Identifying and analyzing the factors utilized by superintendents in achieving their "personal best" in education

David L. Long

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Long, David L., Ph.D.
Iowa State University, 1991
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Identifying and analyzing the factors utilized by superintendents
in achieving their “personal best” in education

by

David L. Long

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Major: Education (Educational Administration)

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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1991
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APPENDIX D. PERSONAL BEST QUOTES AND SLOGANS
The major purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the factors utilized by superintendents in achieving their "personal best" in education. The data for this study were gathered from fifty-two superintendents from California, Iowa, Missouri, and New York during the months of December 1989 and January 1990. The superintendents each filled out and returned a "Personal Best Survey" from which the data for the study were gleaned.

Major findings of this study include:

1. The most frequently used practices utilized by superintendents in achieving their personal best effort were delineated. The most frequently used practice reported by superintendents was to enable others to act.

2. The background and situational factors of the personal best efforts were identified and analyzed. The superintendents wrote regarding improving the climate most frequently in their personal best effort.

3. The superintendents' actions, regarding the success of their personal best effort, were categorized into the appropriate strategy utilized.

4. The superintendents were excited and fearful as they initiated their personal best effort and they were self-satisfied during its implementation.
Superintendents learned to lead from others, experience, and educational training.

The size of the district had no significant impact on how superintendents identified and analyzed factors in achieving their personal best effort.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

In any organization, leaders are those who can bring people together to accomplish the ordinary and the extraordinary. In the past several years, a number of management experts have examined the qualities and characteristics of leadership. They made an effort to determine what makes an individual an effective leader (Amundson, 1988). An excellent analysis of leadership is provided in a series of papers written by John Gardner (1988), former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Gardner identifies six special characteristics of leaders: (a) think long term, (b) think in global trends, (c) emphasize values, (d) set priorities, (e) communicate, and (f) think in terms of renewal.

Most students of leadership agree that the ability to articulate a vision for an organization is a key responsibility of a leader. In Leaders (1985), it is suggested that “an essential factor in leadership is the capacity to influence and organize meaning for the members of the organization.”

In public K-12 educational organization, the superintendent is the key person responsible for providing leadership. The superintendent must have the vision as to where the school must go, and act to help the organization and its members change. We do not, however, know much about how these educational leaders act to achieve this feat. While school reform has yielded reports and studies calling for high levels of leadership, school administrators have little to help them know how to lead. Much research has been written about the principal and leadership. The key leadership position in a school district is the superintendent. We need to
know how the superintendent leads.

How does the superintendent move a school district forward? We do know something about how their colleagues in the private sector lead. Bennis and Nanus (1985), for example, conducted an in-depth analysis of ninety top leaders in business and politics. Their research revealed the skills and strategies used by ninety CEOs, purported to be among our country's most effective leaders. The finding revealed the qualities that enabled them to take charge and lead. The study clarified what those leaders did to use those skills and strategies and how they acquired them. Four major strategies emerged from the research; four areas of competency, four types of human handling skills, that all ninety of the leaders embodied:

(a) Strategy 1: Attention through vision;
(b) Strategy 2: Meaning through communication;
(c) Strategy 3: Trust through positioning; and
(d) Strategy 4: Deployment of self through positive self-regard.

This is apparently what successful leaders do in the business world.

We can borrow from research in the private sector to learn more about leadership and what superintendents do to institute change and exert leadership in school systems. Kouzes and Posner (1988) examined what leaders did when they achieved their "personal best" in a leadership role. A personal best experience is an event or achievement in leadership which a leader believes to be his or her "record-setting performance." Their research examined strategies business leaders utilized when they achieved their individual standard of excellence. Every manager
in the study had at least one leadership story to tell. The stories they told seldom sounded like textbook management. They were not logical cases of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. Instead, they were tales of dynamic change and bold actions. The researchers asked what common practices leaders used to get extraordinary things done in organizations.

From an examination of over five hundred surveys, the researchers identified five practices (main categories of classifications) and ten commitments or strategies the business leaders used to turn challenging opportunities into remarkable successes. The practices were (a) challenging the process, (b) enabling others to act, (c) inspiring a shared vision, (d) modeling the way, and (e) encouraging the heart. Two of the strategies that the achieving leaders identified as important for challenging the process were searching for opportunities and taking risks. Below are the other four practices and an example of a common strategy for each practice:

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The results of the study were striking, both in their refutation of the leader stereotype and in their consistency. Kouzes and Posner found, as an illustration of refutation of the leader stereotype, most successful ideas for competitive innovation came not from the leaders, but from others, and the leaders gave away
their powers to others and became stronger. They found leaders exhibited certain
distinct practices when they did their best. They also found this behavior varied
little from industry to industry, and profession to profession. From the analysis of
the personal best cases, a model of leadership for guiding leaders in achieving
their highest level of excellence has been developed.

Statement of the Problem

Policymakers and experts continuously contend that the leadership of the
superintendent is important. The National Governors' Association report, Time for
Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education, stated that the "leadership of
superintendents will be a key ingredient in planning for the future." School leaders
are struggling to learn how to manage change and lead the organization to
excellence. There is a general lack of research to guide school leaders at the
district level. There is a need to conduct research that will clarify successful
practices and strategies used by effective superintendents.

Purposes of the Study

This study is designed to determine the commonality of leadership strategies
utilized by superintendents who achieve their personal best. The identification of
leadership strategies, secondary categories of classification, will help gain insight
into what superintendents do when achieving their personal best. The secondary
purpose is to determine if there are certain perceptions and feelings apparent in
the identified leadership practices of the superintendent. The identification of the
perceptions and feelings will be an effort to understand their impact on the decisions of the superintendents.

The third purpose is to gather anecdotal information that will further clarify what superintendents do and how they do it when they achieve their personal best. Survey questions will solicit anecdotal information, such as slogans, describing the superintendent’s vision of his or her personal best and elicit quotations on leadership. Anecdotal information will help determine what they do, how it is done, and in what situations these things work.

Research Questions

1. What are the background and situational factors involved when the superintendent achieves his/her personal best?
2. What was the relative importance of the five identified practices in assisting superintendents to achieve their personal best?
3. What strategies did superintendents utilize to carry out leadership practices?
4. What are the feelings of superintendents during initiation and implementation of their personal best endeavor?
5. Where or how did the superintendents learn the skills necessary to lead?
6. What is the relationship between the size of the school district and the personal best endeavor, practice, and strategies?
Delimitation of the Study

The following factors limited the scope of the investigation:

1. The study utilized a small sample from four states.

2. A limitation implicit in this survey research was the inability of the researcher to control the representative sample, which effects the ability to generalize to the general population.

Definitions of Terms

These definitions are presented to give clarity to their use in this investigation:

**Anecdotal Information.** A brief, subjective account of information supplied by the superintendents to explain their personal best.

**Arbitrator.** One of the three members of the arbitration panel whose function was to determine coding where disagreements existed between the two coders.

**Coder.** One of two who examined the fifty-two surveys and assigned responses to categories using a coding map.

**Coding Map.** Assigned numbers relating to possible responses and categories.

**Intercoder Reliability.** As applied to educational measurements, internal consistency or stability of the measuring device over time (Borg and Gall, 1983). The consistency of the two coders to categorize a response on the survey and assign the same number from the coding map.
Leadership Practice. Leadership practice is the main category of classification from the personal best survey. The practices, which are represented by five fundamental areas, are those basic areas which enabled superintendents to get extraordinary things done.

Leadership Strategy. A leadership strategy is a category of classification which reflects a behavioral commitment in the personal best leadership survey.

Personal Best. A personal best experience is an event or achievement in leadership in their school district, which a superintendent believes to be his/her individual standard of excellence. It is that "record-setting performance" which becomes the subject of their responses.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This study investigated the common leadership strategies utilized by superintendents who achieved their personal best, and examined types of factors (perceptions and feelings) apparent in the strategies. This review was limited to literature relevant to the study, addressing several subtopics related to leadership.

School Leader Functions and Tasks

Research has been conducted regarding the functions of the principal in an effective or exemplary school. Kelly (1980) noted that the principal is most responsible for the outcomes and satisfaction at the site and suggested functions of the principal. Bird and Little (1986) identified strategies utilized by principals. Cuban (1984) suggested no school can be effective without a highly functional principal. He went on to suggest leadership tasks performed by effective principals. Other researchers have identified effective principal behavior; Frasher and Schoemaker (1982) and Sweeney (1982).

The superintendent has been the subject of limited research related to behaviors of an effective leader. In 1982, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) published Guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators. This publication initially identified a core set of superintendent performance factors. The performance factors are as follows:

(a) Establish and maintain a positive and open learning environment,
(b) build strong support for education;
(c) develop and deliver an effective curriculum;
(d) develop and implement effective models/modes of instructional delivery;
(e) create programs of continuous improvement;
(f) skillfully manage school system operations, and
(g) conduct and make use of significant research as a basis for problem solving and program planning of all kinds.

Murphy and Hallinger (1986) identified twelve effective school districts in California. Structured interviews were conducted with the superintendents of the twelve districts and they identified six performance factors common to the superintendent’s role as leader. The performance factors were:

(a) setting goals and establishing expectations and standards;
(b) selecting staff;
(c) staff supervision/evaluation;
(d) establishing an instructional and curricular focus;
(e) monitoring curriculum and instruction, and
(f) insuring consistency in technical core operations.

Collier (1987) used self-reports of superintendents in Texas to determine those factors necessary for successful superintendent job performance. Superintendents were asked to rank the most important superintendent performance factors related to school district effectiveness. The most important factors reported by superintendents were:
(a) demonstrates a broad array of leadership skills;
(b) demonstrates sound principles of personnel administration;
(c) employs sound financial planning and cash flow management;
(d) employs principles of sound curriculum design and instructional delivery;
(e) employs effective school/community public relations, coalition building, and related factors;
(f) ensures that instructional time and resources are used effectively;
(g) develops valid and reliable performance measures for instructional outcomes, and
(h) provides for effective evaluation of teacher performance.

Sclafani (1987) surveyed a national sample of superintendents to identify the most important superintendent performance factors. The superintendents reported the most important factors were:

(a) demonstrates a broad array of leadership skills;
(b) demonstrates sound principles of personnel administration;
(c) employs sound financial planning and cash flow management;
(d) employs effective school/community public relations, coalition building, and related factors;
(e) provides for effective evaluation of teacher performance;
(f) uses cost-effective techniques and sound program budgeting;
(g) utilizes motivation techniques, and
(h) demonstrates conflict mediation and the skills to accept and cope with controversy.

Beyond Tasks, Functions, And Skills

Research has identified important functions and tasks of the superintendent. Much has been written regarding the performance factors necessary for successful superintendent job effectiveness (Sclafani, 1987). Kouzes and Posner (1988) recognized the need for a change, for a more in-depth examination of leadership. They stated:

"More than ever, there is a need for our leaders to guide us to greatness. Yet there seems to be a reluctance to answer the cry for leadership. Why? We believe this cautiousness results not from a lack of courage or competence, but from outdated notions about leadership. Just about everything we have been taught about traditional management prevents us from being effective leaders. We need to go beyond the traditions, the functions, and the tasks." (preface, p.XV)

Research conducted by the California Advanced Academy for Executive Leaders (1990) suggests that for schools to matter, and for superintendents to matter within these schools, the superintendents and their systems must change their basic views of leadership. This change must occur to achieve fundamentally expanded and different views of learning and excellence. The following themes emerged from the Academy's research providing suggested direction as to how superintendents must think and behave if schools and their leaders are to achieve fundamentally different views of learning and excellence:

Project passion and purpose. Significant instructional change will not occur unless the superintendent takes strong, passionate leadership and focuses on
instruction. The superintendent needs to have a hunger for high purpose and a passion to achieve it.

**Fight for the freedom of the job.** Just as we empower others in the educational system to do their best, we must strongly argue for the freedom within the system to achieve all the things the public demands of us, and which we demand of ourselves.

**Recapture the focus.** Superintendents must focus on that which they were trained to do, promote student learning. The superintendent needs to be an instructional leader who facilitates, rewards, and spurs the instructional achievement of others.

**Coordinating child-focused services.** Superintendents in the ’90s will play a role in bringing about the effective coordination of these services with the instructional programs in schools.

**Redefine accountability systems.** Redefining accountability systems in schools will increase individual responsibility for outcomes at all levels and will focus the efforts of all school personnel on the importance of student achievement, not on standardized processes.

**Enhance personnel management.** The superintendents of the ’90s will be learners, explorers, and proponents of an improvement ethic which establishes the expectation that everyone in the organization should be learning and committed to improvement.

**Establish reward system.** There is a need to devise programs and techniques for providing and expanding rewards that directly relate to performance.
Be healthy people. Professional performance and personal well-being will be linked in effective school executives.

Private Sector

Research in the private sector has gone beyond tasks and functions. Bennis and Nanus (1985) conducted an in-depth analysis of ninety top leaders - executives at companies like GM, ARCO, and Lever Brothers. Bennis and Nanus stated: "If there was ever a moment in history when a comprehensive, strategic view of leadership was needed, this is certainly it." (p.4) Leaders (Bennis and Nanus, 1985) was written in the belief that leadership is the pivotal force behind successful organizations and that to create vital and viable organizations, leadership is necessary to create a vision and mobilize the organization. Their study revealed what the ninety business leaders did to utilize leadership skills and strategies and how they acquired them.

Their research revealed that four major strategies developed which were embodied by all ninety of the leaders: (a) attention through vision, (b) meaning through communication, (c) trust through positioning, and (d) the development of self through positive self-regard. Bennis and Nanus found "that leadership is the marshalling of skills possessed by a majority, but used by a minority. But it's something that can be learned by anyone, taught to everyone, denied to no one." (Leaders). The four strategies, according to Bennis and Nanus, can be learned, developed, and improved upon.
Attention through Vision. This strategy is the management of attention through vision which creates focus. All ninety people interviewed by the researchers had a picture of what the organization was about. Their visions were compelling and pulled people forward.

Meaning through Communication. This strategy creates meaning for people by talking and listening. A group becomes aligned with the goals of an organization. Meaning through communication is the process for getting the message across at every level of the organization.

Trust through Positioning. This strategy is the lubrication that makes it possible for organizations to work. Trust implies accountability, predictability, and reliability. Trust is the glue that maintains organizational integrity. Positioning is the set of actions necessary to implement the vision of the leader. Through positioning, a leader establishes trust.

The Deployment of Self through Positive Self-Regard. This strategy is the interpersonal and human aspect of leadership. It consists of three major components: (a) knowledge of one's strengths, (b) the capacity to nurture and develop those strengths, and (c) the ability to discern the fit between one's strengths and weaknesses and the organization's needs. Positive self-regard exerts force by creating in others a sense of confidence and high expectations. Positive self-regard is the creative deployment of self while leading.

Individuals who possess this strategy are good at their jobs, enjoy their work, and are proud of what they do because it reflects their value system.
A major study has provided insight into leadership. Kouzes and Posner (1988) examined what leaders did when achieving their personal best. The authors asked leaders what they did when they got extraordinary things done in organizations. They researched the practices leaders use to turn challenging opportunities into remarkable successes. The researchers challenged myths and tradition regarding leadership. Their findings contain a set of practices that can form the foundation for the development of a new generation of leaders. They compared traditional thoughts regarding leadership with their data. Their research revealed the following:

"Traditional management teaching would have us believe that the ideal organization is orderly and stable. Yet, when successful leaders talk about their personal best achievements, they talk about challenging the process, about changing things, about shaking up the organization." (preface, p. XVI).

"Leadership myth portrays the leader as a renegade who magnetizes a band of followers with courageous acts. In fact, leaders attract followers not because of their willful defiance, but because of their deep respect for the aspirations of others." (preface, p. XVI).

"Traditional management teaches us that leaders ought to be cool, aloof, and analytical - separating emotion from work. Yet when leaders discuss the things they are the proudest of in their own careers, they describe feelings of inspiration, passion, intensity, challenge, caring, and even love." (preface, p. XVI).

The authors examined the experiences of five hundred middle and senior-level managers when they achieved their personal best. They examined what leaders did when they did their personal best at leading, not managing, others. These were experiences when, in their own perception, these leaders set their own individual standard of excellence. The personal best survey consisted of 38 open-ended questions. Sample questions included were: (a) Who initiated the project?
(b) How did you prepare for this experience?, and (c) What special techniques and strategies did you use to get other people involved in the project? More than 500 of these surveys were collected.

Every manager in the study had at least one leadership story to tell. The stories they told seldom sounded like textbook management. They were not logical cases of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. Instead, they were tales of dynamic change and bold actions. The research revealed that leadership involves five basic practices and ten specific behaviors:

1. Challenging the Process, practice number one, is the opportunity for greatness. The researchers found that leadership is an active, not a passive, process. While many leaders attributed their success to "luck" or "being in the right place at the right time," none of them sat idly by or waited for fate to smile upon them. Although the distinctive competencies of a person may fit the needs of the moment, those who lead others to greatness seek challenge. All the cases collected about leadership personal bests involved some form of challenge. The challenge may have been an innovative new product, a reorganization, or a turnaround; but the majority of cases involved a change from the status quo which challenged the process. Kouzes and Posner found leaders exhibit two primary behaviors in this practice category:

   (a) Searching for Opportunities: when leaders look for ways to alter the status quo, to create something totally new, for new processes, for ways to beat the system. Leaders tend to search for opportunities to do what has never been done.
(b) Experiment and Take Risks: a leader explores sources of innovation, turns mistakes into learning opportunities, and will try untested approaches.

2. The second practice, Inspiring a Shared Vision, is that ability of leaders to look forward to the future and inspire others to agree and work together to achieve a common vision. Leaders spend considerable effort gazing across the horizon of time, imagining what it would be like when they arrive at their final destinations. Leaders get others to buy into their dreams by showing how all will be served by a common purpose. Some call it vision; others describe it as a purpose, mission, goal, even personal agenda. Regardless of what it is called, it is the desire to make something happen, to change the way things are, to create something that no one else has ever created before. The behaviors are:

(a) Envisioning the Future: to imagine, to see into the future, and to stay focused on what to create for the organization.

(b) Enlist Others: to communicate the shared vision with commitment and feeling.

3. Enabling Others to Act, the third practice, is the art of developing teams with spirit and cohesion who will work together. Exemplary leaders enlist the support and assistance of those who must make the project work. They involve, in some way, those who must live with the results, and they make it possible for others to do good work. They encourage collaboration, build teams, and empower others. They enable others to act. The two key behaviors for enabling them to act are:
(a) **Fostering Collaboration**: ability to have people work together for the good of the organization.

(b) **Strengthening Others**: empowers the members of the organization to take responsibility through sharing power and information.

4. The fourth practice, Modeling the Way, is the process for the leader to show the way. Leaders stand up for their beliefs. They practice what they preach. They show others by their example that they live by the values they profess. The behaviors related to this practice are:

(a) **Setting the Example**: leading by doing. It is the understanding of how leaders model the way through the clarity and courage of their convictions.

(b) **Planning Small Wins**: builds commitment to action. It is the realization that the most effective change processes are incremental.

5. Encouraging the Heart, the fifth practice, is recognizing that getting extraordinary things done in organizations is hard work. Leaders encourage others to continue the quest. They inspire others with courage and hope. The two behaviors are:

(a) **Recognizing Individual Contributions**: leaders treat people in a way that leads to extraordinary achievements. Leaders know people repeat behavior that is rewarded.

(b) **Celebrating Accomplishments**: valuing the victory and cheering about key values is a key behavior. Celebrations are central to the core of the culture of an organization.
The Kouzner's and Posner's study (1985) is about leading people, not merely managing them. The authors wrote of leadership beginning where management ends, where the systems of rewards and punishments, control, and scrutiny, give way to innovation, individual character, and the courage of convictions.

The results of Kouzes' and Posner's study were striking both in their refutation of the leader stereotype and in their consistency. From the analysis of the personal best cases, a model of leadership which guides leaders when achieving their highest level of excellence when leading, was developed.

Summary of the Chapter

The review of literature focused on educational leadership functions, tasks, and leadership research in the business sector. The literature indicates that much is known about how school leaders function, but superintendents have no guide as to how to lead.

The review clarified that research has been conducted to identify effective schools and what is expected for superintendent success. It also provided self-report data indicating what superintendents see as important for success. AASA, (1982); Murphy and Hallinger, (1986); Sclafani, (1987); and Collier, (1987), all conducted research related to the superintendent and performance factors related to effective leadership. The review of literature then turned to two important leadership studies in the private realm. Bennis and Nanus (1985) conducted research which revealed how ninety business leaders utilized leadership skills and
strategies in four major areas. Finally, research by Kouzes and Posner (1988) was reviewed. They examined what practices and strategies business leaders used to get extraordinary things done in their organizations.

The present study identifies and analyzes factors utilized by superintendents when achieving their personal best in education. The practices and strategies superintendents used to get extraordinary things done will be identified and analyzed.
The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methods and procedures used in identifying and analyzing the practices utilized by superintendents in achieving their personal best in education.

**Survey Construction**

The data to identify the leadership practices utilized by superintendents were obtained by using the survey "Recalling A Personal Best Leadership Experience." This survey was developed by the researcher using the original instrument administered to over five hundred leaders in business developed by Dr. James M. Kouzes and Dr. Barry Z. Posner. Slight modifications were made to gain the necessary data. This researcher communicated with Dr. Posner at Santa Clara University in writing and on the telephone to obtain both permission to use and to seek input regarding changes.

The superintendents in the sample all responded to the same survey. The instructions for completing the instrument asked the respondents to focus their thinking on the leadership experiences as a superintendent, select their personal best, spend time getting a clear mental picture of the experience, recall and review the activities, and answer all survey questions. The questions required narrative responses and provided an opportunity for anecdotal comments.

In December 1989, this researcher administered the personal best survey to four "volunteer superintendents" to determine the time span for answering the questions. Because of this field test, several refinements and clarifications were
made in the introduction, instructions, and wording of items to reduce the average completion time to forty-five minutes.

Sample Selection and Collection of Data

Subjects who participated in the study were from California, Missouri, Iowa, and New York. The process to determine which superintendents would receive a survey was to contact the County Superintendents of Riverside, San Bernardino, and Orange Counties. They supplied a list of superintendents from their county (Riverside - 27, San Bernardino - 33, and Orange - 10). State level administrators were contacted in Iowa, Missouri, and New York, and asked to supply the names of ten superintendents. The survey was mailed to one hundred superintendents in late December of 1989 and early January of 1990. Each packet contained a letter of introduction and instructions, a survey, and a stamped, self-addressed manila envelope for mailing purposes. Two weeks after mailing the packets, post cards were mailed to subjects who had not returned the instrument. Two weeks later (last week of January 1990) phone calls were made to subjects who had not responded. By February 20, 1990, fifty-two superintendents had returned completed personal best surveys to the researcher. This represents a 52% return rate.

A coding map was formulated after receiving approximately seventy-five percent of the surveys from the superintendents. The researcher developed discrete categories for each question after reading each survey item, formulating potential answers, and examining superintendents' responses. It was also necessary to devise a coding system to further clarify responses that reflected
strategies. For example, the superintendents were asked, "How did your team celebrate its accomplishments, its milestone achievements?" Other categories, involving the superintendents' feelings, were also involved in the coding system development. For example, "Please write down a few words which describe how you felt personally as the leader of this experience." Dr. Posner was contacted for copies of his coding map, but he indicated none was used in writing their research.

After the researcher formulated the categories for each question, the coding map was sent to an expert panel composed of Dr. Richard Manatt, Dr. Daniel Reschly, and Dr. James Sweeney, all of Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, as well as Dr. Posner of Santa Clara University. The professors on this expert panel offered suggestions for changes in the categories.

Concurrent with the administration of the surveys, the researcher identified two individuals to analyze and code the responses. One coder was an Iowa State University graduate student and the second coder was an elementary computer teacher from the Banning Unified School District, Banning, California. The two coders received two days of training on March 2 and 3, 1990, in Banning, California. Three weeks prior to the training the coders were given a copy of *The Leadership Challenge* by Kouzes and Posner. They were responsible for reading the book as part of the preparation for the training session. They were also asked to complete the survey just as superintendents had done so as to review and clarify questions and categories. This also allowed the coders to gain an appreciation of the thought process utilized and specific questions asked. The
coders were also given a copy of the coding map to become familiar with the categories as they related to specific questions.

During the first day of the training session, March 2, 1990, the coders met for five hours. The session consisted of an overview of the workshop, objectives, a definition of terms, and timelines for completion and entry of the coding data. A completed survey was discussed and the coders worked together to review and clarify coding map categories, so a mutual understanding and answer range variation could be understood. This process was repeated on two more surveys. To further increase the intercoder reliability, the coders next analyzed three surveys on an individual basis and then shared their coding answers response with each other. This was followed by discussion and the trainer providing additional category classification information for the coders.

During the second day of training, six hours, the analyses of responses continued, codings were compared, and areas of discrepancies discussed. As a result of these sessions, where the other category had an excessive number of responses, specific coding map changes were made to allow for a definitive answer. More meaningful data could be obtained utilizing these categories. Changes were made in four of the seventy-one question categories by the coders and trainer. A coder workshop agenda is in the appendix.

The training session was designed to establish intercoder reliability at the .80 level or above. After five surveys, the intercoder reliability was .78. The intercoder reliability for the fifty-two surveys was .90. The intercoder reliability was obtained
by dividing the total number of disagreements of the coders in the predetermined sample by the total number of answers in the predetermined sample.

After the training session on March 2 and 3, 1990, the coder was given the remaining copies of the fifty-two completed surveys to code. They were asked to return the coded material within thirty days. The coded data were returned to the researcher on April 1 and April 2, 1990, by the two coders.

Upon receipt of the coding sheets, the researcher identified specific items which were coded differently by each coder. There was an average of seven of the possible 76 responses. A panel, consisting of three Banning Unified School District teachers, met during the first week of May to determine the categories where differences existed. The panel had a one-hour orientation to acquaint themselves with the study, instrument, and process for identifying the conflict responses. The panel read the question for each disputed answer, then discussed and voted on each. A majority vote determined the category for placement.

Upon completion by the panel, the original coding sheets were changed to reflect the panel's decision. The coded information was entered into the computer during the latter two weeks of May 1990.
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the investigation designed to identify and analyze the practices, feelings, and strategies of superintendents in achieving their personal best as educational leaders.

Six research questions guided the study: (a) What are the background and situational factors involved when the superintendent achieves his/her personal best?, (b) What is the relative importance of five leadership practices identified by business leaders as important in achieving their personal best?, (c) What strategies did superintendents utilize to carry out leadership practices?, (d) What are the feelings of superintendents during initiation and implementation of their personal best endeavor?, (e) Where or how did the superintendents learn the skills necessary to lead?, and (f) What is the relationship between the size of the school district and the personal best endeavor, practice, and strategies?

Background and Situational Features of the Personal Best

Leadership is highly idiosyncratic. It is important to understand the background and situational features surrounding superintendents who achieve their personal best. The typical respondent had been a superintendent for eight years in a district of 6400 students. This district size mean was somewhat inflated because some Southern California superintendents from larger districts responded
to the survey. These included San Diego (119,500) and San Bernardino (30,000). The largest district had 119,500 students and the smallest district had 300 students. The median size of the districts was 4800. Many of the personal bests described occurred between 1981 and 1990; of the superintendents who identified the date of their personal best, 64 percent chose a personal best that took place in the last 10 years. Forty-five of the fifty-two personal bests took place where the superintendent is currently employed.

Figure 1 shows the district size of the respondents. Twenty-seven superintendents were from districts of 5,000 students or less. Eight of these were from districts of fewer than 1,000 students. Fifteen of the superintendents are leaders of districts of 5,000 - 15,000 in student population. The remaining ten superintendents were from districts of more than 15,000 students and two of those were from districts of 25,000 or more students.

Figure 1.

Number of Superintendents and School District Size
Subject of "Personal Best"

Each superintendent in the study had at least one leadership story to tell. These stories seldom sounded like those in the leadership textbooks and were not about planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling, and other classic management tasks. They represent stories of dynamic change and bold actions.

The superintendents’ personal best reflected a significant change. Regardless of district size, experience, or the geographic region of the country, their personal bests were about firsts, about departure from educational norms, about things that had not been done before. This includes planning for rapid student population growth, negotiation innovations, and projects to improve climate. This is best illustrated by the personal best of Superintendent Tom Payzant of San Diego, California, "A Historic Collective Bargaining Agreement." Tom Payzant had been frustrated for twenty years by the time and energy consumed in "an adversarial process." He put his reputation and credibility on the line to initiate an alternative collective bargaining process which led to an unprecedented four-year contract with the certificated and classified personnel of the San Diego School District. Payzant took risks in seizing the opportunity to make a major change. He broke down stereotypes and traditions to implement this major change. He viewed this innovation and settlement as his most significant accomplishment as a superintendent.

Table 1 shows the specific categories in which superintendents achieved their personal best. Twenty-five percent of the fifty-two responding superintendents selected Improving Climate as their personal best. The second most popular
selected *Improving Climate* as their personal best. The second most popular subject of leadership revolved around *Growth and Expansion* in their school districts. Other personal best efforts included effective schools, curriculum improvement, school closings, planning, and negotiations.

Table 1

**Frequencies and Percentages of Personal Best Efforts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Best</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving Climate</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Growth &amp; Expansion</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Schools Project</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Improvement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Closing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Planning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 52 100 %
Reason for Selection of Subject of Personal Best Effort

The respondents were asked why they selected a specific category or project that became their personal best. Forty percent of the superintendents selected their project because they felt it would make a difference. Twenty-five percent indicated that self-satisfaction was their reason for selecting the project. Another 18 percent reported their effort was good for kids and thus, their reason for selection. The remaining 17 percent were varied.

Length of Personal Best Effort

There was considerable variance in the length of time the superintendents took to accomplish their personal best. Figure 2 showed that thirty-one percent of the personal bests were completed in a time span ranging from a few weeks to nine months. Twenty percent took one year, 20% took two years, and 10% of the superintendents took more than two years to accomplish their personal best. One personal best involved changing fourteen K-8 schools in Vista, California, to a Year-Round Education calendar; and is ongoing after one-and-one-half years. On the other hand, a project in Pauma Valley, California, took only two weeks from start to finish. For those two weeks, union representatives and the administration negotiated and settled the master contract using a "win/win" philosophic premise.
Superintendents were asked what they felt was the most important contributor to the project’s success. Table 2 shows what contributed to the personal best effort success. Involvement of others emerged as the most significant contributor in the success of their personal best effort; 33 percent of the superintendents indicated this was the top contributor. Sixteen percent of the superintendents responding to the survey indicated they took risks to challenge the status quo. Another sixteen percent reported envisioned the future. Other important contributors to the success of the personal best effort included modeling, communication, and the development of trust and respect.
Table 2

Frequencies and Percents of Contributors to Personal Best Effort Success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributors</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involved Others</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took Risks</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envisioned</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeled</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed Trust &amp; Respect</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceptions and Feelings During Initiation, Implementation and Completion

A personal best effort may provide leaders great challenges and stimulate much anxiety. It seems likely it would be helpful to other leaders if they could understand the perceptions and feelings of superintendents during the initiation and implementation of personal best projects. The superintendents, during initiation of
the project, felt excitement and fear. The search for opportunities beyond their previous experience was very exciting to them. The creativity, the thought of the unknown, the untested approaches, lent to that excitement. The element of fear also crept into their psyche. Superintendents indicated they asked themselves questions such as, "What if the personal best project does not succeed? "What if the level of cooperation necessary for success does not occur?" The superintendents were, at times, frustrated over the lack of support. The superintendent from Capistrano, California, typified these feelings. He succeeded in his personal best to adopt a broad-based program of sex education. He overcame an aggressive and well-planned opposition campaign mounted by religious fundamentalists. The superintendent was creative in his approach and organization. He reported, "I am excited over the process of acceptance with opposition." At the same time the element of fear was present. Fear for his job, if things did not go well. An accumulation and conglomeration of feelings were apparent.

During implementation, the superintendents felt self-satisfaction, togetherness, excitement, and power. Table 3 shows the feelings during initial implementation. Fifty-four percent of the superintendents reported feeling a great sense of self-satisfaction during implementation and upon completion of their personal best effort. They said this self-satisfaction was a reflection of an increased feeling of self worth, as the personal best effort progressed from implementation to completion. The superintendents talked about what the team members had in common, how they came to understand each other's needs, and how the
togetherness developed as they worked on their personal best. The feeling of excitement expressed by superintendents during the initiation phase of the personal best remained during the implementation. Eighteen percent indicated they had a feeling of excitement as the personal best effort progressed. Six percent reported a feeling of power during implementation.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings Expressed in Percent of Superintendents During Initiation and Implementation of Personal Best Effort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common Leadership Practices and Strategies of Superintendents

Five practices identified by Kouzes and Posner (1988) described what CEOs do to achieve their personal best. These practices were (a) enabling others to act,
(b) inspiring a shared vision, (c) modeling the way, (d) encouraging the heart, and (e) challenging the process. The personal best survey used in this study utilized these five basic practices and focused on the top two strategies for each practice that enabled superintendents to get extraordinary things done. To determine which practice superintendents used most frequently, questions were asked regarding the five to seven key leadership actions they took to accomplish their personal best leadership effort. Those responses from superintendents were then forced into Kouzes’ and Posner’s “practice categories.”

The frequencies of the key action answers were tallied to reflect the importance of the "Common Leadership Practices" utilized by superintendents in accomplishing their personal best. Table 4 shows the rank and points of the practices. The point totals were obtained by adding the five allowed responses for each of the fifty-two superintendents for this survey question. This amounted to a total point accumulation of 260.

Research, from Kouzes and Posner (1988), yielded two strategies that were used to achieve each of the practices. In this study, the superintendents were asked if they indeed used both of the strategies in each practice. They did. The superintendents were also asked to indicate how they went about utilizing the strategies. For example, in the practice of enabling others to act, they indicated they utilized the strategies of fostering collaboration and strengthening others. They then told how the two strategies were used in achieving their personal best.
Table 4

Practice, Ranks, and Strategies Utilized in Superintendents Personal Best Effort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Enabled Others to Act</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>(1) Fostered Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Strengthened Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Inspired a Shared Vision</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>(1) Envisioned the Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Enlisted Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Modeled the Way</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>(1) Set the Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Planned Small Wins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Encouraged the Heart</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>(1) Recognized Contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Celebrated Accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Challenged the Process</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(1) Searched for Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Experimented and Took Risks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each practice will be discussed in an effort to clarify meaning or describe how each helped the superintendent achieve his or her personal best. Strategies will also be discussed to shed further light on how the practice was accomplished. The two strategies most frequently used to accomplish the practice will be discussed in greater depth.

Enabled Others to Act.

The superintendents said they did not, as leaders, achieve success by themselves. They enabled others to act by enlisting support and assistance and by involving, in some way, those who must live with the results. Involvement enabled them to do good work. Enabling others to act was the most frequently used practice that superintendents utilized to achieve their personal best. Sixty-
used practice that superintendents utilized to achieve their personal best. Sixty-one percent of the superintendents reported that enabling others to act was the single greatest contributor to the success of their project.

Jacquelin Spacek, Superintendent of Lakeside Union School District, Lakeside, California, summarized it nicely:

"Enabling others to act was the very key to our effort to implement site-based management. We trained in group process and solicited feedback to gain collective decisions. We enabled our teachers and administrators. We developed trust through others in a safe environment, our team, to assist in gaining input. This environment enabled others to be participants in the decision-making process."

Ron Revelle of Highland, New York, also characterized how these others were enabled to act. He stated:

"The team members were made to feel they were critical to the success of the vision. Key information was shared with team members, as well as opening up the lines of communication with myself and others involved with the process, we enlisted their support."

This was similar to those other examples provided by other superintendents. Enabling went beyond the immediate decision-making group. The superintendents enlisted the support of board members, teachers, parents, peers, and community members.

**How do superintendents enable others?**

The two strategies which emerged as the most significant by superintendents who enabled others were: (a) fostered collaboration, and (b) strengthened others.

**Fostered Collaboration.** Superintendents enabled others to act by fostering collaboration; building teams to achieve success. The data showed this strategy
was about getting people to work together. Superintendents recognized they needed others to accomplish their personal best. They involved teachers, parents, peers, students, and school board members and built spirited and cohesive teams. They involved others in planning, listened, solicited input, and gave members of the team discretion to make their own decisions.

In the fifty-two cases we studied, not a single example of extraordinary achievement was encountered that was accomplished without the active effort and support of many people. Many superintendents like Donald Lindstrom reported, "We did it together." He fostered collaboration.

In a collaborative effort, everyone is important to the success of the personal best effort. Table 5 shows when asked, "Who else was involved with the success of the personal best?", 45 percent of the superintendents reported they involved all pertinent and related input groups in their success (parents, teachers, board, and administrators). Fourteen percent said they involved the board and administrators in their success, while 10 percent said they involved principals and teachers. The remaining 31 percent reported varied combinations of their constituency were involved; peers, board, and teachers, and board and parents. This involvement, coupled with assistance in learning how to work together, fostered collaboration which enabled others to act together.
Table 5
Those Involved with the Success of the Personal Best Effort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All (Parents, Teachers, Board, &amp; Administrators)</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board &amp; Administrators</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals and Teachers</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board &amp; Teachers</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board &amp; Parents</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eighty-eight percent said they did use specific approaches to foster collaboration.

Figure 3 shows the approaches used by superintendents to build teamwork or collaboration.

Ron Hockwalt, El Cajon, California, used the approach of building teamwork with a small group and slowly expanded the circle to foster collaboration. He pointed out the essential strand of building that "feeling" with the team in stages. Hockwalt reported that as he fostered teamwork he sought to change people's thinking from an either/or thought process to a positive perspective on working together. Making it clear that being willing to reciprocate would encourage people to recognize that the greatest gain comes from teamwork. Sixty-two percent reported that building teamwork was the primary approach for fostering
collaboration. One superintendent put it nicely:

"Leadership is a relationship between leaders and the people they aspire to lead. A failure to understand that leadership is a shared responsibility, such as not building teamwork, is a leadership destined for mediocrity. Not involving others will not allow the achievement of excellence in one's personal best."

In utilizing teamwork to foster collaboration, a California superintendent assigned tasks that required the teachers to exchange ideas and resources. As the teachers jointly worked together, they saw the need to share information and became convinced that everyone should contribute to the effort of the group. They built a team.

Twelve percent of the superintendents reported they fostered collaboration by developing cooperative goals. Developing cooperative goals through staff planning produced a model program for a superintendent in Santa Clarita, California. In his view, cooperative goals ensured that people worked together to ensure each other's success. When people understood their goals were workable and compatible, they then promoted their own welfare by promoting the group interest.

![Figure 3. Approaches Utilized to Foster Collaboration.](image-url)
Trusting relationships (eight percent) were critical for fostering collaboration. "We were absolutely honest and forthright from the start - no hidden agenda, we cooperated and supported each other," responded Michael Stuckhardt, Pauma Valley, California. He learned that developing support, involving others, and delegating generated a high level of trust. This approach allowed him to initiate and implement "Win/Win Negotiations" with the certificated staff of his district. Trust, in his view, was “that all important glue holding the effort together.” Trust was also developed by meeting commitments and keeping promises. Superintendents reported their behavior was more critical than that of any other person in elevating the level of trust in their district. Listening and showing interest were also important. Superintendents also reported they listened to and showed interest in ideas and thoughts which created a positive climate and tended to develop trust.

**Strengthened Others.** Strengthening others enables them to play a role in shaping their team's success. The frequencies and percents of techniques utilized by superintendents to strengthen others are shown in Table 5. Thirty-one percent of the superintendents indicated they strengthened others through empowerment, providing an opportunity for team members to act and make decisions. This strengthened them and aided the personal best efforts. They also noted that people were strengthened when they work on tasks critical to the efforts’ success and when their accomplishments are recognized as important.

More than one of four superintendents indicated they strengthened others
through involving them in working on cooperative goals. In one superintendent's words,

"I believe in the ability of our team and they have much to offer to the district through working on cooperative goals. Teamwork strengthens others and helps develop the commitment and skills of those involved."

Fifteen percent said they strengthened others by developing an understanding of each other's needs. One superintendent reported he broke down barriers and set about developing an understanding by encouraging interactions among the team members. Other superintendents said weekly meetings with team members helped the members come to understand each other's needs, which in turn strengthened the individuals and the group. Other techniques utilized by superintendents to strengthen others were to help them feel united as a team (11%) and discuss expected behavior with individuals and groups.
Table 5

Frequencies and Percents of Techniques Utilized by Superintendents to Strengthen Others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on Cooperative Goals</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Understanding of Each Other’s Needs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel United as a Team</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed Expected Behavior</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inspiring A Shared Vision.

Inspiring a shared vision was the second most frequently used practice utilized by the superintendents. The superintendents were futurists to some extent. They had a vision and ideals of what could be. They communicated their hopes and dreams so others clearly understood and accepted their vision as their
own. Rene Townsend, Superintendent of Vista Unified, Vista, California, wrote, "Leaders have to have a dream, a vision they care about passionately enough to persevere in the toughest of times. With strong appeals and quiet persuasion, they develop enthusiastic supporters."

Patricia Novotney of Temecula, California, stressed the importance of a shared vision, "I spent a great deal of time with community and school district leaders sharing our ideas. We talked of the ideal, we discussed the future, we shared our vision." Two strategies were instrumental in inspiring a shared vision. They are: (a) envisioned the future, and (b) enlisted others.

Envisioned the Future. Bennis and Nanus (1985) listed vision as one of their four strategies employed by CEOs who take charge. Vision, according to Bennis and Nanus, grabs. Management of attention through vision creates focus. Vision animates and transforms purpose into action. Kouzes and Posner (1988) define a vision as an ideal and unique image of the future. Both sets of authors depict vision as a vehicle which leaders use to change ideas and images to organizational action.

Superintendents who achieve their personal best looked to the future. They had a vision and ideals that drove how excellence could be achieved. Larry Maw, Lake Elsinore, California, described how vision made a difference in his negotiations project, "I visualized a settlement with both unions and a setting of the stage for another settlement for the upcoming year.....we settled the next time in two days!" Maw "saw something out there," and imagined that extraordinary outcomes could be realized in the future for the district, if the proper negotiations stage could be set. This was one of the many similar examples illustrating the
importance of vision. Many superintendents reported they needed to be forward looking and have a clear sense of direction to achieve their personal best.

Figure 4 depicts how the superintendents envisioned the future to achieve their personal best.

![Graph showing the percentage distribution of how superintendents envisioned the future to achieve their personal best.](image)

**Figure 4.** How Superintendents Envisioned the Future To Achieve Their Personal Best.

Forty-five percent of the respondents' vision of the future included setting a new standard of excellence. When Larry Maw visualized the settlement of his negotiations project, he wanted to set the stage for achieving a level of excellence yet achieved by the district. A new standard of excellence meant the establishment of the most positive working climate between the unions and the administration.
This positive climate coupled with the ability to enter into long range financial planning did indeed then allow the district to pursue lowering class sizes and employing more reading teachers on the elementary level.

Thirty-seven percent of the superintendents identified completion of the project as their vision. Their vision was apparently a sense of completion of an important project. The vision of fourteen percent of the superintendents was an idea; for the good of students. The Superintendent from Westminster, California, reported that preparing for growth would achieve his vision of reduced class size for the good of students through building additional classrooms.

**Enlisted Others.** Securing “buy in” of followers to achieve a personal best effort is important. Superintendents worked hard to secure buy in to reach their goal. They attracted others, enlisted supporters to share the vision, worked at communicating the purpose, and then elicited support of the vision. They enlisted others by seeking their input and expertise using peers, teachers, and parents to accomplish their personal best on a collective basis.

Superintendents enlisted others in various ways. Empowerment was most prevalent, as indicated in Figure 4 (45 percent). The superintendents delegated decision-making to the group, giving them the power to act.

One example of how superintendents used empowerment to enlist others was provided by Steve Voelz from Iowa. He empowered the staff by giving them the power to establish the staff development program for the district. He secured buy in through enlistment of the team to make staff development decisions.
Another example came from a California superintendent. He empowered a community task force to meet, make decisions, and give a board report regarding the interim sessions in year-round education.

Twenty-seven percent enlisted others through the power of their position. For example, a California superintendent appointed the committees to work on high performance schools....no one declined, everyone accepted. He simply used the power of his position to enlist others. There were many examples of enlisting others through position power. In “taking charge” of the Redlands, California, School District, Ron Franklin expedited the process by appointing many committees in a very short time. "The staff and I both knew what we had to do so we just got at it," said Franklin. "I simply named the committee members to save time."

Fourteen percent of the superintendents said they enlisted others using the value of "helping students" as an inducement for involvement. They cajoled, solicited, and explained the importance of the personal best effort as it related to the helping of students. The superintendents played to the inherent reason most educators are in the profession: to help students.
Modeling the Way.

Modeling the way is behaving in a way which is consistent with the beliefs that must drive the empowerment effort; for the superintendents, it was leading by example. When asked if they modeled the way, ninety-eight percent of the superintendents said they led by example. This paralleled Kouzes and Posner's (1988) study, where they found that ninety-five percent of the CEOs in their study modeled the way through planning and leading by example. Bill Lawson, Superintendent from Westminster, California, put it best, "Modeling the way is being true to your values. 'A role model' is when your actions reflect your beliefs."

The how of modeling the way was demonstrated by Superintendent Don Lindstrom, Encinitas, California, in accomplishing his personal best, establishing an Effective Schools Process: "I modeled the way, I practiced what I preached,

Figure 5. Percentages for the Strategy of Enlisting Others.
I did what I said." To model the way, superintendents: (a) set the example, and (b) planned small wins.

Set the Example. When asked how superintendents set the example, sixty-four percent responded that they "walked the talk," and practiced what they preached, as shown in Figure 6. They stood up for their beliefs, many times under fire from the community and teachers. They live by professed values, even when under fire. They led by doing. In the determination of new elementary school boundaries in San Marcos, California, Superintendent Mac Bernd, "personally conducted all community meetings and became a 'lightening rod' for the district." Mac Bernd set the example for the district by personally espousing quality and equality education for all children in the heat of action. He set the example by talking, listening, and telling of his strong belief in the new boundaries that would balance the size of the elementary sites, stabilize staffing, and equalize class sizes. Bernd pressed for this to the community because he believed it was in the best interest of students. He was criticized, but he persevered. He made his vision tangible and the community ultimately accepted the new boundaries. Bernd illustrated how superintendents set the example by walking the talk.

Seventeen percent said they set the example by managing their time. Superintendents reported it was important that their team believed that managing time results in more positive and additional interaction with students. They then set the example by managing their own time effectively. Examples of managing their time were: specific, announced, and adhered to starting and ending times for meetings and the use of organizational planning books.
Figure 6. Percentages of How Superintendents Set the Example.

Planned Small Wins. The superintendents planned ways for others to experience successes along the way. The use of small wins was illustrated by Superintendent Ron Hockwalt, El Cajon, California, in establishing a model education center in the Cajon Valley Union District. He wanted to move carefully and be successful with each step. Hockwalt wanted to start with a small win. He brought in consultants to work with the team for two days to enhance their skills in group dynamics and decision-making. This was followed up with team meetings utilizing their newly found skills, and meeting to carefully explain the impact their decisions were making on the ultimate goal. They made such progress that at the end of one year a model education center had been established. The small wins added up to a personal best success.
Encouraged the Heart.

The fourth most frequently used practice superintendents utilized in achieving success in their personal best effort was to encourage the heart. The work involved with their personal best effort was long and arduous. It was important to encourage others to continue their quest. They gave heart by visibly recognizing people’s contribution to the vision. Jacquelin Spacek from Lakeside, California, sent congratulatory notes and memos to each of the team members involved with implementing a site-based management process. She also met with each team member individually to give positive feedback, personal strokes, and support. She said a part of a leader’s job is to show employees they can win, to take the lead in encouraging the heart to carry on.

The two strategies for encouraging the heart were: (a) recognized individual contributions, and (b) celebrated team accomplishments. Figure 7 shows how individual contributors were recognized and Figure 8 shows how team accomplishments were recognized.

**Recognized Individual Contributions.** Recognizing contributions led to positive, high-level achievements. Seventy-nine percent of the superintendents reported they recognized individuals. Praise, coaching, and personal notes of a job well-done ranked first on the leader’s method of recognizing individual contributors to the personal best. Fifty-four percent used day-to-day thank you’s and strokes.

A superintendent from California described a common strategy. He gave
“warm fuzzies” for a job well-done. These warm fuzzies were continuous thank-yous and strokes.

Twelve percent of the respondents recognized individual contributors by giving them plaques, pins, and certificates. Marty Lucas from Iowa gave pins to all of the staff members for their help in determining district needs.

Dave Darnell, Mason City, Iowa, hosted a district-wide formal recognition dinner for individuals who have contributed to the success of the effective schools effort. Ten percent of the superintendents recognized individual contributions by having formal dinners and presentations to encourage the heart.

![Bar Graph]

Figure 7. Recognition of Individual Contributors to the Personal Best.

Celebrated Team Accomplishments. Eighty-three percent of the superintendents celebrated team accomplishments to encourage the heart. Figure
8 shows how superintendents celebrated team accomplishments. The strategy of celebrating team accomplishments was an area of difference with the CEOs from Kouzes and Posner's (1988) research. Celebrating team accomplishments, according to their data, were such activities as formal dinners and gifts. The superintendents in this study explicitly pointed out that they saw day-to-day thank yous and strokes as a form of celebration. Thirty-nine percent said they gave day-to-day thank yous and strokes to team members to encourage the heart. Roland Skumowitz of Romoland, California, continuously gave personal thank yous (defined as a team celebration by superintendents) and sent notes to team members to encourage them in their quest to acquire a school site for the first new school in the district.

Formal dinners and award ceremonies were used by thirty-five percent of the superintendents. The certificated and classified staffs of South Bay, California, celebrated at their "Conference of Champions Dinner" where the purpose was to recognize those who had made significant contributions to reach the established goal of 100% of their schools named in the high performance category. The South Bay Conference of Champions Dinner was focused on team success. Each team that had achieved their school named in the high performance category received a trophy. Each team member was given a pin. There were speeches, thank-yous, and cheering.
Figure 8. Celebrating Team Accomplishments.

Challenged the Process

Challenging the process was identified as the fifth most frequently used practice. Challenging the process is the willingness of the superintendent to experiment and take risks. Each of the personal bests involved some form of challenge. Each of the responding superintendents said they challenged the status quo to complete their project. They indicated they took risks and communicated the vision.

In challenging the process, the superintendents utilized two strategies; they (a) searched for opportunities, and (b) experimented and took risks.
Searched for Opportunities. Kouzes and Posner (1988) defined the strategy of searching for opportunities as challenging the status quo. Superintendents confronted status quo; the way one district has always done things in its business-as-usual environment. The superintendents stepped out in front with their personal best effort to show others the direction in which to head. All fifty-two of the superintendents indicated they challenged the status quo.

The superintendents (92%) actually initiated and assumed the responsibility of the project. In contrast, Kouzes and Posner (1988), found in their study of five hundred corporate CEOs that more than half the cases were initiated by someone other than the CEO. Product innovations were just as likely to come from customers and line employees as from the CEO.

Tom Williams of Belmond, Iowa, provided an example of how superintendents searched for opportunities. Superintendent Williams changed the status quo by initiating a whole grade-sharing plan between Belmond and Klemme, Iowa. Williams faced a formidable challenge. The status quo was individual classes in the separate communities of Klemme and Belmond. The two districts consolidated and the challenge was to combine these grades for attendance in one of the communities. Strong community feelings and potential loss of community identity stood in the way of change. Whole-grade sharing did come about with the seventh and eighth grades attending Klemme and grades 9-12 attending Belmond. Williams had confronted and changed the status quo, he had searched for opportunities.
In creating a community redevelopment agency for the first time, David Blumenthal of Coronado, California, ventured in uncharted waters as he used a never-before-tried law to establish the agency to guide redevelopment for the district. He used a newly written law to finance the building of new schools.

Experimented and Took Risks. As previously noted, every superintendent reported they initiated change and challenged the status quo. They indicated an openness to new ideas and a willingness to listen to team members. This strategy, as related, was inherent to change and the willingness of superintendents to experiment, take risks, learn from mistakes and successes, and convert them to the good of the organization.

Harold Prior, a superintendent from Algona, Iowa, was willing to experiment and take risks. Prior set about to establish a teacher evaluation instrument and procedure in spite of the fact that a similar effort had failed in the Algona District four years earlier. Not only had it failed in an earlier attempt, negative feelings and impressions still existed. Superintendent Prior was very aware of the risk involved in his effort. But he moved forward, set up committees, listened, cajoled, and allowed the team members to make mistakes. After six months of meeting, talking, and writing, a new teacher evaluation instrument and procedure were in place in the Algona School District.
Learning to Lead.

How does a superintendent become the best leader possible? The superintendents in the study were asked, "Just how have you gained the skills to lead?" Figure 9 shows how they obtained the skills. Most learned from others (34%), many from experience and educational training, and one of ten from reading. Below are anecdotes which further clarify how superintendents learn to lead.

![Diagram showing the percentage of learning methods: Learned from Others (34.0%), Experience (28.0%), Educational Training (20.0%), Reading (10.0%), Other (8.0%).]

Figure 9. How Superintendents Learned to Lead.
Learning from Others. A third of the superintendents indicated they learned to lead from others; through mentors as informal sponsors and coaches; these fellow superintendents were very helpful. Each of the superintendents were part of a network. Trusted colleagues gave them feedback that helped them learn to lead. Joseph Fazio, Castaic, California, learned to lead by “observing and working with leaders I valued and wanted to emulate.” Mac Bernd, San Marcos, California, learned by “listening to those who are older and wiser, and by watching those who are successful and borrowing aspects of their style.” These significant others are not always educators; four superintendents named their father as the significant influence on their learning to lead.

Experience. Twenty-eight percent of those surveyed indicated they learned by doing. Don Andrews, Wallkill, New York, said he learned to lead through experience. “I sat in the same chairs as my building administrators.”

The superintendents did not provide anecdotes about their educational training and how reading helped them to lead.

Teach Someone Else.

The superintendents were asked if they were to teach someone else about leadership, based on their personal best effort, “what would you tell others to do to be an effective leader?” Figure 10 shows twenty-nine percent of the educational leaders said they would teach someone else to involve others. This was hardly surprising since involving others was the most important practice the superintendents utilized in achieving their personal best effort. Modeling (20%), having a vision (15%), and developing trust (14%) were other approaches
suggested by superintendents as to how others could achieve personal best. The remainder of the responses (22%) fell into categories such as having a system, communicating, taking risks, and others.

![Figure 10. Percentages of What Superintendents Would Teach About Leadership.](image)

**Support of Participants.**

A major factor in achieving a personal best effort was acquiring buy in by members of the team. The data clearly illustrates most superintendents were able to increase the level of support of the people who helped them achieve their personal best.

Table 6 shows that nine percent of the superintendents reported they had substantial backing (at or above the 80% level) at the beginning of the project while
54% said that support had reached that high level at the conclusion of the project. Sixty percent of the superintendents reported that backing by participants was below the 20 percent level at the beginning of the effort while only 13 percent of the superintendents reported it fell below the 20 percent support level at the conclusion of the project.

Table 6
Percent Level of Support of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning of Project</th>
<th>Conclusion of Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superintendents</td>
<td>Participant Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantial Backers</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Above 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Above 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Above 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Above 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposed</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Below 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most Important Contributor.

When asked to identify the most important contributor to the success of their personal best effort, one of three of the superintendents reported that "involving others" was the most reported contributor to their success. Sixteen
63 percent of the superintendents reported that taking risks was a key while another 16% reported "envisioning the future" made a difference. Modeling was identified as the most important contributor to their personal best effort by ten percent. Communication, developing trust, a system, rewards, and other contributors constituted 25% of the contribution in somewhat smaller, but relatively equal distribution. Figure 11 reports the most important contributors to the success of the personal best effort identified by the superintendents.

![Figure 11. Contributors to the Success of the Personal Best Effort.](image)

**Organizational/Cultural Attributes of Personal Best Effort**

The literature is replete with suggestions as to what leaders should do to manage the sociotechnical aspects of the organization. The superintendents were
asked to describe their activities in the following: (a) planning structures and systems used to organize and control the project, (b) values and standards which guided their actions, (c) quotes and slogans utilized during their personal best effort, and (d) getting the word out to the rest of the organization regarding the success of the personal best. These are described below.

**Planning Structures and Systems.**

What structures and systems did superintendents use to plan, organize, or control their project. Table 7 shows the development of actions plans was named by 49% of the superintendents as the structure or system employed to plan and control the project. John Wood of Beaumont, California, for example, utilized an action plan with subject areas, levels of responsibility, and time lines. The task force used an action plan to plan and organize their effort for Wood’s personal best effort of a strategic long-range plan for his district.

Twenty-three percent of the superintendents reported that empowering teachers provided all the structure needed since it enabled teachers to become strong, capable, and committed. Don Lindstrom, Encinitas, California, for example, developed site-level teams whose function was to make building-level decisions regarding the budget and staffing. Eighteen percent of the superintendents developed measurable performance standards and structures for planning. Ten percent provided other strategies.
Table 7
Frequencies and Percentages of Structures and Systems Utilized to Achieve Personal Best Effort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure/System</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop Action Plans</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower Teachers/Decision-Making</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Performance Standards</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values or Standards.

What values or standards guided superintendents' actions during their personal best effort? Figure 12 shows "caring about youngsters" guided 44 percent of the superintendents. Don Helms, Corona, California, had a personal best effort which infused technology into the instruction in his district. The project upon completion motivated and excited students, which improved test scores. This guiding value or standard in implementing the program was that the personal best effort would "help prepare students for the future." In his words, "genuine acts of caring can pull students forward."
Honesty guided thirty percent of the superintendents. Joseph Fazio of Castaic, California, sought the return of the seventh and eighth grade education from the high school district to the elementary district. This personal best effort met with relatively strong opposition, and required heavy community involvement. Fazio described it this way:

"We were honest in our assessment of what we could and could not do for the students. We told them the good, we told them the negatives, and we shared the reasons openly and honestly."

The personal best effort was very successful and Castaic has now returned the seventh and eighth grades to the elementary district. Integrity was an important value or standard. Seventeen percent of the superintendents reported that having integrity was a very important value guiding their actions. Nine percent reported other strategies.

Figure 12. Percentages of Values Which Guided Superintendent Actions.
Quotes and Slogans.

Superintendents were asked if they used a quote or slogan to show the way in achieving their personal best effort. They were also asked to contribute a quotation of their own regarding leadership. Below are some examples. A more complete list can be found in the Appendix.

Quotes:

"If you try to please everyone in the grandstands, you’ll end up sitting up there with them."

"The trust level is the glue holding the organization together."

"I can make friends with competent people, but I can’t make my friends competent."

Slogans:

"We dare to dream."

"With Excellence in Mind."

"We are Family."

"Together We Can."

Getting the Word Out.

Superintendents were asked how they got the word out to the rest of the organization regarding team accomplishments. Figure 13 shows 42% said they used television. They did this both during and after the personal best effort. News spots, educational channels, and cable channels were used to communicate their success. A third used internal communication, such as newsletters, to let others know of their accomplishments. The newspaper was utilized by 12% of the leaders as an avenue of communication. Four percent used memos.
Figure 13. Percentages of How Superintendents Got the Word Out to Others.

How Superintendents Want to be Remembered.

How would superintendents like to be remembered? Table 8 shows most want to be remembered for "making a difference," that was for the good of youngsters. They wanted to touch the lives of others and they also want to be remembered as caring while some want to be remembered as honest (6%) and fair (4%).
Table 8  
Frequencies and Percentages of How Superintendents Want to be Remembered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remembered</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made a Difference</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship Between District Size 
and Personal Best Endeavor, Practice and Strategies

A chi-square test was run on each personal best survey question to test the relationship between the size of the school district and the personal best endeavor, practice, and strategies. Not one practice, strategy, feeling, or other related question was significant at the .05 level. The factors utilized by superintendents in achieving their personal best in education were independent of the size of the school district.
Summary of Chapter

In this chapter the findings of the study were presented. These findings include the identification of superintendent feelings and factors contributing to the success of the superintendent's personal best effort.

Below is a summary of key findings in chapter IV:

1. All of the superintendents personal best efforts were about change. Improving climate was the area most likely to be targeted for change.

2. The superintendents selected their respective personal best efforts because they "wanted to make a difference."

3. The relative importance of the most frequently used practices utilized by superintendents when achieving their personal best effort is as follows:
   (a) enabled others to act;
   (b) inspired a shared vision;
   (c) modeled the way;
   (d) encouraged the heart; and
   (e) challenged the process.

4. The superintendents used the following strategies in achieving their personal best effort:
   (a) fostered collaboration;
   (b) strengthened others;
   (c) envisioned the future;
   (d) enlisted others;
(e) set the example;
(f) planned small wins;
(g) recognized contributors;
(h) celebrated accomplishments;
(i) searched for opportunities; and
(j) experimented and took risks.

(5) Involvement of others was the most important factor in the success of the personal best.

(6) Superintendents feel excitement and fear when initiating the personal best and of self-satisfaction upon completion of their effort.

(7) They were able to garner a higher level of support from the conclusion of the effort.

(8) Superintendents learned to lead from others.

(9) Superintendents want to be remembered as making a difference.

(10) Superintendents tended to actually initiate and assume the responsibility of their project while CEOs personal bests tended to be initiated by someone else.

(11) There was no relationship between the size of the school district and the personal best endeavor, practice, and strategies.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the behavior and thinking of school superintendents in achieving their personal best in education. In this chapter, conclusions from the study are reported recommendations for further research. The chapter has been organized into three sections: (a) summary, (b) discussion, and (c) recommendations for further research.

Summary

The study was designed to learn how superintendents lead. This study goal was accomplished by analyzing how superintendents achieved their personal best in education. Focus was on the practices; five fundamental behaviors that enabled superintendents to get extraordinary things done, and strategies; ten behavioral commitments that fell under the main practice headings that each superintendent utilized to achieve their personal best effort. The study also examined the feelings and perceptions of these superintendents as they achieved their personal bests.

This study was an extension of Kouzes' and Posner's (1988) work in the private sector. Kouzes and Posner examined what practices and strategies over five hundred business leaders utilized in achieving their personal best in the private sector. The instrument, developed by Kouzes and Posner, was used to examine what superintendents did to institute change and provide leadership in school districts.
Fifty-two superintendents from California, Missouri, Iowa, and New York responded to the survey which was analyzed by two individuals who were trained to code and analyze the data. Below are the six research questions which framed the results for examination.

**Research Question One:** What are the background and situational factors of superintendents who achieve their personal best?

**Research Question Two:** What is the relative importance of five leadership practices identified by business leaders for assisting superintendents to achieve their personal best?

**Research Question Three:** How were the strategies utilized in carrying out leadership practices?

**Research Question Four:** What are the feelings of superintendents during initiation and implementation of a personal best?

**Research Question Five:** Where did the superintendents learn the skills necessary to lead?

**Research Question Six:** What is the relationship between the size of the school district and the factors involved with the superintendents' personal best?

Below is a summary of the findings related to these questions.

**Background and Situational Factors.**

The typical respondent had been a superintendent for eight years in a district of 6,400 students. Two-thirds of the superintendents chose a personal best that took place in the last ten years. There was considerable variance in the length
of time the superintendents took to accomplish their personal best; 50 percent took
more than one year to complete their personal best effort, 31 percent took less
than a year, and 19 percent did not answer.

Each superintendent (52) recounted a story of dynamic change and bold
actions. These stories seldom sounded like those in leadership textbooks and
were not about staffing, directing, controlling, and other classic management tasks.
The most frequent area selected for the personal best effort was improving climate
(25%). The superintendents (40%) selected an area to target for improvement as
their personal best effort because they wanted to make a difference.

Leadership Practices.

The most frequently used practice of superintendents was enabling others
to act. This paralleled the findings of Kouzes and Posner (1988) as they found that
CEO's reported enabling others as their most frequently used practice in the world
of business. One third of the superintendents also identified the most important
contributor to the success of their personal best effort as the involvement of others.
Involvement of others apparently parallels enabling others. The strand of enabling
others was repeated over and over again by superintendents as the most important
aspect in fulfilling their project. They had strong feelings regarding the fact that the
effect of enabling others to act made team members feel strong, capable, and
committed. The team members felt empowered to produce extraordinary results
to achieve the personal best efforts. The second most frequently used practice of
superintendents was inspiring a shared vision which was followed by modeling the
way, encouraging the heart, and challenging the process.
Leadership Strategies.

Kouzes' and Posner's research showed that leadership was an observable, learnable, set of practices and for each of these practices leaders used strategies that enabled them to achieve their personal best. The actions of superintendents who achieved their personal best, paralleled those found in Kouzes' and Posner's research. Superintendents apparently utilized similar types of strategies to accomplish their personal best. They searched for opportunities in a similar fashion, they envisioned the future much as CEOs did, fostered collaboration in a similar fashion, as did other private sector counterparts. However, the strategies of recognizing individual contributions and celebrating team accomplishments were different. The CEO's celebrated and recognized in a formal fashion (dinners and awards) while the superintendents celebrated successes and recognized others in an informal way (strokes and thank you's).

Feelings.

The personal best effort provided superintendents with great challenge and stimulated much anxiety. The superintendents reported feelings of excitement (39%) and fear (37%) during the initiation of their personal best effort. They had feelings of self-satisfaction (54%) and togetherness (20%) during implementation of their personal best effort.

How Superintendents Learned to Lead.

The superintendents gained the skills to lead from various sources. Many (34%) reported they learned to lead from others. These were most likely to be mentors and peers. Twenty-eight percent said they learned from experience and
20% said they learned to lead from educational training.

District Size.

Regardless of the size of the district, superintendents basically utilized the same types of practices and strategies.

Discussion

The data collected in this study paint a picture of how school superintendents lead when they achieve their personal best. Each of the fifty-two superintendents in this study told a story of bold actions and dynamic change. Traditional thinking regarding how superintendents lead would have us believe that the goal of leadership in an ideal school district would be to maintain order and stability. Yet, superintendents in this study described their personal best effort in terms of change, challenging the process, and of doing things that had never been done before in their districts. Stories were of improving the climate, building schools, effective school projects, and sweeping curriculum improvement.

The superintendents also reported feeling excitement, fear, frustration, satisfaction, and togetherness during the initiation and implementation of their personal best effort. It is important to inexperienced superintendents, school board members, and experienced, practicing superintendents, to be aware that even those who were most successful experience anxiety as they embark upon and head toward the implementation of their personal best effort. A feeling of excitement was present in both the initiation and implementation of the projects. In no single instance in any of the personal best efforts did any of the superintendents use the word boring. Neither did any superintendent ever use
ordinary, routine, or dull. Top-flight performances engender excitement. We tend
to associate doing our best with experiences that ignite enthusiasm within us.
When it comes to excelling as a superintendent, the memorable times are filled with
excitement. They arouse feelings of passion. Building an administrative team,
starting a year-round education program, and turning around a negative board
climate are all exciting endeavors. Whether a leader is overcoming adversity or
creating something unique and new, or is excited by the accompanying activities.
It is important to note that successful superintendents experience fear. General
Schwartzkopf recently noted that a good soldier should experience fear going into
battle - it helps him or her to proceed more intelligently. Perhaps there is some
similarity between going into battle and commandeering a major change in a
school district.

One might hope that all superintendents would feel the sense of satisfaction
that superintendents who achieve their personal best experience in carrying out
and completing their project. Perhaps we should find more and better ways for
superintendents to share those feelings with others who hesitate to take that
difficult first step in breaking the status quo which means change. Perhaps if more
superintendents understood the feelings of satisfaction, excitement, and joy of a
personal best effort they would be more prone to initiate change.

Traditional thinking about superintendents as leaders tell us the
superintendent is basically one of control; control of financial resources, time, and
people. Conversely, the data from this study showed the big job was enabling
other to act and enlisting the support and assistance of all of those involved with
change and adjustment. The superintendents involved those who must live with
the results, encouraged collaboration, built teams, and empowered others. The
word we was emphasized as opposed to the word I. The implications for school
districts and higher education is to provide superintendents with training and
inservice to learn how to effectively enable others to act.

In enabling others to act, the superintendents actively involved team
members in decision-making. The superintendents considered the needs and
interests of others. They said involvement of others was the key to success in
achieving their personal best. They said it over and over again in relating their
efforts. An old Chinese proverb illustrates the importance of involving others; of
empowering those who we work with to make decisions;

"If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain. If you want ten years of
prosperity, grow trees. If you want one hundred years of prosperity, grow
people." (Kouzes and Posner, 1988, p. 161.)

It is important for us to understand the impact of empowerment on success. The
more people believe they can influence and control the organization, the greater
organizational effectiveness and team member buy in will be.

The implications for school districts and higher education is again, to provide
superintendents with training and inservice to learn how to effectively enable others
to act.

Traditional leadership teaching tells us the superintendent must focus on the
short term, the interim budget, the monthly board meeting, and quarterly reports.
This study found that superintendents who got things done had future orientation,
they had vision. They told of a sense of what is possible at a future point in time,
if all work together to achieve a common purpose. The superintendents also stressed the importance of inspiring others to achieve their vision.

Clearly, the leadership practice of inspiring a shared vision involved being forward-looking and inspiring. The superintendents fulfilled the hopes and dreams of others to enable them to see the exciting potential for the future. Superintendent after superintendent reported that they were very excited and enthusiastic about their personal best efforts. Their feeling of enthusiasm was also felt by the people they led. The superintendents' belief in and enthusiasm for the vision were the ingredients that sparked the flame of inspiration.

But, visions seen only by the superintendent are insufficient to create change and fulfill personal best efforts. Superintendents must get others to see the exciting possibilities of the future. It is important that the superintendent communicate the purpose and convince others to support the vision. Superintendents must take the time to teach others the vision.

Traditional leadership teaching tells us superintendents tend to be analytical (separating emotion from work) and aloof. This study describes superintendents as very caring human beings who want to make a difference for our youngsters. They related that they reflect their feelings to those they work with and it helps to develop a feeling of family through caring. We work with people on a constant basis. Human beings are both our raw material and product in education. We must exhort basic human attributes to succeed in our environment. Caring was reported over and over by superintendents as how they want to be remembered. They modeled caring on a day-to-day basis. Their genuine acts of caring drew
people forward to achieve their personal best efforts. It is crucial for educational leaders to understand the emission of the emotion of caring helped the superintendents to succeed.

This research also offered insight as to where superintendents learned to lead. The data showed that the highest percentage of superintendents learned from others. They said mentors are very valuable as informal coaches and sponsors. The implication for assisting superintendents in learning to lead is to set up a coaching and mentor process and network. Professional organizations, school districts, and universities should work together to accomplish this research recommendation. Coordinated involvement and organization by these three pivotal entities could perhaps establish such activities as a functional mentor program. Not just an assignment of a mentor, but exercises, meeting times, and an evaluation of progress.

Superintendents also said they learned to lead from experience. They felt there was a strong case to learn by doing. The implication is for school boards to heed this fact when hiring superintendents. Superintendents said they needed to walk in various administrative shoes before acquiring adequate experience to be a superintendent. The most often mentioned shoes was the fact that the superintendents felt they needed building principalship experience before becoming a superintendent.

They also reported they learned to lead from educational training. Graduate school and workshops were important in acquiring the skills to lead. Colleges and universities should assure the availability of the highest quality courses and
workshops for superintendents or aspiring superintendents.

It was not surprising that the size of a district had no meaningful impact on how superintendents identified and analyzed factors in achieving their personal best effort. Superintendents from small schools work and think as superintendents from large schools do. They utilized the same practices, the same strategies, they cared the same, and they learned to lead from the same sources.

Leadership of the superintendent is a process which involves skills and abilities and how those acquired skills and abilities can be put to use. This study will assist superintendents in learning more about the how of leadership through identifying and analyzing the factors utilized in achieving their personal best in education. This study will allow superintendents to:

(a) assess their strengths and weaknesses as leaders in comparison to the data,
(b) learn how to involve, inspire, and motivate others toward a common goal,
(c) learn important skills in building a team, and
(d) understand where and how to learn to lead.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The following recommendations are submitted for further consideration for researchers investigating what superintendents do to institute change and exert leadership in school systems (i.e., how the superintendent leads):

1. A study of the teachers representing the fifty-two districts used in this research might be conducted to compare their perceptions of their leaders’ actions and those of the superintendent.
2. Separate studies aimed at each of the five practices could be carried
out to give an in-depth look reflecting a high degree of specificity on how
superintendents lead.

3. A comparison study of how principals identify and analyze factors in
achieving their personal best in education should be conducted.

This study is about the how of leadership. How do superintendents get
other people to want to follow? How do superintendents get other people, by free
will and free choice, to move forward on a common purpose? Just how do
superintendents get others to want to do things?

This study is about the most frequently used practices superintendents use
to turn challenging opportunities into successes.

This study will help superintendents develop their abilities to get
extraordinary things done in their districts. From an analysis of the personal bests,
a model of the how of leadership of superintendents was developed. Because
leadership development is ultimately self-development, the findings of this study
presents a personal challenge to superintendents.


Sclafani, Susan K. "AASA Guidelines for Preparation of School Administrators: Do They Represent the Actual Behaviors of Superintendents?" Ph.D. dissertation, the University of Texas at Austin, 1987.


This study would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of my family, friends, and colleagues who taught me much about myself.

A thank you to each of my committee members: Dr. Richard Manatt, Dr. Dan Reschly, Dr. Shirley Stow, and Dr. Robert Thomas. A special thank you to my major professor, Dr. Jim Sweeney. The backing, late-night phone calls, multiple FAX jobs, direction, and friendship extended were the backbone of my ability to endure.

I also want to extend a special thank you to Jamie Blomgren and Kris Benyshek, Educational Administration secretaries. They answered hundreds of questions via the phone from California. You are appreciated and remembered.

I dedicate this book to all of the superintendents who responded to the survey, my family, friends, and Jim and Jan Sweeney. Thank you for your love and support.
APPENDIX A.

CONSENT FORM FOR SURVEY
AND CORRESPONDENCE
Riverside County Office of Education  
Office of the Deputy Superintendent  
Research Project Request  

Researcher(s): David  

Address: 1440 Bliss St., Benning,  

Telephone (work): (714) 249-1925  
(home): (714) 249-2784  

Agency/School: Benning Unified  

Title of Study: "Identifying and Analyzing the Practices Utilized by Superintendents in Achieving their "Perspective" in Education."

Projects will not be considered for approval without attachment of the following:

- Abstract of study
- Tests, surveys or questionnaires
- Project timeline
- Informed Consent (if required—see Privacy Rights Statement

If this project is approved, no changes will be made in the scope or structure of the study without approval of the Deputy Superintendent's Office. It is also agreed that an abstract of the final report of the research findings will be provided to the Riverside County Office of Education. Researcher, by signature below, has read and agrees to comply with the research guidelines at the Riverside County Office of Education.

Briefly describe how your study will contribute to the Riverside County Office of Education (how it will help students, teachers, parents or the field of education):

```
BRIEFLY DESCRIBE HOW YOUR STUDY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION (how it will help students, teachers, parents or the field of education):
```

1. Administrative personnel and/or school involvement required
2. Number and characteristics of students desired: 100
3. Classroom/teacher time required

Researcher's Signature:  
Advisor's Signature (if appropriate):

[ ] Project Approved  [ ] Project Denied

Comments:

Approved by Cabinet: 5-8-89
3. The study may not be undertaken for commercial purposes.

4. Excessive time requirements that infringe on instructional time are not permitted. However, when a study is approved and school staff members agree to participate voluntarily, they may be expected to cooperate for reasonable lengths of time.

5. The Riverside County Office of Education takes seriously its duty to protect its personnel, students, and their families from invasion of privacy, breach of confidence, or other irresponsible acts performed under the guise of research. It is contrary to Riverside County Office of Education policy to permit researchers to ask students, students’ parents, or school staff members their age, home address, occupation, extent of education, financial status, marital status, ethnic origin, religious belief, and the like. Any information from school records and resources must be kept anonymous and only generalized in the study. Names of personnel, students, or schools must not be identified orally, in writing, electronically, mechanically, or by any other means in reporting research findings. Ordinarily, the researcher may say that the study was conducted in proof of education.

6. The ethical principles that must be followed in all phases of research are those observed by members of the American Educational Research Association and the American Psychological Association as stated in the latter’s Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants (APA, 1983, and related publications).

Approved by Cabinet: 5-8-89
January 8, 1990

Dr. Robert J. Fisher
Superintendent
980 North Ash Street
Escondido, CA 92027

Dear Dr. Fisher:

I am currently in the middle of my research project for my Ph.D. The subject matter of the research deals with the superintendency and how we have dealt with our "Personal Best" during our years as a superintendent. The enclosed survey, which is based on Kouze and Posner's research in business, will attempt to paint a picture of how the superintendent communicates, motivates and leads during their "Personal Best". I have been in contact with Dr. Carol Pugmire, San Diego County Office of Education, in acquiring your name. One hundred superintendents in California were selected to be a part of this research. The survey will take approximately 35 minutes to complete and will be an essential part of the data used in my research project. Enclosed please find a survey and a self-addressed envelope to me.

Thank you in advance for your input regarding this important project.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
David L. Long
Superintendent of Schools
Banning Unified School District

DL: sf
APPENDIX B.

PERSONAL BEST SURVEY
RECALLING A "PERSONAL BEST"

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

David Long, Superintendent
Banning Unified School District
161 W. Williams Street
Banning, California 92220

Purpose:

The purpose of this exercise is to gather data to see how superintendent’s lead. The information gathered will give superintendents a picture of the practices of and the strategies involved in the leadership of school district chief executive officers. James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner examined the experiences of 500 middle- and senior-level managers at their personal bests. This survey is an adaptation of their instrument.

Getting Ready:

1. Completion of this survey will take from forty-five to sixty minutes.

Definitions:

In this assignment you are being asked to describe a Personal Best Leadership Experience. Here is what is meant by these terms:

**Personal Best:**

A "personal best" experience is an event (or series of events) which you believe to be your individual standard of excellence. It is your own "record-setting performance," a time when you did your very best in your role as superintendent. It is something you use to measure yourself by; a time you look upon as your peak or high-performance experience. A useful and simple guide to the selection of your "personal best" is: "WHEN I THINK ABOUT THIS IT MAKES ME SMILE A LOT."

**Leadership Experience:**

You have been involved in many experiences as a superintendent. For purposes of this data collection you are being asked to focus your thinking on only those in which you were the superintendent.
When You Are Ready To Begin, Follow This Process:

1. Think about all the leadership experiences you have had as a superintendent. Let them pass by in your mind, as if you were viewing a movie of your leadership career or hearing a tape recording of your personal leadership history.

2. A few of these experiences will undoubtedly look, sound, or feel like personal best experiences. Select one of these personal best experiences.

3. Spend some time getting a clear mental picture of the extraordinary experience. See, hear, and feel it again as intensely as you can. Get as vivid an image as possible.

4. Once you have recalled and reviewed your personal best leadership experience, turn to the worksheets and answer all the questions.
RECALLING A PERSONAL BEST
LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Your Name: ___________________ Today’s Date ___________________

Title of Your Personal Best: ____________________________

Name of District: ___________________ Years as Superintendent: _____

Size of District: _________________________

1. THE SITUATION

a. **Where** did this take place? Name of District/City:

b. **When** did this take place? How long did it take to complete from start to finish?

c. **Who initiated** this project? (You, teacher, principal, etc.)

d. **Approximately how long did it take from inception to becoming operational?**

e. **Who else was involved,** either directly or indirectly, in the project? It is not necessary to name everyone. Please just indicate their functional areas, and whether they were supervisors, peers, teachers, parents, etc.
f. What was your specific role or title in this project?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

g. Indicate any awards, bonuses, or other special recognition you and/or your group received.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. MOTIVATION AND CHALLENGES

a. If you were the one to initiate this project, what motivated you to want to do it?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

b. What did you do, if anything, to challenge the status quo, the existing ways of doing things? What novel, or innovative, things did you do?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

c. As best as you can recall, how would you describe your feelings at the beginning of the project?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
d. Approximately what percent of the people involved with the project were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning of the Project</th>
<th>Conclusion of the Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Substantial backers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Opposed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. DESTINATIONS

a. As you looked forward to the time when the project would be completed, what was your ideal outcome, your vision?

b. If you used any slogans, metaphors, catchy phrases, logos, symbols, etc., to describe your dream or vision, what were they?

c. How did you sell others on your project?
4. IN Volvement

a. Did you use any special methods or techniques to involve others in planning and decision making?

b. How did you build a team out of those individuals who worked for you?

c. How did you develop trust and respect among those who worked on the project?

5. LEADER ACTIONS

a. For this project, what were the values (standards) you believed should guide everyone’s actions?
b. How did you *show others, by your own example*, that you were serious about these values and standards? How did you "lead by example?"

   

   

c. What *structures and systems* did you use to plan, organize, or control the project?

   

   

d. What *dramatic or unusual actions*, if any, did you take to get people to pay attention to important aspects of the project?

   

   

6. **ENCOURAGEMENT**

   a. How did your team *celebrate its accomplishments*, its milestone achievements?
b. How did you recognize individual contributors? Any special incentive systems, recognition programs, etc.?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________


c. How did you get the word out to the rest of the organization about your group's accomplishments?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________


7. SUMMARY

Please review your responses to items 1 through 6. In summary, what would you say were the 5-7 key leadership actions you took which enabled this to be a personal best leadership experience?

1. ________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________

4. ________________________________________________

5. ________________________________________________

6. ________________________________________________

7. ________________________________________________
8. CHARACTER OF THE EXPERIENCE:

a. What five or six words would you use to best describe the character (the feel, the spirit, the nature, the quality) of this experience?

b. Please write down a few words which describe how you felt personally as the leader of this experience?

9. LEADERSHIP LESSONS:

a. What did you learn about leadership style and practice from this "personal best leadership experience?"

b. If you were going to teach someone else about leadership based upon your own personal best experience, what morals and lessons about leadership would you pass along? What would you tell others to do to be an effective leader?
c. Of all the things that contributed to the success of this project -- whether it was an action you took or some other attribute -- what was the most important contributor to the project’s success? What action, attribute, etc., made the most difference:


d. If you were going to contribute one quotation of your own, one personal saying, to a book about leadership, what would that quotation be?


10. **IN CONCLUSION:**

   a. As a leader, how is it that you would most like to be remembered?


   b. Why did you select this project to write about? When you look back on it, what made this one so special, unique, memorable?


c. How have you learned to lead? Just how have you gained the skills to lead? Please select and rank order the three ways which have contributed most to your leadership development:

#1. 

#2. 

#3. 

APPENDIX C.

CODING MAP, CODING FORM, AND CODER WORKSHOP AGENDA
### DATA CODING: "Personal Best"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>Identify Number</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>0 - 5,000 = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 5</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 7</td>
<td>Years as Superintendent</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
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</tr>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Demographics</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Where</td>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>See Attached Sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Situation</td>
<td>Before 1950 = 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1981 - 1990 = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>How Long</td>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Less than 1 Mo = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 3 Months = 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 - 6 Months = 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 - 9 Months = 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Over 9 Months = 5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Who Initiated</td>
<td>Situation (Who)</td>
<td>You = 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Other = 4</td>
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<td>Time (Inception to Operation)</td>
<td>Situation (Time)</td>
<td>Less than 1 Mo = 1</td>
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<td>Over 3 Years = 9</td>
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<td>Parents = 4</td>
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<td>Community Task Force = 5</td>
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<td>Board &amp; Admin = 6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers &amp; Parents = 9</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All = 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Principals &amp; Teachers = 11</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers, Principals &amp; Bd. Members = 12</td>
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<td>Chairperson</td>
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26 Neutral (%) Conclusion (Same as #23) 0 - 20% = 1
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27 Opposed (%) Beginning (Same as #23) 0 - 20% = 1
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28 Opposed (%) Conclusion (Same as #23) 0 - 20% = 1
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29 Vision Destination Set a New Standard of Excellence = 1
Fulfill a Statement of the Future = 2
To Complete the Project = 3
To Fulfill the Concept for the Good of Youngsters = 4
Other = 5

30 Slogans Destination Yes = 1 No = 2

31 Slogans Destination (Examples) Student Oriented = 1
Teacher Oriented = 2
District Oriented = 3
Community Oriented = 4
Other = 5

32 Slogans Destination Empowerment = 1
Develop Creativity = 2
Help Students = 3
Utilize their Expertise = 4
Position Power = 5
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33 Techniques Involvement Yes = 1 No = 2
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Fulfilled = 4
Appreciated = 5
Frustrated = 6
Successful = 7
Relief = 8
Accomplishment = 9
Anxiety = 10
Other = 11

Learn Leadership

A Process Was Involved = 1
My Style Suits Me = 2
Much of Leadership Style Development Was Self-Development = 3
Specific Practices Led to the Success of the Project = 4
My Style Influenced the Practices = 5
Other = 6

Teach Leadership

Search for Opportunities = 1
Take Risks = 2
Envision = 3
Involve Others = 4
Motivate = 5
Empower = 6
Model = 7
Communicate = 8
Celebrate and Reward = 9
Have a System = 10
Develop Trust and Respect = 11
Establish Guidelines = 12
Other = 13

Most Difference Leadership

Searched for Opportunities = 1
Took Risks = 2
Envisioned = 3
Involved Others = 4
Motivated = 5
Empowered = 6
Modeled = 7
Communicated = 8
Celebrated and Rewarded = 9
Had a System = 10
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DATA CODING: "PERSONAL BEST"

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C O D E R  W O R K S H O P  
MARCH 2 & 3, 1990  
BANNING, CALIFORNIA

A G E N D A

1. Overview
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APPENDIX D.

PERSONAL BEST QUOTES AND SLOGANS
PERSONAL BEST QUOTES

1. "There will be times when you question your motives for becoming an educational leader..... at those times remember, we are in this business for kids."

2. "Use the advice of the staff that you employ."

3. "Theory T Works!"

4. "A good leader is actually like a sheep herder. You have to herd them in the right direction."

5. "Leadership is your capacity to work with others to achieve the established organization purposes.....and to still respect each other after achieving the purposes."

6. "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their level of commitment, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."

7. "If you try to please everyone in the grandstands, you'll end up sitting up there with them."

8. "Art celebrates humanities' grandeur; politics its folly."

9. "To be successful, a leader needs to be a great planner and show enormous enthusiasm for what he does."

10. "Building the trust level is the glue holding the organization together."

11. "Go for it."
12. "Never underestimate those you're dealing with - those for or against you (on the cause).

13. "Listen to diverse points of view, gather data, and share a dream."

14. "Personal success can be silent as long as it is mirrored by the learning and growth of others."

15. "Listen, act, and achieve."

16. "Have confidence in people."

17. "Life's greatest rewards come in the service to others."

18. "I can make friends with competent people - but I can't make my friends competent."

19. "Set high expectations for yourself AND expect no less of those who also serve the organization."

20. "Believe in yourself, your thoughts, your actions, and want it badly enough to do the work that is required. Be grateful and allow others to buy into what could be a successful venture."

21. "The ultimate achievement is always at the end of a lonesome path."

22. "Know what you stand for, and stand for it. If it's good for kids, do it. Don't tell me how it can't be done; tell me how it can be done."

23. "Make decisions on the basis of what is good for the organization and all children, rather than on the basis of the 'scream' factor."

24. "Be yourself and be honest."
25. "Friends come and go, enemies accumulate."

26. "We are in the process of becoming."

27. "The more power you give away, the more powerful you will become."

28. "Lead as you would like to be led."

29. "Winners never quit, quitters never win."

30. "Give people support and encouragement and stand aside to applaud - they'll accomplish amazing things."

31. "Helping others helps you."

32. "Educational leadership is not a solitary function, rather it is the function of unlocking the talents of the group - of the entire profession."

33. "You never know what you can do until you try!"

34. "Spend considerable time and attention seeking opportunities that are not routinely obvious."

35. "The ability to understand the situation, the players' readiness level, and your own power position and ability, is key as we situationally manage."

36. "Know yourself and your strengths and weaknesses."

37. "Every vision needs a plan."

38. "Leaders are people who know what to do when they don't know."
39. "A good leader inspires people to have confidence in their leader; a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves!"

40. "To be a good leader, you must first learn to be a good follower."

41. "Leadership is setting priorities and goals, the ability to delegate responsibilities, having two-way communication, being available for consultation and making the hard decision, and by setting a good example."

42. "Together we can."

43. "Celebrate your successes!! No matter how small!!"

44. "Know your dates and the individuals’ skills and emotional strengths before delegating responsibilities."

45. "Schools will get better if we focus on what is best for children."

46. "Have high expectations for everyone involved. When this occurs, any obstacle can be addressed."

47. "We were given a 'Super Opportunity'."

48. "Anything not monitored is optional."

49. "Leaders have to have a dream, a vision that they care about passionately enough to persevere in the toughest of times."

50. "Enjoy the contests and successes, which show your skills; and laugh at your failures, which prove your humanity."
PERSONAL BEST SLOGANS

1. "Together We Can." (3)

2. "To 'rise above' the adversary."

3. "Quality education through a shared commitment of the school, home, and community."

4. "Increase efficiency and productivity."

5. "That all children can and will learn."

6. "A middle school that matters."


8. "We dare to dream!"

9. "We must gain control of our own districts before the onslaught of houses and students."

10. "Count your blessings."

11. "Win - Win, Fair."

12. "The process of becoming."

13. "With Excellence in Mind."

15. "Communication the Key to Understanding."

16. "Technology Across the Curriculum."

17. "To improve 'Conditions of the Workplace'."

18. "If you think you can...you can. If you think you can't...you can't."

19. "We Are Family."

20. "Literature Created Community Ownership."


22. "South Bay the One to Watch."

23. "Only 'YRE'."