had a positive effect on the students, staff, parents and the community.

She was the first to begin parent-teacher conferences. This alone opened the doors of communication between the parent and the school.

The test scores have to raised and maintained over the past several years. She attributes this to her great staff and her supporting what they do as teachers.

She has been an elementary person from the beginning and finds the "a lot of the time elementary people do not become a superintendent because there are so many secondary issues to deal with" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 8). She believes that elementary people

make the best superintendents because of several things. “One is the ability to work on several things at one time and, second of all, I think they have a better overview of people, kids, and the big picture” (Sonya, 1-13-00, 8).

Being a woman superintendent has not been easy. She has struggled with decisions, but she feels like overall she has been what her school district needed. She is pleased with the job that she has done and what that she has helped accomplish with the support of others in her school district.

### Colleagues in the Superintendency

She knows that the good old boy network is present among the male superintendents. She has been in administration for some time and does she feel like she fits in? “No” (Sonya, 1-13-00, 9). “At those meetings, the men I know, I make an effort to always go up and visit with them” (Sonya, 1-13-00, 9). She still is not included into the group. In support of Sonya, Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) state that women continue to have major difficulty being accepted by the “Good Ol’ Boys.”

Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) went on to say:

Women’s opportunities for access to this powerful network are limited although the network could be critical to their advancement. For example, women are unable to participate in men’s informal “locker room” discussions or to join some fraternal and professional organizations. It is in these informal settings that information is shared, networks are developed, and decisions are made. (p.15)

The “good old boys” network will probably always be off limits to female superintendents. I mean after 18 years I am not any closer to being included in the “good old boys” network than I was when I first began as a superintendent. (Sonya, 1-13-00, 9).

She feels that there is flip side to this. She expresses that it is not a good idea for the female superintendents to establish a good old girls club either. Sonya feels that this is beginning to happen among a few of the females.

They travel together and they go together, they are good friends and they support each other, but they are always obvious on the scene, because here we have the little boys and over here we have the little girls. (Sonya, 1-13-00, 9)

This will end up doing more harm to the females that are superintendents.

Sonya tries not to make this an issue when she is among the male superintendents at various functions. "Just recognize the fact that when I go, I know I am not going to be one of the boys" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 10). She knows that being a superintendent of schools is a pretty lonely job, but "it is even lonelier at the state level" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 10).

She is able to network among the male superintendents around her, but she is quick to add that even them at the state meetings will acknowledge her presence and that is all. "I do not fit in" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 10).

Sonya suspects that the good old boy network still views females "as suspect and are viewed as the secretary or the something or other" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 11). She feels that by being a female that person does not fit in and "feels discriminated against or not taken seriously because she is a woman" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 11).

I know I do, at least three times a day. You know my assistant who is male and I will walk up to people who do not have any idea who we are and they will address him first every time. They will do it. It is just hysterical. They assume he is the superintendent. (Sonya, 1-13-00, 11)

Sonya feels that she will never be a part of the good old boy network. She thinks that, just because that she is female, she will have a harder time and will not be taken seriously.

### Support in the Superintendency

As a female superintendent of a small rural independent school district, she depends upon the group of superintendents that surround her district. She is the second female in that group.

These surrounding superintendents will call her and talk to her. "First time I ever got a phone call and somebody wanted my advice on something, I was thrilled to death" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 10). These superintendents are her close friends. They have formed a trust and a friendship. They support one another and trust that the advice or support that they are receiving is correct.

When asked who she would depend on if she were to seek another job, Sonya responded that "I am probably not a good one to ask that question. I am really, really focused on my school district. I have a real emotional tie here" (Sonya, 1-13-00, 12). She realizes that being the superintendent of the school district where you grew up has its drawbacks, but she would not seek other employment.

Even though, she would not seek other employment, Sonya knows that in order to get your foot in the door, one must depend on people that are out and about. The ones that know what positions are open and know all the particulars about them. These people would be the salesmen that call on her school. These people are in the know and are the ones that would be the best help to one seeking another position. They have so many contacts.

## Summary

Sonya has given 30 years of her life to education. She has moved up the steps of the ladder within the same system with the exception of the seven years that she was an elementary teacher in another state.

She believes that just because she is a woman, that she is not taken seriously at times. She thinks that is due to the thinking that is out there. Women cannot do the job and accept the responsibility.

Overall, she feels that she has been very successful in her school district. She has been able to bring money into her schools through grants. Sonya has initiated change throughout the years she has been there. With each change, there has been improvement to the school, the staff and to the students.

She knows that, being a female, she will never be accepted into the good old boy network that exists within the state. That does not seem to bother her because she knows that she is doing a good job.

The male network is extremely powerful and, as the younger superintendents move into the jobs, she sees the network as becoming stronger. She feels that the younger male superintendents feel that a female does not have a place in the superintendency.

Sonya does have male superintendents that she is close to. These friends help support and offer advice when she needs it.

She does not see herself as moving up to another position, but if she did, she would contact salesmen to help her. These contacts are knowledgeable and would be the necessary ties needed to get you foot in the door.

Sonya is very pleased with the job that she is performing in her school district. She still has vision as to where she would like to take the school district.

#### Vivian

Vivian has completed 24 years in education and is in her 25th year. This is her first year as superintendent in a small rural school district. She has been at three different school districts during her time in education. Vivian received her bachelors' degree in elementary education and taught as an elementary teacher for 12 years in two different schools. She received her masters' degree in educational administration.. She had served as an elementary principal for 12 years for the school district in which she is currently serving as superintendent.

#### Female Superintendents in Small Rural Districts

Vivian felt like the superintendency would open up for her because her superintendent was retiring soon. "So I just waited on him to retire to get into this position" (Vivian, 1-14-00, 1).

Vivian's first superintendency was planned for her. She knew when her superintendent retired that she was going to be the next superintendent. She says that "it is kind of a big family here. They grow to trust you and they want to continue that trusting relationship" (Vivian, 1-14-00, 2).

She has 75 certified staff and 42 noncertified staff. Her school district encompasses 36 square miles.



Her student population is just a little over 1,100 students. She has known the students since they were in kindergarten. Her current seniors were in kindergarten when she was their elementary principal.

Vivian serves under a five member board of education. The board of education is made up of one female and four males. She has known all of the board members for the past ten years.

Being a first year superintendent, Vivian sees herself as an observer. She recognizes that she is at a disadvantage when it comes to maintaining the facilities. She states that “probably the most difficult part of my job right now is maintaining facilities. I am not a construction person” (Vivian, 1-14-00, 4-5).

#### Success as a Female Superintendent

Since this is Vivian’s first year as a school district superintendent, she has made only the changes that were absolutely necessary. She views herself as an observer for the first year.

She has provided a more hands on approach to staff development for her teachers. She has initiated the Great Expectations Program in the elementary school and is expanding it into the middle school.

She feels that she has good relationship with the board of education. They support her ideas.

As a superintendent, she feels that she “could do something for these kids and that is what I wanted to do” (Vivian, 1-14-00, 1). She makes herself available to her students

at lunch time. She wants to be a part of their educational program. "As an administrator, I like to know the kids" (Vivian, 1-14-00, 5).

Vivian thinks that her first year as superintendent she has been successful. She feels that she has been able to continue the program as well as her former boss.

### Colleagues in the Superintendency

She has been assigned a male mentor for her first year. She said that they get along very well and he has been very helpful to her. Their school districts are almost the same size.

Vivian does think there is a good old boys network within the superintendency. "Some of them have a hard time accepting women, but so far I really personally have not had that problem, but I can tell that it is out there" (Vivian, 2-14-00, 3).

Her husband is a coach and is friends with a few of the male superintendents and her dad was also a superintendent of schools. "I do not feel uncomfortable around male company at all" (Vivian, 1-14-00, 3).

Vivian thinks that attitude has a lot to do with how she gets along with males. "I have never felt that there is an issue men/women, or female/male issue. I think that if you think there is an issue, then you will encounter problems because it is in your attitude" (Vivian, 1-14-00, 3).

She is not a big feminist movement person. She feels like it does not matter what gender you are if you do the job the best that you can. "I have never had the attitude that there is a difference in women" (Vivian, 1-14-00, 4).

Vivian thinks that women are “a little slower about taking the risk, like jumping into a job like this” (Vivian, 1-14-00, 4). She notes that women tend not to seek out the jobs when they have finished their superintendent’s certificate.

She adds that school boards which are predominately male, “are a little apprehensive” (Vivian, 1-14-00, 4), when it come to hiring a woman for the superintendent’s job. She feels that this is definitely a factor that explains why there are not many women as school superintendents.

Even though, Vivian knows that the good old boy network exists, she feel that by being included by her group of male superintendent friends that is all that is necessary. She does not intend to move to other school districts. She intends to stay put at her present school until she retires. Therefore, the males that she is close to make her feel comfortable enough when she goes out to the state meetings. The good old boys network is out there, but it is not important to her because she is comfortable within her group of superintendents.

#### Support in the Superintendency

Vivian has a very close relationship with her surrounding school superintendents. She has the advantage that she has known them for many years through her husband and dad.

These male school superintendents are the ones who she goes to for help or advice. Her school district is approximately the same size of the male superintendents that she communicates with. This makes is handy, because they experience some of the same problems.

She has no intentions of pursuing another superintendency. She states that “I do not think I would ever want to go into a situation where I am not familiar with the community. I know you could go and do research about the communities all you want before you go into a district, but if you do not know some of the ins and outs of that community well, I think that would be real hard to be the superintendent” (Vivian, 1-14-00, 4).

She relies solely on what is comfortable to her.

### Summary

Vivian is currently in her 25th year in education, but is a first-year superintendent in a school district that she has been a part of for 13 years.

Since this is her first year as a superintendent of schools, she sees herself as an observer. She has made only the necessary changes that her district required.

Vivian thinks that she is doing a fine job. She feels that it is important for a superintendent to know the students. She makes herself available at lunch time.

She knows that the good old boy network is present, but she thinks that part of it is the attitude of the female. She personally has not experienced it, but she only associates with those superintendents that she knows and has known for a long time.

These superintendents that she is tied to are her area superintendents. She feels like they are the ones that will help her if a problem arises. She has not developed any contacts with outside salesmen.

She feels like she will retire from that particular school district and that she needs to continue to associate with her current group of superintendents.

### Cross-Superintendent Summary

Similarities and differences emerged when comparing the data collected from the eight respondents. Table II summarizes a variety of demographics of the female superintendents in small rural districts. No similarities were found between the size of the districts, the size of the student population, the number of certified and noncertified staff, the makeup of their boards of education, their longevity in education, the number of years as a superintendent and the superintendents levels of degrees.

TABLE II  
FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS IN SMALL  
RURAL DISTRICTS

Categories	Brooke	Cheryl	Helen	Karen	Loretta	Pamela	Sonya	Vivian
# Students	1681	130	511	525	140	570	1000	1100
# Certified Staff	118	13	34	50	19	48	83	75
# Non-certified Staff	67	9	27	23	11	26	60	42
# Board Members	5 1m 4f	3 2m 1f	3 1m 2f	5 4m 1f	5 4m 1f	7 7m 0f	5 5m 0f	5 4m 1f
Degrees Held	Doctor's	Master's	Master's	Doctor's	Master's	Master's	Master's	Master's
# Years Education	27	14	18	28	33	18	30	25
# Years Supt.	7	4	15	5	3	17	18	1
# Square Miles	150	10	59	90	72	350	559	36

Note: m= Male, f=Female.

One major difference was the number of years experience each had in education and as a superintendent. The number of years in education ranged from 14 to 33 years. The number of years as a school superintendent ranged from one to 18 years.

Another difference was the number of students in their school district. The number of students ranged from 130 to 1681.

The number of certified and noncertified staff was a major difference. The number of certified staff ranged from 13 to 118. The number of noncertified staff ranged from nine to 67.

Another difference was the number of square miles in each district. The number of square miles ranged from ten to 559 square miles.

The number of board members was a difference. Five of the eight participants served a five member board of education and two of the participants served a three member board of education. Only one participant served a seven member board although it was not because of the size of the district, but because the district consolidated with another school district.

The makeup of the board of education varied from school to school. Three of the boards of education had four males and one female board member. Another district had four female and one male. One other has seven males on the board of education. The three member boards were different also. One had two males and one female, while the other one had one male and two female. There was only one five member board of education that had five males.

The superintendents had different levels of degrees in higher education. Two the eight had their doctorate's degree and the other six had a master's degree plus extra college hours for a principal and a superintendent's certification.

Similarities that emerged from the category Success as a Female Superintendent were that five female superintendents felt that they were successful in their present position. They believe that they can initiate change and make a difference in the lives of their students, in the community and in the whole school district.

Three of the female superintendents are not sure how successful they have been. Two of them feel that trust has to be established before they can feel successful and the other superintendent is in her first year and is looking at this year as a observer. She does not want to initiate any changes except what is apparent.

Table III summarizes the good old boy network. It shows that there are some similarities that exist concerning this network. Seven of the eight participants felt that this network is present and that as a female superintendent, they were not accepted and that this particular network cannot not be penetrated.

TABLE III

## GOOD OLD BOY NETWORK

Good Old Boy Network	Brooke	Cheryl	Helen	Karen	Loretta	Pamela	Sonya	Vivian
Does Exist	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accepted	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Able to Penetrate the Network	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Table III illustrates the good old boy network that exists among the male superintendents in this state. According to the information gathered from the respondents and from the literature, it is evident that this particular network exists. Each female superintendent, except one, believed that the good old boy network was alive and well. One felt like it did not exist and it was never apparent to her. She is the anomaly and since the data were collected she is no longer a superintendent.

Seven of the eight participants agree that the good old boy network exists. Seven of the eight participants are in agreement that they are not accepted as female superintendents in the network. The same seven have not been able to penetrate that network.

Table IV summarized perspectives about colleagues in the superintendency, the support in the superintendency, and the outside contacts that the female superintendents have. Most all of the eight respondents agree that they need help and support as they make decisions for their school district. They also feel that as a female superintendent outside contacts were needed to pursue advancement and to gain a new position. Vivian did not plan on leaving her school district. The tenure of a superintendent is about three years and this is only her first year as a superintendent of schools.



TABLE IV  
COLLEAGUES, SUPPORT, AND OUTSIDE CONTACTS  
FOR FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS

Categories	Brooke	Cheryl	Helen	Karen	Loretta	Pamela	Sonya	Vivian
Colleagues in the Supt.	Area Supt.	None	Area Supt.	Long Time Supt.	Area Supt.	Area Supt.	Area Supt.	Area Supt. Past Supt.
Support in the Supt.	Area Supt.	NA	Area Supt.	Long Time Supt.	Area Supt.	Area Supt.	Area Supt.	Area Supt. Past Supt.
Outside Contacts	Salesmen CCSA	Salesmen State Dept.	Salesmen State Dept.	Salesmen State Dept. Other Supt.	Salesmen	Salesmen State Dept. Neg. Firm	Salesmen	None

Several similarities appeared in Table IV. It shows that six of the eight felt like the superintendents in their area were their colleagues. One stated that she did not have any colleagues. Another has a long time superintendent that she is friends with to be her colleague and to help and support her. The same responses were evidenced by saying they would depend upon these same people for help and support. Seven of the eight respondents stated that salesmen were the outside contact of choice. One does not believe that she will need any because she is planning on staying at the same school until she retires, unfortunately I find that hard to do since she is a first year superintendent. Four of the female superintendents would call upon the State Department of Education, one would call CCSA, and another would call other superintendents or a negotiating firm.

### Summary

The similarities and differences among the eight female small rural school district superintendents was discussed. Major differences were found in student population, school size, years of experience in education and as a superintendent, number of certified and noncertified staff, number of board members and their makeup, and the degrees that each female superintendent held.

Similarities that existed among the female superintendents were that they were all female and that they were aware that the good old boy network existed. It was real and strong. The female superintendents were not accepted and could not penetrate that network.

### Summary

Brooke, Cheryl, Helen, Karen, Loretta, Pamela, Sonya and Vivian were selected to participate in this study because they were female superintendents in small rural school districts. A case study including females in small rural districts, success as a female superintendent, colleagues in the superintendency, and support in the superintendency. The eight case studies were compared and contrasted. The similarities and differences of females as small rural district superintendents, success as a female superintendent, colleagues in the superintendency and support in the superintendency were discussed. Each case study will be analyzed both individually and collectively in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In this chapter, the data were analyzed individually and collectively through the lens of Perpetuation Theory (Braddock, 1980; Wells & Crain, 1994; Granovetter, 1973, 1976, 1995). Research questions two, three, and four are answered in this chapter. Network analysis explains many of the realities reported. Other realities are also noted. The usefulness of network analysis is also noted. When analyzing the data, two points were considered: 1) social networks of superintendents and 2) the classifications of social networks; their strong and weak ties.

#### Social Networks

“The term networking most recently mutated into the growing language of technology, emphasizes connections. Establishing networks is an essential connection for anyone wanting to grow personally or professionally” (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Social networks are a means that one may use to identify oneself and receive help, support, information and contacts. It is the “set of personal contacts through which an individual maintains his (sic) social identity and receives emotional support, mutual aid, service information, and new social contacts” (Walker et al., 1977, p.35). There exists two types

of connections within social networks (Granovetter, 1973). The two types of connections are strong ties and weak ties.

### Strong Ties

Strong ties are between individuals when those individuals have mutual interests. Generally speaking, the strong ties are family members and close friends. “The strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie” (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361). Therefore, the more time one spends with one another the more intense the relationship becomes. Family members and close friends develop an emotional bond and a trust. This becomes the strong tie between the two individuals.

### Weak Ties

“Weak ties exist throughout an individual’s less formal interpersonal networks. A weak tie is described as the linkage between an individual and an acquaintance or friends of friends” (Pennington, 1999, p. 76). Weak ties are very important because they provide the individual the necessary means to paths of opportunity. These ties link one individual to another individual. Weak ties become the bridges to one another. “Weak ties are an important resource in making possible mobility opportunity” (Granovetter, 1973, p.1373). Weak ties provide the necessary bridge to link contacts of individuals to one another.

## Tie Components

There are four components that determine the strength of a tie when they are combined. Each component is dependent upon one another. These four components are “the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie” (Granovetter, 1973. p. 1361).

Time. One aspect of the strength of a tie can be measured by the amount of time shared or spent together. In his research, Homan (1950) states that “the more frequently persons interact with one another, the stronger their sentiments of friendship for one another are apt to be” (p. 133), and the stronger the tie. They form a bond and have similar interests, which draws them closer together. This is the strong tie between the individuals and is evidenced by the amount of time spent interacting. Where there is limited time or a lack of interaction among each individual, this is a weak tie.

Emotional Intensity. Another aspect of the strength of a tie is the amount of emotional intensity between individuals. The stronger the intensity, the stronger the relationship becomes. The more emotional interaction between individuals where the individuals had a mutual choice would be a strong tie. A weak tie would be characterized by the lack of emotional interaction between individuals.

Intimacy. The strength of a tie was measured by the amount of similar knowledge that individuals shared with one another. The networks where the individuals shared the same paths, had the same backgrounds, and had the same positions within an organization were the strong ties. On the other hand, those individuals with the network who did not

cross the same paths, had completely different backgrounds, and had different positions within an organization were the weak ties.

Reciprocal Services. The strength of a tie was measured by the benefits its members would receive through the interaction between the individuals within the network. Those individuals that received many benefits from being a member of the network had strong ties with others within the network. Those individuals that received no benefits from being a member of the network had weak ties with others within the network.

### Summary

The social networks available to the female superintendents in the small rural school districts were the networks with the other superintendents both male and female and the outside networks within the boundaries of education. Superintendent networks referred to networks that the female superintendents were a part of because of their position within the school system (i.e. relationships with other superintendents, board members, teachers, students, etc.) The outside contact networks referred to networks in which the female superintendents were both professionally and socially active (i.e. salesmen, state department of education, CCSA, etc.).

Any tie must have at least three of the tie components to be identified as strong. Having two or less of the tie components would determine that the tie was weak.

## Brooke

Brooke disclosed two networks during her interview. The network of superintendents was a strong connection for her. She did not consider this particular network to be the “good old boys” network. She did not think there was such an organization as the “good old boys.” She felt she was included with all superintendents. The outside network provided her with informal contacts.

### Network of Superintendents

The network of superintendents was made up of all other superintendents that she considered as her friends and they were all male. She would heavily rely upon them for any support or help that she might need. She would not hesitate to call them with any problems. The friendship that has been established between her and other superintendents would be Granovetter’s (1973) tie components of time, emotional intensity, and intimacy.

The social network which existed between Brooke and the other superintendents supports Granovetter’s (1973) idea of strong ties. The data supported the existence of three tie components in the network of her and other superintendents: time, emotional intensity, and intimacy. Brooke and the other superintendents have known each other for a time and have worked together on various boards of organizations. They have regular monthly meetings, attend conferences and workshops together.

The component of time existed because Brooke spent a great deal of time with the other superintendents on a regular basis and through the time component, emotional intensity developed between her and the other superintendents. They developed a sense of

trust between one another. Intimacy existed because they were all in the same profession. Reciprocal Services was not established. Even though, Brooke could rely on these superintendents for help and support, she could not depend on them to recommend her or provide contacts for her to move up the career ladder.

### Outside Networks

The social network that existed between Brooke and the outside network was consistent with Granovetter's (1973) notion of weak ties. The data supported the existence of two tie components between her and her outside contacts: intimacy and reciprocal services.

Her contacts with outside people, such as salesmen and her professional organization (CCSA), were her weak ties that linked her with contacts to enable her to pursue another position. Brooke spent little time with these two contacts, but she and these ties did share a common ground. That common ground was education and positions within education. The common ground would be Granovetter's (1973) tie component of intimacy. Brooke's contacts also provided her with Granovetter's (1973) tie component of reciprocal services. She could receive benefits through these contacts. They would provide the necessary means with which she would use in seeking another job within the superintendency.

The relationship between Brooke and her outside network of salesmen and her professional organization showed they shared common interests and that this network could provide her with benefits. However, this network tie was weak because the data showed absolutely no evidence of emotional intensity or time.



The weak tie between Brooke and the outside network provided a necessary link in order for her to promote herself. Once she had achieved her goal, it was no longer necessary to continue to associate with this network, unless she decided to keep open the channels.

### Impact of Networks

The strong ties permitted Brooke to socialize with other superintendents, be at ease and not to feel uncomfortable or unwanted in their groups. Her weak ties allow her to gain the necessary contacts within education to set forth and achieve her goals.

### Summary

Brooke used the network of superintendents and the outside network to maintain her status in her position. She reported strong ties with other superintendents who were male. She used these ties for support and information. She believes that as a female superintendent, there is no such thing as a good old boy network or "I personally have never been subject to that. At least not to my knowledge, if I was it was behind my back" (Brooke, 11-10-99, 4). She has established weak ties with salesmen and professional organizations that promote her through her outside networks.

Table V summarizes the tie components found in Brooke's networks or the absence of tie components in those networks.

TABLE V  
EXISTENCE OF TIE COMPONENTS IN THE  
SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR BROOKE

Social Network	Female Superintendents		Male Superintendents		Outside Contacts	
	Present	NA	Present	NA	Present	NA
Time		X	X		X	
Emotional Intensity		X	X			X
Intimacy		X	X		X	
Reciprocal Services		X		X	X	
Totals	0	4	3	1	3	1

Brooke had no ties with the female superintendents and since these ties are nonexistent, she used her strong ties with other superintendents for help and support and her weak ties with outside contacts for self promotion. She had no ties at all with other female superintendents. Her strong ties would be with the other superintendents since she has three tie components time, emotional intensity and intimacy. Her weak ties would be with the outside contacts since she has three tie components time, intimacy, and reciprocal services.

#### Cheryl

During the interview with Cheryl, she reported that she did not have any ties with other superintendents. She has isolated herself due to the job requirements at her school.

The absence of ties was evident because there was no history between Cheryl and the other superintendents, there was no emotional intensity, there was no intimacy and there were no reciprocal services to be gained. She did believe that the good old boy network exists among the superintendents, even though she did not have any relationships with them. "I never try to get into the network, I do my own thing, but the good old boys network is a problem for superintendents across the state" (Cheryl, 11-12-99, 3). She knew from past experience that particular network does exist. Data that were collected indicates that one network exists with Cheryl. The outside network is the network with which she identifies. This network gives her the necessary means to promote herself and what she does. She knew that the good old boy network exists with other superintendents and did not feel comfortable or accepted within that particular group. Therefore, she did not associate with the network of superintendents.

### Outside Networks

Her contacts within the outside network are salesmen and the State Department of Education. The people that she has contact with are her weak ties which help link her to people outside her school. She would use these outside contacts to link her to available superintendent's positions. She occasionally depends on these weak ties, but together they have mutual interests through the field of education. Cheryl and the outside network have another weak tie because this tie can provide her with rewards or benefits when it comes to pursuing another job within the superintendency. The mutual interests and rewards or benefits would be Granovetter's (1973) tie components of intimacy and

reciprocal services. However, these network ties are weak because they show no evidence of emotional intensity or time.

The social network that existed between Cheryl and the outside network was consistent with Granovetter's (1973) notion of weak ties. The data supported the existence of two tie components between Cheryl and her outside contacts: intimacy and reciprocal services. The relationship between Cheryl and her outside network of salesmen and the State Department of Education showed they shared a mutual interest in the field of education and that by having these outside contacts, she could gain a benefit or reward. However, this network tie was weak because the data showed absolutely no evidence of emotional intensity or time.

#### Impact of Networks

These weak ties between Cheryl and the outside network provide her with a link to use to her advantage. Once she receives what she needs, she is through with that network until she needs something else.

#### Summary

Cheryl identifies two weak ties which she seeks out for assistance. These two weak ties are salesmen and the State Department of Education and they are classified under Granovetter's (1973) tie components as intimacy and reciprocal services. She knows from experience that the good old boy network exists, but due to her job she does not try to penetrate that particular network. She did not identify any strong ties. Table VI

summarizes the tie components found in Cheryl's network or the absence of tie components in these networks.

TABLE VI  
EXISTENCE OF TIE COMPONENTS IN THE  
SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR CHERYL

Social Network	Female Superintendents		Male Superintendents		Outside Contacts	
	Present	NA	Present	NA	Present	NA
	Time		X		X	
Emotional Intensity		X		X		X
Intimacy		X		X	X	
Reciprocal Services		X		X	X	
Totals	0	4	0	4	2	2

Cheryl had no ties with the other superintendents network, male or female.

Therefore these ties are nonexistent. She uses her weak ties to her advantage and to her benefit. Two tie components identified as Cheryl's weak ties were intimacy due to the salesmen and her having education as a background and reciprocal services which were to benefit her if she needs an outside contact.

## Helen

When interviewing Helen, it was determined that two networks existed. The superintendent networks and the outside network were used by her. She established ties within the superintendent network, but could not penetrate the good old boys network. The outside network was one which she used to promote herself and help her attain her goals. Two social networks influenced Helen as a female superintendent. The first was the network of superintendents. The second was the network of outside contacts.

### Network of Superintendents

During the years that Helen has been a female superintendent, she has developed a friendship with the superintendents in her area. The friendship and fellowship that she shares with these superintendents supports Granovetter's (1973) notion of strong ties. The data supports the existence of three tie components in the network of superintendents: time, emotional intensity, and intimacy. She shares a history with these superintendents, meets with them on a monthly basis, calls upon them for help and support, has the same backgrounds and has the same positions.

The data supports that the good old boy network is very strong. She does not associate with it and feels that, as a female superintendent, it is impossible to penetrate this network. She has never been accepted into the good old boy network throughout her years as a female superintendent. She states that this network "is a big hindrance" (Helen, 11-12-99, 3).

### Outside Networks

The social network that exists between Helen and outside contacts is consistent with Granovetter's (1973) notion of weak ties. The data received from the interview supports a relationship between salesmen, State Department of Education and Helen. Their relationships are brief and necessary for Helen to promote herself. This relationship supports the existence of two tie components: intimacy and reciprocal services.

The data identifies these weak ties because of the brief contact between the entities. Helen and the ties both share the same field of expertise. There was some expectation of reciprocity when evaluating Helen's response to gaining a promotion.

### Impact of Networks

The strong tie allows Helen to interact with other superintendents in her area. She feels comfortable with them and has formed friendships with them. She relies on them for help and support.

She has not developed a tie within the good old boy network. There is no evidence in her interview that she feels even somewhat accepted into this group.

She identified two weak ties that she uses to her benefit. The weak ties are salesmen and the State Department of Education. These ties are available to her as a form of convenience.

### Summary

Helen uses the network of superintendents as a resource for help and support. She, also, has formed friendships with them and feels very comfortable with them. These have been identified as her strong ties.

According to the information received from the interview, the good old boy network is very strong. Helen finds that she is not accepted into the group and feels that the group is not one that can be penetrated.

Analysis of the data reveals that Helen has two weak ties: intimacy and reciprocal services. These weak ties are salesmen and the State Department of Education. She relies on them for benefits as a form of convenience. Table VII summarizes the tie components found in Helen's network or the absence of tie components in those networks.

TABLE VII  
EXISTENCE OF TIE COMPONENTS IN THE  
SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR HELEN

Social Network	Female Superintendents		Male Superintendents		Outside Contacts	
	Present	NA	Present	NA	Present	NA
Time		X	X			X
Emotional Intensity		X	X			X
Intimacy		X	X		X	
Reciprocal Services		X		X	X	
Totals	0	4	3	1	2	2



Helen had no ties with the other female superintendents. Since these ties are nonexistent, she used her strong ties with the other superintendents for friendship, help and support. Her weak ties were a form of convenience that she used for promotion and information.

### Karen

When interviewing Karen, it was determined that a network of superintendents did not exist. She had one superintendent whom she depended on for advice, help, support and friendship. She had established a strong tie with this individual. The good old boy network does exist based upon the data received. She is not accepted into this network and believes that, as a female superintendent, that particular network cannot be penetrated. The outside network Karen uses to seek information about positions available and for assistance to get these positions.

Since Karen does not associate with other superintendents, but only with one superintendent, she does not truly have a network of superintendents, but to include this strong tie of hers, he will be included in the network of superintendents. However, the association with this one superintendent would be her strong tie. Only one network, the outside network, is used by Karen to promote herself.

### Network of Superintendents

Karen has a long time friend who is a superintendent. They have developed a friendship and professional relationship. This supports Granovetter's (1973) notion of strong ties. The data collected supports the existence of three tie components in the network of superintendents: time, emotional intensity, and intimacy. She has been a

friend of his for many years. They share a history together because of their backgrounds and positions. He is one that she has mentored after and she uses him for help and support.

### Outside Networks

Karen has identified her outside networks as salesmen, other superintendents in the area and the State Department of Education. The people within these networks share education as their common ground. This common ground would be Granovetter's (1973) tie component of intimacy.

Within this network, Granovetter's (1973) tie component of reciprocal services is evident. Karen can receive benefits by knowing and casually associating with these contacts.

The social network that existed between Karen and the outside network was consistent with Granovetter's (1973) notion of weak ties. The data supported the existence of two tie components between her and her outside contacts: intimacy and reciprocal services. The relationship between Karen and her area superintendents, salesmen and the State Department of Education exhibits the common ground of education that they share. This outside network can help her attain another position by providing her with information about openings, and who to contact.

The weak ties provide a necessary link or bridge to enable Karen to promote herself.

### Impact of Networks

Karen's strong tie with the one superintendent permits her to feel included around other superintendents that he associates with. He also provides her with the support and information that she relies on to do her job. This still does let her break into the good old boy network. Her weak ties allow her to gain the educational contacts she needs to promote herself.

### Summary

Karen uses the friendship of another superintendent and the outside network contacts to maintain her current position as a female superintendent. She relies on her strong tie for support and help. There is a trust between them and she knows that what he tells her is to her benefit. She knows the good old boy is out there and is not a part of it because it does not allow female superintendents in. The only exception to this would be the circle of acquaintances she has met through her friend. Karen's weak ties are salesmen, State Department of Education, and area superintendents. They are important to her because without them she would not be in the position she is today. She knows that one must have contacts. Table VIII summarizes the tie components found in Karen's network or the absence of tie components in those networks.

TABLE VIII  
EXISTENCE OF TIE COMPONENTS IN THE  
SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR KAREN

Social Network	Female Superintendents		Male Superintendents		Outside Contacts	
	Present	NA	Present	NA	Present	NA
Time		X	X			X
Emotional Intensity		X	X			X
Intimacy		X	X		X	
Reciprocal Services		X		X	X	
Totals	0	4	3	1	2	2

Karen has the one superintendent that she considers as her close friend, but does not consider other superintendents to be in this category. She has formed casual relationships with the other superintendents which would be her strong ties, but did not have any ties with other female superintendents. She knows that the female superintendents network is there, but has no ties with it. There these ties are nonexistent. Her weak ties are those with whom she depends on when looking to promote herself or to seek and attain another superintendent's position.

Loretta

It was determined when interviewing Loretta that networks of superintendents and networks outside the superintendency existed. The network of superintendents is a social

network where she had form friendships, received help and support. The good old boy network which serves the same purpose does not include her. The outside networks that she has formed with salesmen has provided her with necessary people of contact.

In analyzing the data from Loretta's interview, it was evident that two networks existed. The network of superintendents was perceived by her to be strong. This network did not include the good old boys network, since she was not a part of it by no fault of her own. The other network she is a part of is the outside network. This network linked her with several informal contacts.

#### Network of Superintendents

This network was identified as other superintendents that she associated with over time and had become friends with. She meets with these superintendents on a regular basis and calls upon them for support. This supports Granovetter's (1973) notion of strong ties. The data supports the existence of three tie components in the network of superintendents: time, emotional intensity, and intimacy.

From the interview, Loretta believes that the good old boy network is around and as a female superintendent "you can feel it" (Loretta, 1-12-00, 7). The male superintendents do not want you around. She has tried to break into the network, but has been unsuccessful.

#### Outside Networks

She has established a connection with salesmen. This social network that exists is consistent with Granovetter's (1973) notion of weak ties. The data received from the

interview supports that without these outside contacts, she definitely would not be a female superintendent as she is today. This social contact supports the existence of two tie components: intimacy and reciprocal services.

The data identifies these as weak ties due to the lack of emotional intimacy between her and the salesmen. The mere acquaintances of these ties that could provide her with connections would be the reciprocal services.

### Impact of Networks

The strong ties with the other superintendents in her area allow her to interact with them on a personal level. She is able to trust their opinions and values their friendship and support.

There is not a tie with the good old boy network. She knows it exists and has tried to become accepted, but has not been able to break down the barriers. She maintains that even though her presence is not particularly wanted in such places as the hospitality rooms, she will continue to be present and enjoy herself.

Loretta identified salesmen as her only weak tie. These ties have already proven to benefit her in the present job she holds. Without the help of a salesmen, she feels like she would not have this superintendency.

### Summary

Loretta has established strong ties with other superintendents in her area. In analyzing the data, there are three tie components identified in the network of superintendents: time, emotional intensity, and intimacy. The good old boy network is

present, but not penetrable. They do not want to accept the female superintendents. Her weak ties are with salesmen. They have been able to help her make the right contacts. She definitely would call upon their services if she decided to pursue another job. Table IX summarizes the tie components found in Loretta's network or the absence of tie components in those networks.

TABLE IX  
EXISTENCE OF TIE COMPONENTS IN THE  
SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR LORETTA

Social Network	Female Superintendents		Male Superintendents		Outside Contacts	
	Present	NA	Present	NA	Present	NA
Time		X	X			X
Emotional Intensity		X	X			X
Intimacy		X	X		X	
Reciprocal Services		X		X	X	
Totals	0	4	3	1	2	2

Strong ties exist between Loretta and other area superintendents due to the tie components of time, emotional intensity and intimacy, but there is no evidence that any ties exist with the other female superintendents. Weak ties existed between her and salesmen due to intimacy and reciprocal services.

## Pamela

It was determined when interviewing Pamela that networks of superintendents existed and networks outside the superintendency were present. One network is a social network of superintendents in her area. She relies on them for help and support and is very close to them. The good old boy network is present on the state level, but she feels that network can be used to her advantage once a trust is established. She also feels like this network is dying out. Pamela has contacts with an outside network that she uses to her advantage.

Two networks existed when interviewing Pamela. The first network is the network of superintendents and the second network is the outside network. The good old boys network is apparent, but is slowly dying as the younger superintendents take the helm.

### Network of Superintendents

This network consists of the superintendents in her area. These superintendents are her friends. She has known them over the years and they share a mutual trust between them. They rely on each other for help and support. The closeness between her and the area superintendents would be Granovetter's (1973) tie components of time, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocal services.

The social network that exists between Pamela and the area superintendents supports Granovetter's (1973) idea of strong ties. After analyzing the data, it is evident



that all four of the tie components: time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocal services are present.

Pamela has known these superintendents for a long time. There has not been a turn over of superintendents in her area for several years. They attend regularly monthly meetings, and talk frequently with one another.

The good old boy network does exist, but is not as strong as it used to be. Pamela “thinks it could be used to our advantage” (Pamela, 1-13-00, 5). Years ago one had to establish a trust with them to become somewhat accepted, but today it seems that the female superintendents are separate from the male. There is a definite separation. She feels that she is not accepted today.

#### Outside Networks

Pamela has identified her outside network as salesmen, State Department of Education and a negotiating firm. The people she comes into contact with in these outside networks all share a common tie. They all work in some field of education. This common tie would be Granovetter’s (1973) tie component of intimacy.

In these outside networks, Granovetter’s (1973) tie component of reciprocal services is present. These outside contacts provide Pamela with information that can help her move up to another position.

The social network that existed between Pamela and the outside network was consistent with Granovetter’s (1973) notion of weak ties. The data supported the existence of two tie components: intimacy and reciprocal services. They have something in common and can provide her with the necessary contacts to promote herself.

The weak ties provide the necessary link to enable Pamela to interact with different people and to promote herself.

### Impact of Networks

Pamela's strong tie with the area superintendents allows her to establish a network of friends, support and guidance. Her weak ties allow her to achieve through these contacts. She is able to be introduced to others that might help her seek out a new position.

### Summary

Pamela used the network of superintendents and the outside networks in working as a female superintendent. She used her strong tie with the area superintendents to give her the friendship, the sense of belonging, the help and support that she needs to do her job. Salesmen, State Department of Education, and a negotiating firm are her weak ties. They were used to gather information about other positions. She used weak ties to make contacts with individuals. Table X summarizes the tie components found in Pamela's social networks or the absence of tie components in those networks.

TABLE X  
EXISTENCE OF TIE COMPONENTS IN THE  
SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR PAMELA

Social Network	Female Superintendents		Male Superintendents		Outside Contacts	
	Present	NA	Present	NA	Present	NA
Time		X	X			X
Emotional Intensity		X	X			X
Intimacy		X	X		X	
Reciprocal Services		X		X	X	
Totals	0	4	3	1	2	2

Pamela is not a part of the female superintendents network presently. Her strong ties with the area superintendents tend to aid her in her day to day operations of her job, but it is the weak ties she would use to look for another job or a recommendation.

#### Sonya

When interviewing Sonya, it was determined that networks of superintendents exists. Networks outside the superintendency were present. The first social network is the one that is used to form friendships, see support, help and encouragement. The outside network is one of informal contacts. Sonya identifies both networks within her field.

Two networks existed when interviewing Sonya. The first was the network of superintendents. This network is a very strong tie. She has established long term relations with these area superintendents. She is aware the good old boys network, but does not feel that she is a part of it. The second network is the outside network. This network consists of informal contacts.

### Network of Superintendents

Sonya has extremely close ties within this network due to the time she has been in the area. She has established close friendships which would be Granovetter's (1973) tie components of time, emotional intensity, and intimacy.

The social network that exists between Sonya and the area superintendents supports Granovetter's (1973) idea of strong ties. The data supports the existence of three tie components in the network of superintendents: time, emotional intensity and intimacy.

Sonya and the area superintendents have known one another for years. They have developed strong ties with one another because of the nature of their work. They attend regular superintendents meeting on a monthly basis. They discuss school business with each other and rely on each other for support and advice.

### Outside Networks

Sonya identified salesmen as her outside network. The social network that existed between her and the salesmen was consistent with Granovetter's (1973) notion of weak ties. The data supported the existence of one tie component between Sonya and the

salesmen: reciprocal services. She relied upon the salesmen for information about other schools. She also viewed them as links to outside contacts if she ever chose to need them to further her career. Their tie is weak.

### Impact of Networks

The strong ties that Sonya has with the area superintendents provides her with strong support. She relies on them for help when she has a problem at her school, advice, and encouragement. The weak ties provide Sonya with information about other schools and the salesmen are who she would contact if she were to pursue another superintendent's position.

### Summary

Sonya has strong ties with the other area superintendents. This is due to the time she has been in the area. They are her support. These superintendents are close friends and they help each other when one has a problem. She is not a part of the good old boy network on the state level because it is hard, if not impossible to be allowed in. The outside network that she is a part of is one that she considers to be quite valuable to a superintendent, especially if a female superintendent. These weak ties are the network of salesmen. They provide the necessary link to help one promote herself or to get ahead in their career. Table XI summarizes the tie components found in Sonya's network or the absence of tie components in those networks.

TABLE XI  
EXISTENCE OF TIE COMPONENTS IN THE  
SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR SONYA

Social Network	Female Superintendents		Male Superintendents		Outside Contacts	
	Present	NA	Present	NA	Present	NA
Time		X	X			X
Emotional Intensity		X	X			X
Intimacy		X	X			X
Reciprocal Services		X		X	X	
Totals	0	4	3	1	1	3

Sonya has strong ties with area superintendents because of length of time in the area. This has enabled her to develop three tie components that are her strong ties. She has no ties with the female superintendents. She knows that the ties with the outside network are weak, but knows that these ties are very important to have in order to get ahead in the superintendency.

#### Vivian

It was determined when interviewing Vivian, one network was identified. It was the network of superintendents. As a new female superintendent, she recognizes that at the state level there is a good old boys network. She is not established yet to have formed any ties with an outside network.

### Networks of Superintendents

Vivian recognizes one network within the social networks: superintendent networks. This network includes the area superintendents and her past superintendent. It is a strong tie for her.

She is a new female superintendent this year. She associates each month with the area superintendents. They attend the state conferences together. She also has a very strong tie with her past superintendent. He is the one who hired her as a principal and then recommended her for the superintendency. This supports Granovetter's (1973) tie components of time, emotional intensity and intimacy.

The social network of area superintendents and Vivian is consistent with Granovetter's (1973) notion of strong ties. The data supports the existence of three tie components between area superintendents, her past superintendent and her: time, emotional intensity and intimacy.

The component of time exists due to her relationship with the past superintendent and with the amount of time she meets with the other superintendents. The time spend with these superintendents has caused the components of emotional intensity and intimacy to become a reality. They share a common interest in their field of education. This bond has built a trust among them. This allows her to call upon them for help and support that a first year superintendent would need.

### Impact of Networks

The one network of superintendents has guided Vivian through her first year as a superintendent. She receives encouragement from her past superintendent. This strong tie has made her feel comfortable in her job setting. It has permitted her to become accepted automatically within the group of her area superintendents. Even though, she is a part of this local network, she has not been able to break through into the good old boy network of which some of her area superintendents are a part of.

### Summary

Vivian uses the new friendships with the other superintendents and past superintendent to help her when problems arise at her school or for information on how to do job particulars. These strong ties allow her to feel very comfortable and she does not hesitate to call them for help. As a first year superintendent, she has found that there is a good old boy network that she is not a part of and she realizes that she probably never will be a part of it. Since she plans on staying at her school until her retirement, she feels that her strong ties with the identified superintendents is all she will need. She has no outside networks and has no weak ties. Table XII summarizes the tie components found in Vivian's network or the absence of tie components in those networks.



TABLE XII  
EXISTENCE OF TIE COMPONENTS IN THE  
SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR VIVIAN

Social Network	Female Superintendents		Male Superintendents		Outside Contacts	
	Present	NA	Present	NA	Present	NA
Time		X	X			X
Emotional Intensity		X	X			x
Intimacy		X	X			X
Reciprocal Services		X		X		X
Totals	0	4	3	1	0	4

Vivian has two strong ties within the other superintendent networks: area superintendents and her past superintendent. Ties with the female superintendents are nonexistent. She has no outside networks. Most all of the eight respondents agree that they need people to help and support them as they make decisions for their school district. Weak ties used to pursue advancement and to gain a new position. One female superintendent did not plan on leaving her school district and does not see the need for such ties.

#### Collective Analysis

The primary focus for viewing Social Networks was to identify and describe the social networks of superintendents that exist among the female superintendents in small rural schools and the classifications of social networks; their strong and weak ties.

### Social Networks

When interviewing the female superintendents that participated in this study, three main social networks were identified: the female superintendent network, other superintendent networks and outside networks. Each network was examined by Granovetter's (1973) four tie components: time, intensity, intimacy, and reciprocal services.

### Female Superintendents Networks

Female Superintendents Networks were significant because not one of the eight female superintendents interviewed had any ties with other female superintendents. They do not know one another and do not really put forth the effort to get to know one another. They stay by themselves or are in their comfort zone with their area superintendents. The absence of the female superintendent not identifying with other female superintendents was evident with each female superintendent. Not one of the participants stated really why other than they felt more comfortable with their area superintendents or by themselves.

### Superintendent Networks

Superintendent Networks were significant for the female superintendent. These area superintendent networks provided a sense of belonging, help, support, encouragement, and a resource for advice, but the good old boys network proved to be unattainable by the female superintendents. All the female superintendents with the

exception of one used strong ties with the area superintendents network. One of the female superintendents included her past superintendent into this group along with her area superintendents. Another female superintendent included a long time superintendent friend here under the strong ties, but classified her area superintendents as a weak tie.

These female superintendents feel very secure with other male superintendents in their area and for the most part are accepted, but on the state level that is a different story. They are not included by the other male superintendents and even much to their surprise, they find themselves not included by their strong ties the area superintendents.

### Outside Networks

Outside Networks were significant for the female superintendents with the exception of one. These outside networks provided a resource for them to gather information about other school districts, superintendent's positions that are available and contacts with other superintendents, board members and members of the community. Ties were nonexistent to this network with only one of the female superintendents. Weak ties were established between this network and the female superintendents. These weak ties are regarded as something a superintendent should have and as a resource tool to aid in moving up the career ladder.

To summarize the data, Table XIII collectively analyzes each respondent's answers.

TABLE XIII  
 EXISTENCE OF TIE COMPONENTS IN THE  
 SOCIAL NETWORKS OF ALL FEMALE  
 SUPERINTENDENTS INTERVIEWED

Type	Female Superintendents	Male Superintendents	Outside Contacts
Strong		X (22) Ties	
Weak			X (14) Ties
NA	X (32) Ties	X (10) Ties	X (18) Ties

### Summary

The female superintendents do not have any ties, strong or weak with other female superintendents in this state. The tie component of time showed that the female superintendent had a strong tie with the other superintendents. This is due to them meeting regularly. The component of emotional intensity developed between the female superintendent and the other superintendents. They developed a close relationship. The component of intimacy developed because they were all in the field of education. They shared a common interest. Only one female superintendent felt that reciprocal services would come her way. Intimacy and reciprocal services were the two tie components that the female superintendents had definite similarities. Time and emotional intensity was not important. Superintendent networks and outside networks played a significant role for the female superintendent. The strong and weak ties within these networks played a significant role in how the female superintendent fit within the organization, how they

were perceived, how they received the necessary information to help, assist, and support them, and how to be promoted to another position.

### Summary

Superintendent networks and outside networks were examined to determine their effect on the female superintendent in a small rural school. In each case study, social networks affected the female superintendent. It was consistent with the principals of network analysis (Granovetter, 1973, 1976, 1995 & Wells & Crain, 1994) and tie strength (Granovetter, 1973); that the female superintendents had developed strong ties with the area superintendents and used them for help and support and the weak ties were used by the female superintendents for promotion to another position and for contacts to get ahead.

The strong ties between female superintendents and the area superintendents provided them with involvement in the local superintendents group. The strong ties showed interaction with male superintendents. The ties were based upon peer relationships or the ability for the female superintendent to gain expertise from the other superintendents.

The finding of weak ties between the female superintendents and the outside networks would be consistent with Braddock (1980) that the female superintendents that were tied to the outside network and had established weak ties were more easily to bridge the necessary contacts they would need to seek information and another position. The weak ties were viewed as necessary to exist and viewed to be very important. The

summary, conclusions, recommendations, and implications of this were presented in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND COMMENTARY

This chapter includes a summary, conclusions, recommendations, implications, and commentary gleaned from the data compiled and analyzed in this study.

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the cultural networks of female small rural school district superintendents in an effort to explain their success to ascending and maintaining their positions in a small rural superintendency. The purpose was accomplished by:

1. Data collected from the female superintendents of small rural districts that were selected for the study based on their ability to be hired in a male-dominated profession;
2. Describe the ties (Granovetter, 1973) that exists and analyze these ties through the lens of Network Analysis (Granovetter, 1973, 1976, 1995);
3. Report other realities that may be revealed; and,
4. Assess the usefulness of these lenses in understanding the phenomenon of the female small rural school district superintendent.

To accomplish these purposes, several kinds of data were needed.

### Data Needs and Sources

Data from eight female small rural school district superintendents who have been successful in attaining a superintendency and who have been successful as a superintendent were needed. These women had to be currently practicing as the executive administrator of their school district.

### Data Collection

Data were collected from conducting interviews using the explanatory case study (Yin, 1994). Eight participants were selected. During the interview, participants were asked to focus their responses on what networks existed for the woman superintendents aspirants, what ties are needed to become a woman superintendent and why are these women superintendents. Questions were formulated to allow for analysis based upon Granovetter's (1973) four characteristics of ties: time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocal services. All interviews were conducted in person, recorded, transcribed and organized to allow for consistent analysis of the data provided.

### Data Analysis

The data from the interviews were analyzed for content and any other realities that might be relevant to the significance of this study. In order to remove personal bias which might exist due to me being a female superintendent in a small rural school district, the findings of my study are based by the literature review in Chapter II and by the data that



were revealed by the participants. Data were then sorted into four categories: history of the superintendency, characteristics of the superintendent, women and the superintendency, and network analysis, strong or weak ties which open the door of opportunity for women superintendents.

History of the Superintendency. The female superintendents who participated in this study, the superintendencies in this particular state had been dominated by men and still are. There are 37 female superintendents out of 547 school superintendents in this study. The participants are the first female superintendent to administer the school district where they are employed. Two of the eight were on their second superintendency. Five of the eight moved up through the ranks at their present school district to the superintendent's office.

Characteristics of the Superintendent. Each female superintendent had been in education for a number of years. Each one tended to be in their forties. Two of them held doctorate's degrees. They all seemed to share one characteristic and that was they were determined to become a superintendent. These females were not the typical female, they set goals and set out to achieve them. These women are very people oriented and are concerned with academic achievement of students.

Women and the Superintendency. The superintendency is a field where only a few women hold the highest leadership role in a school district. The participants in this study were hired based upon several things: one because of raising test scores, four because they were recommended by the previous superintendent, and the other three

because the school districts were looking for a change. In all instances, their were networks available to them which help promote them to the school board that were doing the hiring.

Network Analysis. Granovetter's (1973) defines ties as basically the four components of time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocal services. These were found to be extremely helpful in describing the ties that existed among the female superintendents, other area superintendents, and outside contacts. By using this definition, the data was collected and analyzed.

The purpose of this study was to examine the cultural networks of female superintendents in small rural school districts. Through the framework provided by Granovetter's (1973) definition, the commonalties among the participants could be identified.

The data revealed that there were two types of ties: professional and ties of convenience or contacts. Professional ties were those that were established through the position of being a superintendent. The convenience or contacts ties were those ties that were outside of the superintendency, but that conducted business with them or were a professional group tied to the superintendency.

### Findings

Given all the data, the following findings emerged:

1. Strong Ties:

- Female superintendents used strong ties with the other area superintendents in relationship to time, emotional intensity, and intimacy.
  - Female superintendents used strong ties with other superintendents to help and support them in their day to day operations of their schools. The participants do not hesitate one little bit about calling another superintendent in their area for assistance. The component of emotional intensity was significant because of the established relationships between the female superintendent and the others. This would also include the tie component of time.
  - These tie component of intimacy with the other superintendents provided the female superintendent with a sense of belonging to a male dominated field. Being able to feel included at the local level helped the female superintendent accept the rejection at the state level.
  - The fact that time was spent and that they all shared a common interest, strong ties were formed. These strong ties enabled some of the respondents an opportunity to form friendships with their male area superintendents. Most felt that these male superintendents truly were their close friends, but the female superintendent did not think that she could depend on them for any favors or benefits.
2. Weak Ties:
- Female superintendents used intimacy and reciprocal services to form weak ties between them and outside contacts. The outside contacts were a

source of information. This information can be about other schools or about other positions that are available.

- The outside contacts between the female superintendents and salesmen were the main source of important contacts. The participants regarded their opinions and knew without them, obtaining a superintendent's job would probably be next to impossible.
  - Contacts through the outside network were used as contacts for attaining another superintendent's position. These ties were the ones outside the superintendent's group. This included contacts with board members, school leaders, the community and people that the school did business with.
3. No Ties:
- There were no ties with the good old boys network at the state level.
  - There was one network that one female superintendent thought she had contact with and the others stated that they had no ties and that was the good old boys network. The absence of ties was apparent. The participants knew it existed, but also knew it was so strong that they would not be permitted to become a part of it.
  - Another network that the female superintendent has not tapped into yet is the network of other female superintendents. There was no evidence of tie components of time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocal services.

## Conclusions

The findings in this study bring about several conclusions about female superintendents in a male dominated profession. First, female superintendents must have a resource in their field that they can bounce things off of. They, like their male counterparts, must be able to share ideas and ask for help or support in situations that arise in their schools from their peers.

Second, female superintendents must be able to carry the weight of the superintendency by herself on the state level. They must be able to function in a male dominated group.

Third, they must establish strong social networks with their area superintendents and other female superintendents so that they can have available the necessary ties to support them. Friendships must be established. A trust has to form between the female superintendents and the males in order for these friendships to form.

Fourth, weak ties among female superintendents and outside networks, such as salesmen, CCSA, State Department of Education, and a negotiating firm establish strong contacts that the female superintendents must have. These contacts provide them with necessary information and recommendations to pursue and attain a superintendent's job. They provide the necessary link or bridge to get the female superintendent's foot in the door.

Fifth, our society has some distance to go before it will become a reality of women being at the helm of our schools. Male superintendents have an advantage over women because that is what is considered to be the right choice for the superintendent's job.

Sixth, strong and weak ties among female superintendents, area superintendents and outside contacts support Granovetter's (1973) notion of strong and weak ties. The findings of this study are supported through the lens of Network Analysis (Granovetter, 1973, 1976, 1995).

### Recommendations and Implications

Significant research must: 1) add to or clarify existing theory, 2) add to the knowledge base, and 3) impact practice (Hoy & Miskel, 1991). The following will show how this particular study has met each of these criteria.

#### Theory

Network Analysis (Granovetter, 1973, 1976, 1995) was used to show the current networks and ties of women superintendents. Granovetter's (1973) notion of strong and weak ties was used to analyze the strength of superintendent networks and outside networks that are available to the female superintendents. These ties can be identified as strong or weak. These ties share the common tie components of time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocal services. In using these, differences and common traits among the female superintendents could be identified and examined. Network Analysis proved useful in this study.

The female small rural school superintendents that were used for this study all identified reciprocal services as the most important tie to have. This tie provided them with a necessary means to secure a job. Reciprocity might be the key for female superintendents in small rural school districts. These participants were in similar

circumstances and used reciprocal services to promote themselves. Through reciprocity, the female superintendents in this study were able to gain benefits from the outside networks.

Reciprocity seems to be the key more so than the other tie components; time, emotional intensity, and intimacy. This tie provided the participants tangible evidence that was needed to reap the necessary benefits to secure a superintendent's position.

Given the data generated and the analysis in this study, Granovetter's (1973) notion of strong and weak ties might benefit from the addition of another component: proximity. The women in this study linked with people in similar circumstances or people who were in close proximity to their school districts. This new but related component might be the reason that these female small rural school superintendents depended so strongly on reciprocal services. Because of their location or isolation as small rural school superintendents, they had no one to establish a tie that could help promote them other than those at districts close to them or salesmen.

It would also be possible to expand the definition of time in the existing model to include proximity. Either way, proximity emerged from this study as an important component needed to explain female rural school superintendent ties.

### Research

Using Network Analysis as one's research has identified networks and ties among female superintendents, other superintendents, and others. The findings of this study added to the existing knowledge base of Network Analysis by documenting the effect of social networks and their ties upon female superintendents.

Future research can be used by other female aspiring to the superintendency and by other female superintendents who want to move on to another superintendency. It would be useful for females to know how strong and weak ties affect their search for the superintendency and how they will fit into the group of superintendents.

### Practice

For the number of females to become superintendents to increase, women must develop ties within their professional organizations, other superintendents, and outside contacts. Research previously done, shows the importance of network ties in receiving support, information and attaining superintendent's jobs (Granovetter, 1973).

This study shows how women who have attained the superintendency remain at the helm of their schools. It identifies the ties that have to be established. It also shows women that want to achieve the superintendency, that certain contacts must be established. The contacts that proved to be the most beneficial for women were outside contacts who had connections in the school district for which one is applying.

### Commentary

When I first began this study, I believed that female superintendents had attained their positions because of their qualifications, and hard work. The beginning assumption was that if a female truly wanted to become a superintendent of schools, all she had to do was take the required coursework and apply for a job. I assumed that based on their credentials and set goals for themselves, they could attain a superintendent's position in any school district of their choice. I knew that there was a good old boys network, but I



assumed a female could become accepted within this network if she wanted to. This research did not support these assumptions.

What the research did support was that a women needed to be more qualified than her male opponents. She needed to develop ties with outside contacts who were influential within the school district. These outside networks were the key to getting one's foot in the door and landing the superintendent's job. Without these ties, it was nearly impossible to attain a superintendent's job.

Once a female became a superintendent of schools, she had to form strong ties with her area superintendents. These superintendents would be the ones that she would rely on for support in her district. On the state level that might be a different story. It was noted that once a female superintendent left their common ground, they were not accepted into the group of other superintendents at the state level. They found themselves isolated and rejected even by their area superintendents.

At the state level, the good old boys network is strong and hard at work. It was revealed that as a female superintendent, you were not welcome. In this study the absence of ties between the female superintendent and the other superintendents male or female created a negative climate at the state level. The female superintendents felt rejected and all alone at these meetings. They felt that they were not wanted and that the other superintendents felt that they could not do the job as a superintendent of schools.

During the process of this study, I had to reexamine my thoughts and beliefs on females in the superintendency. The females must make attempts to establish ties with other superintendents and outside contacts that deal with the school system.

As a female superintendent I wonder why had I been accepted? Why had I had the support from other male superintendents? How did I really get the superintendent's jobs that I have had? In answer to these questions, I asked my current board of education why I was hired over other candidates. Their response was another superintendent had recommended me who they had great respect for, a salesman (a former superintendent friend of mine) whom had recommended me to the secretaries, and they liked my answers to the interview questions about finance. I believed that I was hired because of my answers to their interview questions. I know now that it was the ties I had that were linked to the board of education in some way. I did not get this superintendent's job based on the fact that I had all the right credentials, but on a network of connections.

As a female superintendent, I will maintain my ties with other superintendents and with the outside contacts that do business with the school and with the people in the community. I know that they are the ones who just might be the ones that hold my future employment opportunities based upon their ties to the board of education.

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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM



**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

Date: November 22, 1999 IRB #: ED-00-164

Proposal Title: "A STUDY OF SOCIAL NETWORKS OF FEMALE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS"

Principal Investigator(s): Adrenne Hyle  
Penelope Haynes

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

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*Adrenne - the data issue is part  
of fed. requirements re: ensuring confidentiality  
of subjects — Co*

Signature:

*Carol Olson*

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

November 22, 1999

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

Informally, I will introduce myself and explain the consent form. Then, I will begin the interview by conversing and concentrating upon the following questions.

### Background Information:

1. Tell me about yourself - personal and as a professional in education - degrees held, career path, experience as a teacher, principal, superintendent.
2. Tell me about the school district - its location, school board members, number of staff, and number of students.
3. Tell me the various types of knowledge, skill, and training that are needed by individuals who are district superintendents of schools.
4. Tell me your satisfaction and how you perceive your effectiveness as a superintendent.

### Network Analysis:

5. Who were your role models or people that encouraged you to pursue the superintendency as a career?
6. How long have you known them?
7. How did they help you in your career search?
8. Why do you think you were selected as a superintendent?
9. Who did you contact during the search process for the superintendency? (Friends, former and/or present school superintendents, references)
10. Why did you contact these individuals?
11. Do you feel as a woman superintendent that you fit in the "good old boy network" with other male superintendents' and why?
12. How are you included in the social and/or school business with other superintendents in the state and are they male or female?

APPENDIX C

WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE WITH PARTICIPANTS

## CONSENT FORM FOR A STUDY OF WOMEN SUPERINTENDENTS IN OKLAHOMA AND THEIR SOCIAL NETWORKS

### General Information

You are being asked to be interviewed about women in the superintendency and their social networks as part of dissertation research by a doctoral student of Oklahoma State University.

The purposes of this study are: 1) to increase data on the Oklahoma school superintendents who are women, 2) to investigate how these women perceive the superintendent of schools, 3) to investigate women superintendents' perceptions about possible constraints on their career paths, 4) to investigate their relationships with other male superintendents, and 5) to investigate how women get the superintendents' jobs.

The interview will last one to one and one-half hours. Questions will be developed by the doctoral student. All participants will be asked the same general questions. Your interview will be taped and transcribed by the doctoral student and may be reviewed by the dissertation advisor. Observations will take approximately one hour. Notes will be taken by the doctoral student and may be reviewed by the dissertation advisor. All tapes, notes, and transcriptions will remain confidential and will be kept under lock and key for a period of 5 years and then destroyed. Access to these materials during this period will only be the dissertation advisor and the doctoral student.

Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent permitted by law. No name of superintendents or school districts will be used in reporting research. Pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant of the study. These pseudonyms will be used in all discussions and in all written materials. Consent to conduct the interview has to be signed in order for your interview to be included in the doctoral student's study. This form will be filed and retained for at least 2 years by the dissertation advisor.

### Subject Understanding

I understand that your participation in this interview and observation is voluntary, and that there is no penalty to participate. I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time without penalty after notifying the dissertation advisor.

I understand that the interview and observation will be conducted according to commonly accepted research procedures and that the information taken from this interview and observation will be recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or through other identifiers linked to the subjects.

I understand that the interview and observation will not cover topics that could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or deal with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior such as illegal conduct drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.

I may contact the dissertation advisor, Dr. Adrienne Hyle, Ph. D., Department of Educational Administration and Higher Education. College of Education, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078; Telephone (405) 744-7244, should I wish further information about the research.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ (A.M./P.M.)

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Subject)

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it and provided the subject with a copy of this form.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ (A.M./P.M.)

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Doctoral Student)

FILED:  
INITIALS OF INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

VITA

Penelope Ann Williams Haynes

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: A STUDY OF FEMALE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS' SOCIAL NETWORKS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Okarche, Oklahoma, on February 27, 1953, the daughter of James Allan and Vivian Williams.

Education: Received Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma in May, 1975; received Master of Arts degree in Guidance and Counseling from Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma in May, 1979; received Elementary Principal Certificate from Oklahoma University, Norman, Oklahoma in May, 1987; received Superintendent Certificate from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 1989. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration at Oklahoma State University in May, 2000.

Experience: Employed by Riverside School, El Reno, Oklahoma as an elementary teacher, 1975-1980; Canadian County Superintendent of Schools, El Reno, Oklahoma, 1980-1989; superintendent of schools, Academy Central School, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1989-1990; superintendent of schools, Allen Bowden School, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1990-Present.

Professional Memberships: Cooperative Council of Oklahoma School Administration, Oklahoma Association of School Administrators, Oklahoma State School Boards Association, Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools, Oklahoma Rural Elementary Schools, Association of School Business Officials.