SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION IN MONTANA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

by

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ABSTRACT

The AASA 2000 Study of the American Superintendency indicated between 1950 and 1992 the median age of superintendents was 48 to 50. Since 1992 the median age of superintendents increased to 52.5, the oldest recorded median age for superintendents during the twentieth century. The results of this study indicated during the coming decade half of the nation's superintendents will retire.

In 1999, the Montana School Boards Association, the School Administrators of Montana, the Certification and Standards and Practices Advisory Committee and the Department of Education at Montana State University, conducted a study that assessed school administrator shortages in Montana. The study indicated that 61.3% of districts had hired an administrator within the last three years. A study conducted by Dr. Dori Neilson (2002) for the Montana State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) revealed that 48% of administrators in Montana school districts plan to retire within the next five years. Communication between the superintendent and school board is a mechanism that will improve relations between the parties and may increase superintendent longevity. A thorough performance appraisal of the superintendent can improve communication between board members and the superintendent.

The problem addressed in this study is that it is unknown by state leaders and policy-makers to what degree, based on the perceptions of practicing Montana public school superintendents, evaluations of school superintendents in Montana are aligned to the Performance Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003). A t-test of Independent Samples revealed significant differences in several areas regarding alignment of current Montana superintendent evaluation practices to the Domains.

An understanding of current practices for evaluating the superintendent in Montana revealed areas of improvement that will result in improved superintendent evaluation practices. Evaluations that improve communication between school boards and superintendents of Montana school districts will provide a framework to increase superintendent longevity and decrease the need to hire a superintendent in a job market that is experiencing a shortage of qualified candidates. This study provides recommendations for revisions of policies and laws governing evaluation of Montana superintendents and training of Montana school board members in superintendent evaluation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A study designed to assess the availability of qualified teachers in the State of Montana revealed the annual number of certified staff retirements had increased from 283 in 1990 to 523 in 2000 (Nielson, 2001). The data further revealed that 95% of the retirements in 2000, or 495 individuals, were from the K-12 public school system and the number of annual retirements is expected to increase due to the aging teacher population. The study also revealed that 29% of students who complete education programs in the colleges of Montana are teaching in accredited schools of Montana one and two years later. Montana school administrators in general and Montana public school superintendents specifically, are drawn from this pool of experienced professional teachers.

The study conducted by Nielson (2001) would seem to indicate that the aging teacher population and the declining number of graduating Montana teacher candidates who remain in the state, may contribute to and further exacerbate the shortage of prospective superintendents looming on the horizon. Decreasing the frequency of school superintendent vacancies when a shortage of prospective candidates exists may be accomplished through an effective process of evaluating the school district superintendent. Effective evaluation of the school district superintendent is a communication process between the school board and superintendent that helps to clarify roles, expectations and performance (Peterson, 1989).

In 1995 the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) conducted a study of school superintendents in the United States (AASA, 2000). The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of impending retirements on the candidate pool for superintendent vacancies in the country. That study revealed that 39% of superintendents responding to the survey indicated they intended to retire within the next five years and an additional 57.6% plan to retire within the next ten years (AASA, 2000). In an effort to validate the results of the initial study and reassess the status of the predicted shortage of qualified superintendent candidates, AASA staff conducted a follow up to this study in 2000. This follow up research reaffirmed that there will be a shortage of qualified superintendent candidates and that the shortage would be exacerbated in future years due to individuals retiring or seeking employment in other fields. Also, the study indicated that between 1950 and 1992 the median age of superintendents was between 48 and 50 years old. Since 1992, the median age of superintendents has increased to 52.5, which is the oldest recorded median age for school superintendents during the twentieth century (Table 1).

Table 1. AASA 1992 and 2000 Comparison of Superintendent Age Distribution

AASA 2000 Study of the American Superintendency
Ages of Superintendents
1992 and 2000 Comparisons

	Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D	
	25,000 or		3000-24,999		300-2999		Fewer Than300	
	More Pupils		Pupils		Pupils		Pupils	
Age	1992	2000	1992	2000	1992	2000	1992	2000
Under 40	1.4	0	3.3	0.7	8.1	2.7	17	6.4
40-44	10.4	4.2	15.3	4.6	21.6	7.1	24.5	10.9
45-49	28.5	15.8	28.9	24	28.1	25.7	17.8	30.2

Table 1 Continued

	Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D	
	25,000 or More Pupils		3000-24,999 Pupils		300-2999 Pupils		Fewer Than300 Pupils	
Age	1992	2000	1992	2000	1992	2000	1992	2000
50-54	26.4	30.5	27.1	41.9	22.2	37.7	21.7	24.6
55-59	18.7	33.7	18.7	20.5	15.5	19	14.2	19
60+	10.4	15.8	6.8	8.3	4.5	7	4.8	8.9

Further, the conclusion of this study indicated it is estimated that during the coming decade**,** half of the nation's superintendents would need to be replaced.

In 1999, a study of school administrators was conducted as a collaborative effort between the Montana School Boards Association, the School Administrators of Montana, the Certification and Standards and Practices Advisory Committee and the Department of Education at Montana State University (1999). This study presented information specific to the State of Montana regarding a possible shortage of school administrators and problems districts were experiencing in hiring qualified individuals. The findings indicated that 61.3% of the districts had hired an administrator within the last three years and also that the most often cited problem experienced during the hiring process was the pool of applicants was too small.

This was the focus of a follow up study conducted by Dr. Nielson for the Montana State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) in 2002. In this study Nielson found that 48% of the administrators indicated they plan to retire within the next five years. Further, "there exists a pool of qualified administrators in the schools who do not currently hold administrative positions. But that pool has shrunk by 25% over the past

three years and their average age exceeds that of the current administrators. "One-fourth of the pool indicates they do not intend to apply for administrative positions" (Nielson, 2002, p. 1). Additionally, 45% of the administrators currently practicing in Montana are considering jobs in education in other states. Two-thirds of these individuals who are contemplating leaving the state are less than forty years old (Nielson, 2002).

Clearly, these facts indicate there is an impending, if not immediate, shortage of qualified administrative candidates in Montana. Given these facts, school trustees need to prepare for an eventual vacancy in the position of school superintendent in their respective school districts. School boards that develop processes to provide superintendents with opportunities to successfully serve in school districts may prevent unnecessary vacancies in the position. A process that may assist in preventing unnecessary vacancies in the position of school superintendent is a well-designed mechanism of performance evaluation. Sharp (1989) contends,

> The superintendent is the chief executive officer of the school district. A proper evaluation of the superintendent is crucial to the advancement of the educational program, the relationship between the board and the superintendent, the fairness with which a board deals with its superintendent, and to the perception that the school staff and the community have of the board (p. 27).

In 1992 the American Association of School Administrators developed a set of eight professional standards and corresponding competencies for the profession of the school superintendent. Utilizing these standards and competencies, DiPaola and Stronge (2003a) conducted a national study of superintendent evaluation. This study examined the alignment of state evaluation practices with the AASA standards and ultimately led DiPaola and Stronge to develop a superintendent evaluation handbook and corresponding

Domains and Standards. Currently, there are no standards and/or competencies established in Montana for the position of school superintendent that school board trustees are required to utilize during the process of evaluating the performance of the superintendent.

The laws of the State of Montana provide that the trustees of any high school district, except a county high school, and the trustees of the elementary district where its high school building is located shall jointly employ and appoint a district superintendent (20-4-401 MCA, p. 500). In accordance with 20-4-401 MCA the Montana Board of Public Education, through administrative rule 10.55.701 (5), requires that the Board of Trustees shall have written policies and procedures for regular and periodic evaluation of all regularly employed certified administrative, supervisory, and teaching personnel. Pursuant to this administrative rule it is the mandated responsibility of Boards of Trustees to regularly evaluate the performance of a school superintendent. In conjunction with this requirement it is the responsibility of the trustees to establish the purpose of the evaluation process.

Lindgren (1985) stated that some of the reasons to evaluate the district superintendent are to:

1. Comply with a legal requirement;
2. Identify school district priorities;
3. Provide accountability for carrying out district policy;
4. Provide feedback to the superintendent on his/her performance and;
5. Establish a basis for reemployment and salary increases.

Additionally, Booth and Glaub (1978) contend that the board needs a system for ensuring that the superintendent is managing the district within policies established by the board

and that an effective appraisal system should open communications among board members and the superintendent. Further, an effective appraisal system forces the board and superintendent to examine their respective roles and responsibilities so they are more clearly defined and so each will know what the other expects. Basom, Young and Adams (1999) contend that the most frequently cited technique for improving board/superintendent relationships was that of communication. Superintendents were adamant in suggesting that there can never be too much communication between the superintendent and board.

In a 1985 survey completed by the Educational Research Service, school board chairs and superintendents cited good communication as the primary reason a strong relationship developed between the school district and school board chair. A collegial and thorough performance appraisal of the district superintendent can improve communication between the board members and the district superintendent. Through a performance appraisal that leads to improved communication and positive board/superintendent relations the survivability of a district superintendent should be improved and tenure may be lengthened. The ultimate result of increased tenure of the superintendent is that a Board of Trustees will, when a shortage of candidates exists, be conducting a superintendent search less frequently and stability will be provided to the district.

While the definitive impact of the shortage of prospective school superintendents has yet to be determined, research reveals that there is a shortage which will be exacerbated in future years, in both the nation and Montana, due to an increasing number

of administrator retirements. Strong and positive school board/superintendent relations may improve the average tenure of the school superintendent that, according to the 2000 AASA study, currently averages 5-6 years nationally.

Statement of the Problem

Loran Frazier, former Executive Director of the School Administrators of Montana, reported that there were forty-five superintendent vacancies in Montana for the 2000-2001 school year and forty-three superintendent vacancies for the 2001-2002 school year (L. Frazier, personal communication, October 23, 2002). In a doctoral dissertation Stout (2001) reported that there "were forty-five superintendent and fifty-seven principal vacancies in Montana for the 1999-2000 school year. Two of those positions were not filled. In several instances one superintendent filled the superintendent position in two school districts" (p. 9). Further, Darrel Rud, Executive Director of the School Administrators of Montana, indicated that superintendent vacancies in Montana have continued to be in the range of 40-50 per year for the past five years. However, in the 2003-04 school year the number dipped below 40 for the first time in recent years. As the association keeps this information in an informal manner, there is neither quantifiable data available nor an explanation for the small decline in vacancies. As this is the first year the number of superintendent vacancies in Montana has fallen below 40 in recent years, it is not possible to establish this as a trend (D. Rudd, personal communication February 4, 2005). Among the pool of certified school administrators not currently serving in an administrative capacity, the number of individuals interested in pursuing an

administrative position is decreasing. There is a shortage of prospective superintendents in the nation and the State of Montana. In an effort to prevent unnecessary superintendent vacancies school boards should strive to improve communication with the superintendent by implementing an effective process of superintendent evaluation. A quality superintendent evaluation process is a win-win proposition for both parties and helps to promote a strong relationship between the parties (Carnes, 1997).

Research reveals that a clearly identified superintendent performance appraisal process will improve communication between the school board and the superintendent and that improved communications enhances the working relationship between the two parties. An improved working relationship may lead to improved job satisfaction for the district superintendent and an improvement in trustee approval regarding the performance of the district superintendent. Bippus (1985) reports improved school board relations can be another benefit of superintendent evaluations. In a 1992 paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Edington and Enger stated that a formal evaluation process followed regularly, keeps vital communication lines open. Haughland (1987) asserts that regular and effective communication techniques, which are enhanced by regular evaluations, can bring differences of opinion and misunderstandings to light so they can be effectively handled.

The Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) adopted by the Montana Board of Public Education require school trustees to conduct a performance appraisal of the district superintendent. However, there is not a clearly identified or consistent process of superintendent evaluation utilized in the State of Montana. An evaluation instrument that

has been legitimized and validated by the Montana University System, the School Administrators of Montana and/or the Montana School Boards Association does not exist. Neither state law nor the Montana School Accreditation Rules nor the Montana School Boards Association requires training for school board members in the evaluation and supervision of the district superintendent.

A process for districts to use in the development of an evaluation instrument also has not been developed for Montana school districts. A model evaluation instrument that has been approved by Montana stakeholders is also unavailable. In short, there is not a standard evaluation process in existence for the State of Montana and lay school board members, many with no experience in the supervision of personnel, are not required to be trained in the area of performance evaluation.

The problem addressed in this study is that it is unknown by state leaders and policy-makers to what degree, based on the perceptions of practicing Montana public school superintendents, evaluations of public school district superintendents in Montana are aligned to the six Performance Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b). Understanding this alignment will help to clarify for state leaders and policy-makers whether or not the superintendents of Montana public school districts are assessed according to the nationally recognized standards. Such information may improve processes of superintendent evaluations, board-superintendent relations, and the longevity of superintendent tenure in Montana.

The Purpose

The problem of this study is that it is unknown by state leaders and policy-makers to what degree, based on the perceptions of practicing Montana public school superintendents, evaluations of public school district superintendents in Montana are aligned to the six Performance Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b). The purpose of this study was to examine to what degree school district superintendent evaluation processes in the State of Montana are aligned with the Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b) as reported by practicing Montana public school district superintendents. It is the work of these two authors that provided the theoretical framework for this study.

This study was designed to collect information from practicing public school superintendents in Montana. To accomplish this end, a survey was distributed to practicing public school superintendents in Montana. The survey was designed to collect individual and school district demographic information as well as information about the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents regarding alignment of current superintendent evaluation practices utilized in Montana with the Domains and Standards established by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b).

The information gathered in this study may assist school district trustees and school district superintendents in improving the process of evaluating the school superintendent. Improved processes of evaluating the school superintendent may improve relations between the parties and increase the longevity of superintendent tenure in Montana.

Research Questions

In the State of Montana, the Board of Public Education requires evaluation of the school district superintendents. However, research is not available regarding the alignment of the evaluation criteria to national standards adopted by the American Association of School Administrators. More specifically, research is not available regarding the alignment of superintendent evaluation processes to the domains and standards proposed by Dipaola and Stronge (2003b). The theoretical framework about standards based evaluation of the school district superintendent identified through the work of DiPaola and Stronge is the basis for this study. Therefore, to accomplish the purpose of this study, the following questions were examined and answered.

1. What are the current superintendent evaluation practices in Montana public school districts?
2. What are the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents regarding the degree of alignment of the evaluation practices utilized in their current school district to the six Performance Domains for evaluating superintendents identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b)?
3. Are there differences between Montana public school district superintendents perceptions of alignment to the six Performance Domains of superintendents from AA, A, B, C and Independent Elementary school districts, as measured by the Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes Survey instrument?

4. Are there differences between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents who jointly establish goals with their board and those who do not jointly establish goals with their board regarding the degree of alignment of superintendent evaluation practices to the six Performance Domains established by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b)?
5. Are there differences between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents in the alignment of superintendent evaluation practices to the six Performance Domains based on superintendent longevity?

Significance of the Study

Analyzing the criteria currently utilized in Montana public school districts to evaluate the school superintendent may help to clarify areas of strength and weakness of the current evaluation practices in the public school districts in Montana. Information will be available about the instruments and process of evaluating the school district superintendent and whether or not the evaluation is focused on management skills, leadership skills, a combination of the two or other criteria.

This information may be useful in improving communication between district superintendents and school board members. With improved communication, superintendent retention and job satisfaction may improve together with school board satisfaction and confidence in the superintendent. Refining the understanding regarding the importance of superintendent evaluation among superintendents and board members

may result in improved relations between the two parties. Improved relations may lead to increased longevity and less frequent turnover in the position of district superintendent.

With the nationwide shortage currently being experienced for school superintendents and the reluctance of certified non-practicing administrators to seek administrative positions, decreasing the frequency of searching for a district superintendent may be a benefit to school districts and eliminate a potential area of stress and frustration for school board members. Goodman, Fulbright and Zimmerman (1997) recommend that school district governance should focus on three major goals: (1) Do what is necessary to provide effective stable leadership among school boards and superintendents of schools, (2) Ensure that there is clear understanding and upholding of the respective roles and responsibilities of board members and superintendents, and (3) Support a high degree of collaboration between each school board and its superintendent, who together must view themselves as the school district governance team for higher student achievement.

Less frequent searches for school superintendents can provide stability in the position of the district superintendent. A long-term relationship may assist in establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Also, collaboration between the school board and superintendent may be enhanced through the stability and clearly defined goals established in a comprehensive and thorough evaluation process.

Aligning the evaluation instrument with the critical responsibilities and performance expectations identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b) may improve the performance of the chief executive and lead to decreased superintendent vacancies in a

tight recruiting market. Consequently, school boards would be confronted with the necessity of a search for a superintendent less frequently and stability in Montana school districts may be enhanced.

The study may provide guidance to the Montana School Boards Association and the School Administrators of Montana regarding the development of a best practice evaluation model for school superintendents in Montana. The development of such a model could lead to school board training activities that enhance the ability of school boards to effectively assess the performance of the district superintendent within district established goals and objectives. Additionally, the study might be utilized by the Legislature or Board of Public Education to more clearly delineate school board responsibilities regarding the duties and evaluation of the district superintendent. Through these organizations, a more thorough and useful process of evaluation may occur and provide for what should be the ultimate objective of all school district initiatives i.e., improved student academic achievement. In a survey for the Council of Urban Boards of Education National School Boards (2002) Association Executive Director Anne L. Bryant described these benefits best when she asserted that stability of the superintendency has a direct impact on the success of any school district. High turnover among top administrators can undermine reform efforts; affect student performance and impact staff morale as each succeeding superintendent attempts to put an individual and unique stamp on the district.

Limitations of the Study

This study will only analyze information gathered from practicing public school district superintendents in the State of Montana during the 2003-04 school year. Also, the information gathered through the survey will be based on the perceptions of respondent school district superintendents. As a result, the information may be affected by a lack of knowledge of the Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge or the personal bias of the respondent.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions provide standardized meaning to the titles and terminologies utilized throughout this dissertation.

District Superintendent: a person who holds a valid class 3 Montana teacher certificate with a superintendent's endorsement that has been issued by the Superintendent of Public Instruction under the provisions of this title and the policies adopted by the Board of Public Education and who has been employed by a district as a district superintendent. (20-1-101 {7} MCA).

School Board Member: a registered voter elected or appointed to serve on the school board for the 2003-04 school year. (20-3-305 {1} MCA).

School Board Chair: the individual elected by the other school board members to serve as the chair of the school board.

School Board: the legally elected or appointed governing body of the local school district in Montana.

Public School District: the territory, regardless of county boundaries, organized under the provisions of this title to provide public educational services under the jurisdiction of the trustees prescribed by this title. (20-6-101 {1} MCA).

Montana Association of School Superintendents (MASS): a professional state association in which a practicing school superintendent in Montana may become a member.

Evaluation: the systematic process of assessing the merit and/or worth of something, e.g., a person's qualifications or performance in a given superintendency (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988).

Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes Survey: the survey instrument developed and distributed to practicing Montana public school superintendents to collect the data for this dissertation.

Class AA School District: Montana high school district athletic classification with an enrollment of over 900 students.

Class A School District: Montana high school district athletic classification with an enrollment between 370-899 students.

Class B School District: Montana high school district athletic classification with an enrollment between 130-369 students.

Class C School District: Montana high school district athletic classification with an enrollment between 1-129 students.

Independent Elementary School District: Montana elementary school district serving students in grades K-8 that is not directly affiliated with a high school district.

Summary

In the State of Montana school board trustees of public schools are charged with the legal obligation to guarantee the school district superintendent is evaluated on an annual basis. This responsibility is especially challenging to some school board members who have not previously been responsible for evaluating an employee. This is particularly true in an environment where the subordinate is responsible for managing a school district and may be perceived by the evaluator as having more knowledge about the operation of the school district and the process of evaluation. In any case, evaluation of the school district superintendent of schools is a fundamental responsibility of the school board and should be viewed as a means to ensure good education through effective governance and management of the schools (Booth and Glaub, 1978).

Effective governance and management of schools is a goal all school boards should strive for and will assist in establishing an atmosphere where improved teaching and learning can occur. Effective governance and management of the schools may be affected if the process of evaluating the district superintendent of schools is not conducted in an effective manner. In the State of Montana, where it is anticipated that approximately 48% of school administrators will retire within the next five years (Nielson, 2002), maintaining the services of a school district superintendent may be

preferable to conducting a search for a replacement. An inefficient or poorly designed and conducted process of evaluation may affect the longevity of the superintendent. An effective process for evaluating the superintendent may prevent turnover in the position and assist in establishing a positive working relationship between the parties.

The purpose of this study was to examine to what degree school district superintendent evaluation processes in the State of Montana are aligned with the Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b) as reported by practicing Montana public school district superintendents. In an effort to establish a theoretical basis for this study, the following review of the literature will investigate the evolution of the position of the school district superintendent of schools both on a national and state level. Additionally, the roles and responsibilities of the school district superintendent of schools will be outlined and the process of evaluation regarding this position will be discussed and analyzed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The modern public school district places a variety of responsibilities and demands on the superintendent. In order to understand this phenomenon it is useful to understand the historical development of the position of school district superintendent both nationally and in the State of Montana. Stufflebeam (1994) explains that the role of the district superintendent has evolved from that of keeper of the schools, with the board making almost all policy and administrative decisions of importance, to that of chief executive officer. The position of school superintendent has evolved over time into a complicated and demanding responsibility. The modern school superintendency has become one of the most complex and challenging leadership roles in American society (Stufflebeam, 1994).

The modern public school district must respond to edicts and mandates from the local board of trustees, decisions by courts on the state, local and federal levels, and legislation from the state and federal level. Two recent developments that have had significant impact on public school districts are the "A Nation At Risk Report" issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002. The No Child Left Behind Act will have profound effects on the public schools of our nation for years to come. General Counsel for the United States Department of

Education Brian W. Jones, in a keynote address at the Education Law Association's 48th Annual Conference, described the law as a revolutionary change. The NCLB Act imposes a new regime of accountability on schools. Mr. Jones has stated unequivocally that the NCLB is a process of change. In a document prepared for the United States Department of Education the National Leadership Study Group asserted that implementing changes to enable the educational system to respond to the needs of its constituents, and society, is the responsibility of educational leaders (September, 1993). In this atmosphere it is instructive to understand how superintendent evaluation may aid the superintendent in developing leadership skills**.** Improved leadership skills will help the superintendent to identify and implement reforms that will improve student achievement and enable the school district to meet requirements for adequate yearly progress.

Acquiring a clear understanding about the purpose of evaluating the school district superintendent will aid in understanding superintendent longevity and the relationship between the school board and the superintendent. Lashway (2003) asserts,

> School boards should work closely with superintendents to clarify their expectations for performance and evaluation. Without strong and highly visible board support, district administrators will be preoccupied with shoring up their political base and thus unlikely to take the bold steps needed for transforming schools (p. 3).

It will also aid in understanding the role of the school district superintendent in facilitating change and implementing reforms such as those that will be required to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. The following text will review the history of the school superintendency in the nation and State of Montana, school reform

and leadership and the process of evaluating the performance of the school district superintendent.

National History of The School Superintendency

Before a public school district superintendent can be hired for a position a public school district must exist. With the United States of America not yet in existence, colonists attempted to secure for their families a future in a new land. Although a nation of states was still a century into the future, community leaders began to realize the need for an organized system of public education. Citizens of Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1645 agreed to establish a school and allot twenty pounds for the schoolmaster. Additionally, a board of seven townsmen was authorized to put in or remove the schoolmaster, to see to the well ordering of the school and scholars and to receive and pay the twenty pounds (Cuban, 1976). Further, in 1647 Massachusetts decreed, that every town having 100 householders must provide a grammar school to fit youths for the university (Cubberley, 1920). These colonial laws appear to have been the first statutes governing public education in a nation not yet established. With the creation of the first public school district, the position of school district superintendent would follow in approximately two hundred years. However, in the interim, various positions of responsibility for managing and administering the public schools were established.

As with any enterprise in a developing nation, the complexity and demands of overseeing the public school began to increase in difficulty and complexity. Originally, the men of the communities in which schools existed managed them. Reeves (1954)

found that the townsmen were responsible for deciding such things as the levy of the town taxes, the selection of teachers and the determination of their wages, the length of the school years and provisions for housing the schools. The townsmen entrusted with this responsibility not only had to manage the school, but also various political and local responsibilities. This created a situation in which the townsmen were unable to appropriately attend to all of their responsibilities.

In 1789 Massachusetts passed an Act to Provide for the Instruction of Youth and for the Promotion of Good Education. Not only was this the initial law recognizing the public school district, it also provided for the establishment of the school committee that was entrusted with the administration and supervision of the public school district. From this time on, school committees were appointed in most towns and the authority of the selectmen gradually declined (Norton, 1996). Typically, the selectmen eventually realized that the responsibility of managing the affairs of the school district required daily attention. Consequently, this led to the creation of the position of principal/teacher who was appointed by the selectmen to manage the daily affairs of the school district. However, the original position established to assist the board with management of the school district was the schoolmaster (AASA, 2000).

While the schoolmaster was responsible for monitoring issues on a daily basis, the appointed or elected board of education maintained control over the major issues of the public school system. Thus, within a period of approximately one hundred and forty years the public school district had evolved into an organization requiring the services of at least a part-time administrator. As the nation continued to increase in population, the

number of children attending school also increased. It became only a matter of time before administrative duties would begin crowding out teaching responsibilities (Cuban, 1976). This would eventually result in the creation of a position with more responsibility and oversight for the public schools.

The ever-increasing demands and needs of the public schools eventually led to the creation of the position of County Superintendent of Schools. More than a dozen states had adopted the county form of educational supervision before the Civil War (Cremin, 1983). According to Blumberg and Blumberg (1985) the first reported position of County Superintendent of Schools occurred in 1813 in the State of New York. The establishment of the first position of school district superintendent would occur approximately two decades later.

The distinction for establishing the first position of a school district superintendent in 1837 rests with the city of Buffalo, New York (Reller, 1935). In July of the same year, the city of Louisville, Kentucky became the second municipality in the country to hire a superintendent.

Over the course of the next fifty-three years school superintendents were hired in thirty-seven other metropolitan areas in the United States. The creation of this new position was due in large part to the increasing complexity of the public school district. School boards began to realize they needed an individual to manage a school. They needed an individual and oversee the instructional responsibilities and the ever-increasing demands of a public school district.

Montana History of The School Superintendency

Having been granted statehood on November 8, 1889 as the forty-first state, Montana had been dealing with the issue of public school supervision while still a territory. On December 12, 1864 the First Legislative Assembly created a superintendent position responsible for the supervision and oversight of the public schools. As with the trend in other areas of the nation at this time in history, this was the position of County Superintendent of Schools. According to statute, this was to be an elected position and the individual elected to this position was to serve for a three-year period of time. Pursuant to the Acts, Resolutions, and Memorials passed by the First Legislative Assembly, some of the duties of the County Superintendent were to:

1. Establish school district boundaries;
2. Conduct public meetings in the established school districts;
3. Examine prospective school teachers;
4. Visit the schools in the county;
5. Receive and maintain the district records and reports;
6. Apportion funds to the school districts and
7. Collect all moneys due the school fund from fines or from any other source in the county. (Acts, Resolutions and Memorials of the First Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Montana, 1864, p. 435-437).

This was followed by the creation of the position of Superintendent of Public Instruction by the Legislative Assembly in 1872 and finally the position of school district superintendent was created by the legislature of the State of Montana in 1895 (Montana

Historical Society). The duties of the school district superintendent position as enumerated in Article XV of the Codes and Statutes of Montana, were:

1. Section 1930- In every district having a population of five thousand and upwards the board of trustees of such district may appoint a superintendent of schools, who shall be designated city superintendent of schools of the district and who shall hold his position at the pleasure of the board. He shall be paid a salary from the general fund to be fixed by the trustees.

2. Section 1931- The person appointed to such a position shall be the holder of a state certificate of the highest grade, issued in some state, or is a graduate of some reputable university, college or normal school, and shall have taught in public schools for at least five years.

3. Section 1932- The superintendent shall perform such duties as the board of trustees shall prescribe.

4. Section 1933- No city superintendent shall engage in any work that will conflict with his duties as superintendent. (Codes and Statutes of Montana, In Force July 1, 1895, p. 259).

A review of the current laws of the State of Montana specifies the present duties of the school district superintendent as follows:

Duties of the district superintendent or county high school principal.

The district superintendent or county high school principal is the executive officer of the trustees and, subject to the direction and control of the trustees, the executive officer shall:

1. Have general supervision of all schools of the district and the personnel employed by the district;

2. Implement and administer the policies of the district;

3. Develop and recommend courses of instruction to the trustees for their consideration and approval in accordance with the provisions of 20-7-111;

4. Select all textbooks and submit the selections to the trustees for their approval in accordance with provisions of 20-7-602;

5. Select all reference and library books and submit the selections to the trustees for their approval in accordance with provisions of 20-7-204;

6. Have general supervision of all pupils of the district, enforce the compulsory attendance provisions of this title, and have the authority to suspend for good cause a pupil of the district;

7. Report the pupil attendance, absence, and enrollment of the district and other pupil information required by the report form prescribed by the superintendent of public instruction to the county superintendent, or county superintendents when reporting for a joint district;

8. Perform other duties in connection with the district as the trustees may prescribe. (20-4-402, MCA, p. 501).

As with other jurisdictions, issues arose specific to Montana that impacted public schools and affected the position of the district superintendent. Leadership skills have been tested and the school district superintendent has been expected to identify resolutions to these issues. The primary issues that have affected the schools of Montana occurred in the latter decades of the century. Specifically, they are the Ridgeway Title IX equity lawsuit, the 1996 lawsuit contesting the equity of Montana's system of funding the public school districts and in the decade of the nineties declining student enrollment. The final issue that presents significant challenges for school superintendents in Montana occurred when the Montana Quality Education Committee filed a lawsuit in 2003 challenging the adequacy of the state funding mechanism for public school districts. On November 9, 2004 the Montana Supreme Court ordered the state to define and fund the free, quality public education that Montanans are guaranteed under the constitution and gave the Legislature until October 1, 2005 to devise a solution.

The position of school district superintendent has evolved over time in both the nation and the State of Montana. In the current atmosphere of the public school district,

the superintendent is expected to not only manage schools but also to provide leadership and guide the public school system through change and reform. In this atmosphere it can be anticipated the duties and responsibilities of the school superintendent will continue to evolve.

Roles and Responsibilities of the School District Superintendent

One of the ramifications of this new position in the public school arena was that the responsibilities of the position were not clearly defined. It eventually became incumbent upon townsmen, school boards and state legislatures to define the duties and responsibilities of the school district superintendent. Additionally, in recent years federal mandates have added to the duties and responsibilities of the school district superintendent. The following text outlines the evolution of the duties of the school district superintendent and identifies various events and issues that have contributed to the identification of these responsibilities.

Since the creation of the first position of school superintendent the responsibilities of the position have adapted to meet the changing needs of society and the school district. Stufflebeam (1994) states,

> The role of the superintendent has evolved from that of keeper of the schools, with the board making almost all policy and administrative decisions of importance, to that of chief executive officer. In the latter role, the superintendent provides professional guidance to the board for policy development and is charged and authorized to make the decisions necessary to implement board policy. By the end of the 19th century, most superintendents had shed the role of schoolmaster, without decision authority, to become the managing administrator responsible for the day-to-day running of the district (p. 13).

The position has evolved from one of a clerical nature to one of educational leader, responsible for student achievement and guaranteeing compliance of the public school district with various state and federal mandates.

When the position of the school district superintendent was created in 1837 in the cities of Buffalo, New York and Louisville, Kentucky the governing bodies were uncertain what the responsibilities should entail. Ultimately, the earliest superintendents were head teachers and clerks (AASA, 2000). The purpose of the position was to relieve the townsmen and school board members of the mundane daily responsibilities that were becoming more frequent and time consuming as student school population continued to increase. Teachers were responsible for what happened in the classroom during the nineteenth century and school curricula remained static (DiPaola, 2003b). In fact, many superintendents shifted back and forth from education to other occupations, such as the ministry, law, business or politics (Tyack, 1976). During the latter years of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century, superintendents began to experience a transition in their areas of responsibility and management philosophies of the public schools.

At the turn of the twentieth century schools experienced the introduction of a new philosophy of management into the school environment. Boards became policy-making bodies and school superintendents ran the school district day to day (DiPaola, 2003b). As superintendents changed their capabilities and as school boards changed, superintendents gained more responsibility and authority and became the executive officers of the board (Sharp, 1997). At this juncture in the development of schools and the role of the school

district superintendent, scientific management, based on models implemented in private industry, were utilized in the public schools. Carter and Cunningham (1997) have referred to this as the era of the four B's: bonds, buses, budgets and buildings.

The scientific theory of organizational structure is founded in the works of Max Weber, a German sociologist; Henri Fayol, a French industrialist; and Frederick Taylor, an American industrial engineer (Senge, 1990). These men, who at the turn of the century began writing about the rapidly growing technology of mass production colliding with the traditional patterns of management, clearly saw that the resulting inefficiency was wasteful. As they began to examine the problems of management erupting in the production centers of society, they shaped notions about organizations intended to resolve many of the organizational administrative problems. If these principles were applied in almost any organizational setting, it was argued, the result would be the efficient use of time, materials and personnel (Hanson, 1991).

Specifically, theorists of the period believed that an application of the structures and processes of organizational control would promote rational, efficient and disciplined behavior, making possible the achievement of well-defined goals. Efficiency would be achieved by arranging positions within an organization according to hierarchy and jurisdiction and by placing power at the top of a clear chain of command (Beck, 1987). Scientific procedures were applied to determine the best way of performing a task and rules were written that required workers to perform in a prescribed manner. Using defined structures such as these, a scientifically ordered flow of work could be conducted with maximum efficiency.

The conceptual model envisioned from this scientific theory spilled over the boundaries of industry and was imported into the practice of management in all sectors of society, including schools (Lewis, 1983). Over time, the executive power for operating the school district began to be transferred to the superintendent and school boards began to assume more of a policy-making role. The ultimate result of this transfer of power was that the board conducted periodic meetings, while the superintendent made the day-to-day decisions (AASA, 2000). The introduction of the principles of scientific management into the public school system resulted in an increase in authority and responsibility for the superintendent. As the nation progressed through the mid twentieth century it found itself embroiled in World War II. Consequently, as the nation became focused on war efforts and self-preservation, the rapid pace of reform school districts experienced at the turn of the century and advancement of the public school district declined. However, with the close of the war, the need for reform and innovation was soon to blossom once again.

The initial event in the second half of the twentieth century to profoundly impact public school systems was the successful launch of the Soviet Sputnik space capsule in 1957. This leap forward in technology by the Soviet Union shocked and frightened the nation and shaped the evolving superintendency (DiPaola, 2003b). DiPaola and Stronge (2003b) further stated,

> This achievement of the Soviet Union during the Cold War Era changed public expectations of public schools and generated national legislation that dramatically impacted curriculum. Expectations focused on improving schools, and superintendents responded to the challenges. Effective superintendents

> implemented reforms, advised their boards, interfaced with the public and became adept political strategists. (p. 14).

As the nation entered the sixth decade of the twentieth century, an expectant country anticipated great things and positive reforms from the public school district. A new president was elected and during the decade of the sixties, civil rights and federal legislation were about to significantly impact the public school system and district superintendents of the nation.

Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) was a significant issue to impact the public schools system. The United States Supreme Court ruled that schools could not segregate students on the basis of race when providing services to them. Essentially, separate but equal was no longer an acceptable approach to providing educational services to students. Schools were confronted with the impact of racial tension and the school district superintendent was responsible for managing and resolving the situation. In addition to this, the following events that occurred in the waning decades of the twentieth century would impact the public schools of the nation and the responsibilities of the school district superintendent.

1. Civil Rights Act of 1964- Title VI of this federal law declares that no educational institution may receive federal funds of any kind if that institution discriminates on the basis of race, creed or national origin.

2. Elementary Secondary Education Act- Passed by the United States congress in 1964 this legislation was acclaimed as groundbreaking due to equity advancements it leveraged for at risk and low-income students. For the first time the federal government began spending large sums of money to provide remedial education programs to assist children and youth and to improve school performance.

3. Title IX of the Educational Amendments (1972)- This federal law states that no educational institution may receive federal dollars if that institution discriminates on the basis of gender.

4. Education of All Handicapped Children Act, PL 94-142 (1975)- Enacted by the 94th congress this federal law provided that the public school districts of the nation must provide services to all handicapped students.

5. Teacher Unionization (Early 1960's –Early 1980's)- In the early years of the sixties no public school teacher in the United States was covered or protected by negotiated collective bargaining agreements. By the early 1980's more than two-thirds of teachers were covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

6. No Child Left Behind Act (2002)- Referred to some as the most sweeping reform of the Elementary Secondary Education Act since it was enacted in 1965, the No Child Left Behind Act has extensive ramifications for public school districts. To comply with the law, states and districts must now make implementation decisions that have enormous consequences for students. Therefore, it is critical that educators compare these new requirements and decide how to implement the law (Learning First Alliance, 2003).

The examples above illustrate the impact of the federal government and the courts on the public school districts during the second half of the twentieth century. As the century has progressed, more responsibility and accountability has fallen to the district superintendent. In response to external threats to schools, community groups dramatically changed their expectations of the role of the superintendent. The aftermath of this period of conflict and confusion still exists in many school districts (Kowalski, 1998). While there are some similarities between the national progression of the position and the evolution of the position of school superintendent in Montana, the timeline is somewhat different. However, an issue that remains the same between the state and national levels is the responsibility of all school boards to effectively evaluate the

performance of the district superintendent to guarantee the school district is meeting the challenges and meeting the needs of the students. Ultimately, effective evaluation helps to assure a good education for students in our nations schools (Redfern, 1980).

Superintendent Evaluation

Pursuant to Montana State Law it is the responsibility of the local board of trustees to evaluate the district superintendent. An issue that is unclear involves what criteria are utilized to conduct the evaluation and whether or not district superintendents are actually evaluated. Glass (1992), Robinson and Bickers (1990) documented that while 90 percent of superintendents nationally were evaluated annually, less than 10 percent of superintendents said that their board discussed explicit guidelines and performance standards with them when they were hired. For the purposes of this dissertation evaluation has been defined as the systematic process of assessing the merit and/or worth of something, e.g., a person's qualifications or performance in a given superintendency (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988). The following pages will discuss evaluation of the school district superintendent, the role of the school board in this process and how a thorough approach to evaluation of the district superintendent may affect the relationship between the school board and the school district superintendent.

McCurdy (1993) conducted research on the reasons why superintendents in large metropolitan school districts had an average tenure of three years. He found that those who left their positions cited confusion of roles between the school board and the

superintendent as one of the greatest causes for resigning. A properly designed and configured process of evaluation may help to eliminate the confusion between the roles cited by McCurdy in his study. Booth and Glaub (1978) cite the following benefits of a planned process of appraisal.

1. Appraisal encourages improved performance. A superintendent must grow as demands of the job grow. It helps the superintendent understand his/her own strengths and weaknesses.

2. Appraisal enables the board to make informed decisions about contract renewal (or non-renewal) and compensation. The superintendent knows the standards that have been set for him/her.

3. Appraisal generates understanding between the board and superintendent. Both learn what is expected of themselves and one another.

4. Appraisal enables the board and superintendent to deal with differences at a time other than during a crisis.

5. Appraisal offers a way to commend work well done with genuine sincerity.

6. Appraisal provides a powerful defense against the superintendent's critics because it records evidence of performance and improvement.

7. Appraisal of the superintendent forces the board to examine its own performance (p. 13).

Stufflebeam (1994) reiterated each of these reasons but specifically cited improved communication between the school superintendent and school board, school board and superintendent relations and planning as benefits of a thoroughly planned process of performance appraisal. This was also affirmed by Peterson (1989) who acknowledged that an evaluation offers protection from lawsuits and criticism from both superintendents and constituents angered over the superintendent's performance and salary. Peterson

(1989) also asserted that in an optimum environment evaluation of the school superintendent is a communication tool.

Additionally, the value of establishing the school superintendent as a leader of the school district has been identified as another benefit of a thorough system for appraising the performance of the superintendent. Redfern (1980) asserted that superintendents want to be assured that they are doing a good job. A good evaluation system may provide that assurance for both superintendents and school boards. Further, Cunningham and Hentges (1982) emphasized that the major reasons superintendents cited for evaluation were to provide periodic and systematic accountability, to help establish relevant performance goals and to identify areas needing improvement. The New Jersey School Boards Association (1987) noted that the board could govern more effectively when it knows what the superintendent is supposed to do and whether it's getting done. In the twenty-first century school district, a superintendent performance appraisal system tailored to address the needs of the individual school district may assist in establishing the future course and direction of district programs and initiatives. Under the newly reauthorized Elementary Secondary Education Act, school districts will be required to precisely design school leaders' roles and how their performances in those roles will be evaluated (DiPaola, 2003b). Once the role of the school district superintendent is identified school boards can begin to assess the quality of the performance appraisal system utilized in the school district. This may lead to retention, modification or replacement of the existing system of performance appraisal.

Emphasis and focus on the performance appraisal of the school district is not a new phenomenon of the twenty-first century. The American Association of School Administrators (1980), in conjunction with the National School Boards Association, issued a joint statement calling for formal evaluations of the school district superintendent. It read:

> Though individual school board members have many opportunities to observe and evaluate superintendents' performance, it is clear that such informal evaluations cannot provide the board with a complete picture of superintendents' effectiveness in carrying out her (his) complex job. Regular, formal evaluations offer boards the best means of assessing their chief administrator's total performance. Conducted properly they benefit the instructional program of the school district (p. 4).

However, in the intervening years little systemic progress has been made (DiPaola, 2003b). It is incumbent upon school boards to guarantee that the school district superintendent is evaluated annually. Not only is evaluation of the school district superintendent required by law in Montana and many other states, it is a primary mechanism for the board to assess the current state of affairs, condition and direction of the school district. However, before the school board can initiate, establish or modify a process of performance appraisal for the district superintendent, it must know what the role of the superintendent is to be.

Booth and Glaub (1978) identified three distinct types of school boards regarding management of the school district. First is the custodial school board that is content to serve as a rubber stamp for the school district superintendent. Second, the lay-administrative school board manages the operation of the school district and simply dictates orders to the school district superintendent. Third, the policy-making school

board dictates and establishes policy and holds the school district superintendent accountable for the operation and management of the district. Booth and Glaub contend that if the management style of the school board is custodial or lay-administrative an evaluation is not needed. An evaluation process is not required in the first example because the school board does not know what is occurring in the district and in the latter because the school board is doing the job of the district superintendent. Only the policy-making school board is in need of a performance appraisal system for the district superintendent. Specifying the performance standards is the first step the school board initiates when it designs the superintendent's evaluation process (Klauke, 1988).

Throughout the modern history of the public school district various experts and researchers have attempted to identify areas of competency or performance standards for the school district superintendent. In 1979, in a joint publication with the National School Board Association, the American Association of School Administrators identified certain areas of expertise a school superintendent should possess. These areas are:

1. Classroom and laboratory environments, tools for teaching and structural organization for the deployment of staff and students.

2. What science and research show about the expectations, drives, fears, interests and personal diversities that exist within groups of teachers, parents and youth.

3. The public and what makes it tick, including: what it is; what its dynamics are; how it is organized; who makes it; where the power lies; how it makes itself felt; and how to work with it instead of against it.

4. The constantly changing needs of a school district and the society it serves.

5. How to plan wisely for the future (p. 35).

The performance standards utilized in a school district should establish the expectations of the school board regarding the performance of the school district superintendent. The board should sit down with the superintendent and agree on criteria to use in the evaluation. DiPaola and Stronge (2003) assert that only by a joint process of defining responsibilities and standards of performance can there be clear direction for the school system, the evaluation process and the superintendent being evaluated. As stated by Heller (1984) the process of developing and attending to goals and objectives can strengthen the relationship between the school and superintendent.

Development of the performance appraisal system for the district superintendent will not be necessary in all districts. Some school districts will be satisfied with their current process while others, depending on the role of the school board, may not need one. Stufflebeam (1994) analyzed twelve different superintendent evaluation models and identified the various strengths and weaknesses of each model when compared to the personnel evaluation standards approved by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. Stufflebeam divided the evaluation instruments into the three separate categories of global judgment, judgment driven by specified criteria and judgment driven by data. The category designation of the twelve models of performance appraisal for the district superintendent of schools was as follows:

1. Global Judgment- Descriptive Narrative Reports; Board Judgment; Formative Exchanges About Performance and Stakeholder Evaluation.

2. Judgment Driven by Specified Criteria- Printed Rating Forms; Report Cards; Management by Objectives; Performance Contracting and Duties/Responsibility Based Evaluations.

3. Judgment Driven by Data- Superintendent Portfolio; Student Outcome Measures and School and District Accreditation (p. 35).

Ultimately, Stufflebeam concluded that the appraisal process with the greatest number of strengths in this comparison was the Duties/Responsibility Based Model. Additionally, three of the top four evaluation processes analyzed with the greatest number of strengths existed under the Judgment Driven by Specific Criteria category. Upon reviewing the nine strengths of the Duties/Responsibility Based Evaluation process**,** three prominent strengths identified through the research are that it ensures regular evaluation, establishes mutually agreed upon criteria for evaluation and facilitates clarification of the board and superintendent roles.

DiPaola and Stronge (2003a) conducted a study of current policies and practices regarding superintendent evaluation in all fifty states. They conducted an analysis of the criteria in the evaluation instruments collected from the states by comparing the performance appraisal system to the AASA Professional Standards for the Superintendency. The eight performance standards established by the AASA are:

1. Leadership and District Culture.
2. Policy and Governance.
3. Communications and Community Relations.
4. Organizational Management.
5. Curriculum Planning and Development.
6. Instructional Management.
7. Human Resources Management.
8. Values Ethics and Leadership. (1994)

A complete description of the AASA standards is provided in Appendix A.

They also categorized the state models utilizing the same twelve Models of Superintendent Evaluation employed by Stufflebeam. They concluded that all of the

models in this analysis contain relative strengths and weaknesses. However, the AASA ultimately concluded that the foundation of an effective evaluation system in education, including for superintendents, is the use of clearly described and well-documented performance standards (AASA, 2000). Performance standards guarantee that the superintendent is evaluated based on what he/she was hired to do (DiPaola, 2003).

Improving the operation of the school district and student achievement are the basic reasons to evaluate all school district personnel. The school district superintendent occupies the unique position that may be able to influence the overall performance of the school district. In addition to the statutory requirement, this fact provides a logical reason for the school board to evaluate the school superintendent. Utilizing performance standards as suggested by DiPaola and Stronge may assist the school board in conducting a more thorough assessment of the district superintendent's performance. DiPaola and Stronge (2003) have identified policy and governance, planning and assessment, instructional leadership, organizational management, communications and community relations and professionalism as the six domains that should be included in the evaluation of the district superintendent.

Policy and governance describes the job standards related to the policy, governance and political dimensions of the position. It contains Performance Standards that describe how well the district superintendent works with the school board to develop and implement policies that define the expectations of the organization. This Performance Domain investigates how well the district superintendent communicates with staff when recommendations are prepared for the school board. It also asks how

well the school district is managed on a daily basis to guarantee a safe and efficient operation for the students and staff. It essentially outlines how the district superintendent deals with issues related to the daily operation of the school district and relations with the staff and school board.

Planning and assessment details job standards for assessing instructional programs and personnel and for developing improvement plans to promote student learning. This Performance Domain poses questions about how well the superintendent conducts planning activities and how well information is gathered and analyzed when making decisions. The effectiveness of the district superintendent in developing and establishing a strategic plan for the district is also explored. Additionally, when the planning activities are conducted the issues of effective staff involvement and communication with the trustees is assessed. Last, a primary focus of this Domain asks how the leadership of the superintendent is affecting student achievement through planning activities and the allocation of resources.

The Performance Domain of instructional leadership relates to providing vision, direction, motivation and support to achieve the school district's stated mission and goals. Additionally, it focuses on the support and leadership provided in the areas of personnel, curriculum and staff development for the purpose of enhancing instructional programs. The Performance Standards in this Domain assess the problem solving capabilities of the school district superintendent. They also review how effectively the school district superintendent manages the process of change and innovation in the district. Last, the

management, design and integration of the curriculum to promote a positive learning atmosphere are also investigated.

Regarding the Performance Domain of organizational management**,** areas relating to supporting, managing and directing the operations and functions of the organization are reviewed. The Performance Standards in this Domain investigate the management skills of the district superintendent and the provision of a safe environment for students and personnel. The organizational abilities of the district superintendent and relationship with the school board trustees are also reviewed. Items investigated during the assessment of this domain generally involve how the district superintendent works with the staff and school board and manages the school district procedures to positively influences student learning. The area looks at how effective the district superintendent manages the school district, hires and evaluates personnel and organizes staff training activities to improve academic achievement.

The Performance Domain of communications and community relations includes standards for demonstrating effective communication that promotes understanding, support and continuous improvement of the school district's programs and services. The Performance Standards in this Domain deal with effective communication by the district superintendent that promote the programs of the school district and establish an atmosphere of oneness. This includes communications with the school board, staff and community that engender trust and mutual respect.

The final domain identified through the work of DiPaola and Stronge is in the area of professionalism. This involves standards for demonstrating a commitment to

professional ethics and growth while advancing the mission of the organization. The performance standards in this area relate to the ability of the district superintendent to work with the staff and community in a collegial and collaborative manner. Additionally, the district superintendent actively participates in professional growth activities and provides service to the community, profession and school district through active involvement in these entities. Last, the district superintendent must possess personal integrity and behave in an ethical and moral manner. The complete text of the Performance Domains, Standards and Indicators developed by DiPaola and Stronge is provided in Appendix B.

Summary

In both Montana and the nation the roles and responsibilities of the district superintendent have evolved and become more complex since the position was first created in 1837. This evolution of responsibilities has created the need for school boards to evaluate the new and changing roles of the school district superintendent. It has also led to the creation of standards for the position through the AASA. Utilizing these standards DiPaola and Stronge have further identified Performance Domains, Standards and Indicators that provide a basis for evaluation of the superintendent's performance.

Understanding how the superintendent evaluation processes utilized in Montana align with these Domains and Standards may improve evaluation processes in the state. The process of evaluating the school superintendent must be based on a well-defined description of the role of the superintendent (Kowalski, 1998). This may result in

improved relations between school boards and practicing superintendents, greater job satisfaction for superintendents and lengthen the longevity of practicing superintendents in Montana. As the pool of candidates who are available to fill a vacancy in the position of school superintendent continues to shrink, increased longevity may lead to less frequent vacancies for school boards to contend with.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine to what degree school district superintendent evaluation processes in the State of Montana are aligned with the Performance Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b) as reported by practicing Montana school district superintendents. In a study conducted regarding the current practices of evaluating superintendents and principals in a standards based environment, Davis (2002) found that administrator evaluation should be revised to reflect the standards based environment currently confronting the educational environment. He further asserted that in this environment there is a need for administrator evaluations to provide an accurate reflection of the success or failure of the school administrator. In today's standards based environment, administrator evaluations need to reflect how the educational system is perceived. An effective process of evaluating the school district superintendent, based on standards, will provide the board of trustees with a means to determine what the superintendent is going to do and whether or not it is being accomplished (New Jersey School Boards Association, 1987).

In their book "Superintendent Evaluation Handbook" DiPaola and Stronge (2003) provide an evaluation process based on recommended superintendent Performance Domains, Performance Standards and Performance Indicators. The purpose of this study was to assess how well, based on the perceptions of practicing Montana public school

superintendents, the superintendent evaluation instruments of Montana school districts are aligned with the Performance Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge.

By assessing how well superintendent evaluations in Montana align with the Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge**,** this study provided information about the current state of superintendent evaluation in Montana. Understanding how well Montana public school superintendents perceived current evaluation practices were aligned to recognized performance standards for the position is important to the development of superintendent evaluation processes in Montana. This information may help to guide school district trustees and district superintendents in improving the process of evaluating the superintendent which may improve relations between the parties and extend the longevity of superintendent tenure in Montana. Last, results of the study may assist the state or a state organization in selecting or developing a model process for conducting the evaluation of the school superintendent that could be utilized in the public schools of the state.

The following chapter will explain the process by which the research was conducted. This will include a description of the process of data collection, the population of the study, methodology, instrumentation and questionnaire validation and how the data collected was analyzed.

Data Sources

Involvement of practicing public school superintendents in Montana was essential to the completion of this study. Consequently, it was necessary to accurately identify the number of practicing superintendents in the state. Collection of accurate date would not

have been possible without the assistance of the School Administrators of Montana and the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The material gathered to identify the number of practicing public school superintendents in Montana included the current mailing list for the 2003-04 school year from the School Administrators of Montana and a list of practicing Montana superintendents from the "Directory of Montana Schools", provided through the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

Also, the Performance Domains, Standards and Indicators established by DiPaola and Stronge provided the basis for developing and conducting the survey and investigation into the current practice of evaluating public school superintendents in Montana. Finally, the data gathered through the statistical analysis conducted in this study identified information useful for school boards and school superintendents who may desire to revise the process of evaluating the school district superintendent.

Population of the Study

The population of this study was determined by an analysis and comparison of information received from the School Administrators of Montana and the Montana Office of Public Instruction. A mailing list of practicing superintendents in Montana who were members of the School Administrators of Montana organization was received from that organization. The information received on the Excel spreadsheet from the School Administrators of Montana office identified 178 Montana public school superintendents who were members of the organization. This information was cross-referenced to the 2003-2004 Directory of Montana Schools spreadsheet provided by the Office of Public Instruction to avoid omissions of practicing superintendents who are not members of the

School Administrators of Montana. The process of cross-referencing the two lists identified seventeen additional practicing public school superintendents in Montana. The combination of these two data sources identified 195 practicing public school superintendents in Montana during the 2003-2004 school year. The three superintendents of state operated institutions that provide residential educational services were deselected from the list prior to establishing the final number of 192. These three positions are in environments that do not interact with elected school board members and the superintendents do not serve in public school districts. The population of this study has been restricted to practicing superintendents in public school districts of Montana. A revised list identifying 192 practicing superintendents in public school districts of Montana was prepared to serve as the mailing list.

The 192 practicing Montana public school superintendents on the revised list were selected to participate in the study because the size of the population is manageable. Kerlinger, (1992) stated that to beginning students of research a basic rule is to use as large a sample of the population as possible. Therefore, it was decided that utilizing the entire population of practicing public school superintendents in Montana for this study was appropriate to assist in minimizing error. The smaller the sample is the larger the error and the larger the sample the smaller the error (Kerlinger, 1992). All of the individuals requested to participate in this study were practicing superintendents of Montana public school districts.

Nine practicing superintendents were requested to participate in the pilot study of the survey instrument to provide input regarding possible improvements in the document.

These nine individuals were deselected from the population of the study when the final survey was mailed. Additionally, this practitioner, a practicing Montana public school superintendent, was also deselected from participation in completion of the survey. This provided a final number of 182 superintendents serving in Montana public school districts who provided the population to whom the survey was distributed.

Methodology

Statistical analysis is perceived in many scientific disciplines as indispensable for drawing reliable conclusions from empirical data (Porter, 1986). In a general sense, research is designed to accomplish the extension of knowledge and/or the solution of a problem (Wiersma, 1985). This study was designed to collect information from practicing public school superintendents in Montana. To accomplish this end, a survey was distributed to practicing public school superintendents in Montana.

The purpose of conducting a survey is to gather information from a population to determine the current status of the population regarding a variety of variables and is the most common use of surveys in schools (Gay, 1996). The survey was designed to collect demographic information as well as information regarding the perceptions of these superintendents about the alignment of superintendent evaluation processes for public school superintendents in Montana with the Domains and Standards established by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b).

Instrumentation

To gather the information necessary to address the purpose of this study a survey instrument was constructed around the Performance Domains and Performance Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge. The purpose of the Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes Survey (Appendix D) was to gather information regarding the alignment of these Domains with the processes for evaluating the school district superintendent currently utilized in Montana public school districts. This survey was distributed to practicing superintendents in the public school districts of Montana. Part I of the survey instrument was designed to collect demographic information about the respondent superintendents. The demographic information collected through the survey included: 1) gender, 2) age, 3) years in education, 4) years in current school district, 5) number of years of experience as a superintendent, and 6) school size.

Part II of the survey was designed to collect information regarding specific evaluation practices utilized in the school district the superintendent currently serves. Superintendents were requested to provide information about the: school board policies regarding superintendent evaluation, superintendent evaluation procedures, frequency of formal or informal superintendent evaluations with the school board, involvement of groups or individuals other than the school board in the evaluation of the school district superintendent, process for creating a summative evaluation document and training of school board members in conducting the evaluation.

Part III was designed to gather information about the evaluation practices as they relate to the six Performance Domains and the thirty Performance Standards established

by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b). As there are in excess of 100 Performance Indicators established by DiPaola and Stronge to include them all individually would have made the survey document excessively long and may have adversely affected the number of responses to the survey. Consequently, the survey was designed to include examples of the Performance Indicators affiliated with each of the thirty performance standards. Thus, section III of the survey required responses to questions regarding only the thirty established Performance Standards.

Questionnaire Validation

"Before preparing the final form of the questionnaire, the items should be tried out with a small group as a pilot run. The group need not be a representative sample of the prospective respondents. The results of the pilot run should identify misunderstandings, ambiguities, and useless or inadequate items" (Wiersma, 1985, p. 151). This process will assist in establishing the content validity of the survey instrument to be distributed for collection of data. The establishment of content validity usually occurs through the process of logical analysis (Wiersma, 1985). "Usually, experts in the area covered by the test are asked to assess its content validity" (Gay, 1996, p. 140).

The Montana Association of School Superintendents (MASS) has divided Montana into nine regions (Appendix C) within which practicing superintendents can meet with other superintendents of that region to discuss educational issues. One superintendent from each of these nine regions was requested, and agreed, to participate in a pilot of the Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes Survey to determine content validity. Last, the proposed survey and dissertation topic was presented to the

executive directors of the Montana School Boards Association and the School Administrators of Montana to secure input and an endorsement of this study.

Six of the superintendents selected to participate in the pilot survey were personally contacted at the 2004 Montana Association of School Superintendents Spring meeting in Helena, Montana. The other three superintendents were contacted via telephone to request their participation and explain the study. All nine of the participants selected for the pilot survey agreed to assist in completion and review of the survey document. Following this contact, the survey and a cover letter (Appendix E) was mailed to the superintendents and they were requested to provide input about the instrument, directions for completion and the instructions contained in the cover letter. The population of the pilot survey included four individuals with doctoral degrees, the former Executive Director of the Montana School Boards Association, two individuals with more than twenty-one years of experience each as a school superintendent, one individual with 6-10 years of experience as a school superintendent and one individual with less than five years of experience as a school superintendent in the State of Montana. These practicing Montana school superintendents provided multiple perspectives about the survey given their varied years of experience, backgrounds in education and college degrees and established the content validity of the survey. The distribution of the nine pilot participants as per MASS region and school district classification is presented below in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2. Pilot Study Population Distribution by MASS Regions.

Regions	North West	North Central	HiLine	North East	West	Four Rivers	Central	South Central	South East
Participants Pilot Study	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 3. Pilot Study Population Distribution by School Classification.

Regions	Independent Elementary	Class AA	Class A	Class B	Class C
Participants Pilot Study	1	1	2	2	3

Following return of the pilot surveys various modifications were made to the original survey following consultation with the university advisor. Grammatical changes were made to three questions in part I of the survey. Additionally, question number nine, part I, was changed from “district size” to “district classification”.

In part II of the survey, question number 2 was clarified to inquire about whether the superintendent requested an open or closed session of the Board of Trustees for presentation of the evaluation results. Also, at the request of a doctoral committee member, a question was inserted into part II of the survey that asked whether or not the district had a job description for the position of school district superintendent. Other than minor punctuation and formatting corrections, no changes were made to part III of the survey instrument.

After revision of the Superintendent Evaluation Practices in Montana survey (Appendix D), it was mailed, together with a cover letter (Appendix F) and a self-addressed stamped envelope, to the superintendent population selected for participation in this study. Each of the surveys was coded 010-191 exclusively for tracking purposes as respondents have been guaranteed that their responses will remain confidential.

Survey Distribution and Follow Up Procedures

The surveys were distributed to the population of the study on April 23, 2004. The surveys were coded 010-191 to facilitate record keeping of superintendents who responded to the survey. One day prior to mailing of the survey to the population of the study the Executive Director of the School Administrators of Montana sent out an e-mail reminding all superintendents in the organization's list-serve group that the survey was in the mail and encouraging them to complete the document. Individual members of this group in attendance at the Montana Association of School Superintendents Spring meeting in Helena on March 18 & 19, 2004 were familiar with the document as the Executive Director announced the study during the business session meeting and encouraged all present to participate in completion of the survey.

All survey recipients were requested to return the survey within a period of two weeks. Individuals who did not respond within a period of two weeks were mailed a postcard reminding them of the survey and requesting their participation. Additionally, one week after the mailing the Executive Director again distributed an e-mail to request that the survey recipients complete the document. Following this, all individuals who had not responded within another two week time period were contacted by telephone in

an effort to secure completion of the survey. Individuals who had not responded within two weeks of this phone call were deselected from the population of the survey. Additionally, during the third week after the mailing the Executive Director again distributed an e-mail to request that the survey recipients complete the document. The statistical analysis of the survey results was not conducted until a minimum of seventy-percent of the mailed surveys had been returned. An acceptable level of response for a population of 180 is 68% or 123 participants (Gay, 1996). Consequently, the 70% criterion was established since the population for this survey was 182 superintendents of Montana public school districts and 70% exceeded the threshold established by Gay.

Analysis of Data

The purpose of the research was to determine if there were interactions among the independent and dependent variables and if these interactions explain some of the differences between the groups. Independent variables are identified in part I of the survey instrument in questions 1-8. "Independent variables are variables that cannot be manipulated, should not be manipulated or simply are not manipulated but could be" (Gay, 1996, p. 323). The dependent variables are found in part II and III of the survey instrument.

Dependent variables contained in the survey instrument report the various evaluation practices utilized in Montana public school districts and the perceptions of practicing Montana school superintendents about the alignment of current evaluation practices with the Performance Domains and Performance Standards developed by

DiPaola and Stronge. All data collected regarding the various differences among evaluation practices and the perceptions of practicing school superintendents in Montana public school districts identified through the survey were analyzed utilizing SPSS 11.5.

The analysis of Part I of the survey, demographic information, was conducted through the use of general descriptive statistics. Frequency distributions and percentages as per the school district classification reported on the survey were provided and discussed. Question 6 of Part I asked about the longevity of the superintendent in the current school district and question 9 of Part I requested the superintendent to identify the school district classification. Both of these questions were analyzed utilizing a t-test of Independent Samples.

Part II of the survey utilized descriptive statistics to analyze questions 1 through 9. Question 4 of Part II asked whether the superintendent and school board established goals jointly. A t-test of Independent Samples was also conducted on this question. The t-test is the most commonly utilized inferential statistic and is designed to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups (Gay, 1996).

Part III of the survey was designed to collect information about the perceptions of practicing public school superintendents regarding alignment of the evaluation instrument with the Performance Domains, Standards, and Indicators identified by DiPaola and Stronge. Information gathered through part III of the survey was subjected to analysis through utilization of descriptive statistics.

Summary

Evaluation of the school district superintendent has been identified as one of the most important responsibilities to be fulfilled by a school district trustee. While there are various reasons why trustees conduct an evaluation of the school superintendent, a primary reason is to provide justification for retention or termination of the services of the superintendent. Utilizing an evaluation instrument with clearly defined performance standards, aligned to nationally accepted standards for performance, will provide the trustees with clear information about the performance of the school superintendent. Through this study of the present evaluation practices utilized in the public school districts of Montana, information will be available that will identify whether or not current practices are aligned to the standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge. This information will aid districts in reviewing their current practices and possibly lead to the development of an evaluation process that is not only useful to school trustees, but meaningful to school superintendents.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The perceptions of practicing Montana public school superintendents about the processes and practices utilized to evaluate the position of school superintendent in their current school district were examined through this study. Practicing Montana public school superintendents were requested to assess the current evaluation processes and practices and compare them to the Performance Domains and Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b).

Understanding the perceptions of practicing Montana public school superintendents about the evaluation processes and practices utilized in Montana public school districts may assist in the development of a model evaluation process that can be utilized in the public school districts. Information about the current processes and practices may provide a mechanism for emphasizing and improving the ability of school boards to conduct this responsibility.

To facilitate the acquisition of information for this study a survey was distributed to practicing Montana public school district superintendents. Prior to distributing the survey to the population of the study, the survey was first field tested through a pilot test of practicing public school superintendents. The distribution of the individuals selected for the pilot test by school district classification and MASS region is represented in Tables 2 and 3. The three parts of the survey included: 1) demographic information, 2)

information about the processes and practices for evaluation of the superintendent currently utilized in the district and 3) the perceptions of the Montana public school superintendents regarding the degree of alignment of current superintendent evaluation processes and practices to the superintendent performance domains and standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b).

Population of the Study

Initially, 195 practicing Montana public school superintendents were identified as potential participants in this study. The three superintendents of state operated institutions that provide educational services to the residents were deselected from the list prior to establishing the final number of 192. These three positions are in environments that do not interact with elected school board members and the superintendents do not serve in public school districts.

The population of this study was restricted to practicing superintendents in the public school districts of Montana. Of the 192 practicing public school superintendents 9 pilot study participants and this practitioner were deselected from participation in the final study. The survey was then disseminated to the remaining182 practicing public school superintendents.

Ultimately, of the 182 surveys that were distributed, 135 useable responses were returned resulting in a return rate of 74.18 percent. None of the completed surveys returned as requested were excluded from this study.

Individual Superintendent and School District Demographics

Data obtained through the survey included various pieces of demographic information from individual respondents and the district they were currently serving. Individual information included gender, age, years in public education, years as a school superintendent and years as the superintendent of their current school district. Information about the school district they currently serve included how long the previous superintendent was in the school district, how long the current evaluation process has been utilized, number of years before the evaluation process will be revised and the district classification.

Montana Superintendent Demographic Information

Information about the gender of Montana public school superintendents was requested through the survey. This descriptive statistic may be useful to Montana universities in justifying efforts to recruit and train qualified females aspiring to the position of school superintendent. Regarding the individual information requested from the respondents, the gender distribution of the returned surveys was 16 (11.9%) females and 119 (88.1%) males (Table 4).

Table 4. Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	119	88.1
Female	16	11.9
Total	135	100.0

Another piece of demographic information requested through the survey was the age of current Montana public school superintendents. As previously reported, according to the AASA 2000 Study of the American Superintendency between 1950 and 1992 the median age of superintendents hovered around 48 to 50. Since 1992 the median age of superintendents has increased to 52.5, which is the oldest recorded median age for school superintendents during the twentieth century. In the under 30 age category 1, (.7%) individual replied affirmatively, 9 (6.7%) individuals replied in the 30-39 category, 45 (33.3%) replied in the 40-49 category, 56 (41.5%) individuals replied in the 50-59 category and 24 (17.8%) individuals replied in the 60+ age category. When the numbers for the 50-59 and 60+ age categories were aggregated 59.3% of the survey respondents were 50 years of age or older. Respondent information regarding age is displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Age of Montana Superintendents Responding to the Survey

Age	Frequency	Percent
Under 30	1	.7
30-39	9	6.7
40-49	45	33.3
50-59	56	41.5
60+	24	17.8
Total	135	100.0

Superintendents were also requested to provide the number of years they have in public education. A review of Table 6 reveals that 9 (6.7%) superintendents had 0-10 years in public education, 32 (23.7%) superintendents had 11-20 years in public

education, 52 (38.5%) had 21-30 years in public education and 42 (31.1%) superintendents had 31+ years in education. The two categories of 21-30 and 31+ years in education represent 69.6% of the Montana public school district superintendents who responded to the survey.

Table 6. Number of Years in Public Education

Years in Education	Frequency	Percent
0-10	9	6.7
11-20	32	23.7
21-30	52	38.5
31+	42	31.1
Total	135	100.0

When the information about the number of years of experience the respondent had as a school superintendent was calculated, it was noted that three individuals failed to respond to the question. The remaining 132 respondents revealed that 55 (40.7%) had 0-5 years of experience, 30 (22.2%) had 6-10 years of experience, 12 (8.9%) had 11-15 years of experience, 19 (14.1%) had 16-20 years of experience and 16 (11.9%) had 21+ years of experience as a school superintendent (Table 7).

Table 7. Years of Experience as a School Superintendent

Years as Supt.	Frequency	Percent
0-5	55	40.7
6-10	30	22.2
11-15	12	8.9
16-20	19	14.1
21+	16	11.9
Missing	3	2.2
Total	132	100.0

The last question in the survey designed to collect demographic information requested the superintendent to identify the number of years he/she had in the current school district. The results of the survey revealed that 91 (67.4%) had 0-5 years, 33 (24.4%) had 6-10 years, 4 (3.0%) had 11-15 years; and 5 (3.7%) had 16+ years of experience in their current school district. Two individuals failed to respond to this survey question. When the responses for the 0-5 and 6-10 categories are aggregated, 91.8% of Montana public school superintendents had ten or less years in their current school district. This information is detailed in Table 8.

Table 8. Number of Years as the Superintendent of the Current District

Supt of Current School District	Frequency	Percent
0-5	91	67.4
6-10	33	24.8
11-15	4	3.0
16+	5	3.7
Missing	2	1.5
Total	135	100.0

Data Regarding Respondent's School District

Part I of the survey instrument also contained questions regarding the public school district the superintendent is currently serving. Information requested about the current school district served by the superintendent included how long the previous superintendent was in the school district, how long the current evaluation process has been utilized, number of years before the evaluation process will be revised and the district classification.

The survey results regarding longevity of the previous superintendent revealed that 77 (57.0%) had served the school district for 0-5 years, 36 (26.7%) had served for 6-10 years, 9 (6.7%) had served for 11-15 years and 9 (6.7%) had served the school district for 16+ years. The majority of superintendents who responded to the survey indicated their successor had served the school district for ten years or less. When the responses for the 0-5 and 6-10 categories were aggregated, 83.7% of the previous superintendents had served the school district for ten or less years. This information is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. How Long the Previous Superintendent Served in the District

Years Previous Superintendent Served the District	Frequency	Percent
0-5	77	57.0
6-10	36	26.7
11-15	9	6.7
16+	9	6.7
Missing	4	3.0
Total	135	100.0

Question number seven in part I of the survey was specific to the school district and was designed to collect data about how long the current evaluation process had been utilized. The survey responses revealed that 51 (37.8%) had utilized the current evaluation process for 1-5 years, 30 (22.2%) for 6-10 years, 16 (11.9%) for 11-15 years and 9 (6.7%) for 16+ years. Additionally, 5 (3.7%) districts had no evaluation process,

23 (17.0%) did not know how long the evaluation process had been utilized and 1 (.7%) individual did not respond. This information is provided in Table 10.

Table 10. Years the Current Evaluation Process has Been Utilized

Years Evaluation Process Utilized	Frequency	Percent
1-5	51	37.8
6-10	30	22.2
11-15	16	11.9
16+	9	6.7
Don't Know	23	17.0
No Evaluation	5	3.7
Missing	1	.7
Total	135	100.0

Question number eight in part I of the survey was specific to the school district and was designed to collect data about the number of years before the evaluation process will be revised. A review of Table 11 reveals that 30 (22.2%) were in the process of revising the superintendent evaluation process. Furthermore, 36 (26.7%) will revise the process in the next 1-5 years, 1 (.7%) in 6-10 years, and 68 (process would be revised.50.4%) did not know when the superintendent evaluation

Table 11. Years Before the Evaluation Process Will Be Revised

Years Evaluation Process Revised	Frequency	Percent
In Process	30	22.2
1-5	36	26.7
6-10	1	.7
Don't Know	68	50.4
Total	135	100.0

The final question of part I soliciting demographic information requested superintendents to identify the school district classification. The responses of the superintendents indicated that 6 (4.4%) superintendents were employed in AA school districts, 16 (11.9%) in class A school districts, 32 (23.7) in class B school districts, 67 (49.6%) in class C school districts and 14 (10.4%) in independent elementary school districts responded to the survey. This information is reported in Table 12 below.

Table 12. School District Classification

Classification	Frequency	Percent
AA	6	4.4
A	16	11.9
B	32	23.7
C	67	49.6
Independent Elem.	14	10.4
Total	135	100.0

Superintendent Evaluation Instrument Assessment

A primary purpose of this study was to ascertain the perceived relationship of superintendent evaluation processes utilized in Montana public school districts to Domains and Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b). The identification of this alignment with the Performance Domains and Standards established by DiPaola and Stronge was based on the perceptions of practicing Montana public school superintendents. Information gathered through part III of the survey was subjected to analysis through utilization of descriptive statistics. A t-test of Independent Samples was also utilized to further analyze the information gathered in an effort to determine where

differences between the groups exist. Beginning with presentation of the descriptive statistics, an explanation of the results of these analyses will be presented in the following section.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was utilized to evaluate the correlation of the six Performance Domains for superintendent evaluation established by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b). The mean scores employed to conduct the statistical analysis were derived from the responses of Montana public school superintendents to the Montana School Superintendent Processes Survey instrument. The purpose of utilizing these correlations was to determine whether or not significant relationships existed between the six domains. The correlations between each of the six domains (Policy and Governance (G), Planning and Assessment (A), Instructional Leadership (L), Organizational Management (M), Communications and Community Relations (C), and Professionalism (P)) were all significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed) and justified using the mean scores for superintendent responses for further analysis of the research questions posed through this study. The mean scores were calculated utilizing a four point Likert scale: (4) Fully Assess, (3) Somewhat Assess, (2) Little Assessment and (1) No Assessment. A Likert scale is developed utilizing a number of points on a scale in which the intervals between the points are assumed to be equal (Wiersma, 1985). The results of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation are displayed below in Table 13.

Table 13. Correlations of the Six Domains for Superintendent Evaluation Identified by DiPaola and Stronge.

		G	A	L	M	C	P
G	Pearson Correlation	1	.703(**)	.711(**)	.743(**)	.734(**)	.646(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	135	135	134	135	135	134
A	Pearson Correlation	.703(**)	1	.809(**)	.734(**)	.647(**)	.675(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	135	135	134	135	135	134
L	Pearson Correlation	.711(**)	.809(**)	1	.853(**)	.735(**)	.756(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	134	134	134	134	134	134
M	Pearson Correlation	.743(**)	.734(**)	.853(**)	1	.810(**)	.779(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	135	135	134	135	135	134
C	Pearson Correlation	.734(**)	.647(**)	.735(**)	.810(**)	1	.761(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	135	135	134	135	135	134
P	Pearson Correlation	.646(**)	.675(**)	.756(**)	.779(**)	.761(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	134	134	134	134	134	134

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question One and Analysis

Superintendent evaluation is the systematic process of assessing the merit and/or worth of something and should be designed to assess a person's qualifications or performance in a given superintendency. Part II of the survey was designed to collect information about the current superintendent evaluation processes and procedures utilized in the public school districts of Montana. Through the utilization of descriptive statistics, information will be presented about the processes and procedures utilized in Montana public school districts to evaluate the performance of the school district superintendent.

The first question addressed through this study was, “What are the current superintendent evaluation practices in Montana public school districts?”

The majority of respondents (91.9%) reported that the school district currently had in place established policies and procedures governing the evaluation of the school superintendent and a larger percentage (95.6%) had an adopted job description for the position in place. Additionally, slightly over one-half (50.7%) of the respondents stated that performance goals were established for the school district superintendent on an annual basis. In those school districts that annually establish performance goals, 56 (74.7%) had a process through which the goals were established jointly between the school superintendent and school board.

When conducting the evaluation of the school superintendent**,** most Montana school boards (70.1%) rely exclusively on school board members and do not involve any other groups either inside or outside of the school district in providing information for the evaluation of the superintendent. In the instances where an outside source of information is utilized, the most frequent source of information other than the school board was the certified staff (14.2%). Neither the teacher’s union itself nor the officers of the union are included in this statistic. As a source of information**,** input by the classified staff members was utilized in 10.4% of the respondent school districts.

Most Montana public school superintendents (76.3%) do not complete a self-evaluation as part of the superintendent evaluation process and the superintendent in most school districts (74.8%) meets with the school board annually to discuss performance. Most Montana public school superintendents (79.2%) prefer an executive session closed

to the public when results of the superintendent's performance evaluation are presented. A written summary report was not provided as an element of the evaluation process in 27.6% of the respondent school districts.

Last, the survey was also designed to gather information regarding the quality of training that school boards are receiving in the process of evaluating the school district superintendent. A majority (68.2%) of the Montana public school superintendents who responded to the survey indicated that the school board had little or no training in the process of evaluating the school district superintendent, approximately one-quarter (25.2%) indicate that some training was provided; and 6.7% of the respondents reported adequate training of school board members. The information gathered through Part II of the survey is provided below in Table 14.

Table 14. Frequency of School Superintendent Evaluation Practices by School District Classification

School District Classification	**AA**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**Independent Elementary**
Developed Superintendent Evaluation Policies and Procedures					
Yes	6	15	29	62	12
No	0	1	3	5	2
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	16	32	67	14
Evaluation Results in Open or Executive Session					
Open	2	3	2	17	2
Executive	4	12	28	45	10
Missing	0	1	2	5	2
Total	6	16	32	67	14
Performance Goals Established					
Yes	5	12	17	24	10
No	1	4	15	42	4
Missing	0	0	0	1	0
Total	6	16	32	67	14

Table 14 - Continued

School District Classification	AA	A	B	C	Independent Elementary
Goals Established Jointly Between Superintendent and Board					
Yes	5	11	13	19	8
No	1	3	4	8	4
Missing	0	2	15	40	2
Total	6	16	32	67	14
Developed and Established Job Description					
Yes	6	14	31	65	13
No	0	2	1	2	1
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	16	32	67	14
Superintendent Complete Self-evaluation					
Yes	3	7	6	10	6
No	3	9	26	57	8
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	16	32	67	14
Frequency of Meetings to Discuss Superintendent Performance					
Once	4	10	25	51	11
Annually	2	5	6	11	2
Semi-annually	0	1	1	4	1
Quarterly	0	0	0	1	0
Monthly	0	0	0	0	0
Never	0	0	0	0	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	16	32	67	14
Summary Written Evaluation Report Completed					
Yes	4	14	22	47	10
No	1	2	10	20	4
Missing	1	0	0	0	0
Total	6	16	32	67	14
Quality of School Board Training in Superintendent Evaluation					
Adequate	0	2	1	5	1
Some	3	6	10	14	1
Little	2	4	12	16	5
No Training	1	4	9	32	7
Total	6	16	32	67	14

Table 14 - Continued

School District Classification	AA	A	B	C	Independent Elementary
Other Groups Formally Involved in Providing Information to the School Board for the Superintendent Evaluation					
Other District Administrators	0	4	2	3	3
Certified Staff not the Union	0	2	5	0	2
Students	0	1	1	4	0
Community	0	1	2	7	2
Members Teacher's Union	0	1	0	5	2
Classified Staff	0	3	4	4	3
PTA	0	0	0	2	1
Community Groups	0	0	0	2	0
Subtotal Input From Others	0	12	14	36	13
None	5	11	23	47	8
No Eval.	0	1	1	0	0
Unknown	0	0	4	6	0

Research Question Two and Analysis

Based on the work of DiPaola and Stronge six Performance Domains and thirty Performance Standards were utilized in the development of the survey distributed to

Montana public school superintendents. Descriptive statistics for the Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes survey regarding the perceptions of school superintendent about the alignment of the evaluation instrument in their district to the Performance Domains and Standards identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003) were calculated. DiPaola and Stronge describe the domains as follows:

1. Domain G- Policy and Governance: Describes the job standards related to the policy, governance and political dimensions of the position.

2. Domain A- Planning and Assessment: Includes the job standards for assessing instructional programs and personnel for developing plans to promote student learning.

3. Domain L- Instructional Leadership: Relates to providing vision, direction, motivation and support in the areas of personnel, curriculum and staff development to achieve the district's mission and goals for the explicit purpose of enhancing instructional programs.

4. Domain M- Organizational Management: Relates to supporting, managing and directing the operations and functions of the organization.

5. Domain C- Communications and Community Relations: Includes the standards for demonstrating effective communication that promotes understanding, support and improvement of the district programs and services.

6. Domain P- Professionalism: Includes standards for demonstrating a commitment to professional ethics while advancing the mission of the organization.

The second question addressed through this study was, "What are the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents regarding the degree of alignment of the evaluation practices utilized in their current school district to the six Performance Domains for evaluating superintendents identified by DiPaola and Stronge?" Mean scores regarding the perceptions of school superintendents about the alignment of current

evaluation practices to the Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge are presented below in Table 15. Mean scores were calculated utilizing a four point Likert scale: (4) Fully Assess, (3) Somewhat Assess, (2) Little Assessment and (1) No Assessment.

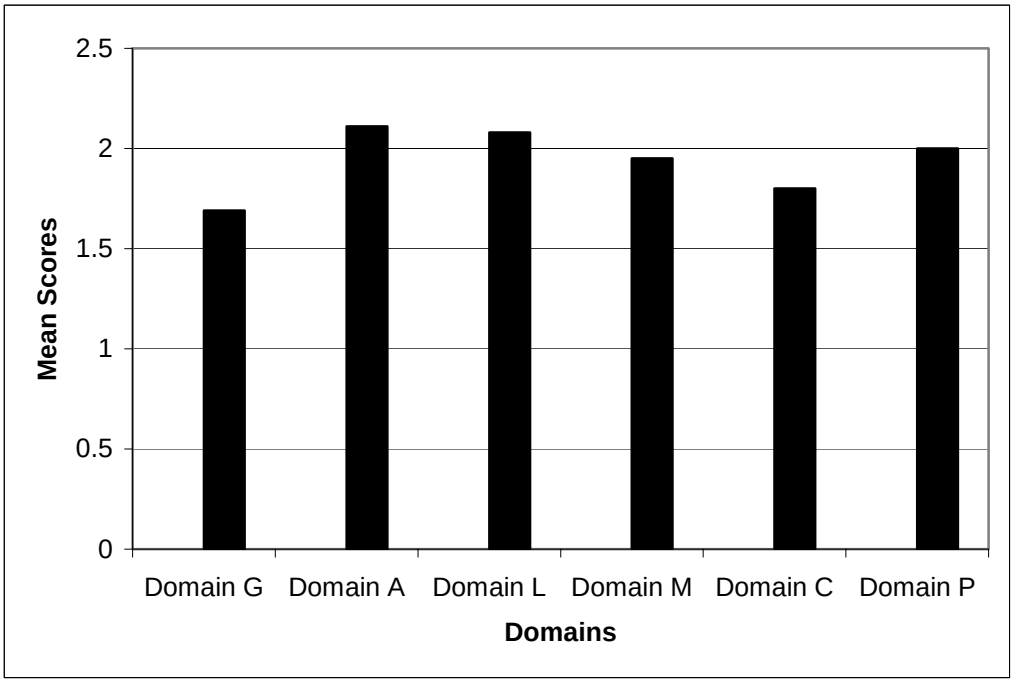
Table 15. Descriptive Statistics of All Superintendent Responses Regarding Alignment to the Six Domains Identified By DiPaola and Stronge

Domain	N	Mean	Standard Error Of the Mean	Standard Deviation
Policy and Governance (Domain G)	135	1.69	.049	.577
Planning and Assessment (Domain A)	135	2.11	.058	.676
Instructional Leadership (Domain L)	134	2.08	.058	.674
Organizational Management (Domain M)	135	1.95	.056	.658
Communication and Community Relations (Domain C)	135	1.80	.055	.641
Professionalism (Domain P)	134	2.00	.060	.696

The mean score of 2.11 in the Domain of Planning and Assessment indicates that superintendents perceived this Domain as being most closely aligned to the evaluation instrument currently utilized in their district. The Domain of Instructional Leadership with the second highest mean score of 2.08 closely followed this. Based on the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents and the identified mean scores, the order of alignment of the last four domains was Professionalism with a mean of 2.0, Organizational Management with a mean of 1.95, Communication and Community Relations with a mean of 1.8 and Policy and Governance with a mean of 1.69. As presented further in Figure 1., Montana public school superintendents perceived the

Domains of Planning and Assessment and Instructional Leadership as most closely aligned to the evaluation practices currently utilized in Montana.

Figure 1. Mean Scores of All Superintendent Responses Regarding Alignment to the Six Domains Identified by DiPaola and Stronge.



Montana public school superintendents were also requested to provide perceptions about how the thirty different Performance Standards identified by DiPaola and Stronge aligned to the evaluation instrument utilized in their current school district. DiPaola and Stronge specifically list the thirty Performance Standards under the Performance Domains in their work (Appendix B). The descriptive statistics of the superintendent perceptions regarding alignment of current superintendent evaluation practices to the thirty standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge (2003) are presented

in Table 16. The mean scores were calculated utilizing a four point Likert scale: (4) Fully Assess, (3) Somewhat Assess, (2) Little Assessment and (1) No Assessment.

Table 16. DiPaola and Stronge Performance Standards for Evaluation of the School District Superintendent and Alignment to Montana School Superintendent Evaluation Instruments

DiPaola and Stronge Standards	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Policy and Governance Standard G1	135	1.7556	.0580	.67433
G2	135	1.6963	.0651	.75581
G3	135	1.4593	.0593	.68853
G4	135	1.8593	.0737	.85661
Planning and Assessment Standard A1	135	2.4370	.0770	.89449
A2	135	2.3333	.0773	.89776
A3	135	2.0222	.0709	.82378
A4	135	1.6741	.0664	.77102
Instructional Leadership Standard L1	134	2.0448	.0741	.85722
L2	134	2.1269	.0698	.80806
L3	134	1.8209	.0709	.82125
L4	134	2.1791	.0748	.86581
L5	134	1.9030	.0717	.83052
L6	133	2.2707	.0725	.83601
L7	134	2.2612	.0778	.90054
Organizational Management Standard M1	135	1.9259	.0741	.86066
M2	135	1.8519	.0702	.81514

Table 16 - Continued

DiPaola and Stronge Standards	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
M3	135	1.7481	.0663	.76994
M4	135	1.9111	.0717	.83279
M5	135	1.9185	.0808	.93881
M6	135	2.2296	.0786	.91375
M7	132	2.0985	.0767	.88118
Communication & Comm. Relations Standard C1	135	1.6741	.0621	.72100
C2	135	1.6519	.0668	.77574
C3	135	2.1556	.0807	.93734
C4	135	1.7185	.0637	.73962
Professionalism Standard P1	133	1.7519	.0750	.86520
P2	134	1.8284	.0666	.77096
P3	134	2.1791	.0748	.86581
P4	134	2.2612	.0792	.91708

Based on the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents, a mean score regarding the alignment of each performance standard to the current superintendent evaluation practices in Montana was calculated. This data is presented in Table 16 above.

The superintendent perceptions regarding alignment of current superintendent evaluation practices to the thirty standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge (2003) were analyzed. The results are provided below in Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7.

Figure 2. Domain G: Policy and Governance Mean Scores

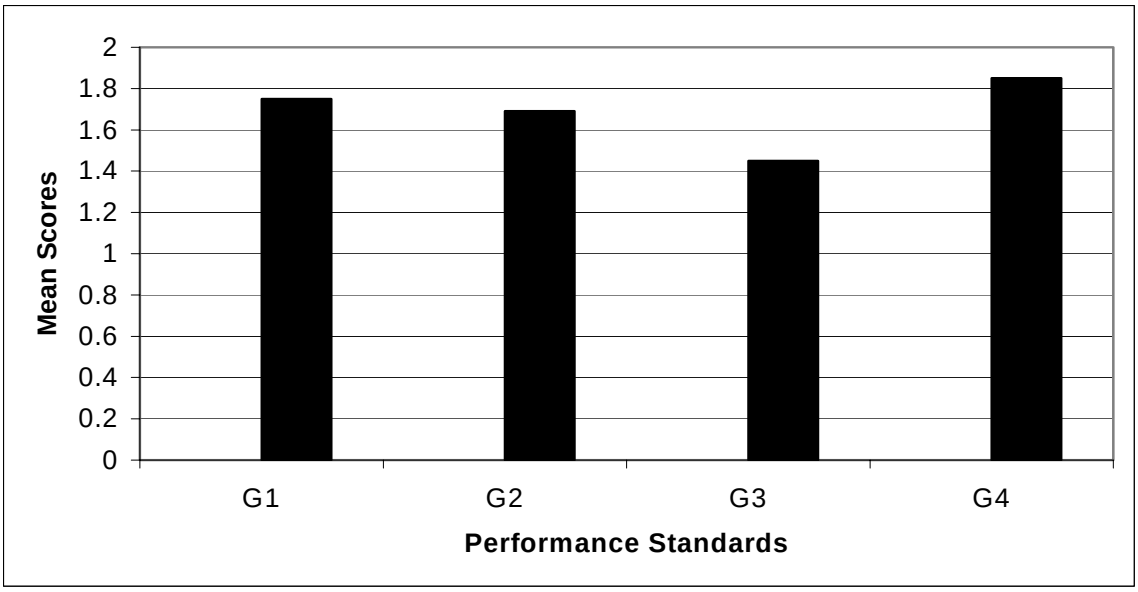


Figure 3. Domain A: Planning and Assessment Mean Scores

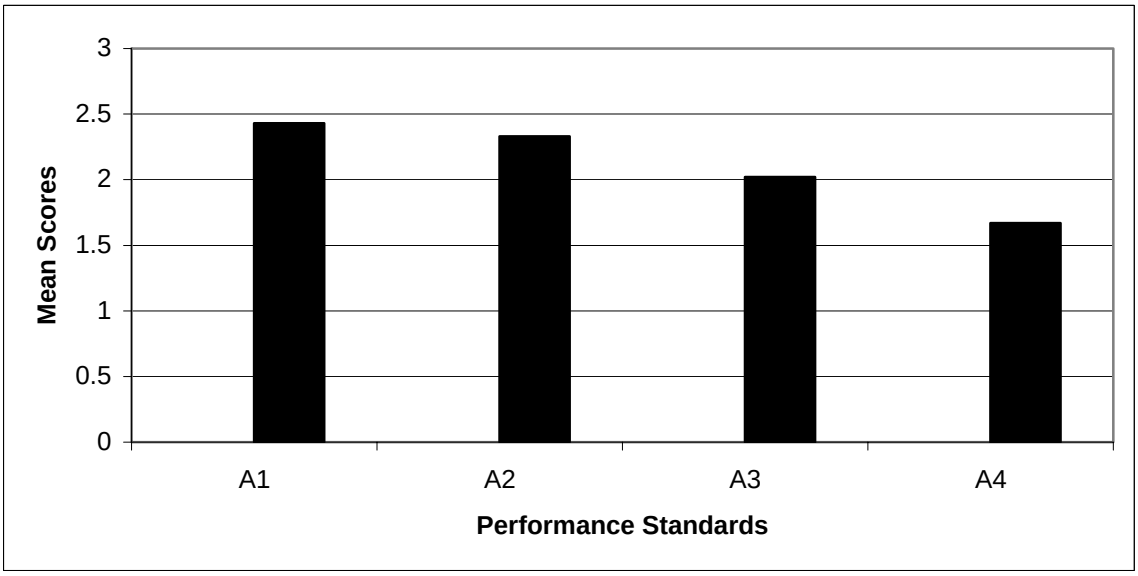


Figure 4. Domain L: Instructional Leadership Mean Scores

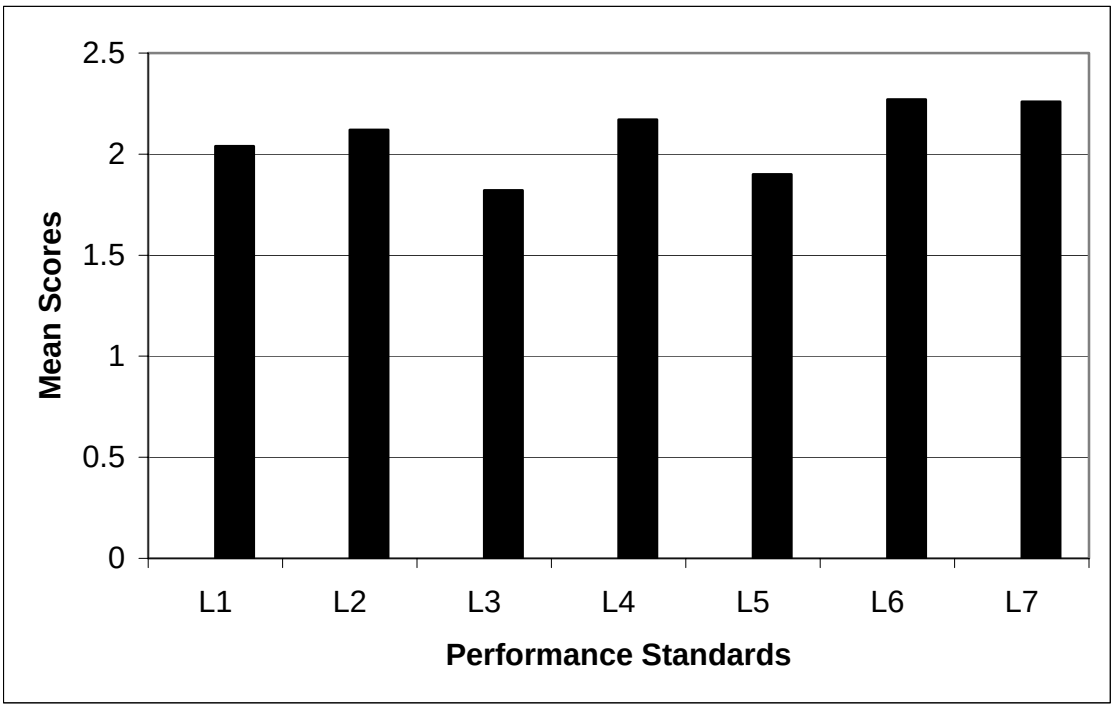


Figure 5. Domain M: Organizational Management Mean Scores

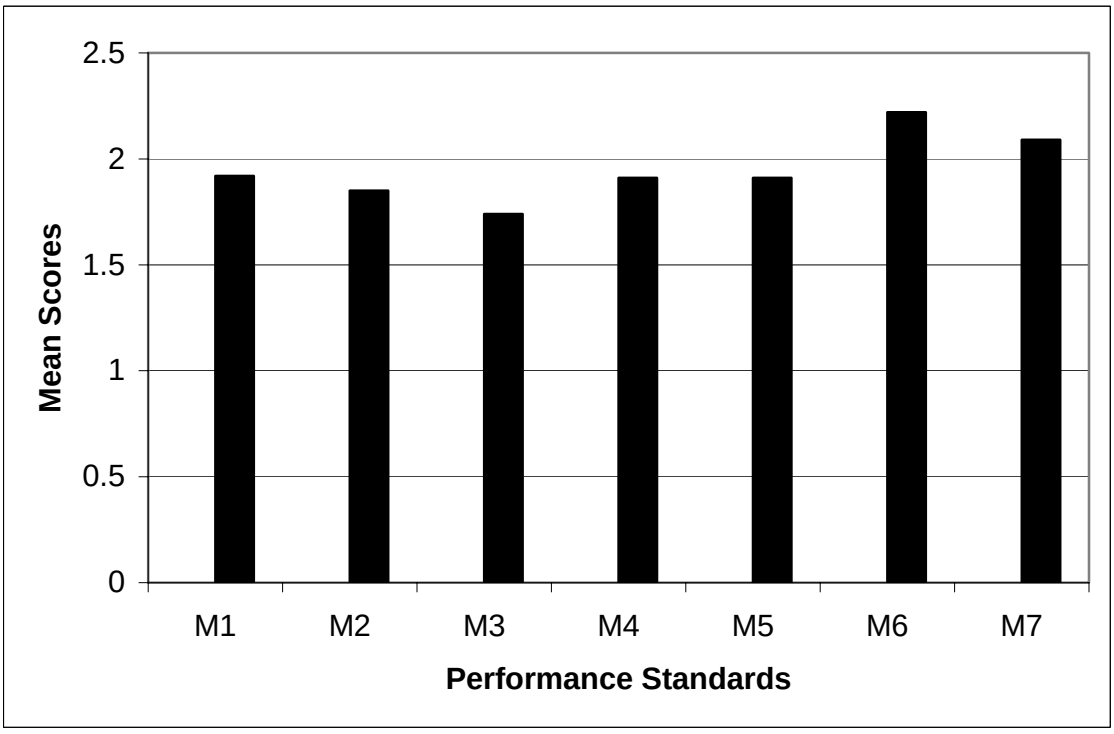


Figure 6. Domain C: Communications and Community Relations Mean Scores

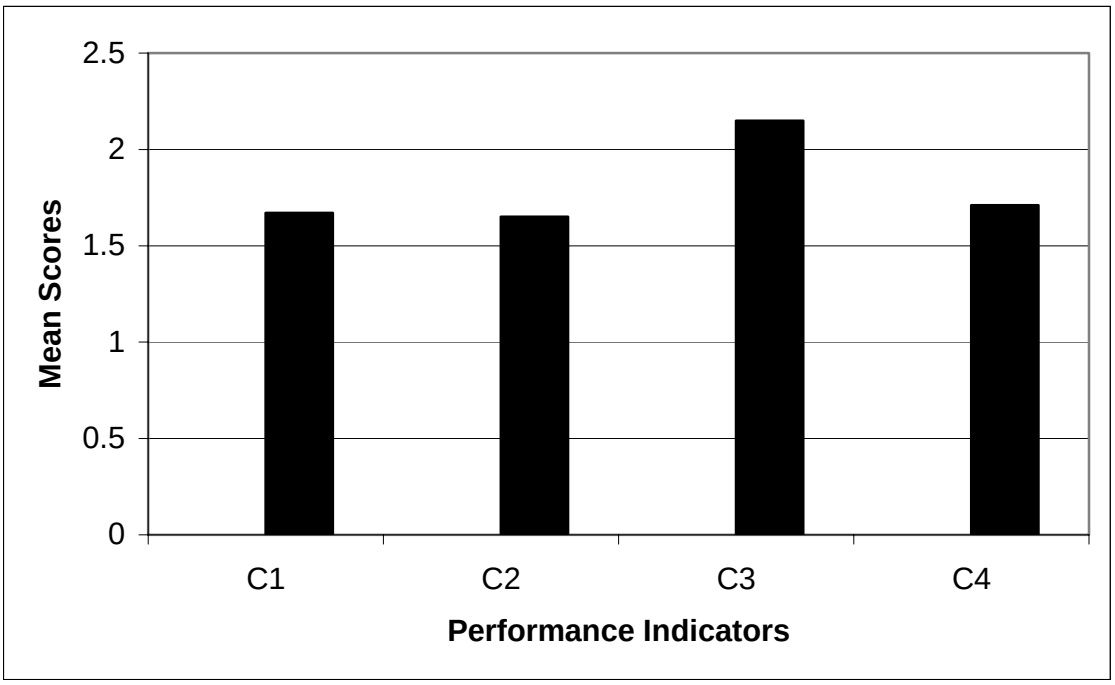
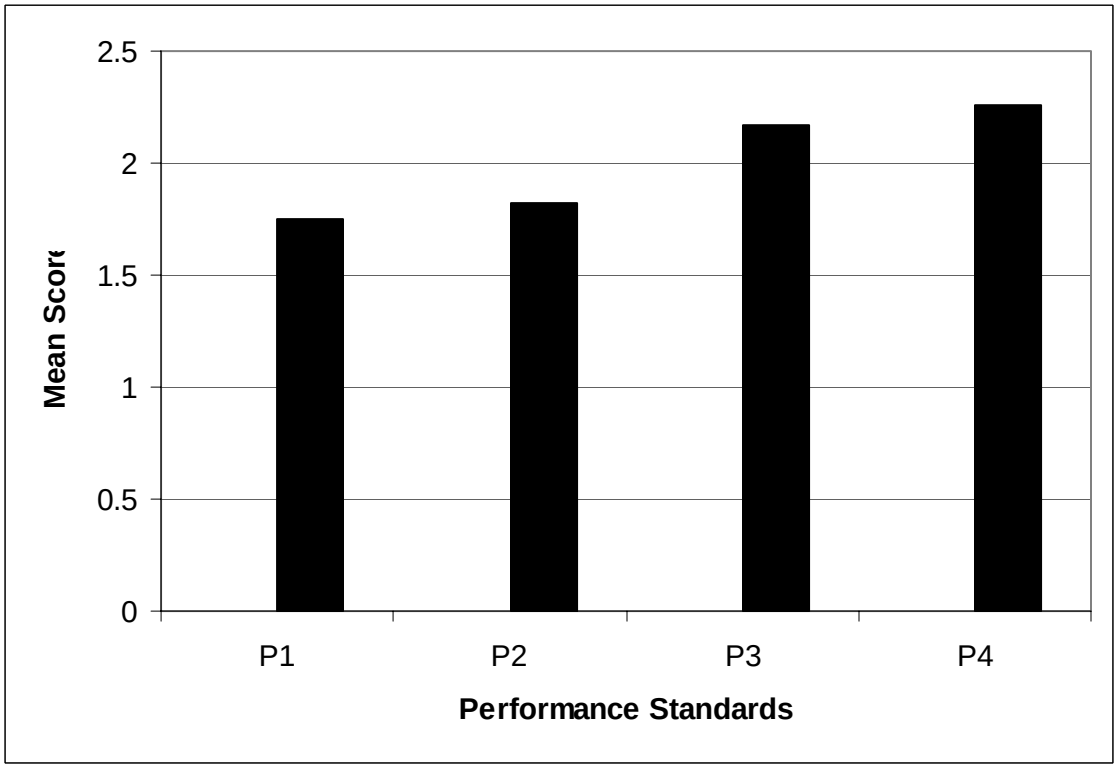
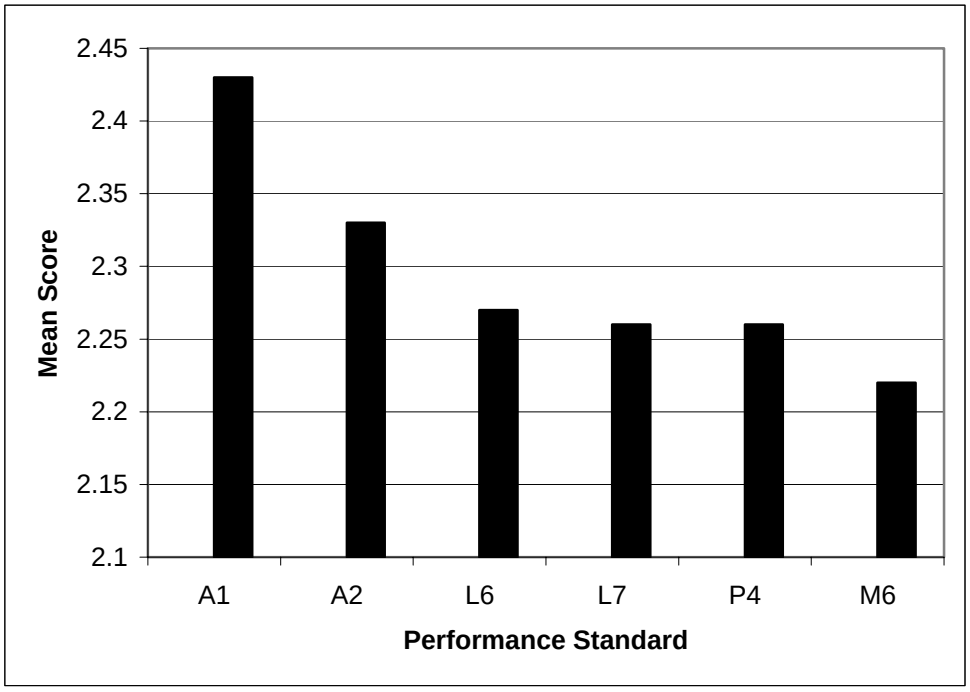


Figure 7. Domain P: Professionalism Mean Scores



A review of the mean statistics provided in Table 16 indicates that the two Performance Standards rated as most highly aligned to current evaluation practices by respondent superintendents were in the Domain relating to Planning and Assessment. The superintendents rated Performance Standard A1, the superintendent effectively employs various processes for gathering, analyzing and using data for decision-making, the highest with a mean score of 2.43. Performance Standard A2, the superintendent organizes the collaborative development and implementation of a district strategic plan based on analysis of data from a variety of sources, received the second highest mean score of 2.33. The third highest mean score of 2.27 was found under the Domain of Instructional Leadership in Performance Standard L6, the superintendent identifies, analyzes and resolves problems using effective problem-solving techniques. This was followed by Performance Standard L7, the superintendent ensures the curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize student learning, in the Domain of Instructional Leadership and Performance and Standard P4, the superintendent provides service to the profession, the district and the community, in the Domain of Professionalism with a mean score of 2.26. The fifth highest mean score of 2.22 was identified in the Domain of Organizational Management and was Performance Standard M6, the superintendent provides staff development for all categories of personnel consistent with individual needs, program evaluation results and instructional improvement plans. The mean scores of the six Performance Standards rated most highly based on the perceptions of practicing Montana public school district superintendents are provided in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Performance Standards for Evaluation of the School District Superintendent and Alignment to Montana School Superintendent Evaluation Instruments



Research Question Three and Analysis

The third question addressed through this study was, "Are there differences between Montana public school superintendents perceptions of alignment to the six Performance Domains of superintendents from AA, A, B, C and Independent Elementary school districts, as measured by the Montana Superintendent Evaluation Survey instrument?

The correlations between each of the six domain scores (Policy and Governance, Planning and Assessment, Instructional Leadership, Organizational Management, Communications and Community Relations and Professionalism) as presented in Table 13 are all significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). It can be concluded that each of these components (Domains) of the survey measured the single construct of superintendent

evaluation. As such, a single score was calculated across all six Domains for each respondent. This score was then utilized to answer research question three.

An Independent Samples t-test was conducted on each possible pair of classifications from the five classifications of school districts utilized in the survey. In the analysis of the data in response to question three, equal variances were not assumed in any of the calculations. The results of the Independent Samples t-test calculations that were conducted between the school district classifications of superintendents regarding alignment of evaluation processes to the six Performance Domains are provided in Table 17.

Table 17. Results of Independent Samples t-Test for all School Districts Classifications Regarding Domain Alignment to Current Montana Public School Superintendent Evaluation Practices When Superintendent Longevity is Considered.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Diff.
Class AA & A School Districts	Equal variances assumed	.952	.341	2.934	20	.008	.7145	.24352
	Equal variances not assumed			2.459	6.835	.044	.7145	.29057
Class AA & B School Districts	Equal variances assumed	.119	.732	1.054	36	.299	.2752	.26109
	Equal variances not assumed			.960	6.519	.371	.2752	.28667
Class AA & C School Districts	Equal variances assumed	.028	.868	1.720	71	.090	.4270	.24823
	Equal variances not assumed			1.541	5.712	.177	.4270	.27715

Table 17 – Continued

Class AA Independ. Elementary School Districts	Equal variances assumed	.017	.899	1.325	18	.202	.3907	.29481
	Equal variances not assumed			1.260	8.570	.241	.3907	.31002
Class A & B School Districts	Equal variances assumed	.623	.434	-2.672	46	.010	-.4392	.16441
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.902	37.502	.006	-.4392	.15136
Class A & C School Districts	Equal variances assumed	1.637	.204	-1.861	81	.066	-.2875	.15445
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.171	28.165	.039	-.2875	.13245
Class A & Independ. Elementary School Districts	Equal variances assumed	1.210	.281	-1.717	28	.097	-.3238	.18858
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.687	24.314	.104	-.3238	.19194
Class B & C School Districts	Equal variances assumed	.196	.659	1.226	97	.223	.1518	.12377
	Equal variances not assumed			1.227	61.295	.224	.1518	.12364
Class B & Independ. Elementary School Districts	Equal variances assumed	.098	.755	.624	44	.536	.1155	.18495
	Equal variances not assumed			.621	24.558	.540	.1155	.18597
Class C & Independ. Elementary School Districts	Equal variances assumed	.001	.977	-.214	79	.831	-.0363	.16972
	Equal variances not assumed			-.214	18.707	.834	-.0363	.17093

The mean scores of Montana Class AA school districts were compared to each of the other four classifications of school districts. When compared to Class A school districts, a significant difference was found between the mean scores of the superintendents t (6.84)=2.46, p=.044, df=6.8. This statistic indicated that Class AA school district superintendents perceived their current evaluation practices to be more significantly aligned to the Domains and Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge than Class A school district superintendents. When the mean scores of Class AA school superintendents were compared to the mean scores for superintendents from the other three school district classifications (B, C, and Independent Elementary) no significant differences were found.

A significant difference was identified when the mean scores of Class A Montana school districts were compared to the mean scores of Class B school districts. The t test was significant t (37.50)=-2.90, p=.006, df=37.5, which indicated that Class B school district superintendents perceived their evaluation practices to be more significantly aligned to the Domains and Standards established by DiPaola and Stronge than did Class A school district superintendents. A significant difference was identified when the mean scores of Class A school district superintendents were compared to the mean scores of Class C school district superintendents. The t-test was significant, t (28.17)=-2.17, p=.039, df=28.2, indicating that Class C school district superintendents perceived their evaluation instruments to be more closely aligned to the Domains and Standards than Class A school district superintendents. No significant differences were found between

the mean scores of the Class A school district superintendents and those from Independent Elementary school districts.

The mean scores of superintendent perceptions regarding alignment of current superintendent evaluation practices in Montana to the Performance Domains and Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge were next compared between Class B and Class C school districts and Class B and Independent Elementary school districts. The t-test revealed no significant differences in any of the comparisons conducted in the analysis of these three school district combinations.

The final comparison conducted between Class C and Independent Elementary school districts also revealed no significant differences between the mean scores of superintendent perceptions in these two school district classifications.

Research Question Four and Analysis

The fourth question addressed through this study was, “Are there differences between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents who jointly establish goals with their school board and those who do not jointly establish goals with their school board regarding the degree of alignment of superintendent evaluation practices to the six Performance Domains established by DiPaola and Stronge (2003)?”

A frequency distribution was conducted that indicated 56 of the superintendents (41.2%) have goals that are established jointly with the school board. This information has been provided in Table 14.

Additionally, an Independent Samples t-test was conducted to determine if there were significant differences between the means of these two categories regarding

alignment of current evaluation practices to the Performance Domains. In the analysis of the data in response to question four, equal variances were not assumed in any of the calculations. The results of the Independent Samples t-test indicated there were no significant differences between the two groups regarding alignment of evaluation practices to the Performance Domains and are provided in Table 18.

Table 18. Results of Independent Samples t-Test for all Superintendents Regarding Domain Alignment to Current Montana Public School Superintendent Evaluation Practices When Goals Established Jointly is Considered.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Diff.
Class AA & A School Districts	Equal variances assumed	1.634	.205	.084	73	.933	.0133	.15861
	Equal variances not assumed			.090	35.660	.929	.0133	.14752

Research Question Five and Analysis

The fifth question addressed through this study was, "Are there differences between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents in the alignment of superintendent evaluation practices to the six Performance Domains based on superintendent longevity?" An Independent Samples t-test was utilized to determine if there were significant differences between the means of the superintendent perceptions. In the analysis of the data in response to question five, equal variances were not assumed in any of the calculations. No significant differences were found in any of the six

combinations that were analyzed to address this question. Information showing the t-scores for each of the combinations of superintendent longevity is provided in Table 19.

Table 19. Results of Independent Samples t-Test for all School District Classifications Regarding Domain Alignment to Current Montana Public School Superintendent Evaluation Practices When Superintendent Longevity is Considered.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Diff.
Years of Experience in the District 0-5 and 6-10	Equal variances assumed	7.631	.007	-.929	122	.354	-.1075	.11566
	Equal variances not assumed			-.809	45.352	.423	-.1075	.13286
Years of Experience in the District 0-5 and 11-15	Equal variances assumed	5.650	.020	-.677	93	.500	-.1854	.27375
	Equal variances not assumed			-.386	3.078	.724	-.1854	.47979
Years of Experience in the District 0-5 and 16+	Equal variances assumed	.041	.840	-.480	94	.632	-.1142	.23804
	Equal variances not assumed			-.444	4.378	.678	-.1142	.25748
Years of Experience in the District 6-10 and 11-15	Equal variances assumed	1.211	.279	-.204	35	.840	-.0779	.38259
	Equal variances not assumed			-.158	3.400	.883	-.0779	.49193

Table 19 Continued

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Diff.
Years of Experience in the District 6-10 and 16+	Equal variances assumed	.866	.358	-.021	36	.984	-.0067	.32800
	Equal variances not assumed			-.024	6.034	.982	-.0067	.27945
Years of Experience in the District 11-15 and 16+	Equal variances assumed	3.668	.097	.140	7	.892	.0711	.50675
	Equal variances not assumed			.132	4.636	.901	.0711	.53911

Summary

This study examined the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents regarding the alignment of existing superintendent evaluation practices to the Performance Domains and Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge (2003). The data collection instrument utilized in this study was the Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes instrument that was divided into three parts.

Part I of the survey instrument collected demographic information about the individual Montana public school district superintendents and the school district they were currently serving. Descriptive statistics that included percentages and frequency

distributions were utilized to describe the current evaluation practices for school district superintendents utilized in Montana public school districts.

Part II of the survey instrument was designed to collect information pertaining to the superintendent evaluation processes and procedures currently utilized in the school district. Descriptive statistics were utilized to present the information collected about the processes and procedures utilized in Montana public school districts to evaluate the performance of the school district superintendent. Mean scores regarding the perceptions of the superintendents were calculated and a t-test of Independent Samples was utilized to determine if significant differences existed between the perceptions of superintendents according to school district classification, when superintendent performance goals are jointly established between the superintendent and school board and when superintendent longevity are considered.

Part III of the survey instrument was designed to gather information about the perceptions of practicing Montana public school district superintendents. This data was specifically collected for further analysis regarding the alignment of current superintendent evaluation practices to the Domains and Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b).

Significant differences were found between AA and A, A and B and A and C school superintendent perceptions when school district classification was considered. No significant differences were identified through the t-test of Independent Samples when superintendent performance goals being established jointly between the superintendent

and school board was considered. Additionally, no significant differences were found when superintendent longevity was considered.

The following chapter will include a discussion of the results of this research, a review of the methodology, conclusions about the findings and discuss the implications of the results. Finally, suggested topics for possible future research are presented.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Montana school districts must be prepared to confront the impending shortage of qualified school superintendents to fill leadership roles in the public school districts of the state. It is hoped that through analyzing and reporting the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents regarding current superintendent evaluation practices in Montana the status of this important school board responsibility will become clear. This will hopefully lead to a better understanding for school boards regarding evaluation of the school superintendent, improved communication between school boards and superintendents, improved superintendent evaluation practices in Montana and increased longevity of Montana public school superintendents thus decreasing the annual number of superintendent vacancies in Montana.

The Administrative Rules of Montana require school trustees to conduct a performance appraisal of the district superintendent. However, there is not a clearly identified or consistent process of superintendent evaluation utilized in the Montana. Additionally, a comprehensive set of standards for trustees to utilize in the development of an evaluation instrument for the school superintendent has not been established by the Montana Legislature or by any of the professional educational organizations in Montana. The problem addressed in this study is that it is unknown by state leaders and policy-makers to what degree, based on the perceptions of practicing Montana public school

superintendents, evaluations of public school district superintendents in Montana are aligned to the six Performance Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b).

A comprehensive and thorough process of evaluating the school district superintendent, which is based on adopted standards for the profession, may improve communication between school boards and superintendents and lead to increased longevity of the superintendent. As Montana school boards prepare to confront the impending shortage of school leaders, increased longevity of the superintendent will decrease the frequency of vacancies in the position of school superintendent. The purpose of this study was to examine to what degree school district superintendent evaluation processes in the State of Montana are aligned with the Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b) as reported by practicing Montana public school district superintendents. It is the work of DiPaola and Stronge that provided the theoretical framework for this study. The five questions addressed through this study are as follows:

1) What are the current superintendent evaluation practices in Montana public school districts?

2) What are the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents regarding the degree of alignment of the evaluation practices utilized in their current school district to the six Performance Domains for evaluating superintendents identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b)?

3) Are there differences between Montana public school district superintendents perceptions of alignment to the six Performance Domains of superintendents from AA, A, B, C and Independent Elementary school districts, as measured by the Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes Survey instrument?

4) Are there differences between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents who jointly establish goals with their board and those who do not jointly establish goals with their board regarding the

degree of alignment of superintendent evaluation practices to the six Performance Domains established by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b)?

5) Are there differences between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents in the alignment of superintendent evaluation practices to the six Performance Domains based on superintendent longevity?

To gather the information necessary to address the purpose of this study a survey instrument was constructed around the Performance Domains and Performance Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b). This Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes Survey instrument was comprised of three parts and distributed to practicing superintendents in the public school districts of Montana. Part I of the survey instrument was designed to collect demographic information about Montana public school superintendents and the school districts they serve. Part II of the survey was designed to collect information regarding the specific evaluation practices utilized in the school district the superintendent currently serves. Part III was designed to gather information regarding the perceptions of practicing Montana public school superintendents about evaluation practices utilized in Montana as they relate to the six Performance Domains established by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b).

The analysis of Part I of the survey, demographic information, was conducted through the use of general descriptive statistics. Frequency distributions and percentages as per the school district classification reported on the survey are provided and discussed. Question 6 of Part I asked about the longevity of the superintendent in the current school district and question 9 of Part I requested the superintendent to identify the school district

classification. Both of these questions were analyzed utilizing a t-test of Independent Samples.

Part II of the survey utilized descriptive statistics to analyze questions 1 through 9. Additionally, question 4 of Part II asked whether the superintendent and school board established goals jointly and a t-test of Independent Samples was also conducted on this question.

Part III of the survey was designed to collect information about the perceptions of practicing public school superintendents regarding alignment of the evaluation instrument currently utilized in their district with the Performance Domains, Standards, and Indicators identified by DiPaola and Stronge. Information gathered through part III of the survey was subjected to analysis through utilization of descriptive statistics.

When the data collected through the survey was analyzed a significant difference was found between AA and A, A and B and A and C school superintendent perceptions regarding alignment of current superintendent evaluation practices utilized in Montana to the Domains and Standards of DiPaola and Stronge when school district classification was considered. However, no significant differences between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents was identified through the t-test of Independent Samples when superintendent performance goals being established jointly between the superintendent and school board was considered. Additionally, no significant differences were found when superintendent longevity in the current school district was considered. A further discussion of the findings, the implications for practice and suggestions for further research is provided below.

Discussion of Findings

The problem addressed in this study is that it is unknown by state leaders and policy-makers to what degree, based on the perceptions of practicing Montana public school superintendents, evaluations of public school district superintendents in Montana are aligned to the six Performance Domains identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b). The Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes Survey instrument was distributed to 182 practicing Montana public school superintendents and 74% of the surveys were completed and returned to provide the data for this study.

Evaluation of the school district superintendent has been established as one of the most important responsibilities a school board trustee is required to complete. Evaluation of the school district superintendent is a tool that can significantly improve communication between the school board and school district superintendent. The first question addressed through this study was what are the current superintendent evaluation practices in Montana public school districts?

Only 8% of Montana school districts do not have policies and procedures in place regarding the evaluation of the school district superintendent and fewer than 5% of Montana school districts do not have a job description for the position of the school district superintendent. Approximately one-half of the superintendents in Montana establish performance goals on an annual basis however, over one-quarter of the superintendents in Montana do not receive a written summary of the superintendent's evaluation.

In school districts without established job descriptions, policies and procedures regarding evaluation of the school district superintendent, how a school board can evaluate the performance of the school superintendent must be questioned. A job description is necessary to outline the minimum expectations for any position in the school district and provided a basis for establishing an evaluation process. Additionally, without established policies and procedures the school board and school superintendent do not have a framework from which to conduct an evaluation. These facts partially explain why over one-quarter of the school superintendents in Montana do not receive a written summary of the superintendent's evaluation. The remainder may be attributed to inadequate practices or a lack of attention to this detail by school boards. The failure of school boards to provide a written summary of the evaluation to the superintendent may affect communication between the parties.

Another area of concern is how a school board can effectively communicate with the superintendent regarding performance if a written summary of the evaluation is not prepared. The Montana School Boards Association, Montana school board trustees and the superintendents of Montana should question how it is possible to effectively communicate with the school superintendent regarding performance when a written summary of the evaluation is not provided. Additionally, the absence of a written summary complicates the issue of how the superintendent can validate improvement in areas of concern that may have been raised during a verbal discussion. This becomes particularly evident when a majority of the school board members may have been newly

elected after the evaluation was discussed between the previous school board and the superintendent.

Neither state law nor the Montana School Accreditation Standards nor the Montana School Boards Association requires training for school board members in the evaluation and supervision of the district superintendent. Only 7% of practicing public school superintendents who responded to the survey indicated that school board members had received adequate training in evaluation of the superintendent. Lay school board members who are not familiar with evaluation of personnel, particularly the position of the school superintendent, are often uncomfortable with this responsibility. School board members may perceive that they do not have the necessary background, skills or knowledge to evaluate the school district superintendent. In circumstances such as this, the ability of school board members to provide a meaningful evaluation that may improve communication and relations between the superintendent and school board is not optimized due to a lack of training and knowledge regarding this responsibility.

The second question addressed through this study was what are the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents regarding the degree of alignment of evaluation practices utilized in their current school district to the six Performance Domains for evaluating superintendents identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b)? According to the perceptions of the Montana public school superintendents who participated in this study the Performance Domains that were most closely aligned to the current superintendent evaluation practices in Montana were in the areas of Planning and Assessment and Instructional Leadership. This seems to be a logical development given the recent impact

of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The NCLB requires school districts to thoroughly review planning activities related to the improvement of instruction and enhancement of student learning. Professional development activities provided for teaching personnel are to be focused and organized around areas in which the district is not making adequate yearly progress. Additionally, the NCLB mandates use of student test scores to identify grades or groups of students who are in need of additional assistance to raise their test scores.

Further, based on the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents and the identified mean scores, the order of alignment of the last four domains is Professionalism, Organizational Management, Communication and Community Relations and Policy and Governance. It is interesting that Montana public school superintendents perceive the Domain of Policy and Governance as least aligned to the Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge. The Domain of Policy and Governance describes the job responsibilities related to policy, governance and the political dimensions of the position.

According to DiPaola and Stronge (2003b), school district governance and administration of the school district according to the adopted school board policies is a primary responsibility of the superintendent. These school board policies provide guidance to the school superintendent about how the school district is to be managed and operated on a daily basis. The perception of Montana school superintendents that this Domain is the least aligned to current superintendent evaluation practices in the state may help to explain why almost 70% of the superintendents have been in their current school

district for five years or less. If the superintendent does not have school board policies to provide guidance for the administration of the school district or if the policies do not clearly represent the expectations of the school board, the superintendent may face numerous instances when operation of the district in accordance with the expectations of the school board is not possible. Failing to operate and manage the school district in the manner the school board prefers will affect whether or not the school board is satisfied with the performance of the superintendent and the renewal of the superintendent's contract.

The Domain of Policy and Governance encompasses the ability of the superintendent to develop policies that define organizational expectations, supervise the daily operations of the school district, provide instructional leadership and work with various individuals and organizations in the community. Poor alignment between the evaluation instrument and expectations of the school board in these areas of policy and governance may contribute to turnover in the position of the superintendent. Additionally, consistent questions from the school board regarding management and operational decisions made by the superintendent may lead to board and superintendent dissatisfaction.

The third question addressed through this study was whether differences between Montana public school district superintendents perceptions of alignment to the six Performance Domains and of superintendents from AA, A, B, C and Independent Elementary school districts, as measured by the Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes Survey instrument? When school district classification was considered a

significant difference between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents regarding alignment to the Domains and Standards was found between superintendents from class A school districts and those from classes AA, B and C school districts. No significant difference was found in the perceptions of superintendents from class A school districts and superintendents from Independent Elementary school districts. The difference between the perceptions of superintendent from class AA and A school districts may be explained because superintendents of larger school districts function in a more specialized capacity. The superintendents of large school districts often times have assistant superintendents in charge of finance, curriculum, elementary and secondary education issues and deal with daily management issues in the district less often. Superintendents of class A school districts frequently deal with the management of these issues on a daily basis and more in depth. Additionally, class A superintendents may be dealing with daily operational and management issues more frequently due to the size of the school district and community.

The difference between the perceptions of superintendents from class A school districts and those from class B and C school districts may be explained because superintendents of class B and C school districts deal with a wider range of issues more frequently than superintendents of class A school districts. Superintendents of smaller school districts are more involved on a daily basis in athletic programs, student discipline, transportation, school food and building maintenance issues to name a few than superintendents of class A school districts. On a daily basis**,** superintendents of class B and C school districts also work more closely with a larger segment of school district

employees than superintendents of class A school districts. This is evidenced in Table 14 by the fact that evaluation processes in class B and C school districts utilized input from other groups more often than evaluation processes for superintendents from class A school districts.

The fourth question addressed through this study investigated differences between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents who jointly establish goals with their board and those who do not jointly establish goals with their board regarding the degree of alignment of superintendent evaluation practices to the six Performance Domains established by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b)? No significant differences were identified between the perceptions of superintendents when this variable was considered. It was anticipated that a significant difference between superintendents who jointly establish goals with their board and those who do not jointly establish goals with their board would be identified. However, the aggregated mean scores for all 135 superintendents who responded to the survey revealed little or no alignment between current superintendent evaluation practices in Montana and the six Domains developed by DiPaola and Stronge. The ability to identify a significant difference was likely impacted by the fact that little or no alignment exists between current superintendent evaluation practices and the Standards and Domains that provided the theoretical basis for this study.

The fifth question addressed through this study analyzed differences between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents in the alignment of superintendent evaluation practices to the six Performance Domains based on superintendent longevity?

No significant differences were identified between the perceptions of superintendents when this variable was considered.

It was anticipated that significant differences would be found between the perceptions of superintendents with less than 10 years of longevity and those with more than 10 years of longevity in the same school district. However, 124 of the survey participants (91.8%) had less than 10 years of longevity in their current school district and 9 (6.7%) had 10+ years of longevity in their current school district. The ability to identify a significant difference was likely impacted by the small number of Montana school superintendents with more than 10 years of longevity (Table 8).

Summary of Findings

The previous section discussed findings of the research conducted for this dissertation. It is interesting that even though the vast majority of Montana public school districts have policies governing evaluation of the superintendent, over 25% of superintendents who responded to the survey indicated they do not receive a written summary of the evaluation. It was also illuminating that only 7% of superintendents responding to the survey indicated that school board members possessed adequate training in the evaluation of the superintendent. Also, while there were significant differences between the perceptions of class A superintendents and those from class AA, B and C school districts, there were no significant differences between any other comparisons of school district classification. Last, according to the perceptions of practicing Montana superintendents, the Domain of Policy and Governance is least

aligned to current evaluation practices utilized in Montana. The following sections will discuss the implications for practice and provide recommendations for further research

Implications For Practice

The literature review of this dissertation explained that evaluating public school district superintendents is one of the most important responsibilities school trustees undertake. While this study revealed that most public school superintendents in Montana receive an annual evaluation, a uniform evaluation process for Montana public school superintendents has not been established in Montana. Additionally, there are no adopted state standards establishing the responsibilities of the school district superintendent. The following text will focus on the implications of the findings of this study.

As a group, the median age of school superintendents of this nation is increasing and the information for Montana is similar. Sixty percent of the Montana public school superintendents who provided information for this study are over fifty years of age and seventy percent have over twenty-one years of experience in public education. The public school superintendents of Montana are an aging group with a majority of them eligible to retire in the very near future.

There is a shortage of school superintendents in the nation and State of Montana. Further, there is a shortage of individuals in Montana currently certified as school superintendents who aspire to the position. The information obtained through this study revealed that the vast majority of school superintendents in Montana have served their existing school district for less than ten years. As there is a shortage of school

administrators in the nation and in Montana this fact should be of concern to the Montana University System, Office of Public Instruction and professional educational organizations of Montana.

Virtually all Montana public school districts will be seeking to replace the school district superintendent in the next ten years. Recruitment of school district superintendents looms as a major challenge for the public school districts of Montana. It would be beneficial to Montana public school districts if the frequency of hiring a new school district superintendent could be decreased. Improved communication between the school district superintendent and the school board may lead to improved job satisfaction for the superintendent and increase longevity in the school district. Communication between the school district superintendent and school board can be enhanced through a thorough and well-designed process for evaluating the performance of the superintendent.

Communication has been described as the most important element in developing and maintaining a positive working relationship between the school superintendent and school board trustees. Evaluation of the school district superintendent has been established as a mechanism that will improve communication between the two parties. Evaluation of the school district superintendent could improve relations and communication between the school district superintendent and school board, improve superintendent job satisfaction and extend the longevity of the school district superintendent. This would decrease the number of times it is necessary to hire a new superintendent.

There is not a uniform process for evaluating the public school district superintendents in Montana. An evaluation instrument that has been legitimized and validated by the Montana University System, the School Administrators of Montana or the Montana School Boards Association does not exist. Further, standards for the position of the school district superintendent do not exist in Montana. An evaluation instrument that is connected to state and/or national standards would assist the trustees in conducting a meaningful assessment of the performance of the school district superintendent.

The School Laws of Montana identify eight activities that a school district superintendent in Montana must do and they range from curricular issues to selecting textbooks and reporting student enrollment. The Montana Association of School Superintendents should take a leadership role in establishing statewide standards for the position of the school district superintendent. Working in conjunction with the Montana Board of Public Education and Montana Legislature statewide standards could be developed and adopted. The standards should be aligned to nationally recognized standards such as those approved by the AASA or the standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b).

Utilizing nationally recognized standards for the development of evaluation instruments and processes for evaluating the school district superintendent will enable the school board to assess whether the evaluation is focused on management skills, leadership skills, a combination of the two or other issues. School boards that develop superintendent evaluation processes tied to specific standards may improve

communication between the school superintendent and school board. Through an evaluation process that fosters improved communication and positive superintendent/board relations the tenure of the school district superintendent may be increased. DiPaola and Stronge have identified Policy and Governance; Planning and Assessment; Instructional Leadership; Organizational Management; Communication and Community Relations and Professionalism as the six Performance Domains that should be present in an evaluation instrument for the school district superintendent.

The public school superintendents of Montana should insist that school boards establish a job description for the position. Without a job description the responsibilities of the school superintendent remain unclear. A school board can govern more effectively when it is aware of and establishes the responsibilities of the position. After the role of the school district superintendent is clearly established school boards can then initiate the process of establishing a strong appraisal system to evaluate the performance of the school district superintendent that is designed around state adopted standards for the position.

Working in conjunction with the Montana School Boards Association the School Administrators of Montana professional association should develop a model evaluation instrument, aligned to adopted statewide standards, for school boards to utilize in the development of a superintendent evaluation document. Additionally, a procedure for developing the evaluation instrument should be established to assist school boards in revising or developing the superintendent evaluation process and documents to be utilized. Over 25% of Montana public school districts will be revising the superintendent

evaluation instrument within the next five years and approximately 25% were in the process of revising the instrument when the survey for this dissertation was distributed. A model evaluation instrument and procedure for developing an evaluation instrument would be particularly useful to the Montana public school districts that intend to revise the evaluation instrument for the superintendent in the near future.

Montana school boards are required to evaluate the performance of the school district superintendent. School boards should also be required to provide the superintendent with a written summary of the annual evaluation. This written summary should explain the areas of strength and areas where improvement is needed. This will not only assist the superintendent in addressing the areas of concern but may lead to increased job satisfaction and longer tenure in the district.

School board members in Montana should be required to receive training in the supervision and evaluation of the school district superintendent. Only 7% of Montana superintendents perceive that their school board members have adequate training to conduct an evaluation of the school district superintendent. Training in evaluation of the school superintendent could easily be provided on a regional basis through the Montana School Boards Association and included in the agenda at the annual Montana Conference for Educational Leadership.

In the absence of leadership from the Montana School Boards Association and the School Administrators of Montana, the responsibility for guaranteeing school boards are properly trained in superintendent evaluation rests with the school superintendents. Superintendents should exert more influence and become assertive in assuring that school

boards receive training in establishing effective superintendent evaluation practices. Montana superintendents should seek training in superintendent evaluation and how utilization of national standards can improve the value and meaning of evaluation for school boards and superintendents. Improved standards based evaluation practices will improve communication between the superintendent and school board, increase superintendent longevity, contribute to successful reform efforts and effect the success of the school district.

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is the state agency empowered to recommend administrative rules regarding education for consideration by the Board of Public Education. The OPI should immediately prepare administrative rules for consideration by the Board of Public Education that require Montana school boards to develop superintendent evaluation instruments that are based on nationally accepted standards for the position. A requirement that school boards utilize standards to evaluate superintendents may lead to development of a model superintendent evaluation instrument and improved evaluation practices specifically designed to advance superintendent performance and positively impact student achievement. Additionally, the OPI should immediately prepare administrative rules for consideration by the Board of Public Education that require Montana school boards to receive two hours of annual training in evaluation of superintendents and require verification of training on the annual Fall Report. The ultimate objective of evaluating the superintendent is to contribute to the success of the school district and positively impact student achievement. When superintendent evaluations are not connected to standards for the profession the purpose

and value of the evaluation must be questioned. Succinctly, if a standards based evaluation process is not being utilized, why is the superintendent being evaluated?

Recommendations for Further Research

The students of the Montana public school districts deserve strong administrative and educational leadership in the school district. In fact, the demands of the NCLB will require that Montana public school superintendents possess strong educational leadership skills. There is a shortage of school administrators in Montana and a well designed, standards based process of evaluating the school superintendent may help to prevent unnecessary vacancies in the position of the school district superintendent. Based on this study and its findings further research is required in the following areas:

This study asked Montana public school superintendents about their perceptions regarding alignment of the superintendent evaluation instrument to the Domains and Standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge. A study regarding the perceptions of school board members or, more specifically, school board chairs should be conducted to determine if there are any correlations between the two groups.

This study identified that class B and Class C school districts were more likely to utilize comments from other groups than the school board when formulating the superintendent's evaluation. Further research should be conducted to determine why class AA and A and independent elementary school districts in Montana utilize other sources less frequently than class B and C school districts.

Montana school boards are required to establish procedures for the evaluation of all school district personnel. Currently, alignment of superintendent evaluation processes in Montana to state or national standards for the position is not required. Additionally, there is no requirement for school board members to be trained in evaluation of the school superintendent. Further, there is no requirement for school board members to be trained about the existence of state or national standards that may assist them in evaluating the superintendent. Since Montana school boards are not aligning superintendent evaluation practices to standards for the position, Montana superintendents should insist that it be done. However, the results of the survey indicate that Montana superintendents are not insisting that superintendent evaluations be aligned to standards for the position. Since Montana superintendents are not insisting upon alignment of superintendent evaluation practices to standards for the position and superintendents are responsible for evaluating school district principals, the education community should wonder whether principal evaluations in Montana are aligned to any standards for the position. Alignment of principal evaluation process to state or national standards is not currently required in Montana. Research should be conducted to determine if Montana superintendents have aligned principal evaluation processes to national standards.

This study has identified that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents who jointly establish performance goals with the school board and those who do not jointly establish performance goals with the school board regarding alignment of their evaluation instrument to the standards

developed by DiPaola and Stronge. Further research should be conducted to determine if the evaluation process or longevity is improved when there are established superintendent performance goals and when these goals are established jointly between the school superintendent and school board.

An evaluation process based on national or state standards provides the school board with a theoretical basis on which the superintendent can be evaluated. Further research should be conducted to determine if the public school districts in the state utilized any standards for the position of school superintendent when the current evaluation processes were designed. Further, research should be conducted to determine if superintendent longevity is increased in school districts that utilize an evaluation instrument aligned to nationally accepted standards for the position when compared to superintendent longevity in school districts that utilize an evaluation instrument not aligned to nationally accepted standards for the position.

Survey responses from Montana superintendents indicated they perceive the Domain of Policy and Governance to be the least aligned to the current Montana superintendent evaluation practices. This might indicate superintendents perceived their school boards were actively involved in the school district on a daily basis. Research should be conducted to determine why Montana superintendents have this perception and determine if it is related to a belief by superintendents that school boards are micromanaging the school districts of the state.

Summary

Evaluation of the public school district superintendent is one of the most important responsibilities of an elected Montana school board member. The problem addressed in this study is that it is unknown by state leaders and policy-makers to what degree, based on the perceptions of practicing Montana school superintendents, evaluations of school district superintendents in Montana are aligned to the six Performance Domains and thirty Performance Standards identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b). The purpose of this study was to examine to what degree school district superintendent evaluation processes in the State of Montana are aligned with the Domains and Standards identified by DiPaola and Stronge (2003b) as reported by practicing Montana school district superintendents. Understanding the perceptions of Montana public school superintendents about the performance appraisals they receive assists in understanding the current status of public school superintendent evaluations practices and procedures in Montana.

This study provides a more clear understanding of the current practices and procedures in Montana regarding school superintendent evaluation and contributes to the knowledge about public school superintendent evaluation in general and in Montana specifically. As such, it may be utilized to promote and/or foster improvements in the superintendent evaluation practices and procedures currently utilized in Montana.

The evaluation instrument utilized for evaluating the school district superintendent should be aligned to state or national standards and serve as a mechanism to improve communication between the school board and superintendent. This improved

communication may lead to better relations between the parties, improved job satisfaction for the school district superintendent and increased superintendent tenure in the school district. It is hoped that through this study improvements will be made to the practices and procedures for evaluating the school superintendent so the process is more meaningful and beneficial to superintendents and school boards alike.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS STANDARDS AND COMPETENCIES FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

1992 AASA STANDARDS AND COMPETENCIES FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

SUPERINTENDENT STANDARDS

- Leadership and District Culture.
- Policy and Governance.
- Communications and Community Relations.
- Organizational Management.
- Curriculum Planning and Development.
- Instructional Management.
- Human Resources Management.
- Values and Ethics of Leadership.

SUPERINTENDENT STANDARDS AND COMPETENCIES

Standard: Leadership and District Governance

- Demonstrates an awareness of international issues affecting schools and students.
- Maintain personal, physical and emotional wellness.
- Promote and model risk taking.
- Facilitate comparative planning between constituencies.
- Promote the value of understanding and celebrating school/community cultures.

Standard: Policy and Governance

- Describe the system of public school governance in our democracy.
- Relate local policy to state and federal regulations and requirements.
- Describe procedures to avoid civil and criminal liabilities.

Standard: Communications and Community Relations

- Demonstrate an understanding of political theory and skills needed to build community support for district priorities.
- Demonstrate that good judgment and actions communicate as well as words.
- Develop formal and informal techniques to gain external perceptions of district by means of surveys, advisory groups and personal contact.
- Communicate and project an articulate position for education
- Write clearly and forcefully.
- Demonstrate formal and informal listening skills.
- Identify political forces in the community.
- Identify the political context of the community environment.
- Formulate strategies for passing referenda.
- Identify, track and deal with issues.

Standard: Organizational Management

- Define the major components of quality management.
- Discuss legal concepts, regulations and codes for school operations.
- Describe the process of delegating responsibility for decision-making.
- Use technological applications to enhance administration of business and support systems.
- Demonstrate planning and scheduling of personal time and organization.

Standard: Curriculum Planning and Development

- Develop core curriculum design and delivery systems for diverse school communications.
- Describe curriculum planning/future methods to anticipate occupational trends and their educational implications for lifelong learners.
- Demonstrate an understanding of instructional taxonomies, goal objectives and processes.
- Describe cognitive development and learning theories and their importance to the sequencing of instruction.
- Demonstrate an understanding of child and adolescent growth and development.

- Describe a process to create developmentally appropriate curriculum and instructional practices for all children and adolescents.
- Demonstrate the use of computers and other technologies in educational programming.
- Conduct assessments of present and future student learning needs.
- Develop a process for faculty input in continued and systematic renewal to ensure appropriate scope, sequence and content.
- Demonstrate an understanding of curricular alignment to ensure improved student performance and higher order thinking.

Standard: Instructional Management

- Demonstrate an understanding of motivation in the instructional process.
- Describe classroom management techniques and theories.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the development of the whole student including the physical, emotional, cognitive and linguistic needs.
- Describe instructional strategies that include multicultural sensitivity and diverse learning styles.
- Exhibit applications of computer technology connected to instruction programs.
- Describe how to interpret and use testing/assessment results to improve education.
- Demonstrate knowledge of research findings on the use of a variety of instructional strategies.

Standard: Human Resources Management

- Demonstrate knowledge of adult learning theory and motivation.
- Diagnose and improve organizational health and morale.
- Demonstrate personnel management strategies.
- Understand alternate benefit packages.
- Assess individual and institutional sources of stress and develop methods for reducing stress (e.g. counseling, diet and exercise programs).
- Demonstrate knowledge of pupil personnel service and categorical programs.

Standard: Values and Ethics of Leadership

- Describe the role of schooling in a democratic society.
- Describe a strategy to promote the value that moral and ethical practices are established and practiced in each classroom and school.
- Describe a strategy to ensure that diversity of religion, ethnicity and way of life in the district are respected.
- Formulate a plan to coordinate social, health and community agencies to support each child in the district.

APPENDIX B

DIPAOLA AND STRONGE RECOMMENDED SUPERINTENDENT DOMAINS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

DIPAOLA AND STRONGE RECOMMENDED SUPERINTENDENT DOMAINS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

SUPERINTENDENT DOMAINS

Domain G: Policy and Governance
Domain A: Planning and Assessment
Domain L: Instructional Leadership
Domain M: Organizational Management
Domain C: Communications and Community Relations
Domain P: Professionalism

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION CRITERIA: DOMAINS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Domain G: Policy and Governance

Performance Standard G-1

The superintendent works with the school board to develop and implement policies that define organizational expectations. The superintendent:

- Supports and enforces all school board policies and informs all constituents of changes to the school board policies.
- Recommends changes to the school board when school board policies conflict with the school board's vision for education.
- Develops administrative regulations that support the application of school board policies.
- Recommends policies and procedures that protect the security and integrity of the district infrastructure and the data it contains.
- Recommends policies and procedures that protect the rights and confidentiality of staff and students.

- Maintains/improves relations between the superintendent and school board through periodic joint seminars, workshops and training sessions.

Performance Standard G-2

The superintendent functions as the primary instructional leader for the school district, relying on support from staff as necessary when advising the school board. The superintendent:

- Involves staff as necessary when planning/providing recommendations to the school board.
- Demonstrates professional and personal skills, which facilitate staff involvement.
- Responds directly and factually to the school board.
- Demonstrates tact when offering recommendations.

Performance Standard G-3

The superintendent oversees the administration of the school district's day-to-day operations. The superintendent:

- Explores/applies operational methods, which enable the school district to apply resources in an efficient manner.
- Keeps the school board informed on needs and issues confronting school district employees.
- Informs the school board of actions that require school board involvement.
- Delegates authority and responsibility to other employees as needs/opportunities arise.

Performance Standard G-4

The superintendent works with all individuals, groups, agencies, committees and organizations to provide and maintain schools that are safe and productive. The superintendent:

- Ensures safe, secure schools for all students and employees.
- Proposes improvements to school facilities, increasing public confidence and trust that schools are safe and effective learning environments.
- Uses technology to enhance professional practices and increase productivity.

Domain A: Planning and Assessment

Performance Standard A-1

The superintendent effectively employs various processes for gathering, analyzing and using data for decision making. The superintendent:

- Applies current research related to effective techniques for gathering data from individuals, groups, programs and the community.
- Uses reliable data in making decisions.
- Reviews analyses of student academic achievement through standardized test results and other academic sources.
- Provides staff with data in a collaborative effort to determine needs for improvement.
- Applies and communicates statistical findings to identify strengths and weaknesses in programs and practices in order to ensure continuous improvement.
- Plans and implements changes in programs and/or curricula based on data.
- Reviews annual analyses of district's test and subtest scores by school and discipline in order to assess school improvement and monitor improvement plans.
- Develops monitors and assesses district and school improvement plans.

Performance Standard A-2

The superintendent organizes the collaborative development and implementation of a district strategic plan based on analysis of data from a variety of sources. The superintendent:

- Provides leadership in the development of a shared vision for educational improvement and of a strategic plan to attain that vision.
- Implements strategies for the inclusion of staff and various stakeholders in the planning process.
- Supports the district's mission by identifying, articulating and planning to meet the educational needs of students, staff and other stakeholders.
- Works collaboratively to develop long and short-range goals and objectives consistent with the strategic plan and monitors progress in achieving long and short-range goals and objectives.
- Provides feedback to principals on goal achievement and needs for improvement.
- Supports staff through the stages of the change process.
- Maintains stakeholder's focus on long-range mission and goals throughout the implementation process.

Performance Standard A-3

The superintendent plans, implements, supports and assesses instructional programs that enhance teaching and student achievement of the state educational standards. The superintendent:

- Demonstrates a working knowledge and understanding of the state educational standards and district curricular requirements.
- Supports the development of a comprehensive curriculum utilizing goals and objectives in alignment with the state educational standards.
- Oversees the planning, implementation, evaluation and revision of the curriculum on a systematic and ongoing basis.
- Provides resources and materials to accomplish instructional goals for all students.
- Facilitates programs/curricular changes to meet state or federal requirements.
- Monitors and assesses the effect of the programs and/or curricula on student achievement.

Performance Standard A-4

The superintendent develops plans for effective allocation of fiscal and other resources. The superintendent:

- Acquires, allocates and manages district resources in compliance with all laws to ensure the effective and equitable support of all of the district's students, schools and programs.
- Allocates resources consistent with the mission and strategic plan of the district.
- Meets and works collaboratively with the board and appropriate staff to determine priorities for budgeting and for the effective allocation of space and human resources.
- Utilizes human and material resources outside the district that may support and/or enhance the achievement of goals and objectives.
- Provides adequate staffing and other resources to support technology infrastructure and integration across the school district.
- Monitors/assesses resource allocation and revises allocation plans based on implementation data.
- Oversees budget development and prepares it for school board approval.
- Implements the annual school operating budget and capital improvement plan.

- Applies financial forecasting and planning procedures that support efficient use of all school district resources.
- Maintains appropriate and accurate financial records.

Domain L: Instructional Leadership

Performance Standard L-1

The superintendent communicates a clear vision of excellence and continuous improvement consistent with the goals of the school district. The superintendent:

- Demonstrates personal commitment to achieving the mission of the school district.
- Articulates a shared vision to all constituencies and ensures that staff members are working in concert with the district's strategic plan.
- Informs members of the board and community of current research related to best practices in curriculum and instruction.
- Explores, disseminates and applies knowledge and information about new or improved methods of instruction or related issues.
- Shares evaluation data and subsequent plans for continuous
- Recognizes, encourages and celebrates excellence among staff and students.
- Demonstrates strong motivation and high standards and models self-evaluation.
- Fosters positive morale and team spirit.

Performance Standard L-2

The superintendent oversees the alignment, coordination and delivery of assigned programs and/or curricular areas. The superintendent:

- Articulates curricular goals, objectives and frameworks to staff and other stakeholders.
- Works with staff to develop a written plan for the coordination and articulation of curricular goals.
- Works with the board, staff and community representatives to identify needs and determine priorities regarding program delivery.
- Provides directions and support in planning and implementing activities and programs consistent with continuous improvement efforts and attainment of instructional goals.
- Monitors coordination of instructional programs with state and local standards.
- Facilitates the effective coordination and integration of district curricular and co-curricular programs.

- Reviews an annual analysis of the school vision's test and subtest scores by school and discipline in order to assess and monitor school improvement.
- Demonstrates an understanding of occupational trends and their educational implications.

Performance Standard L-3

The superintendent selects, inducts, supports, evaluates and retains quality instructional and support personnel. The superintendent:

- Maintains and disseminates a current handbook of personnel policies and procedures.
- Establishes and uses selection procedures that ensure fairness and equity in selecting the best candidates.
- Makes recommendations regarding personnel decisions consistent with established policies and procedures.
- Oversees the recruitment, appointment, induction and assignment of the most qualified personnel available.
- Establishes and implements formal and informal induction procedures to promote assistance for and acceptance of new employees.
- Sets high standards for staff performance.
- Evaluates performance of personnel consistent with district policies, provides formal and informal feedback and maintains accurate evaluation records.
- Provides support and resources for staff to improve job performance and recognizes and supports the achievements of highly effective staff members.

Performance Standard L-4

The superintendent provides staff development programs consistent with program evaluation results and school instructional improvement plans. The superintendent:

- Leads the development and implementation of a systematic professional development plan for individuals, including members of the board, and for the district.
- Works collaboratively with members of the staff in using student achievement data to determine relevant professional development opportunities.
- Meets with principals regularly to assess ongoing school improvement efforts.
- Evaluates the effectiveness of the professional development plan in relation to district goals.

- Encourages participation in relevant conferences, course work and activities of professional organizations.
- Shares program evaluation results and demonstrates connection of results to ongoing staff development efforts.
- Supports staff participation in internal and external professional development opportunities as appropriate.

Performance Standard L-5

The superintendent identifies, analyzes and resolves problems using effective problem-solving techniques. The superintendent:

- Identifies and addresses problems in a timely and effective manner.
- Demonstrates fairness in identifying multiple points of view around problem situations.
- Involves stakeholders in analyzing problems and developing solutions.
- Monitors implementation of problem resolutions.
- Provides shared leadership and decision-making opportunities for staff that promote a climate of collaboration and collegiality.
- Delegates responsibility appropriately to staff members.
- Maintains focus on school and district mission and goals.
- Promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy.

Performance Standard L-6

The superintendent assesses factors affecting student achievement and serves as an agent of change for needed improvements. The superintendent:

- Makes appropriate changes in the curriculum and scheduling.
- Optimizes available physical resources.
- Adjusts placement of students.
- Adjusts personnel assignments.
- Provides appropriate training for instructional personnel.

Performance Standard L-7

The superintendent ensures that curricular design, instructional strategies and learning environments integrate appropriate technology to maximize student learning. The superintendent:

- Provides equitable access for students and staff to technologies that facilitate productivity and enhance learning.

- Communicates expectations that technology will be used to increase student achievement.
- Ensures that budget priorities reflect a focus on technology as it relates to enhanced learning.
- Provides technology-rich learning experiences for all students.

Domain M: Organizational Management

Performance Standard M-1

The superintendent actively supports a safe and positive environment for students and staff. The superintendent:

- Facilitates the implementation of sound, research-based theories and techniques of classroom management, student discipline and school safety to ensure a safe, orderly environment conducive to teaching and learning.
- Clearly communicates expectations regarding behavior to students, staff, parents and other members of the community.
- Clearly communicates procedures for handling disciplinary problems.
- Implements and enforces school district code of conduct and appropriate disciplinary policies and procedures in a timely and consistent manner.
- Supports effective programs through which students develop self-discipline and conflict resolution skills.
- Calmly and effectively manages emergency situations as they occur.
- Is proactive in addressing potential problem situations.
- Consistently conveys mutual respect, concern and high expectations to students, staff, parents and community members.
- Recognizes students and staff for their academic, co-curricular, personal and professional achievements.

Performance Standard M-2

The superintendent develops procedures for working with the board of education that define mutual expectations, working relationships and strategies for formulating district policies. The superintendent:

- Respects the policymaking authority and responsibility of the board.
- Develops and uses a systematic means of keeping members of the board informed with complete, accurate information.
- Facilitates the delineation of superintendent and board roles and the articulation of mutual expectations.
- Recommends policy additions and/or modifications to improve student learning and district effectiveness.

- Anticipates future needs and demonstrates a bias for action.
- Values group interaction and problem solving.
- Expresses opinions on policy issues directly to the board.
- Supports and implements policy established by the board.

Performance Standard M-2

The superintendent effectively manages human, material and financial resources to ensure student learning and to comply with legal mandates. The superintendent:

- Complies with federal, state and local statutes, regulations, policies and procedures.
- Collaboratively plans and prepares a fiscally responsible budget to support the organization's mission and goals.
- Demonstrates effectiveness in obtaining necessary resources.
- Establishes and uses accepted procedures for receiving and disbursing funds.
- Ensures that expenditures are within limits approved by the board.
- Implements appropriate management techniques and group processes to define roles, delegate activities and responsibilities and determine accountability for goal attainment.
- Prepares and implements snort and long-range plans for facilities and sites.
- Ensures proper maintenance and repair of district property and equipment.
- Monitors any construction, renovation or demolition of district buildings.
- Regularly reports to the board on the financial condition of the district.
- Monitors the efficient use of resources.
- Works with staff to establish an effective schedule for use of shared resources.
- Ensures the maintenance of accurate personnel records.

Performance Standard M-4

The superintendent demonstrates effective organizational skills to achieve school, community and district goals. The superintendent:

- Demonstrates and communicates a working knowledge and understanding of school district policies and procedures.
- Ensures compliance and follow-through regarding policies and procedures.

- Uses time to best advantage, manages schedule effectively and follows tasks to completion.
- Employs appropriate technologies to communicate, manage schedules and resources and assess performance and enhance learning.
- Performs duties in an accurate and timely manner.
- Maintains appropriate and accurate records.
- Efficiently and appropriately priorities and addresses multiple issues and projects.
- Systematically evaluates progress on achieving established goals.
- Keeps the board, staff and community apprised of progress in achieving the district's goals.

Performance Standard M-5

The superintendent implements sound personnel procedures in recruiting, employing and retaining the best-qualified and most competent teachers, administrators and other personnel. The superintendent:

- Knows and follows proper procedures for staffing.
- Recruits and assigns the best available personnel in terms of personal and professional competence.
- Establishes and uses selection procedures that ensure fairness and equity in selecting the best candidates for employment and promotion.
- Establishes and implements formal and informal induction procedures for new employees.
- Assigns and transfers employees as the needs of the school district dictate and reports such information to the school board.

Performance Standard M-6

The superintendent provides staff development for all categories of personnel consistent with individual needs, program evaluation results and instructional improvement plans. The superintendent:

- Oversees the planning and development of the staff development program.
- Works collaboratively with members of the staff in using student achievement data to identify relevant professional development needs.
- Encourages and supports employee participation in appropriate internal and external development opportunities.
- Maintains an emphasis on technological fluency and provides staff development opportunities to support high expectations.

Performance Standard M-7

The superintendent plans and implements a systematic employee performance evaluation system. The superintendent:

- Establishes a fair and meaningful employee evaluation system that promotes high expectations of all staff.
- Establishes evaluation procedures that assess demonstrated growth in achieving technology standards.
- Provides training for all administrative and supervisory personnel in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and administrative performance that includes student achievement as a criterion.
- Provides for positive recognition of identified strengths and accomplishments.
- Provides assistance to employees requiring remediation.
- Provides oversight in the identification of strengths and weaknesses of employees, formal and informal feedback and dismissal of ineffective employees.
- Provides an annual report to the school board summarizing the results of employee evaluations.

Domain C: Communications and Community Relations

Performance Standard C-1

The superintendent promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations within the school district. The superintendent:

- Promotes a climate of trust and teamwork within the district.
- Facilitates constructive and timely communication.
- Initiates communication and facilitates cooperation among staff regarding curriculum of program initiatives.
- Establishes a culture that encourages responsible risk taking while requiring accountability for results.
- Models professionally appropriate communication skills, interpersonal relations and conflict mediation.
- Maintains visibility and accessibility to staff.
- Solicits staff input to discuss issues and goals and to promote effective decision-making.
- Establishes and maintains a collaborative relationship with staff members in promoting the district's mission in communicating expectations.

Performance Standard C-2

The superintendent establishes and maintains effective channels of communication with board members and between the schools and community,

strengthening support of constituencies and building coalitions. The superintendent:

- Accepts responsibility for maintaining communication between the board and district personnel.
- Anticipates, analyzes and discusses emerging educational/district issues with the board on a regular basis.
- Systematically provides accurate, relevant information to the board to facilitate decision-making,
- Establishes, maintains and evaluates a planned, two-way system of communication with community constituencies.
- Communicates school and district goals, objectives and expectations to stakeholders.
- Is politically astute and demonstrates the skills necessary to build community support for district goals and priorities.
- Works cooperatively with representatives of the news medial
- Establishes partnerships with public and private agencies to enhance the district's ability to serve students and other constituencies.
- Uses acceptable written and oral language.

Performance Standard C-3

The superintendent works collaboratively with staff, families and community members to secure resources and to support the success of a diverse student population. The superintendent:

- Is responsive to the conditions and dynamics of the diversity within the school community.
- Treats people with respect.
- Models and promotes multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and the appreciation of the diversity in the community.
- Is knowledgeable about laws regarding individual and group rights and responsibilities and scrupulously avoids actions that might violate them.
- Collaborates with staff, families and community leaders and responds to identified needs of individual students and groups of students.
- Promotes the value of understanding and celebrating school/community cultures.

Performance Standard C-4

The superintendent creates an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect with staff and community. The superintendent:

- Unites people toward a common goal.

- Fosters an environment conducive to the teaching and learning process.
- Promotes collaboration and collegiality among the staff.
- Treats all personnel fairly without favoritism or discrimination while demanding high-performance standards.

Domain P: Professionalism

Performance Standard P-1

The superintendent models professional, moral and ethical standards as well as personal integrity in all interactions. The superintendent:

- Understands and models appropriate value systems, ethics and moral leadership.
- Promotes the establishment and application of moral and ethical practices in each school and classroom.
- Relates to board members, staff and others in an ethical and professional manner.
- Maintains the physical and emotional wellness necessary to meet the responsibilities of the position.
- Serves as an articulate spokesperson for the school district and represents the district favorably at the local, state and national level.
- Resolves concerns and problems in an appropriate manner.
- Respects and maintains confidentiality and assumes responsibility for personal actions and those of subordinates.
- Maintains a professional demeanor and appearance appropriate to responsibilities.
- Demonstrates good character and integrity.

Performance Standard P-2

The superintendent works in a collegial and collaborative manner with school personnel and the community to promote and support the mission and goals of the school district. The superintendent:

- Demonstrates flexibility and a collaborative attitude in supporting professionals/other staff/work teams.
- Supports the district and advances its mission/goals.
- Establishes and supports a district culture that encourages collaboration and teamwork in achieving goals.
- Maintains effective working relationships with other administrators and staff.

- Shares ideas and information and considers the interests and needs of staff members and community stakeholders in promoting and supporting district goals and services.

Performance Standard P-3

The superintendent takes responsibility for and participates in a meaningful and continuous process of professional development that results in the enhancement of student learning. The superintendent:

- Participates in professional growth activities, including conferences, workshops, course work and/or membership in professional organizations at the district, state and/or national levels.
- Evaluates and identifies areas of personal strength and weakness related to providing district leadership.
- Sets goals for improvement of skills and professional performance.
- Maintains a high level of personal knowledge regarding new developments and techniques, including technology and shares the information with appropriate staff.
- Comprehends and applies current research on educational issues, trends and practices.
- Networks with colleagues to share knowledge about effective educational practices and to improve and enhance administrative knowledge, skills and organizational success.
- Maintains proper licensure and certification.

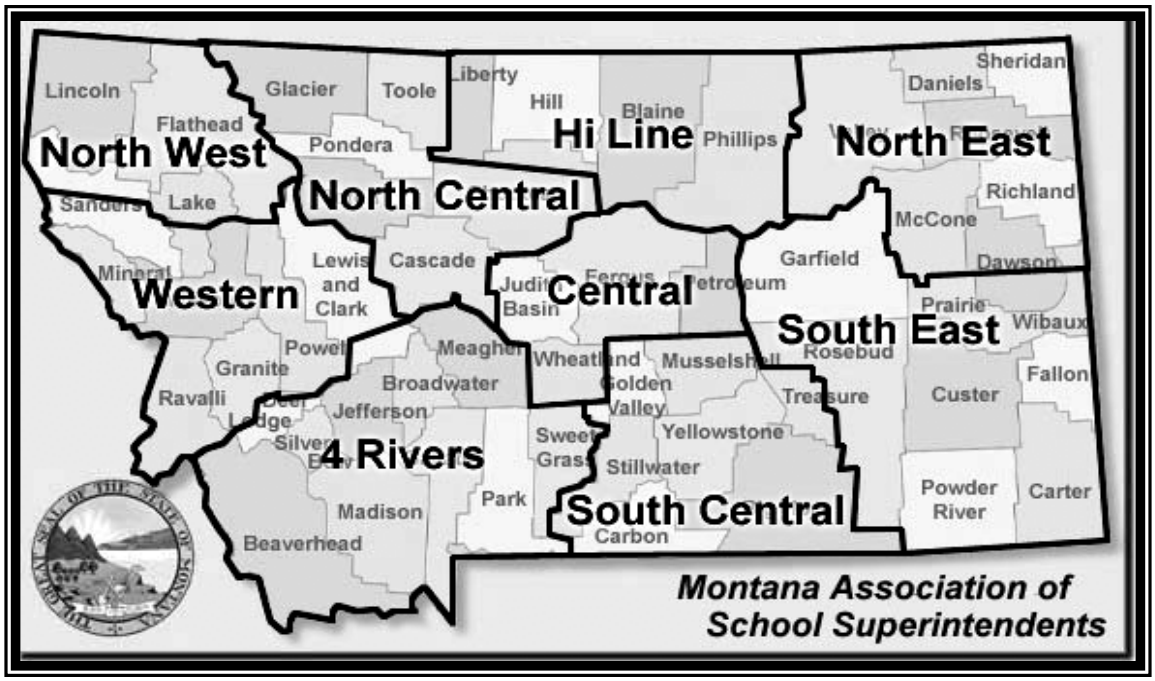
Performance Standard P-4

The superintendent provides services to the profession, the district and the community. The superintendent:

- Serves on district, state and/or national committees and maintains an active role in professional organizations.
- Contributes to and supports the development of the profession by serving as an instructor, mentor, coach, presenter, researcher or supervisor.
- Organizes, facilitates and presents at local, state and/or national conferences.
- Supports and participates in efforts to align district goals and activities with community endeavors.

APPENDIX C

MASS REGIONS



Source: Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (http://virtual.state.mt.us)

APPENDIX D

MONTANA SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION PROCESSES SURVEY

Survey #:

Montana Superintendent Evaluation Processes: A Survey of Montana Superintendents

Please complete the following survey and return in the postage paid envelope by April 30, 2004.

The purpose of this survey is to learn more about the processes utilized to evaluate superintendent performance in Montana public school districts. Information obtained will be used to report the alignment of these processes to standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge in (2003). All responses to the survey are guaranteed confidentiality. The survey number is utilized for tracking of responses only to prevent duplication.

Part I: Demographic Information - Please check (√) one item for each of the following questions

1. Gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. What is your age? ☐ Under 30 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60 +
3. How many years do you have in public education? ☐ 0-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31+
4. How many years do you have as a school superintendent? ☐ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21+
5. How many years was the previous superintendent in your present district?
   ☐ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16+
6. How many years do you have as superintendent of your current district? ☐ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16
7. Number of years the current evaluation process has been in place?
   ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16+ ☐ No Evaluation ☐ don't know
8. Number of years before the evaluation process will be revised?
   ☐ In process ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16+ ☐ don't know
9. District classification? ☐ AA ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ Independent

Elementary

Part II: Superintendent Evaluation Questions - The following questions pertain to the superintendent evaluation processes and procedures utilized in your school district. **For each item, please check (√) the process or procedure that best describes superintendent evaluation in the district.** Evaluation refers to processes utilized to assess the performance of the school district superintendent.

1. Does your district have developed procedures and policies for evaluation of the superintendent?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No **(If NO skip to question # 3)**
2. Did you elect to have the presentation of the evaluation results conducted in an open meeting or executive session of the Board of Trustees?

☐ Open Meeting ☐ Executive Session

3. Are performance goals for the superintendent established annually?

☐ Yes ☐ No **(If NO skip to question # 5)**

4. Are the goals established jointly by the superintendent and School Board?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Does your district have a job description for the superintendent?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Does the superintendent complete a self-evaluation regarding his/her performance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. How often does the superintendent meet with the school board to discuss his/her performance during a school year?

☐ Once Annually
☐ Semi-Annually
☐ Quarterly
☐ Monthly
☐ Never
☐ Other Please Explain_____

8. During the evaluation of the superintendent what other groups or individuals are formally involved in providing information to the school board? **Please check (√) ALL methods that apply.**

☐ Other District Administrators ☐ Teacher's Union
☐ Certified Staff but not the union ☐ Classified Staff
☐ Students ☐ Parent Organizations (PTA)
☐ Community Members ☐ Community Groups (Kiwanis, Lions, Elks)
☐ None ☐ No Evaluation
☐ Unknown

9. Do the trustees create a summary written report during or at the conclusion of the evaluation process?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Are school board members provided with training regarding the process of evaluating the superintendent?

☐ Adequate Training

☐ Some Training

☐ Little Training

☐ No Training

Part III: Evaluation Instrument Assessment – DiPaola and Stronge have identified six domains for describing the major aspects of the job of a school superintendent. Within each domain are performance standards and performance indicators. Each of the six domains is presented along with the performance standards and examples of the performance indicators associated with each standard. **Performance standards** are the job responsibilities performed by the school superintendent. **Performance indicators** are contained in the superintendent evaluation instrument and describe the types of performance associated with the standard.

Directions: Using the scale below and based on your perceptions of your district's current superintendent evaluation process, please rate how completely your district's current superintendent evaluation process assesses the standards and indicators for the school superintendent.

SELECTION SCALE

Fully assess candidate in this area	4
Somewhat assess candidate in this area	3
Little assessment of candidate in this area	2
No assessment of candidate in this area	1

ASSESSMENT

Domain G- Policy and Governance: This domain describes the job standards related to the policy, governance and political dimensions of the position.	**Selection Assessment Level**
Performance Standard G1-*The superintendent works with the board to develop and implement policies that define organizational expectations.* ▪ supports and enforces all school board policies; recommends changes to school board policy; develops administrative rules that support school board policy; recommends policies that protect the rights and confidentiality of staff and students and protects district infrastructure and data; improves relations between the board and superintendent through seminars workshops and training sessions.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 1 None
Performance Standard G2 - *The superintendent functions as the*	**Circle One**

primary instructional leader for the school district. ▪ involves staff as necessary in planning and makes recommendations to the board; demonstrates professional skills, personal skills and tact; responds directly and factually to the board.	Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard G3- ***The superintendent oversees the day-to-day operations of the school district.*** ▪ applies methods that guarantee efficient use of district resources; informs the board of needs and issues ensuring that the board is informed of actions requiring board involvement.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard G4- ***The superintendent works with individuals, groups and committees to guarantee schools that are safe and productive.*** ▪ ensures schools are safe and secure and proposes facility improvements that increase public trust that schools are safe learning environments; uses technology to enhance professional practices and productivity.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1

Directions: Using the scale below and based on your perceptions of your district's evaluation process, please rate how completely your district's current evaluation process for the school superintendent assesses the standards and indicators for the school superintendent.

SELECTION ASSESSMENT SCALE

Fully assess candidate in this area	4
Somewhat assess candidate in this area	3
Little assessment of candidate in this area	2
No assessment of candidate in this area	1

Domain A- Planning and Assessment: This domain includes the job standards for assessing instructional programs and personnel for developing plans to promote student learning.	**Selection Assessment Level**
Performance Standard A1- ***The superintendent employs various processes for gathering, analyzing and using data for decision-making.*** ▪ applies current research related to effective data gathering processes; uses reliable date in decisions regarding student achievement, test scores and school discipline; uses data to identify strengths and weaknesses and ensure continual improvement; communicates data to staff to identify needs and implement program changes.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard A2- T*he superintendent organizes the collaborative development of the district strategic plan based on analysis of data from various sources.* ▪ provides leadership in developing the shared vision of the strategic plan; implements strategies for staff and stakeholder inclusion in planning; collaboratively develops long and short-term goals; maintains focus on long range mission and supports staff through change process.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard A3- ***The superintendent plans, implements, supports and assesses instructional programs that enhance teaching and***	**Circle One**

student achievement. ▪ oversees planning, implementation and revision of curriculum; demonstrates knowledge and understanding of state standards and alignment of the curriculum with the standards; assesses effect of programs and curriculum on student achievement; provides resources to accomplish instructional goals.	Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard A4- ***The superintendent develops plans for effective allocation of fiscal and other resources.*** ▪ manages resources in accordance with all laws to guarantee support of district programs; effectively manages the budget and resources consistent with strategic plan; oversees budget development and presentation to the board; assess and revise resource allocation based on implementation data; collaboratively establishes priorities for budgeting and effective allocation of resources.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1

Directions: Using the scale below and based on your perceptions of your district's evaluation process, please rate how completely your district's current evaluation process for the school superintendent assesses the standards and indicators for the school superintendent.

SELECTION ASSESSMENT SCALE

Fully assess candidate in this area	4
Somewhat assess candidate in this area	3
Little assessment of candidate in this area	2
No assessment of candidate in this area	1

Domain L- Instructional Leadership: This domain relates to providing vision, direction, motivation and support in the areas of personnel, curriculum and staff development to achieve the district's mission and goals for the explicit purpose of enhancing instructional programs.	**Selection Assessment Level**
Performance Standard L1- ***The superintendent communicates a clear vision of excellence and continuous improvement.*** ▪ demonstrates strong motivation, high standards and personal commitment to achieving mission; celebrates excellence; articulates a shared vision aligned with the strategic plan and based on best practices in curriculum and instruction;	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard L2- ***The superintendent oversees the alignment, coordination and delivery of programs and curriculum.*** ▪ articulates curricular goals to staff and stakeholders; works with board, staff and community to identify priorities; assures coordination of curricular goals; provides leadership on planning for continuous improvement; effectively coordinates district curricular and co-curricular programs.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1

Performance Standard L3- ***The superintendent selects and retains quality instructional and support staff.*** ▪ oversees recruitment and assignment of personnel; sets high standards for staff performance; evaluation, selection and personnel recommendations are based on established policies; maintains and distributes personnel policies and procedures; provides support to improve staff performance.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 None 1
Performance Standard L4- ***The superintendent provides staff development programs consistent with program evaluation results and instructional improvement plans.*** ▪ develops and implements a plan of systematic staff development; supports staff participation in professional development activities; evaluates the effectiveness of the professional development plan.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 None 1
Performance Standard L5- ***The superintendent identifies, analyzes and resolves problems using effective problem solving techniques.*** ▪ identifies problems in a timely manner; demonstrates fairness, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy; maintains focus on district mission and goals; monitors implementation of problem resolution.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 None 1
Performance Standard L6- ***The superintendent assesses factors affecting student achievement and serves as an agent of change.*** ▪ adjusts placement of students and personnel assignments; makes appropriate changes in curriculum and provides appropriate staff development activities.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 None 1
Performance Standard L7- ***The superintendent ensures the curricular design instructional strategies and learning environment integrate technology to maximize student learning.*** ▪ provides technology rich environment for the students within budget limitations; ensures budget priorities reflect a focus on technology; communicates expectation that technology will be used to enhance learning.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 None 1

Directions: Using the scale below and based on your perceptions of your district's evaluation process, please rate how completely your district's current evaluation process for the school superintendent assesses the standards and indicators for the school superintendent.

SELECTION ASSESSMENT SCALE

Fully assess candidate in this area	4
Somewhat assess candidate in this area	3
Little assessment of candidate in this area	2
No assessment of candidate in this area	1

Domain M- Organizational Management: This domain relates to supporting, managing and directing the operations and functions of the organization.	**Selection Assessment Level**

Performance Standard M1- ***The superintendent actively supports a safe and positive environment for all staff and students.*** ▪ implements research based theories for classroom management and student discipline to ensure a safe environment; clearly communicates expectations for student behavior; implements district code of conduct and disciplinary policies and procedures; recognizes student and staff achievements.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 1 None
Performance Standard M2- ***The superintendent establishes procedures for working with the board that define mutual expectations and working relationships for developing policies.*** ▪ respects policy making authority of board; supports and implements all policies; anticipates future needs and makes policy recommendation for new or revised policies.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 1 None
Performance Standard M3- ***The superintendent manages all resources to ensure student learning and compliance with legal mandates.*** ▪ monitors efficient use of resources within limits established by the board; regularly reports the financial condition of the district to the board; plans and prepares a fiscally responsible budget; ensures proper maintenance and repair of district property, facilities and equipment.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 1 None
Performance Standard M4- ***The superintendent demonstrates effective organizational skills to achieve school, community and district goals.*** ▪ evaluates progress on achieving goals and communicates progress to stakeholders; can manage and prioritize multiple projects and follows them through to completion; uses time to best advantage.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 1 None
Performance Standard M5- ***The superintendent implements sound personnel procedures in recruiting and retaining the best qualified school district personnel.*** ▪ recruits and assigns best available personnel; selection process is thorough and fair; assigns and transfers employees to meet the needs of the district.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 1 None
Performance Standard M6- ***The superintendent provides staff development consistent with individual needs, program evaluation results and instructional improvement plans.*** ▪ oversees planning and evaluation of staff development; uses student achievement data to identify professional development needs; supports employee participation in professional development activities.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 1 None
Performance Standard M7- ***The superintendent plans and implements a systematic employee performance evaluation system.*** ▪ evaluations processes are fair and meaningful, assess growth, and promote high expectations for staff; provides positive reinforcement for strengths; allows for remediation when needed.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 1 None

Directions: Using the scale below and based on your perceptions of your district's evaluation process, please rate how completely your district's current evaluation process for the school superintendent assesses the standards and indicators for the school superintendent.

SELECTION ASSESSMENT SCALE

Fully assess candidate in this area	4
Somewhat assess candidate in this area	3
Little assessment of candidate in this area	2
No assessment of candidate in this area	1

Domain C- Communications and Community Relations: This domain includes the standards for demonstrating effective communication that promotes understanding, support and improvement of the district programs and services.	**Selection Assessment Level**
Performance Standard C1- ***The superintendent promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations within the school.*** ▪ models appropriate communication skills; maintains visibility and promotes a climate of trust; initiatives communication about curriculum and program initiatives; is accessible to staff.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard C2- ***The superintendent maintains effective channels of communication with school board members, between schools and the community.*** ▪ is politically astute and has skills to build community support; works with local media; establishes a two-way system of communication; provides accurate information to the board; accepts responsibility for maintaining communication between board and personnel; uses acceptable language.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard C3- ***The superintendent works with staff and community to secure resources to support success of a diverse student population.*** ▪ models and promotes multicultural awareness and the values of understanding and mutual respect; is responsive to conditions and dynamics of the school diversity; is knowledgeable about the law.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard C4- ***The superintendent creates an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect with the staff and community.*** ▪ unites people toward common goals; treats all people fairly; fosters an environment conducive to teaching and learning; prevents favoritism or discrimination and promotes high-performance standards.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1

Directions: Using the scale below and based on your perceptions of your district's evaluation process, please rate how completely your district's current evaluation process for the school superintendent assesses the standards and indicators for the school superintendent.

SELECTION ASSESSMENT SCALE

Fully assess candidate in this area	4
Somewhat assess candidate in this area	3
Little assessment of candidate in this area	2
No assessment of candidate in this area	1

Domain P- Professionalism: This domain includes standards for demonstrating a commitment to professional ethics while advancing the mission of the organization.	**Selection Assessment Level**
Performance Standard P1- ***The superintendent models professional, moral and ethical standards as well as personal integrity.*** ▪ models appropriate values system, ethics and morals; maintains a professional demeanor; demonstrates good character and integrity; maintains personal physical and emotional wellness.	**Circle One** Fully 4 3 2 1 None
Performance Standard P2- ***The superintendent works in a collegial manner with school personnel and community to achieve the mission and goals of the district.*** ▪ establishes a culture of collaboration; shares ideas and information and consider needs of stakeholders; supports and advances district mission and goals; works effectively with other administrators.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard P3- ***The superintendent participates in a meaningful and continuous process of professional development that enhances student learning.*** ▪ evaluates and identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses; sets personal goals for improvement of performance; participates in professional growth activities; maintains proper licensure and certification.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1
Performance Standard P4- ***The superintendent provides service to the profession, the district and the community.*** ▪ serves on district, state or national committees; provides presentations at local, national or state levels; supports development of the profession by serving as a mentor, presenter, researcher or supervisor.	**Circle One** Fully None 4 3 2 1

Thank you for your time and assistance in completing this survey!!
Please return completed survey in the postage paid, self-addressed envelope to: Douglas W. Sullivan RR 2 Box 2247, Sidney, MT 59270

APPENDIX E

MONTANA SUPERINTENDENT PILOT COVER LETTER

<Date>

<Name>
<School>
<Mailing Address>
<City, State Zip Code>

Dear Colleague,

I am in the process of completing a doctoral degree program through MSU Bozeman and am interested in examining the area of evaluation of school superintendents in Montana. The problem of my study is that it is unknown to what degree school superintendent evaluations in Montana are aligned to certain national standards. In 1992 the AASA developed a set of eight professional standards and corresponding competencies for the profession of the school superintendent. Utilizing these standards, DiPaola and Stronge conducted a national study of superintendent evaluation. This study examined the alignment of state evaluation practices with the AASA standards and ultimately led DiPaola and Stronge to develop a superintendent evaluation handbook and corresponding standards in 2003. It is this work by DiPaola and Strongs that is providing the theoretical framework for my study. Improving the superintendent evaluation processes utilized in Montana may lead to improved communication between the school board and superintendent which may, in turn, increase superintendent longevity and job satisfaction.

The enclosed survey is designed to assess the perceptions of practicing Montana school superintendents regarding the alignment of current superintendent evaluation processes to the standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge. **Completion of the survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time.** In addition to completing the survey, I request that you make note of any of the following encountered in completing this pilot survey. Some specific examples of possible problems are provided below.

- **Problems regarding the directions for the completion of survey questions.**
- **Problems regarding the questions and responses associated with a question.**
- **Problems with the drafted cover letter that will accompany the final survey.**

Please feel free to make editing suggestions on the enclosed survey. Your completion of the survey and identification of any problems encountered while completing the survey will be used to construct the final survey. Additionally, you will be assisting in determining the current state of affairs regarding evaluation of the school superintendents in Montana.

To complete the survey, please read the instructions carefully, since the response format differs for each section. The survey number will be used only to exclude your name from follow-up mailings. The confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed. **Please return your completed survey in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope by no later than April ??, 2004 (or as soon as possible).**

I thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in responding to the superintendent evaluation survey and its return.

Sincerely,

Douglas W. Sullivan

APPENDIX F

MONTANA SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION
PROCESSES SURVEY COVER LETTER

<Date>

<Name>
<School>
<Mailing Address>
<City, State Zip Code>

Dear Colleague,

I am in the process of completing a doctoral degree program through MSU Bozeman and am interested in examining the area of evaluation of school superintendents in Montana. The executive directors of the School Administrators of Montana and the Montana School Boards Association have endorsed this project. Arrangements have been made with Darrell Rud to make the results of the study available through the SAM web-site upon completion of the study.

In 1992 the AASA developed a set of eight professional standards and corresponding competencies for the profession of the school superintendent. Utilizing these standards, DiPaola and Stronge conducted a national study of superintendent evaluation. This study examined the alignment of state evaluation practices with the AASA standards and ultimately led DiPaola and Stronge to develop a superintendent evaluation handbook and corresponding standards in 2003. It is this work by DiPaola and Stronge that is providing the theoretical framework for my study. Improving the superintendent evaluation processes utilized in Montana may lead to improved communication between the school board and superintendent that may, in turn, increase superintendent longevity and job satisfaction.

The enclosed survey is designed to assess the perceptions of practicing Montana school superintendents regarding the alignment of current superintendent evaluation processes to the standards developed by DiPaola and Stronge. **Completion of the survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time.** Your participation through completion of the survey will aid in examining the current state of superintendent evaluation practices in Montana.

To complete the survey, please read the instructions carefully, since the response format differs for each section. The survey number will be used only to exclude your name from follow-up mailings. The confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed. **Please return your completed survey in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope by no later than May 7, 2004 (or as soon as possible).**

I thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in responding to the superintendent evaluation survey and its return.

Sincerely,

Douglas W. Sullivan