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Political Activity as Advocacy: Through the Eyes of the Illinois Superintendent

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

POLITICAL ACTIVITY AS ADVOCACY: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE
ILLINOIS SUPERINTENDENT

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

BY

JULIE FOGARTY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY 2011

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I am grateful to the 11 superintendents who were kind enough to agree to be part of my research study. I appreciate the demands of their schedules and owe them a debt of gratitude for their willingness to share their perspectives. Without their gracious participation, this study would not have been completed.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to expand the research concerning Illinois School Superintendents' perceptions of the importance of understanding, responding to and influencing the political context of schools in Illinois. The overarching research question for this study asked: What are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning? The findings for this study were gathered through interviews with eleven active Superintendents in Lake County, Illinois. Interview transcripts were compared to the literature review including the political and economic climate in Illinois, networking, lobbying and working with legislators, and professional organizations. They were also compared to the information on the websites of the various professional organizations to which the research participants identified membership. Finally, the research findings were reviewed in light of the conceptual framework of social justice and equity.

Research findings include the following. Many Illinois superintendents belong to the Illinois Association of School Administrators, the American Association of School Administrators, ED-RED, FED ED, Phi Delta Kappa, ASCD, Illinois Association of School Business Officials and their County Superintendents' Group. Illinois superintendents perceived their membership in professional organizations provides them benefits through lobbying efforts in Springfield, providing professional development, and

networking opportunities. The majority of Illinois superintendents perceived networking to enhance their ability to advocate for resources and services. Networking primarily enhanced their advocacy ability through providing information on how other superintendents have handled similar situations. It also reduced the loneliness inherent in the position. However, Illinois superintendents have mixed feelings about lobbying and working with legislators. Whereas they understood the potential positive benefits of lobbying of affecting policy and educating legislators about the impact of legislation, their experience has been that legislators do not listen, let party politics interfere with making good decisions for education, and that other lobby groups with more available funding sources can out-sway legislators. Finally, Illinois superintendents recognized the importance of networking with all stakeholder groups depending on the nature of the issue for which they are advocating.

Implications for further research, policy and practice are presented in the final chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The School Superintendent

The superintendent is the instructional leader of the district as well as its chief executive officer. It is the superintendent's responsibility to create a plan that will accomplish the vision of the board of education. This responsibility entails the facilities, communicating the vision with all stakeholders, and hiring the appropriate personnel to carry out the vision. It is not an easy task (Cambron-McCabe, 2005).

The Illinois School Code outlines the general duties and responsibilities of the superintendent (105 ILCS 5/10-21.4, 2010). Each individual school district and school board creates their own idea of the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent based on the needs of the district. When a search firm is utilized, a leadership profile is generally created. The leadership profile is developed through focus groups representing various stakeholder groups in the district. The search firm consultant will first meet with the board and develop a plan. Next they interview the board, staff, community representatives and other stakeholders to understand what the "ideal" candidate would be for the district. Then they develop a leadership profile based on the information gleaned through the interviews. Finally, the consultant will present the leadership profile to the board. If the board approves the selection criteria outlined in the leadership profile, the search firm consultants proceed with publicizing the vacancy and leadership profile

(Hazard et al., 2009). The practice makes sense in a system that emphasizes the importance of local control.

This study proposed to expand the research concerning Illinois School Superintendents' perceptions of the importance of understanding, responding to and influencing the political context of schools in Illinois. The overarching research question for this study asked: What are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning?

School Leader Standards

Education leadership is more important than ever. States recognize that schools and districts will not meet the ever-increasing demands of accountability for improving student achievement without effective school leaders. In 1996, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) published a document titled, *The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders* (referred to as *ISLLC 1996*). Since that time, 43 states have used the document to help formulate their own standards. For example, the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards Matrix, 2nd Edition, was created in 2002.

In 2008, the CCSSO published *ISLLC 2008*, an updated version of the standards that is more policy driven and is reflective of the past decade of research on what makes a successful education leader. According to a Wallace Foundation study (2006), there are three main system elements that determine the quality of school leadership. The most important of the three is “standards that spell out clear expectations about what leaders

need to know and do to improve instruction and learning and that form the basis for holding them accountable for results.”

ISLLC 2008 is designed to serve as a broad set of national guidelines that states could use as a model for developing or updating their own standards. Because improving student achievement at the state level requires coordinated policies to cultivate excellent leadership at the school and district levels, policy standards establish common goals for policymakers and organizations as they form policies regarding school leadership and set statewide goals for school leadership development (CCSSO, 2008).

The six standards for education leaders focus on instructional leadership, management, professional development, working with families, ethics and understanding the political, social, economic and cultural contexts surrounding schools.

Standard Six

Standard Six of *ISLLC 2008* is

An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Functions as defined by the CCSSO are the “action or actions for which a person or thing is responsible” (CCSSO, 2008). The functions associated with Standard Six are:

1. Advocate for children, families, and caregivers.
2. Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning.

3. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies.

The corresponding Standard Six of the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards Matrix is

Standard Six-The Political, Social, Economic, Legal and Cultural Context: a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Knowledge indicators associated with Standard Six of the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards Matrix include the administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

1. Principles of representative governance that undergrid the system of American schools.
2. The role of public education in developing and renewing a democratic society and an economically productive nation.
3. The law as related to education.
4. The political, social, cultural and economic systems and processes.
5. Models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural, and economic contexts of schooling.
6. Global issues and forces affecting teaching and learning.
7. The dynamics of policy development and advocacy under our democratic political system.

Performance indicators include the administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

1. Communication occurs among the school community concerning trends issues, and potential changes in the environment in which school operate.
2. There is ongoing dialogue with and between representatives of diverse community groups.
3. The school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state and federal authorities.
4. Public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students.
5. Lines of communication are developed with decision-makers outside the school community (ISBE website, 2009).

The first step to addressing this standard is to understand the political, social, economic, legal and cultural context. The social and cultural contexts vary from community to community, and district to district. However, the political and economic constructs in Illinois schools are defined by school code. In Article 3 of the Illinois School Code, educational service regions are distinguished according to county lines. A city with a population of 500,000 or more would be its own region. As a result, the city of Chicago is considered differently than all other regions in Illinois. Illinois in effect is broken into Chicago and Downstate School Districts (all districts other than Chicago Public Schools). Articles 33 and 34 of the Illinois School Code further outline the board of education processes for Downstate districts and Chicago Public Schools respectively (Illinois School Code, 1961).

Political Context

Illinois schools are based on the concept of local control. Each local community determines how it will teach the state standards and create policies to address state mandates. The local board of education is the governing body that makes these decisions. “The local school board is the creation of the state and the delegated authority to govern the school district within the laws, rules, and regulations developed by the state legislature, U.S. Congress, the State Board of Education, and other relevant state agencies” (Everett, 1995).

“The board is legally responsible to the state for school district operations and politically responsible to local voters. The local board is the point where local citizens have direct control over education in their district, including financial matters” (Everett, 1995). The local board of education is generally comprised of seven elected individuals. It is the Board of Education’s responsibility to hire the school superintendent. The school superintendent is placed in a unique employment situation. It is hard to think of any other like it in the world. Most people report to one direct supervisor in their job or career. However, the superintendent is hired by and reports to the board, similar to a CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of a business. Her work is approved or challenged by any one or several of the seven members, sometimes on a daily basis (Cambron-McCabe et al., 2005).

In order to successfully navigate this unique employment relationship, communication becomes key. Establishing a trusting, collaborative relationship between school board members and between the school board and the superintendent becomes one

of the most essential priorities of the superintendent. To build trust, the superintendent must continually focus on coaching, training, and responding to board members' needs (Townsend et al., 2007). The superintendent's tenure demands that she satisfy the expectations of the board (Cambon-McCabe et al., 2005). The effective superintendent places priority on building solid relationships with board members. The power of relationships is the key to being a trustworthy and trusting leader. Trust does not automatically spring from the ground. It must be nurtured. To earn trust, a superintendent must work at it every day. "Trusting others is built upon relationships. When you have a close relationship, trust follows" (Rosberg et al., 2006, p. 92). Trust is the one thing that has the potential to create success and prosperity in every avenue of life. It affects the quality of every interaction, communication, relationship, work project, or career venture in which we engage (Covey, 2006). To be an effective leader, trust is a key, necessary element. Trust is built through keeping promises, consistency between words and actions and consciously paying attention to relationships (Rosberg et al., 2006).

Part of building trust is getting to personally know the board members; their motivations for being on the board, their interests, goals, passions and personal agendas (Townsend et al., 2007). Savvy superintendents begin this learning process during the interview. They are looking for a "match" with the board of education. A good match is not a scientific process, yet it is critical and is often identified by a "feel." The "feel" evolves during the first stages of the communication process with the board. It is during the interview process that the nature of the superintendent-board relationship is revealed.

Board members assess whether candidates meet their expectations desired in the leadership profile. Meanwhile, the candidate is gathering information on how the board works with a superintendent and assesses the dynamics among board members. When the chemistry clicks between both parties, it is a match (Townsend et al., 2007).

“The board-savvy superintendent makes governance a top priority. This means that the superintendent devotes the time required to become a true expert in education’s complex, rapidly changing field. He or she regularly dedicates a large chunk of time—somewhere in the range of 20 to 25%—to working directly with the board. The board-savvy superintendent is a board capacity builder par excellence” (Eadie & Houston, 2003, pp. 56-57).

Maintaining and continuing to develop effective communication practices with the board is an imperative responsibility of the superintendent. “A strong, clear plan of coordinated communication activities with the board is critical to a successful and dynamic relationship” (Townsend et al., 2007, p. 6). Steps of this plan include gathering information about each board members interests, goals and motivations for working on behalf of the district’s children and families (Townsend, et al, 2007), establishing the ground rules, in writing, of your relationship with the board, getting the board to agree on its priorities and using those priorities as a touchstone when assessing requests from the board for staff work (Cambron-McCabe et al., 2005).

Finally, since board members are elected officials, the possibility of a changing board is a reality during each election season. The effective superintendent needs a plan to prepare potential board members for the role they are campaigning to assume. “When

faced with an election, contentious or otherwise, superintendents help themselves and the district by thoroughly preparing every candidate for the roles and responsibilities of being a school board member. The preparation begins prior to the election with comprehensive candidate training and a professional development plan for the first year of board service” (Townsend et al., 2007, pp. 8-9). “Establishing a positive, open relationship with every candidate helps those who are elected be better prepared to join the governance team. Through the training process, they develop a greater depth of knowledge, which allows them to better inform their constituency regarding district operations” (Townsend et al., 2007, p. 10).

New board members experience a learning curve before board service becomes familiar and intuitive. Oftentimes, the learning curve is exasperated by the reality that the board member’s previous experiences do not easily translate into the new role of board service. The role of the board is primarily strategic in that it takes a look at the big picture, looking into the future and encompassing all aspects of the organization and all entities in the community. Many board members come from a profession in which their role is more tactical or operational. Learning the behaviors and skills needed to be a strategic planner and staying out of the tactical or operational aspects of the decisions can be a difficult switch for many new board members (Van Clay & Soldwedel, 2009). It becomes imperative for the superintendent to assist board members in understanding their roles and helping them through the learning curve. Failure to effectively communicate and prepare the board members for their new roles or building the basis of a trusting

relationship often results in a superintendent looking for a new job after a new board is appointed (Townsend et al., 2007).

Economic Context

As with the political context, there is a large emphasis on local control/responsibility when it comes to the economic context of school funding in Illinois. Therefore it is necessary for the school superintendent to understand the system for school funding in Illinois. Illinois schools receive revenue from local, state and federal sources. Approximately 62% of statewide total school revenues come from local sources in Illinois compared to 44% for schools in the United States. The state's share of school revenue runs about 30% while the federal share is about 8% (Fritts, 2008). In Illinois, there is a continued strong reliance on property taxes as the primary source of school funding.

School system funding in the state of Illinois is further complicated by the type of district organization (elementary, high school, or unit), the county-wide property tax laws and the county-wide property tax wealth per student. Depending on within which category each district falls the parameters of the tax and general state aid are defined. School districts receive general state aid on a sliding scale basis determined by the amount of local property tax resources available to support a child's education. General state aid is the money paid to each school district from the state based on the district's average daily attendance from the previous school year (Fritts, 2008). General state aid is divided into three categories. Depending upon its local property wealth, each district is eligible for the foundation, alternate method or flat grant formula. The foundation grant

is applied to school districts with low local wealth/financial ability. The alternate method grant funnels money to districts with a moderate level of local wealth. The flat grant districts receive minimal state support due to high levels of local wealth (Everett, 1995).

Each year the foundation level is set by the state legislature. The 2009-2010 Foundation Level was \$6,119 per student. Most districts qualify for funding under the foundation formula. Districts that qualify for the foundation level have available local resources per student less than 93% of the foundation level. General state aid then provides them with the funds to equal the foundation level per student. The next formula is the alternate formula. Districts qualifying for this formula have local wealth at least 93% of the foundation level but less than 175% of the foundation level. The alternate formula provides between 5-7% of the foundation level per student to the district. In 2009-2010, this would calculate to roughly \$306-\$428 per student. The final formula is for districts whose local property wealth is more than 175% of the foundation level. This formula is known as the flat grant formula. The flat grant formula provides \$218 per student in general state aid (as retrieved from www.isbe.state.il.us/funding/html/gsa.htm on March 26, 2010; Fritts, 2008).

To further complicate matters, some counties in Illinois are subject to Property Tax Extension Limitation Law, commonly referred to as tax caps. The purpose of tax caps is to limit the growth of property taxes. The tax cap controls school property tax revenues in several ways (Fritts, 2008):

- By limiting the increase in total tax extensions to the lesser of five percent or the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate of inflation.

- By tending to reduce tax rates from year to year in areas where the inflationary growth in property values is greater than the CPI inflation rate.
- By limiting or curtailing the issuance of certain forms of bonds that, prior to the enactment of the tax cap, could be issued without a referendum.
- A district subject to tax cap laws may not levy for a fund it has never used or for a fund subject to backdoor referendum it has not levied in the last three years without voter approval.

The tax cap limits the increase of the total extensions to the *lesser* of 5% or the 12-month rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index. The rate has not reached five percent since the inception of the cap (Fritts, 2008).

The tax caps cause school districts significant problems. First, school districts are not allowed to access the full value of their Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) unless the increase in EAV is less than the 5% or is the rate of inflation, whichever is less. Second, for general state aid purposes, the actual EAV is used in determining the calculation. This results in the district appearing wealthier per weighted student and receiving less state aid (Everett, 1995). Finally, the tax cap formula does not take into account any changes in a district's demographics or changes in needs for educational programs within a district. For example, if a district experiences an increase in its English Language Learners, and as a result needs to implement programs as outlined by school code, it must do so within its existing budgetary framework. The district would not be able to levy additional local resources to provide the required programs needed to address the needs of its changing population.

It is vital that a superintendent understands and can effectively communicate to stakeholders the sources of funding in Illinois and their limitations. Since the tax extension from the previous year becomes the starting point the following year, a mistake in the levy accumulates from year to year (Fritts, 2008). Therefore, it is imperative that the superintendent understands this taxing and budgetary process and captures every dollar available to her district.

Mishandling the budgets is one of the surest ways for a superintendent to lose her job (Cambron-McCabe et al., 2005). It will not matter if the chief financial officer was in charge of the budget. All that will matter is that the board and the superintendent did not meet their fiduciary responsibilities to the local taxpayers. The message is clear: Get on top of district finances. If you don't understand school finance, then learn it (Cambron-McCabe et al., 2005).

The State of Illinois

In addition to understanding the local political and economic context of Illinois school systems, it is also important for the superintendent to understand the broader context of politics and economics in the state of Illinois. In light of the recent governor's impeachment and upcoming court case and a long history of "pay to play" politics and former governors' incarcerations, politics in Illinois has become synonymous with corruption. In April, 2009, Rod Blagojevich, who had been impeached as the Illinois governor earlier that year, was indicted on 16 counts of racketeering, fraud, and corruption. Federal prosecutors labeled his racketeering scheme the "Blagojevich Enterprise" (Coen & Pearson, 2009, p. 1). "The primary purpose of the Blagojevich

Enterprise was to exercise and preserve power over the government of the State of Illinois for the financial and political benefit of Rod Blagojevich, both directly and through Friends of Blagojevich, and for the financial benefit of his family members and associates,” the indictment alleged (p. 1). Prosecutors alleged that Blagojevich and his confidants conspired to enrich themselves before his election as governor in November 2002, even striking a deal to divide the spoils after he left the state’s highest office (Coen & Pearson, 2009). It is not surprising most people believe that civic, and especially political, leadership lack a moral and ethical foundation (Rosborg et al., 2006).

The current economic picture in Illinois is equally bleak. In July 2009, Illinois officials approved a budget based on borrowing \$3.5 billion to pay for routine government services. Additionally, \$3.2 billion dollars in invoices to businesses providing services to the state remained unpaid. The budget included \$2.1 billion in spending cuts with a potential \$1.1 billion in additional cuts later in the year. Governor Quinn had yet to provide a plan to address the \$11.6 billion deficit he inherited when taking over the office (Baram, 2009). With education accounting for roughly 37% of the Illinois General Fund expenditures, it does not appear as if the Illinois government can meet their current fiduciary responsibilities let alone provide additional relief to local school districts. Education has barely maintained its limited share of the state’s budget, let alone become a priority over any of the other demands for state dollars. In fact between 1976 and 1995, state funding for education in real terms declined by 25% (Everett, 1995).

Additionally, in January 2010, the Illinois State Legislature passed Public Act 096-0861, referred to as the Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010. In this Act, the General Assembly finds and declares:

- “Effective teachers and school leaders are a critical factor contributing to student achievement.”
- Many existing performance evaluations fail to distinguish between effective and ineffective teachers and principals.
- “Performance evaluation systems must assess professional competencies as well as student progress.”
- Performance evaluation systems must be valid, reliable and contribute to staff development and improved student achievement (Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010).

With this legislation, student achievement data became a significant factor in teacher and principal evaluations. The level of accountability increased. Student achievement data have not yet been tied to superintendent evaluation, at least not legislatively; however, there is no law precluding it if a school board were so inclined. Additionally, the law does require superintendents to complete a training program based on the principal evaluation template. Therefore, the superintendent will be held accountable for interpreting the accountability measures set forth in the evaluation system.

Superintendent as Advocate

So with the knowledge and understanding of the political and economic contexts of Illinois schools, how does a superintendent use and respond to that information for the purpose of advocating for children, acting to influence decisions affecting student learning, and assessing, analyzing, and anticipating emerging trends and initiatives? What are the skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful education leader around Standard Six: An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal and cultural context?

Fortunately, there is a body of research (Patterson et al., 2008) that suggests that anyone can become a powerful advocate. There is a set of principles and strategies used by accomplished advocates that anyone could learn. “If you want to change the world, you have to change how people behave. And if you want to change how people behave, you have to first change how they think” (Patterson et al., 2008). Therefore, it stands to reason that a superintendent could in fact employ specific principles and strategies to increase her effectiveness as an advocate as she seeks the resources and services needed for increased learning opportunities for the students in her district.

Statement of the Problem

“Leadership has long been perceived to be important to the effective functioning of organizations in general and, more recently, of schools” (Marzano, 2005, p. 12). Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors that influence student outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2004). With schools and districts

becoming increasingly more accountable for student achievement in all population subgroups, effective school leaders are more important than ever. “The mounting demands are rewriting administrators’ job descriptions every year, making them more complex than ever. Today education leaders must not only manage school finances, keep buses running on time and make hiring decisions, but they must also be instructional leaders for school improvement, data analysts, community relations officers, and change agents. They must be able to mobilize staff and employ all the tools in an expanded toolbox” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 3).

Burgett states, “whether you like it or not you are a civic leader and a politician” (Rosborg et al., 2006, p. 19). Although suggestions are made to know your elected officials, to communicate with them respectfully, and work with them efficiently (Rosborg et al., 2006), not a lot of research has been done to inform district leaders how to best navigate those roles and relationships. Thus the district educational leader is left to his or her own devices on how best to fulfill the functions of Standard Six of *ISSLC 2008*.

Additionally, within the context of the state of Illinois, with a long history of politics of corruption as evidenced by “pay to play” political practices and the current reality of a \$11.6 billion deficit (Baram, 2009), it is vitally important to understand how the school superintendent acts to influence decisions regarding student learning and advocate for students and families.

Overall Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This study proposed to expand the research concerning Illinois School Superintendents' perceptions of the importance of understanding, responding to and influencing the political context of schools in Illinois.

The overarching research question for this study asked: What are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning? To answer this question the following were investigated:

- a. To what professional organizations do superintendents belong?
- b. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe their professional organizations enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- c. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe networking enhances or inhibits their ability to secure resources and services?
- d. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe lobbying and working with local, state, and federal legislators enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- e. As superintendents advocate for student learning, with whom and how do they network to enhance their ability to secure resources and services?

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were used.

- **Advocacy:** a systematic and purposeful way to defend, represent, or otherwise advance the cause of one or more clients at the individual, group, organizational, or community level (Hofer, 2006, p. 8).
- **Lobbying:** the practice of attempting to influence the decisions of government (Rosenthal, 2001, p. 1).
- **Networking:** the deliberate process of exchanging information, resources, support, and access in such a way as to create mutually beneficial relationships for personal and professional success (Baber & Waymon, 2007, p. 17).
- **Political Activity:** any specific activity or pursuit related to the legislative process, policymaking, governing, or views of social relationships involving power or authority (Webster's Online-Dictionary, as retrieved from <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org>, April 10, 2010).
- **Professional Organization:** an organization that advocates for members, advances and disseminates specialized knowledge and information, provides opportunities for continuing education and professional development, influences public policy and informs the public within their area of expertise (Bauman, 2008, p. 164).

Research Design

The research was conducted as a case study. Eleven elementary school district superintendents in suburban Lake County were interviewed to gain an understanding of their perceptions of the effectiveness of political activities in advocating for resources and services to increase learning opportunities for the students they serve. For the purposes of this study the political activities investigated were membership in professional organizations, networking, lobbying, and working with local, state and federal legislators.

Participants were asked to rate each political activity as to the degree to which it enhances or inhibits the superintendent's effectiveness in advocating for resources and services. Then participants were asked to explain in which ways the political activity enhanced or inhibited their effectiveness. Finally, there were open-ended questions to seek an understanding if there are other avenues or strategies used to advocate for resources and services. In addition to the Likert scale questions and open-ended questions, demographic information was gathered. After the interviews were transcribed, themes and trends were identified during the data analysis and were compared against current research findings.

Limitations of the Study

This research study was subject to a number of limitations imposed by the research design and time constraints. These limitations included:

1. The participant sample was limited to 11 superintendents in Lake County, Illinois.

2. The interviewer asked permission to tape all interviews for transcript accuracy; however, the nuances of body language, facial expression and tone were lost in the transcription of the dialogue.
3. The sample participants all served as superintendents in one geographical location; therefore the summary results may not be generalizable to other superintendents in other counties in Illinois or other states.

However, despite these limitations, a qualitative research design with interview as the method of data collection was appropriate for this research question. Interviews allow people to tell their stories. Siedman (1998) states, “Stories are a way of knowing...In order to give the details of their experience a beginning, middle, and end, people must reflect on their experience. It is this process of selecting constitutive details of experience, reflecting on them, giving them order, and thereby making sense of them that makes telling stories a meaning-making experience” (p. 1).

Significance of the Study

This study may make important contributions to current education leaders who are struggling to navigate the political arena of their role. Additionally, it may help future education leaders clarify how to use political activity as a form of advocacy. Finally, the study may uncover data that leadership preparation programs or continued professional development programs for education leaders may find useful as they help prepare future or current education leaders to effectively navigate the roles and responsibilities associated with Standard Six.

Hopefully this study will make an important contribution in the area of school leadership and political activity with an emphasis on advocating for students and acting to influence state decisions affecting student learning. Insights on what current practitioners perceived to be effective behaviors and use of their time were revealed through the pursuit of the overarching research question: What are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examined the effectiveness of political activity as it relates to advocacy, from the perspective of the Illinois superintendent. The overarching research question this study aimed to explore was what are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning? This study was conducted to form an understanding of:

- How membership in professional organizations enhances or inhibits Illinois superintendents in their role as advocates for the students they serve.
- How networking enhances or inhibits Illinois superintendents in their role as advocates for the students they serve.
- How lobbying enhances or inhibits Illinois superintendents in their role as advocates for the students they serve.
- How working with local, state and federal legislators enhances or inhibits Illinois superintendents in their role as advocates for the students they serve.

There exists a considerable amount of research and theoretical work surrounding political activity and advocacy, as well as the political and economic framework of public school education in Illinois. A selective review of the literature related to the following areas of study is described in this chapter.

- First, the economic and political landscape of educational funding in Illinois was examined.
- Second, the conceptual framework of advocacy as a form of social justice was examined.
- Third, it is often touted “It’s not what you know, it’s *who* you know,” thus literature regarding networking was reviewed.
- Fourth, the literature regarding professional organizations was reviewed
- Finally, since lobbying is a recognized avenue of political activity, research regarding lobbying as a way to advocate was examined.

Political and Economic Context of Illinois Schools

One of the main characteristics of qualitative research is a sustained focus on the context in which experiences occur and that a detailed understanding of the human experience is gained by exploring the complexities of that context (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). It is pertinent to understand the political and economic contexts in which Illinois superintendents navigate their role as advocates.

With Horace Mann’s conception of the common school in the early 1820s, education in the United States moved from the private sector to the public arena. Democracy required an educated populace; therefore, all children were entitled to an education. By the late 1890s, the focus had shifted to the form and substance of public education. During this progressive era the move was for educational quality. The next era was the reform era of 1954 to 1975, where the issue was equality of educational opportunity. Significant events of this era included *Brown v. Board of Education*, the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Education for All Handicapped Act (IDEA) (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954; ESEA, 89 USC. 10, 1965; IDEA, 94 USC. 142, 1975). The purpose of this era was to expand educational opportunity to all races, students of poverty and students with disabilities. Throughout its history, it has been the responsibility of public education to help all children realize the American dream of opportunity and the possibility of self-success (Pai et al., 2006; Phillips, 1969, 1990; Ward & Anthony, 1992).

In the United States, public education is a state function. The Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution states “the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people” (U.S. Constitution, 1776). Education is not mentioned in the Constitution; thus becoming one of the rights of the states and the people. “Constitutional provisions regarding education are in state constitutions and all states, except Hawaii, have created local school districts as agencies of the state to provide educational services” (Ward, 1987, p. 2).

The Illinois Constitution of 1970 provides the basis for public schools in the state. In Article X, Section 1 the following are outlined:

- The educational development of all persons to the limits of their capabilities is a fundamental goal of the state.
- The State of Illinois will provide an efficient system of high quality public education, including institutions and services.
- Public education through the secondary level will be free.

- The State has the primary responsibility for financing the public education system.

The first two bullet points address the overall aim of public education in Illinois but fail to outline how those aims toward adequacy would be measured or even defined. It is further complicated by the restrictions placed on it due to the next two bullet points.

Rosberg et al. (2006) stress the importance of stating goals and determining the measures by which success will be identified. Ward (1987) explains that Illinois is “years away, at best, from providing a commonly accepted definition of what constitutes an adequate education for the state’s children” (p. 8). Furthermore, “issues of taxation levels and financial distribution formulas have overshadowed public and professional interest in matters such as the goals of education and definition of adequacy. Maybe it is inevitable during times of limited fiscal resources, but most policy issues are seen in the context of their potential costs and the availability of revenues. Discussions of measuring educational adequacy, as a result, always return to dollar measures of revenue or expenditure levels” (Ward, 1987, p. 8). Collins (2001) recommends starting with an honest and diligent effort to determine the truth of the situation; what he calls the brutal facts.

Despite the Illinois Constitution claiming primary responsibility for financing public education, the current reality of school funding plays out much differently. Illinois schools receive revenue from local, state and federal sources. Approximately 62% of statewide total school revenues come from local sources in Illinois compared to 44% for schools in the United States. The state’s share of school revenue runs about 30% while

the federal share is about 8% (Fritts, 2008). In Illinois, there is a continued strong reliance on property taxes as the primary source of school funding.

School districts receive general state aid on a sliding scale basis determined by the amount of local property tax resources available to support a child's education. General state aid is the money paid to each school district from the state based on the district's average daily attendance from the previous school year (Fritts, 2008). General state aid is divided into three categories. Depending upon its local property wealth, each district is eligible for the foundation, alternate method or flat grant formula. The foundation grant is applied to school districts with low local wealth/financial ability. The alternate method grant funnels money to districts with a moderate level of local wealth. The flat grant districts receive minimal state support due to high levels of local wealth (Everett, 1995).

Each year the foundation level is set by the state legislature. The 2009-2010 Foundation Level was \$6,119 per student (as retrieved from <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/funding/html/gsa.htm>, March 13, 2010). Most districts qualify for funding under the foundation formula. Districts that qualify for the foundation level have available local resources per student less than 93% of the foundation level. General state aid then provides those districts with the funds to equal the foundation level per student. The foundation level is determined to be the minimum amount of money that will provide an adequate education.

The concept of a sliding scale funding basis is an effort on the state's part to provide some form of standardization of education equality from community to community. However, Ward and Anthony (1992) identify two reasons that state

equalization formulas generally fail to accomplish their purpose. First, they are rarely funded at a high enough level by the state to be effective. Second, they do not limit local communities' discretion in setting local property taxes for school purposes. As a result, "the quality of school received and the amount of money spent on that schooling differ greatly depending on where one lives and in what social strata one's parents reside" (Ward & Anthony, 1992, p. 242).

Therefore the political and economic context of the Illinois superintendent is an education system financed on the basis of minimum adequacy; a system relying heavily on local revenue sources; a system that guarantees a child's constitutional right to an efficient and effective education; and a system that promises the American dream. This would therefore seem to create an untenable set of circumstances. Therefore, one way for the Illinois superintendent to navigate the political and economic context is by looking at the conceptual framework of social justice and equity as it relates to advocacy.

Conceptual Framework of Social Justice and Equity and Advocacy

Ward and Anthony (1992) state, "More than ever before in the history of our nation, the acquisition of economic and political power is dependent on access to high-quality education" (p. 242). Therefore, the superintendent, as instructional leader of the school district she serves, must advocate that all children in her district have access to a high-quality education. In his book, *Advocacy Practice for Social Justice*, Hoefler (2006) explains that advocacy is an ethical imperative for social workers as set forth in the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics. Likewise for the Illinois superintendent, advocacy is also an ethical imperative as set forth in Standard Six of The

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders and Standard Six of the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards. Hoefler adds, “The main purpose of advocacy practice is the pursuit of social justice” (p. 2).

The conceptual framework of social justice and equity can shed some light on what it means to be a superintendent as advocate. Ethics attempt to resolve the fundamental paradox of the human experience: People are by disposition (more or less) egocentric or self-centered. Simultaneously, they are by nature collective, or in need of others. Hence, ethics is the attempt to balance ego-needs with the ego needs of others; to be objective even when personal interests are at stake. Therefore, ethics is the pursuit of justice, fairness and equality. Ethics is an attempt to work out the rights and obligations people have and share with others (Gini, 2004; Katz et al., 1999; Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Marshall & Oliva, 2009).

One way to understand the concept of justice is fairness. Within the scope of fairness there are four distinct characteristics. First, people have rights. Second, people are regarded as individuals. Third, everyone should have a fair chance at securing desirable positions; there should be equal opportunity. Finally, if rules cannot remove inequalities, they should at least be designed so that inequities favor the least advantaged. With respect to equal education opportunity, the state equalization funding formulas and programs such as Head Start and Title I (ESEA, 89 USC. 10, 1965; IDEA, 94 USC. 142, 1975) attempt to provide that justice (Katz et al., 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005).

Justice can be further defined as the fidelity of the claims in a relationship. They go on to discuss four different types of justice. *Commutative justice* is the claims that exist in relations between individuals. *Distributive justice* is the claims that exist between groups of people. *Social justice* is the relations of a society based on internal institutional patterns and structural preconditions. *Retributive justice* is the just balance of goods and harms in which rights to those goods and harms must be earned or deserved (Rawls, 2005). In education, social justice looks at how we divided the state, the districts within the state, the schools within the district, and the students within the schools (Hoefler, 2006; Katz et al., 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992, 2004; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005).

Social justice therefore draws attention to the unfairness of the situation described by Ward and Anthony (1992) that most U. S. children do not have access to the quality of education needed to close the widening income gap between the wealthy and the poor. However, justice, by itself, is not enough. Justice must be teamed with caring. “Care often picks up where justice leaves off” (Katz et al., 1999, p. 12). Caring is not just a matter of doing something. It is also a matter of attitude. Caring is a matter of doing the right thing, to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right attitude, with the right reason, and in the right way. Therefore, when looking for solutions to the injustices identified in education, it is imperative that potential solutions not only satisfy the criteria of justice, but also satisfy the needs of the people who are the targets of the good intentions. In efforts to redress an unjust policy or practice, care must be taken that those who are the focus of the assistance are not further victimized or re-victimized (Katz et al., 1999; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005).

Returning to Hoefler's (2006) idea that the purpose of advocacy is the pursuit of social justice, advocacy can be explored as it relates to the superintendent and pursuing social justice for the students she serves. "It is important to tell those with decision-making authority what is wrong with the world so that something can be done to fix it" (p. ix). He defines advocacy as systematic, purposeful action that defends, represents or advances the cause of an individual, group, organization, or community in order to promote social justice. Hoefler states "Social justice is under attack" (p. 17). He reasons the attack can be countered with the knowledge of how to engage in more structured, effective advocacy practices.

"The importance of politics and advocacy cannot be ignored" (Hoefler, 2006, p. 16). Politics is the process of deciding how resources are allocated. The *only* question is whether school administrators want to help make those decisions. "If you are not the decision-maker yourself, then advocacy is the process by which you help make the decisions on these matters" (p. 21). When knowledge and beliefs are shared, decision makers are exposed to a fresh point of view (Hoefler, 2006). Rosberg et al. (2006) agree, "To be a leading citizen means you lead others. You persuade them, challenge them, inform them, and educate them" (p. 21).

School administrators are civic leaders and politicians who need to view their district as one component of a much larger political system and who need to understand that there are people out there with agendas that don't include education as a top priority (Rosberg et al., 2006). As the political parties in the United States have become more polarized in recent years, most policy changes have resulted in decreased funding and

support for social programs and for education. However, social policy is made on the basis that people do matter, particularly those on the bottom of the economic and social ladder, including children (Hoefler, 2006).

In order for superintendents to advocate for the students they serve, it is necessary to identify the decision makers who can help her reach her goals. It is also important to be well informed on the topics and issues surrounding her goals. “The most important task of someone who wants to use advocacy to make a difference is to have information that is accurate and convincing” (Hoefler, 2006, p. 13). Finally, the superintendent must understand the process to effectively advocate. Networking, membership in professional organizations, and lobbying local, state and federal legislators are strategies the superintendent can utilize to reach her advocacy goals.

Networking and Social Capital

One avenue available to superintendents that helps identify the decision makers who can help reach her goals and be well informed on topics and issues surrounding those goals is networking. “Networking is the deliberate process of exchanging information, resources, support, and access in such a way as to create mutually beneficial relationships for personal and professional success” (Baber & Waymon, 2007, p. 17). Networking is built on mutually beneficial relationships that are powered by the most enduring principle in society; the idea that the good one does will eventually come back to them in one form or another (Misner et al., 2009).

Baber and Waymon (2007) identify many benefits of networking. First, networking is a powerful tool for intelligence gathering. Regardless of the business

setting; whether it be a conference, a meeting, or a golf outing, networking skills enable people to find the latest information on resources, trends and best practice. Second, networking is a critical strategy for professionals to gain visibility and credibility within their field and for building and maintaining relationships for long-term growth. Finally, networking is an essential professional competency. Developing strategic networking skills and practices allow professionals to create, cultivate, and capitalize on relationships that get things done. Abramo et al. (2009) identify another benefit. Networks are an essential tool for sharing knowledge and promoting innovation towards the achievement of specific goals.

“Successful networking is all about building and maintaining solid professional relationships” (Misner et al., 2009, p. 4). The purpose of networking is “to develop a professional rapport with individuals that will deepen over time into a trusting relationship that will eventually lead to a mutually beneficial and continuous exchange of referrals” (p. 117). Networking supports the acquisition of social capital. Misner et al. define social capital as the accumulation of resources developed in the course of social interactions, usually personal or professional networks. These resources include ideas, knowledge, information, opportunities, and contacts. Social capital is built in a number of ways. First, through networking, one gains trust and friendship with others. Second, an exchange of referrals occurs. Third, knowledge and skills are contributed to the effort. Finally, one becomes more knowledgeable and improves her social and business skills.

Social capital is earned and accumulated through networking. The good one does comes back to her, over the long term and often in indirect ways. Social capital is

accumulated by providing help, advice, information, referrals, and other benefits to fellow networkers with no thought of quid pro quo. “By gaining the trust of others, gratitude for value provided, and a solid reputation for integrity and expertise, you become a person whom others wish to help whenever an opportunity to do so presents itself” (Misner et al., 2009, p. 6).

Professional Organizations

Professional organizations provide their members with a readily available group with whom to network and also provide opportunities for professional development. Through the professional development opportunities, superintendents have access to current information related to important issues and topics. Bauman (2008) defines a professional organization as an organization that advocates for members, advances and disseminates specialized knowledge and information, provides opportunities for continuing education and professional development, influences public policy and informs the public within their area of expertise. Martin (2007) believes that professional organizations play a part in developing advocates. “Professional organizations provide VALUE to their memberships. They Validate, Anticipate, Lead, Understand, and Educate their clientele and constituents. And so, the advocate’s personal character traits strengthen when merged with professional support” (p. 17).

First, professional organizations validate their members and model advocacy to their membership. One key component of advocacy is capitalizing on the wide range of people connected to events. Superintendents have the opportunity to ensure all members of the school community (students, teachers, parents, community members, board

members, business partners) reap the benefits of the educational program by creating an awareness of its positive impact. Second, professional organizations play a role in assisting superintendents in anticipating needs. They provide information and support for connecting school programs to new state and federal mandates. One example is FED ED, a consortium of Illinois school districts, educational organizations and corporate sponsors that represents the interests of suburban schools in the nation's capital. FED ED's mission includes advocating for suburban schools to federal legislators and policy makers and keeping members informed regarding relevant federal legislation and policy issues (as retrieved from http://www.thefeded.org/thefededorgfinal_002.htm, April 15, 2010).

Superintendents also anticipate the needs of their school community. "Predicting the resources and skills required to keep programs relevant and essential for the changing demands of users necessitates knowledge, experience, and the ability to listen and understand what people say and mean" (Martin, 2007, p. 17). Likewise, superintendents are advocates who understand the needs of their constituents. An effective superintendent realizes that meeting the needs of her constituents will help advance the program she is advocating for. Many constituents view the superintendent as an expert and depend upon her for support and knowledge (Rosberg et al., 2006). Additionally, successful professional organizations understand their leadership role. School Exec Connect, a leading education search and consulting firm, identifies its primary responsibility "is to America's students who deserve high quality education. We believe that school leaders must ensure that education is more than test scores; it must provide students with opportunities to think creatively, to apply knowledge thoughtfully and to

question critically. We believe that educators must infuse a love of learning and sense of exploration in all students” (As retrieved from <http://www.s291374202.onlinehome.us/our-credo/>, April 15, 2010). Leading professional organizations set a strategic direction and initiate as well as act. They achieve results as opposed to only creating activities. “Instructional leaders in the school are successful advocates. They are respected for their support of the district’s goals as well as for their decision-making ability, management skills, and risk-taking qualities” (Martin, 2007, p. 18). Furthermore, professional organizations promote understanding of goals and missions to its membership and to the public through branding. Professional organizations use logos as tools for advocacy. Ideas conveyed through pictures and words communicate understanding through relationships. The use of symbols is a powerful branding information tool that supports stakeholders’ understandings of the mission and vision of the school district. “Companies around the globe are beginning to appreciate the importance and power of brands” (Kellogg School of Management, as retrieved from <http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/execed/programs/MKTG06/index.htm>, April 15, 2010). Rosberg et al. (2006) adds school leaders need to market the success of their schools. “Intelligent, active branding has enormous benefits” (p. 55). Finally, professional organizations provide education to their members through workshops, conferences, publications, and web sites. Superintendents also educate their stakeholders. One form of advocacy is educating constituents about the district initiatives and making connections to the benefits they provide the community (Martin, 2007). Another form of advocacy is tying professional development to teaching and learning (Rosberg et al.,

2006). Therefore, professional organizations do play a role in developing advocates. “Learning experiences in professional organizations help advocates master how to validate, anticipate, lead, understand and educate their clientele, constituents, and those people outside their profession who become invaluable advocates for successful school programs” (Martin, 2007, p. 19). A review of the websites of school leader professional organizations indicates the prevalence of the professional development component. Professional organizations provide members with information on relevant topics and issues through workshops, position statements, conferences, educational journals, and opportunities to become more involved in the organization.

Lobbying and Advocacy

Lobbying is yet another avenue of advocacy for the superintendent. “Lobbying is the practice of attempting to influence the decisions of government” (Rosenthal, 2001, p. 1). Guyer (2003) adds lobbying is “the active expression of a citizen’s right to influence government” (p. 5). The right to influence government is so fundamental to democracy and to the United States’ system of government that it is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. “The Congress shall make no law... abridging...the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” Rosenthal (2001) adds ““The right to petition” means that citizens and groups can appeal to the government for fair and even special treatment. Where petitioning government is guaranteed, so is the right to lobby” (p. 1). Thus the fundamental right to lobby is grounded and protected in the First Amendment to the

Constitution of the United States. It is one of the cornerstones of our freedoms (Gelak, 2008).

Gelak (2008) further explains, “our founding fathers understood human nature. They recognized that it leads individuals to represent their own interests, rather than the greater public interest” (p. 5). They constructed a system of checks and balances that relies on government accountability by a plurality of interests, not just the select voices of a few. The United States government was built on this system of a plurality of special interests, all expected to participate in the American political system. Participation of citizens in the political system was a fundamental concept in the formation of our government, and effective legislation depends on it. Therefore, lobbying is an integral part of the American political process (Gelak, 2008).

“Political involvement is not merely a right of an informed citizenry, it is a responsibility. Our government does not function properly without an engaged and involved electorate. The role of the professional lobbyists is to assist with citizen engagement and involvement” (Gelak, 2008, p. xxiii). Avner (2002) adds, “advocacy—learning how to speak out effectively on behalf of one’s causes or communities—is absolutely basic to our democratic way of life” (p. xi).

Lobbying at the state and federal level has become more urgent in recent years. Rosenthal (2001) explains the scope of government is broader than it used to be. The states have moved into more fields and have become more active in areas dealing with social issues. Additionally, with substantial cuts in federal aid with little reduction of federal mandates, the ante has been raised at the state level. “With states both choosing

and having to take on new and greater responsibilities, interest groups have targeted their capitols” (p. 3). Since 2002 and the introduction of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, P.L. 107-110, 2002), the federal government has increased its presence in the educational arena. Guyer (2003) adds, “Today and in the future, legislators will rely more and more on lobbyists to provide the information they need to vote responsibly” (p. xv). As the states have expanded the range of areas they address, the range of special interest groups has also expanded. With the reduction of federal budgets, a number of advocacy groups need to get their money from different sources. Therefore, they are much more active at the state level than they once were. The message is clear. “Any group that can be touched by state government...cannot afford to be without representation” (Rosenthal, 2001, p. 4).

Current research has identified three distinct benefits of lobbying. First, lobbying allows for the opportunity to affect public policy. Guyer (2003) contends that a positive result of lobbying is the opportunity to work constructively with members of state legislatures on matters of public policy. Rosenthal (2001) supports that special interest groups that lobby have been able to shape the agendas and policies of the legislature. Gelak (2008) states that one of the two primary aspects of lobby work is advocacy with policymakers. “In essence, lobbyists are involved wherever public policy decisions are made that impact the citizen concerns they represent” (p. 15). She argues that with respect to public policy lobbying serves the two key roles to “provide policy expertise on complex legislation and provide practical insight on technical, practical, and long-term ramifications of legislation and public policy” (p. 16). FED ED’s mission is to “advocate

for suburban schools and other related organizations to federal legislators and policy makers” (as retrieved from http://www.thefeded.org/thefededorgfinal_002.htm, April 15, 2010). The superintendent then must be aware of what state and federal policies and funding decisions will solve or compound the problems faced by her district and which policies will strengthen her district’s ability to provide essential services and programs. It is also important for the superintendent to understand that she can increase her likelihood of impacting public policy when she is intentional and prepared. Planning will ensure she is ready to respond to emerging issues and be positioned to provide leadership in shaping policy (Avner, 2002).

A second benefit of lobbying is that it provides an opportunity to educate and communicate with legislators. Guyer (2003) states, “everyone involved with the development of legislation influences its outcome” (p. 7). He identifies two groups interested in legislation: the legislators and their staff and those who either advocate or oppose the legislation. According to Guyer “lobbying is teaching legislators about your issue and providing the facts needed to convince them to support your view rather than those of your competitors” (p. 8). Rosenthal (2001) supports this position. “In their capacity as lawmakers, legislators need to know where various groups stand on issues” (p. 6). Therefore, “lobbyists play a necessary role in American democracy” (p. 7). They represent their clients’ interests before the legislature and legislators depend upon them for the information they communicate. Gelak (2008) adds that additional key roles of lobbying are to “connect and communicate citizen concerns to public officials and lawmakers, inform citizens of impending legislation and public policy developments, and

raise public awareness of legislation and public policy changes” (p. 16). Gelak also identifies one of the primary aspects of lobby work as informing and communicating with those you represent. FED ED assists its members in formulating and articulating positions on federal legislation, funding and policy (As retrieved from http://www.thefeded.org/thefededorgfinal_002.htm, April 15, 2010). Therefore, to be an effective advocate, a superintendent must make sure her voice is heard with her state and federal legislators. She can do this individually or by contracting with a lobbyist to represent the interests of the students she serves.

A final benefit of lobbying is protecting group interests. FED ED also keeps its members informed regarding relevant federal legislation and policy issues (as retrieved from http://www.thefeded.org/thefededorgfinal_002.htm, April 15, 2010). Another key role of lobbying is uniting citizens with like concerns (Gelak, 2008). Guyer (2003) adds, “legislators want to do the most good for the largest number of people” (p. 9). Becoming a member of an association or an organization is a tool that can be used to multiply the potential of an individual’s political power. Avner (2002) puts it simply “people can do together what they cannot do separately” (p. 16).

Summary

The review of the relevant research on the economic and political landscape of education funding in Illinois, the conceptual framework of advocacy as a form of social justice and on networking, professional organizations, and lobbying indicated that networking, professional organizations and lobbying could be avenues of advocacy for the Illinois superintendent. The review of research also indicated a need to identify the

perceptions of superintendents of how to successfully use those strategies to advocate for the resources and services needed for student success within the current economic and political context of educational funding in Illinois.

This study attempted to inform the leadership practice of advocacy. An assumption was made of good intentions, that superintendents will ethically navigate the political arena as they advocate for the resources and services needed for student success. The overarching research question for this study asked: What are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning? Therefore the following questions remained for there was little, if any, research in this area from the superintendents' perspective:

- a. How does membership in professional organizations enhance or inhibit Illinois superintendents in their role as advocates for the students they serve?
- b. How does networking enhance or inhibit Illinois superintendents in their role as advocates for the students they serve?
- c. How does lobbying enhance or inhibit Illinois superintendents in their role as advocates for the students they serve?
- d. How does working with state legislators enhance or inhibit Illinois superintendents in their role as advocates for the students they serve?

Information gathered in this study may help current and future superintendents find effective avenues for advocating for the resources and services needed for student success. Additionally, the study may uncover data that leadership preparation programs

or continued professional development programs for education leaders may find useful as they help prepare future or current education leaders to effectively navigate the roles and responsibilities associated with ISSLC 2008 Standard Six: An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions of Illinois superintendents on the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for the resources and services needed for increased opportunities for student learning. A qualitative case study approach was used to collect and analyze data to answer the overarching research question: What are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning? To answer this question the following were investigated:

- a. To what professional organizations do superintendents belong?
- b. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe their professional affiliations enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- c. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe networking enhances or inhibits their ability to secure resources and services?

- d. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe lobbying and working with local, state and federal legislators enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- e. As superintendents advocate for student learning, with whom and how do they network to enhance their ability to secure resources and services?

This chapter outlines the methodology that was utilized to conduct the research study. It includes the research method and design, sample participants' description, data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Research Method and Design

Qualitative research has at its core a desire to understand something occurring in its natural setting (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define qualitative research as a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (p. 4). Therefore, qualitative researchers study things within their natural settings with the goal of making sense of what they are studying through the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Qualitative research has two characteristics that separate it from other forms of research. First, the purpose is to learn about some facet of the social world. Second, the researcher is the means through which the research is conducted (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Siedman (1998) concurs that inherent in the interview is the fact that the interviewer is part of the interviewing picture. The role of the instrument, the human interviewer is both recognized and affirmed. As much as the interviewer attempts to

make the meaning being made a function of the interviewee's reconstruction and reflection, the interviewer must recognize that to some degree the meaning is a function of the interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Siedman, 1998). Both these characteristics support the idea that learners construct knowledge rather than just receive it. The learner accumulates knowledge or representations of reality and transforms it, through analysis and interpretation, into information. Qualitative researchers are learners and the qualitative research process provides these rich data for the learning process to occur (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Rossman and Rallis (2003) identify eight common characteristics of qualitative research:

1. **Natural world:** Qualitative researchers go to the people. They do not remove the focus of their study from its natural setting. They focus on data collection of the sensory experience including what people feel.
2. **Multiple Methods:** Qualitative researchers attempt to understand people through a variety of methods including interview, observation, and document review.
3. **Focus on context:** Qualitative researchers acknowledge and embrace the idea that "life occurs in context" (p. 9). Exploring the complexities of the human experience enhances the understanding of the research topic.
4. **Systematic reflection:** Qualitative researchers understand the importance of reflecting on who they are and how it is impacting the research.

5. Sensitivity to personal biography: Qualitative researchers see their perspective as adding to the understanding of the topic being researched rather than something to be suppressed.
6. Emergent nature: Qualitative researchers rely on inductive practice, going from the small to large or specific to general. Hypothesis are formed, confirmed, or changed during the research process; not prior to beginning the research.
7. Sophisticated reasoning that is multifaceted and iterative: Qualitative researchers believe inquiry is a complex and non-linear process, moving back and forth between parts and the whole.
8. Fundamentally interpretive: The qualitative researcher interprets the world she has entered using description, analysis and interpretation.

Research design begins with a clear focus on the research question, the purposes of the study, what information needs to be gathered to answer the questions, and the most appropriate strategy for gathering the information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). To best answer the purpose and questions of this research study, a case study design was used. Yin (2003) purports, “In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). In this study, the research questions asked “in what ways” (or “tell me how”) political activities enhance or inhibit superintendents’ effectiveness in advocating for resources and services, thus meeting Yin’s first criteria. Yin (2003) states, “The case study is

preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated” (p. 7). Since this research study involved Illinois superintendents advocating for resources and services within the political and economic context of the state of Illinois in 2010, it met the contemporary events requirement. The relevant behaviors being investigated were political activities that enhanced or inhibited effectiveness. It was not within the researcher’s control to manipulate these political behaviors as the researcher was not an Illinois superintendent. Additionally, it would not have been ethical to attempt to manipulate the political behaviors of the sample participants as it could have resulted in the loss of resources or services to students. Thus case study was an appropriate research design for the topic.

Stake (1995) describes different types of case studies dependent upon their purpose.

...we will have a research question, a puzzlement, a need for greater understanding, and feel that we may get insight into the question by studying a particular case...This use of case study is to understand something else. Case study here is instrumental to accomplishing something..., and we may call our inquiry *instrumental case study* (p. 3).

Therefore, this research was considered an instrumental case study as we studied the superintendent with the goal of understanding his/her perceptions of the effectiveness of political behavior. Stake (1995) goes on to say that in some situations many subjects are chosen to study rather than just one. Each case study is instrumental in learning about the particular research question, but there will be coordination between the individual case studies. Stake (2003) refers to this as a *collective case study*. Since this research study

consisted of eleven superintendents who were interviewed, it was more accurately identified as a collective instrumental case study.

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is the use of multiple methods (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). A researcher can approach the experience of people in contemporary organizations in a variety of ways including examining documents, observations, exploring history, experimentation, questionnaires and surveys, and reviewing existing literature. However, when the researcher's goal is to "understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experiences, then interviewing is a necessary avenue of inquiry" (Siedman, 1998, pp. 4-5).

The research method used to gather data within this case study was interviewing. "The purpose of interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses...At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of their experiences" (Siedman, 1998, p. 3). This research study aimed to understand the experience of superintendents in Illinois and the meaning they make regarding the effectiveness of their political activity as they advocate for resources and services. Siedman states, "stories are a way of knowing" (p. 1). In reflecting on their experience, people select details, give them order, and make sense of them. As a result, telling stories is a meaning-making experience. At the heart of being human is the ability of people to use language to articulate their experience (Siedman, 1998). With this understanding, interviewing becomes a mode of inquiry.

Sample Participants

Siedman (1998) states,

The purpose of the interview study is to understand the experience of those who are interviewed, not to predict or control the experience...the issue is not whether the researcher can generalize the finding of an interview study to a broader population. Instead the researcher's task is to present the experience of the people he or she interviews in compelling enough detail and in sufficient depth that those who read the study can connect to that experience, learn how it is constituted, and deepen their understanding of the issues it reflects (p. 44).

Therefore, selecting participants in qualitative research using the case study interview method is approached differently. Generally, when the purpose of research is to generalize what is learned to the larger population, a random selection process is used. In interviewing, it is not possible to use random sampling. True random sampling would be prohibitive to the interview method of inquiry (Siedman, 1998). "With small numbers of cases, random sampling can deal you a decidedly biased hand" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27).

Sampling in qualitative research involves setting boundaries that acknowledge what you can study within the limits of your time and means and that connect to your research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, purposeful sampling was utilized. Purposeful sampling is a very thoughtful technique. In this research study a combination of convenience sampling and maximum variation sampling was utilized (Siedman, 1998).

Since the participant population was restricted to one Illinois county, convenience sampling was utilized. Lake County was near where this researcher resided, so it was chosen for its convenience. However, in an attempt to diminish bias, Cook County was

excluded as this researcher worked in and was known to superintendents in Cook County. Additionally, this research study only focused on sample participants who were superintendents in elementary school districts. Again, this was an example of convenience sampling due to the time restrictions of this study. In deciding to limit one of the variables, this researcher hoped to reach the criteria for enough participants. Siedman (1998) cites two criteria for enough participants: sufficiency and saturation of information. By limiting the type of district the participant superintendents work for, this researcher hoped that 11 superintendents was a sufficient number of participants to reflect the range of Lake County, Elementary School District superintendents. Additionally, it was this researcher's intent that through limiting the demographic criteria type of district, she reached the saturation point of information where she was no longer learning anything new by the final interview.

The participant sample was comprised of 11 active superintendents. All 11 of the superintendents served in elementary school districts in Lake County, one of the suburban counties of Chicago. "Interviewing requires that researchers establish access to, and make contact with, potential participants whom they have never met" (Siedman, 1998, p. 6). The sample participants were identified through the Illinois State Board of Education database through a Freedom of Information Act request for the name, address, and other contact information for all Elementary School District superintendents in Lake County (see Appendix A). Upon receipt of the information from the Freedom of Information Act request, this researcher crossed out all superintendents in Lake County who served a high school or unit school district. From the remaining superintendents on

the list, 11 superintendents were chosen at random. This researcher then contacted them by phone (see Appendix B) to determine their interest in participating in the research study. If a research subject declined, a new name was drawn at random. This process continued until eleven superintendents expressed interest in participation. Signed “Letters of Consent to Participate in the Research Study” were obtained to invite their participation in the research study prior to the actual interview (see Appendix C).

Procedures for Data Collection

Rossmann and Rallis (2003) state, “Qualitative researchers seek answers to their questions in the real world...They do research in natural settings rather than in laboratories” (p. 4). Therefore, this research took place in the office of the superintendent. The participant sample included eleven superintendents currently working in Lake County, comprised of communities in the northwest suburbs of Chicago.

The purpose of qualitative research is to learn about the social world and to generate new understanding that can be used (Rossmann & Rallis, 2003). Stake (1995) states,

Much of what we cannot observe for ourselves has been or is being observed by others. Two principal uses of case study are to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others. The case will not be seen the same by everyone. Qualitative researchers take pride in discovering and portraying multiple views of the case. The interview is the main road to multiple realities (p. 64).

Yin (2003) adds, “One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview” (p. 89). He continues, “Interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs. These human affairs should

be reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees, and well-informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation” (p. 92).

The researcher conducted an interview with each sample participant of approximately 30 minutes. The standardized open-ended interview was utilized. This interview method consisted of fixed questions asked of all participants in the same order. “A degree of standardization may be necessary...when many participants are interviewed” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 182). Since this research study consisted of 11 superintendents, or 11 cases, the standardized open-ended interview was warranted. The interview consisted of six demographic questions, six Likert scale questions with a follow-up open-ended question, and three additional open-ended questions (see Appendix E). A copy of the Likert questions was provided to the superintendents to assist with the flow of the interview. The interviews were recorded, with the permission of the sample participants, and transcribed. One limitation was that “the transcript arrives long after context and innuendo have slipped away” (Stake, 1995, p. 66). To help diminish the extent of this limitation, the researcher incorporated the following practices into her interview protocol. First, the researcher conducted the interview without frantically taking notes. Rather she listened, took a few notes and asked questions for clarification purposes. “Strong interviewers are superb listeners and deeply interested in other people. They are skilled in interpersonal interaction, question framing, and gentle probing for elaboration” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, pp. 182-183). Listening is the most important skill in interviewing. Siedman (1998) identifies three different levels of listening. First, a researcher must listen to what the participant is saying. Second she must listen for the

participants “inner voice” (p. 63). Often in interviews, the interviewee uses his public voice that tends to be more guarded. It is the same voice the participant would use if talking to a large group of people. By listening carefully to the interviewee, the researcher can ask for clarification and “encourage a level of thoughtfulness that is more characteristic of the inner voice” (p. 64). Finally, the researcher must listen in a way that allows her to remain aware of the process as well as the substance of the interview. This level of listening assists in maintaining the pace of the interview, records nonverbal cues, and keeps track of the progress of the interview (Siedman, 1998).

A second strategy the researcher used to diminish the limitations imposed by the recording was to plan ample time and an appropriate location immediately following the interview to prepare a written account and interpretive commentary with a focus on capturing key ideas, episodes, innuendo and context (Stake, 1995).

This research plan had one consent instrument, Letter of Consent to Participate in Research (see Appendix C). As part of the Consent to Participate in Research, the researcher gained consent to record the interview. “Audiotapes provide a more accurate rendition of any interview than any other method” (Yin, 2003, p. 92). Research participants had the opportunity to review his/her interview transcripts and provide the researcher with any further clarifications. Through the process of member checking, participants were asked to examine drafts of the writing for accuracy. At this point, they provided critical observations and interpretations. Additionally, through the member check process, research participants helped triangulate the researcher’s observations and interpretations (Stake, 1995).

Data Analysis

Questions 1 through 6 of the interview protocol were closed-answer response items. These items were analyzed and represented as a percentage of participants responding for each demographic category. They were used later as a lens for data analysis and interpretation of the open-ended questions.

Questions 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17 were Likert Scale response items. These items were analyzed and represented as a percentage of participants responding for each Likert scale choice. They were used later as a lens for data analysis and interpretation of open-ended questions.

Questions 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18 through 22 were open-ended questions focusing on participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activities as they advocate for resources and services for opportunities for student learning. The transcripts of these responses were reviewed and analyzed to identify themes and patterns. Rossman and Rallis (2003) identify data analysis as the process of sorting, categorizing, grouping, and regrouping information into chunks that are meaningful. They remark that you learn as you go. "The way you organize the learning—the descriptions you provide and the categories and themes you develop—is analysis. The meaning you make of these chunks is interpretation" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 271). Interviewing generates a large amount of data in the written transcripts. The researcher must approach the data with an open mind with the goal of capturing what emerges as the most important and of the most interest (Siedman, 1998).

Qualitative research inherently attempts to secure an in-depth understanding of what is being studied. One way to capture that in-depth understanding is through triangulation. The combination of methodological practices, empirical materials, and perspectives in a single study adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This researcher attempted to find that richness and depth to her study through triangulation of the interviews, the literature review and through the websites and documents published by the various professional organizations to which the research subjects belong.

Ethical Considerations

In qualitative research, ethical issues are constantly floating beneath the surface of what we do (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A number of steps were taken by the researcher to ensure an ethical approach throughout the research study. First, during the Informed Consent process the researcher carefully explained the intent of the research study and the interview process. Additionally, the researcher sought permission to record the interview. Finally, each participant reserved the right to withdraw from the study at any point. At the time of the interview, participants signed the Consent to Participate in Research letter (see Appendix C).

Second, confidentiality was assured in the Consent to Participate in Research. Holding confidentiality has two associated challenges; protecting the participant's privacy and holding in confidence what they share with you (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Safeguards were put in place to ensure that all recordings, transcripts and notes were kept confidential. The researcher hired a third party transcriber for the sole purpose of

transcribing the interview recordings. The transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement prior to any contact with the research recordings or materials (see Appendix E). All participant identifiers were removed to ensure anonymity. All recordings and transcripts were kept in a locked file (to which only the researcher had access) in the researcher's residence.

Limitations

This study was approached with awareness of three limitations:

1. The sample of respondents does not truly represent all superintendents in the state of Illinois. By limiting the participant sample, due to time and means constraints, only superintendents in public, suburban Lake County working in elementary school districts will be represented in this study.
2. Generalizability of results, such as to unit or high school districts, urban or rural settings, private schools, may not be possible due to the limitations of data collection. Data may not be representative outside the state of Illinois.
3. Identifying themes and patterns is a subjective process, thus the researcher's bias and worldview may limit the generalization of the results.

Bias Minimization

In order to minimize bias, Cook County and Winnebago County were excluded as options for this study since this researcher has worked in Cook County and Winnebago County and is currently a principal in Cook County. By eliminating Cook County and Winnebago County, superintendents who may be known to the researcher were not utilized in this study. Additionally, this researcher kept a journal during the interviewing

process and while organizing and analyzing data. Therefore, if at any time she felt her own experiences or preconceptions regarding the topic were becoming evident, she took a step away from the research and wrote her feelings and thoughts in her journal in an effort to remain focused and unbiased at all times during the research process.

Summary of Research Methodology

In summary, a qualitative research study was used to gain an understanding of the perceptions of Illinois superintendents on the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for the resources and services needed for increased opportunities for student learning. Specifically, a collective instrumental case study, comprised of 11 superintendents in Lake County, Illinois was conducted in this research study. The researcher went into the field and conducted interviews of approximately 30 minutes with each of the 11 superintendent participants in this study. In order to add rigor, complexity and depth to the study, the researcher triangulated her findings from the interviews with the current literature and documents and website information from the professional organizations to which the research subjects are members. All of this information was integrated to answer the overarching research question: What are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning?

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The purpose of this research study is to gain an understanding of the perceptions of Illinois superintendents on the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for the resources and services needed for increased opportunities for student learning. The primary research question is *what are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning?*

Using a qualitative research approach, the researcher interviewed eleven active superintendents in Lake County, Illinois to answer the following specific, fundamental research questions:

- a. To what professional organizations do superintendents belong?
- b. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe their professional affiliations enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- c. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe networking enhances or inhibits their ability to secure resources and services?

- d. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe lobbying and working with local, state and federal legislators enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- e. As superintendents advocate for student learning, with whom and how do they network to enhance their ability to secure resources and services?

All of the interviews were conducted face to face in the superintendents' offices.

The interviews were recorded and later transcribed by a third party. The interviews were conducted during the last two weeks of October and the first three weeks of November 2010. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Completed transcripts were returned to the research participants for any corrections, clarifications or changes as a means to member check.

This chapter presents these data that were obtained from the interviews with the eleven research participants. It includes both the demographic data about the research participants and their responses to the Likert Scale rating questions and the qualitative, open-ended questions from the interviews.

Demographic Data

As part of the interview protocol, six demographic questions, Questions 1-6, were asked to gain an understanding of the diversity within the participant sample. The questions and the responses to the questions are depicted below in graph form along with a brief explanation.

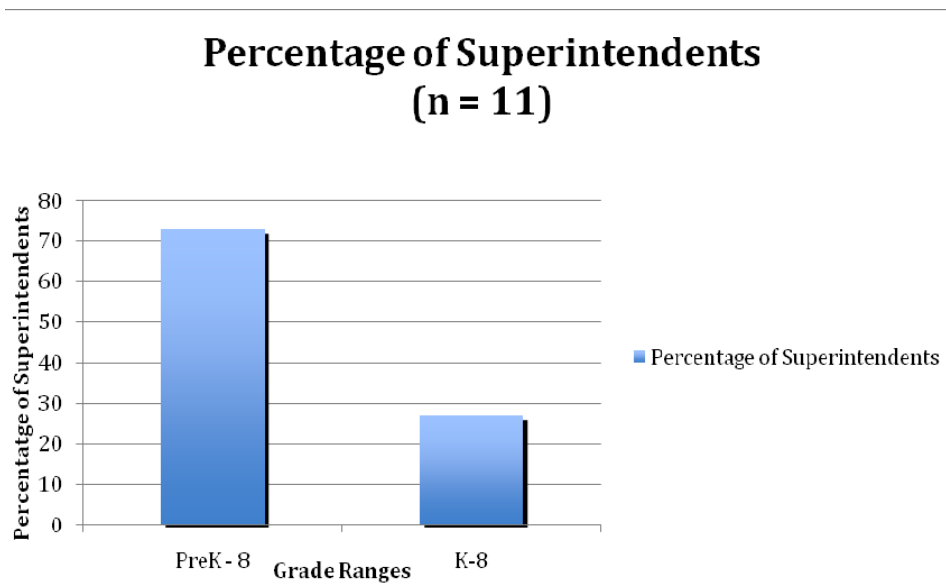


Figure 1. Question 1: What grade does your district serve?

Of the 11 superintendents interviewed, 72% (n=8) worked in districts that served students in preschool through eighth grade and 27% (n=3) worked in districts serving students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

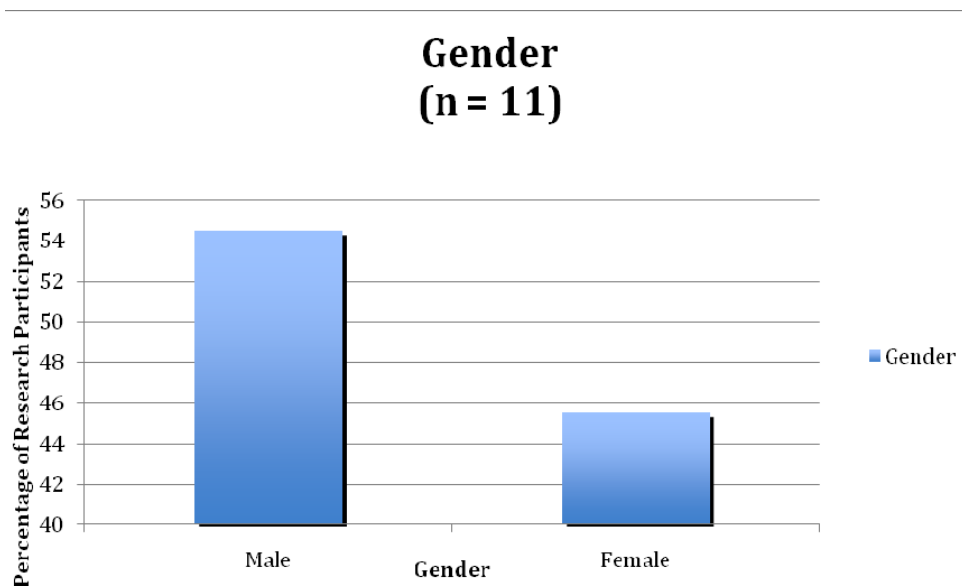


Figure 2. Question 2: What is your gender?

Fifty-four percent of the interview participants were male (n=6) and 45% of the interview participants were female (n=5).

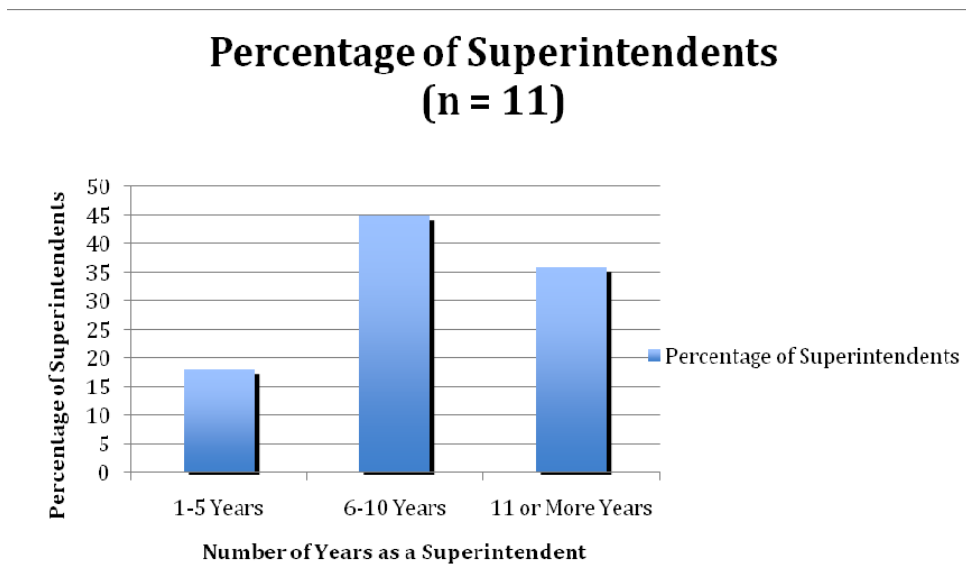


Figure 3. Question 3: How many years have you been a Superintendent?

Eighteen percent (n=2) of the interview participants were in their first five years as a superintendent, 45% (n=5) were in years six through ten of the superintendency and 36% (n=4) have been an Illinois superintendent for 11 years or more.



Figure 4. Question 4: To which professional organizations do you belong?

One hundred percent of the research participants (n=11) are members of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA); and of those, 72% (n=8) are also members of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Sixty-three percent (n=7) are members of Education Research Development (ED RED). Thirty-six percent (n=4) are members of Federal Representation, Education and Communication (FED ED). Twenty-seven percent (n=3) are members of the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO). Although the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Lake County Superintendents Group, and Phi Delta Kappan (PDK) were not specifically part of the interview protocol, since multiple respondents [54% for ASCD (n=6), 63% for Lake Co. Superintendents (n=7) and 36% for PDK (n=4)] listed them in the other category, the researcher provided those professional organizations their own columns in the graph. Fifty-four percent of the interview respondents (n=6) listed other professional organizations to which they belonged.

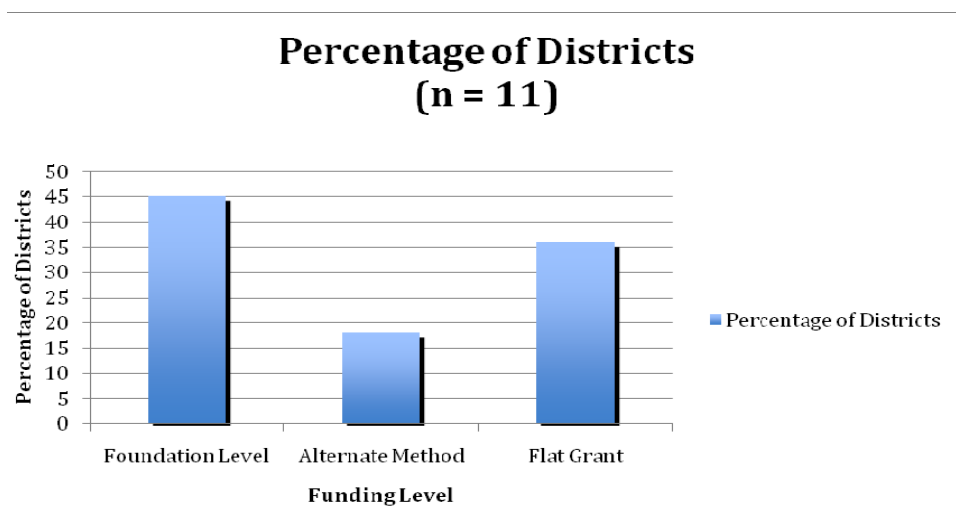


Figure 5. Question 5: What is your level of state funding?

Forty-five percent of the research participants (n=5) work in districts funded at the Foundation Level. They receive the funds needed to meet the foundation level of \$6119 per student in general state aid. Eighteen percent of the research participants (n=2) are funded using the alternate method formula. Depending upon local property tax wealth, these districts would receive between \$306-\$428 per student. Thirty-six percent of the research participants (n=4) work in districts funded at the flat grant level. They receive \$218 per student in general state aid.

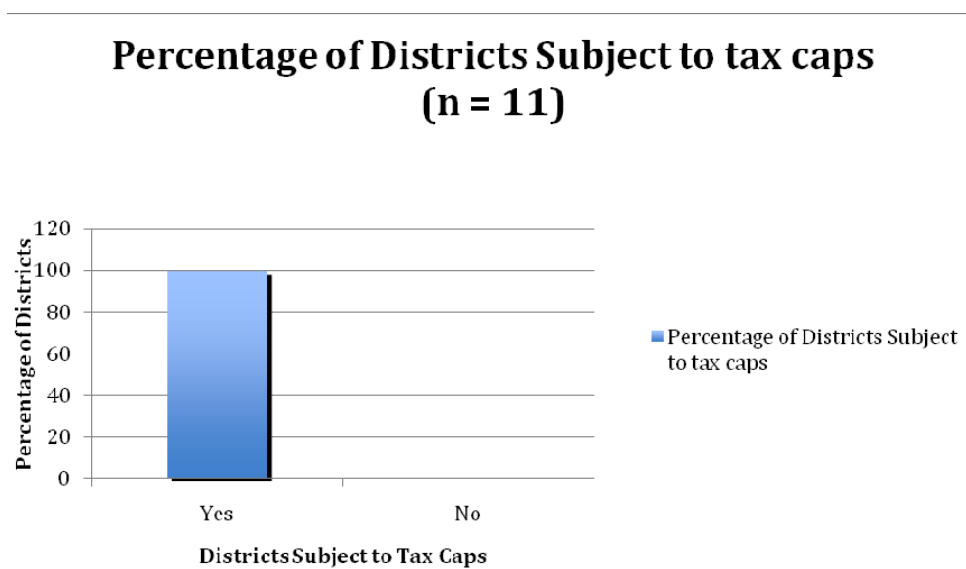


Figure 6. Question 6: Is your district subject to tax cap laws?

All of the superintendents participating in the research work in districts subject to tax cap laws.

Likert Scale Questions

As part of the interview protocol, research participants were asked to rate the degree to which they believed certain political behaviors, including membership in professional organizations, working with local, state and federal legislators, lobbying, and

networking, enhanced or inhibited their ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning. They were asked to rate their perceptions on a scale of one to five: with one being inhibits, three being neutral and five being enhances their advocacy abilities. The Likert Scale interview questions, numbers 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17, and responses are depicted in graph form below followed by a brief explanation.

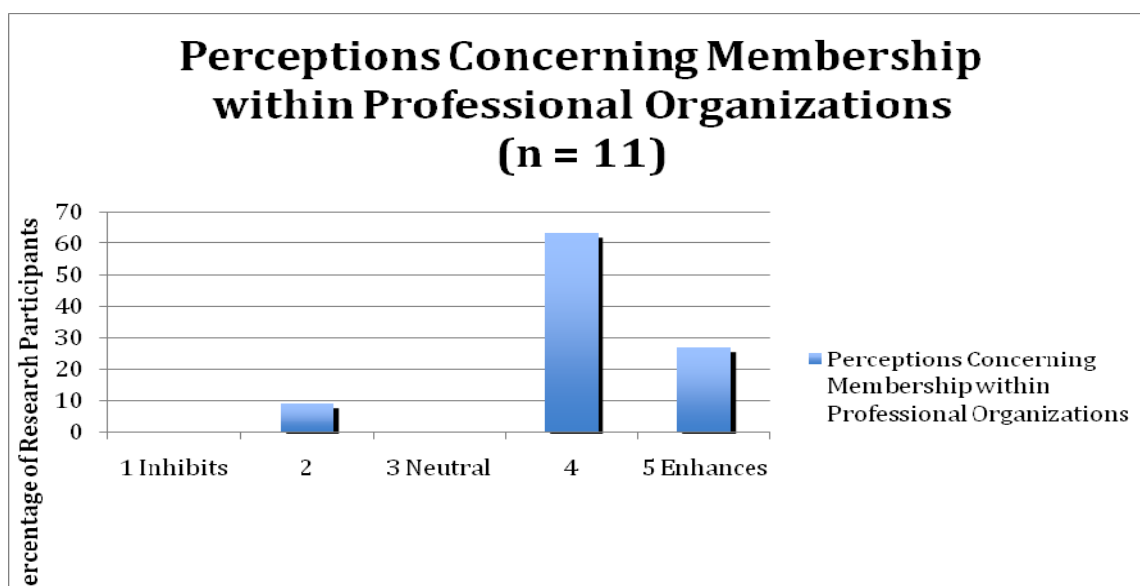


Figure 7. Question 7: To what degree do you believe Membership in Professional Organizations enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning?

None of the superintendents rated their perception of professional organizations with a one, inhibits or a three, neutral. Nine percent (n=1) rated professional organizations as a two, 63% (n=7) rated professional organizations as a four, and 27% of the superintendents (n=3) rated professional organizations as five, enhances their ability to advocate.

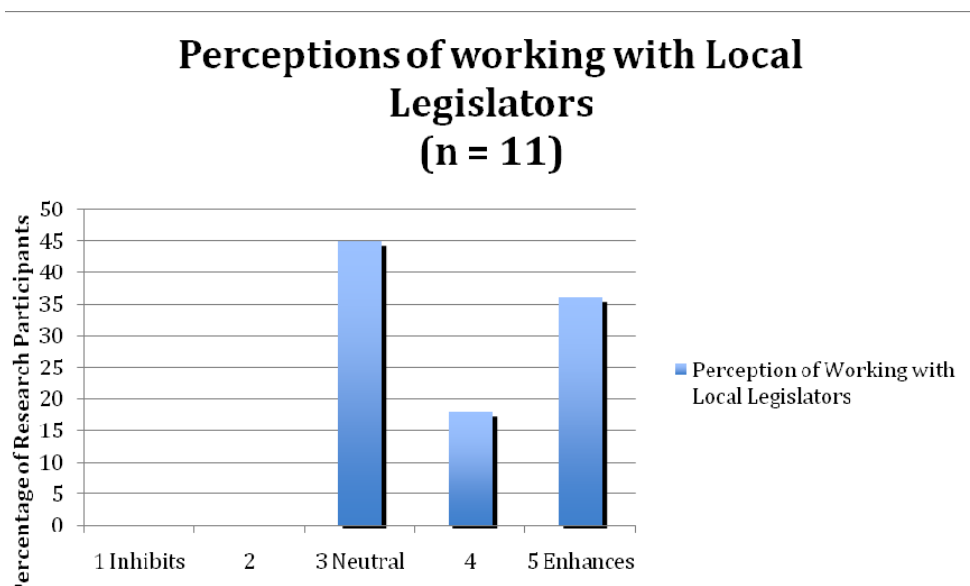


Figure 8. Question 9: To what degree do you believe Working with Local Legislators enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning?

None of the superintendents rated their perception of working with local legislators with a one, inhibits, or a two. Forty-five percent of the superintendents (n=5) rated working with local legislators as a three, neutral, 18% (n=2) rated working with local legislators as a four, and 36% (n=4) rated working with local legislators as a five, enhances their ability to advocate.

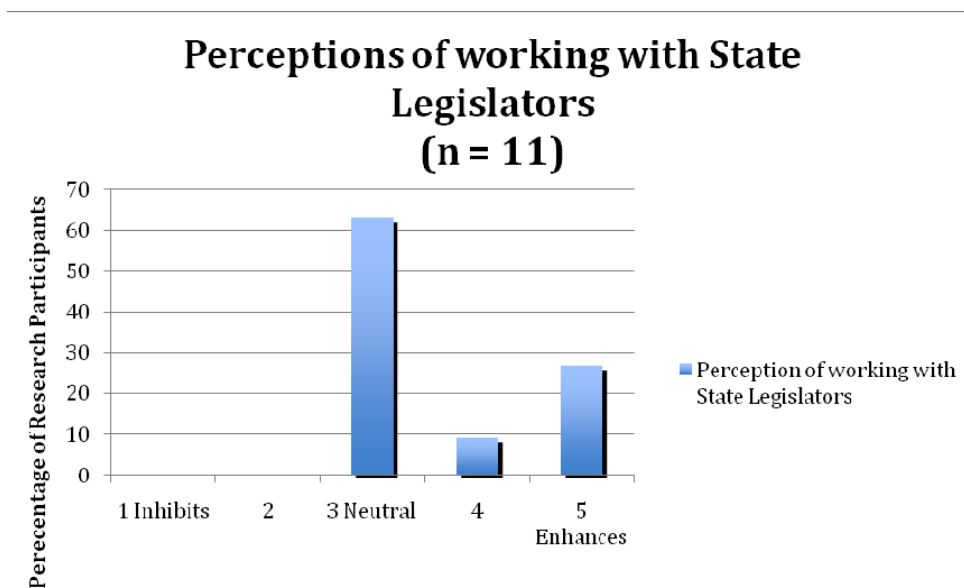


Figure 9. Question 11: To what degree do you believe *Working with State Legislators* enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning?

None of the superintendents rated working with state legislators as a one, inhibits, or a two. Sixty-three percent of the superintendents (n=7) rated working with state legislators as a three, neutral; while 9% (n=1) rated working with state legislators as a four and 27% (n=3) rated working with state legislators as five, enhances their ability to advocate.

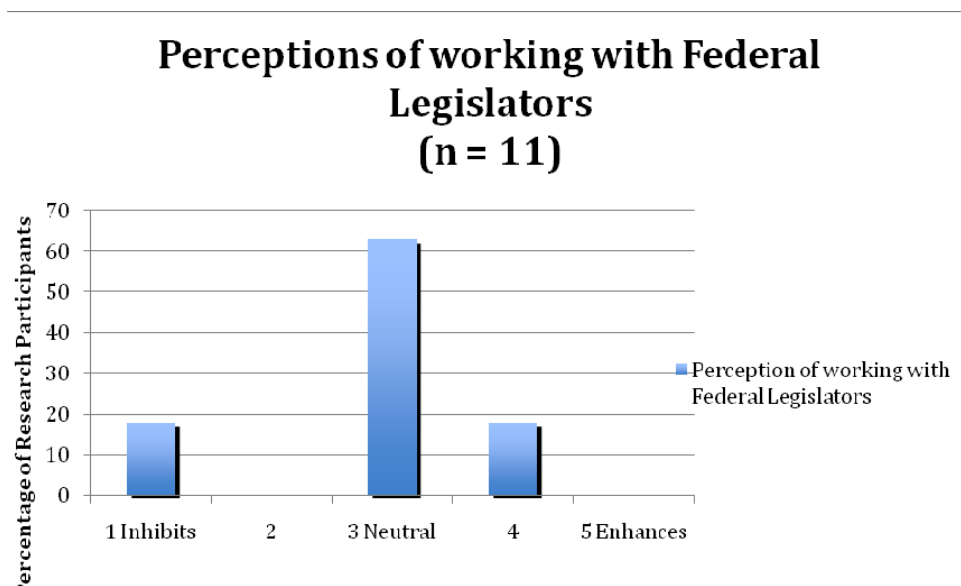


Figure 10. Question 13: To what degree do you believe *Working with Federal Legislators* enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning?

Eighteen percent of the superintendents rated working with federal legislators as a one, inhibits (n=2), 63% (n=7) rated working with federal legislators as three neutral, and 18% (n=2) rated working with federal legislators as a four. None of the superintendents rated working with federal legislators as a two or a five, enhances their ability to advocate.

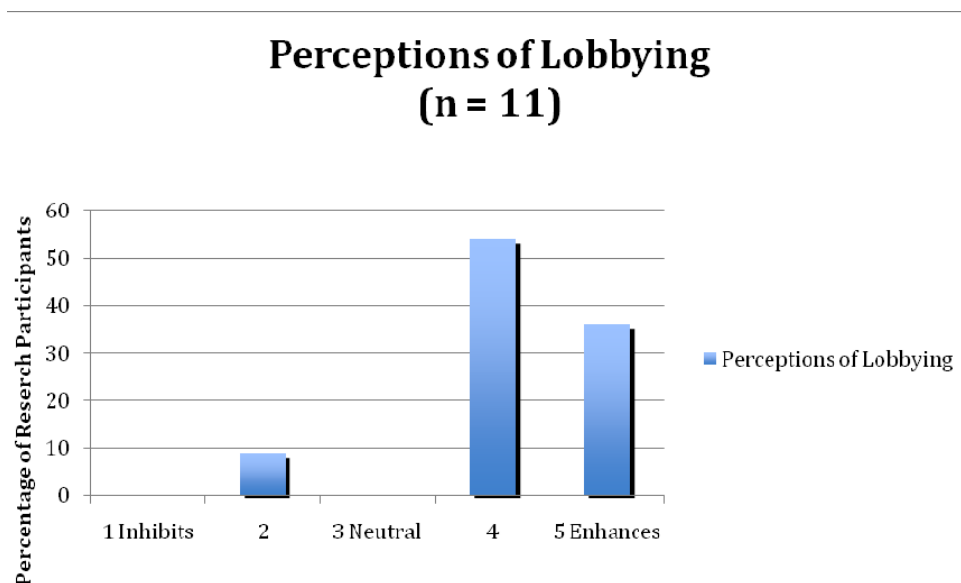


Figure 11. Question 15: To what degree do you believe *Lobbying* enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning?

None of the superintendents rated their perceptions of lobbying as a one, inhibits or a three, neutral. Nine percent (n=1) rated lobbying as a two, 54% (n=6) rated lobbying as a four, and 36% (n=4) rated lobbying as a five, enhances their ability to advocate.

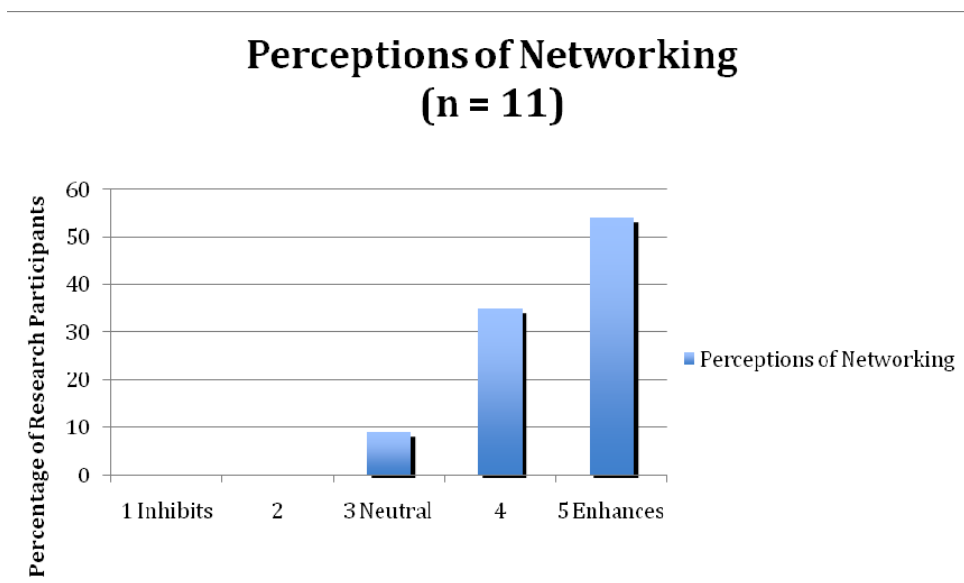


Figure 12. Question 17: To what degree do you believe *Networking* enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning?

None of the superintendents rated networking as a one, inhibits or a two. Nine percent (n=1) rated it as three, neutral, 36% (n=4) rated it as a four, and 54% (n=6) rated it as five, enhances their ability to advocate.

Likert Scale Follow-Up Questions and Responses

Additionally, participants in this study were asked follow-up questions after rating the degree to which the political behaviors inhibited or enhanced their effectiveness to advocate for resources and services for student learning. The intent of the follow-up questions was to obtain a more in-depth understanding and appreciation of their experiences and perceptions. The follow-up interview questions, numbers 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18, are presented below along with each participant's rating and response.

Question 8: You gave Membership in Professional Organizations a _____. Can you tell me why or provide me with some examples?

Superintendent A (rating: 4)

“Well I think, depending upon the organization, some are much more involved in lobbying than others. I’ll give you a quick example, IASA (Illinois Association of School Administrators). I serve on that Board so I am much more actively involved. We have an arm that does lobbying for example. Those other organizations may have lobbyists but I am not as directly involved with that.”

Superintendent B (rating: 4)

“I think involvement, particularly like with ED-RED or even Illinois Association of School Boards. They (professional organizations) are very good about not only putting out general information but they establish relationships with some of the people at the top. They are very good about contacting you. Or you can contact them to go and lobby or go to the state for different things to get your viewpoints across. I think they have been, as an organization, very good advocates for school districts. Whereas, I wouldn’t have the time to be doing that type of work.”

Superintendent C (rating: 4)

“Well I think it is the collegiality; it’s the networking. Developing a rapport.”

Superintendent D (rating: 5)

“Professional organizations have built-in platforms and they’ve got built-in sessions for discussing platforms. They make it very easy to be able to participate. That’s why I think it enhances.”

Superintendent E (rating: 4)

“Well IASA and AASA (Illinois Association of School Administrators and American Association of School Administrators) are strong advocates for administrators. They do a lot to keep superintendents in the loop. The professional organizations get our points of view out to the legislators that we don’t have access to because we are not down in Springfield all the time. I think they do a lot behind the scenes that we don’t necessarily know about, unfortunately.

It’s interesting because we have met with certain legislators and they have taken us to task about not telling them enough about what we really need. We looked at him and said, “but we are telling you all the time what we need. You’re just using it as an excuse.”

That can be more frustrating than enhancing or inhibiting. When you have people from professional organizations out there advocating for you, but you don’t always know what they are doing. The best part is when you have the opportunity to sit down and speak with the person from the professional organization who is lobbying for you. You can sit and talk to him to find out what exactly they are doing in IASA and AASA for us. You learn what they are advocating for. We will also get reports back in our monthly meetings.”

Superintendent F (rating: 5)

“There are times I go down to Springfield and I know some of our IASA and IASBO lobbyist. I know the IASBO lobbyist particularly well. So they’ve asked me to

go down to Springfield and advocate for certain things at certain times. If I wasn't a member of those organizations, I wouldn't have the knowledge that I have now."

Superintendent G (rating: 5)

"There has been a lot of discussion, through professional organizations, IASA is probably the most and also the Lake County Superintendents', regarding how to best impact what happens in Springfield. A little bit at the federal level too, but primarily it's at the state level. There are advocates and also lobbyists that work on behalf of IASA. There is also a collective effort with the teachers' unions and other organizations, school business officials, principals to try to be a part of the dialogue that takes place.

It's interesting that you mentioned this, because there are five districts in Lake County that are planning a forum next Tuesday. We are inviting a State Senator and two local representatives. The topic is education. It's a forum on education finance. We are going to give a Power Point presentation outlining our concerns. We are going to ask them how we can help them. Then we are going to invite them back in a couple of months to see how they are doing. We want to send a message to our elected officials that they have to pay attention to this."

Superintendent H (rating: 4)

"Professional organizations provide a great depth of knowledge. They provide advocacy that when you are working the day-to-day operations it's hard to put your fingers on. They provide up-to-date information that keeps you abreast of what's going on, whether it's at the state level, the national level, whether it's ED-RED and legislative activity or whether it's IASA with regard to professional practices.

I use the information from professional organizations in my day-to-day activities in a variety of ways. With regard to the work from ED-RED, we send the legislative updates out to our Board of Education as well as our district and school leadership teams so they are aware of what's happening in Springfield. With regard to IASA and ASCD, we use those for professional development for ourselves as well as the entire leadership team and our staff.”

Superintendent I (rating: 2)

“I think it has very little impact. It doesn't inhibit it. A few years ago we had a battle with the state; our district was in a battle with the state over the bilingual education mandate. We were not in compliance with the state mandate even though our test scores for our ELL students have improved dramatically. The fact that we were not in compliance with the policy did not affect student achievement. However, student achievement was secondary to being in compliance with the policy from the state's perspective. And so they held our grant back. They didn't give us our bilingual grant.

I worked with many professional organizations. The Lake County Superintendents supported my district's position. IASA supported my district's position. In fact, they developed and adopted a regulation, I guess. They took an official position in support of my district. IASB did the same thing. The official position with my district was, not speaking out against bilingual education, just saying districts should have an option to go with another program if the district could show that the other program is in the best interests of students. However, all of that did nothing; actually did nothing. We still didn't get the money.”

Superintendent J (rating: 4)

“When you are at some of professional organizations’ meetings, you network. I’ll see someone with the same issue that I have. It’s getting information and support from people.”

Superintendent K (rating: 4)

“I think that from an educational perspective you keep informed of what the issues are and in that respect you are better able to reach out or to contact legislators if there is a need to do that. It helps you become better prepared for what’s coming down the pipe in terms of regulations and requirements. Additionally, the networking involved in very valuable, that’s certainly important.”

Question 10: You gave Working with Local Legislators a _____. Can you tell me why or provide me with some examples?

Superintendent A (rating: 4)

“We are actually in transition depending on how this election goes. But I make myself available to them and so a couple of our local legislators are very comfortable, I think, calling and asking an opinion on a law that maybe is going to be passed or how it might impact at least the elementary school district. So I think it’s improved communication and helped them with knowing how some of the things they do are going to impact us.”

Superintendent B (rating: 3)

“They seem to be spread so thin. I think they probably focus their efforts more on districts in greater need.”

Superintendent C (rating: 5)

“I would find them to be the strongest advocates for local education. We found more success working with our local and state legislators.”

Superintendent D (rating: 3)

“Why is it neutral? Because, most of the time local legislators don’t have a good background or understanding of what we are talking about. They just don’t. They don’t want to do anything to hurt us but they often don’t understand the full implications of what they are voting for so it doesn’t often help us.”

Superintendent E (rating: 5)

“I have worked with J.H. I’ve talked with her about some of our issues and through that we’ve gotten some funding for some projects we needed. We have built a new school; we put in some boilers and other things that were part of the budget that we would never have gotten if we hadn’t talked with her about some of our issues.

Recently I’ve had the opportunity to work with M.B. on a committee for her. It’s an advisory committee for her about NCLB. I’ve been on it a couple of years now. We were meeting quite a bit there for a while and then things quieted down with NCLB. I think it’s benefited us a lot. We’ve been able to get our feelings out about NCLB and how we would like to see it change and become more of a partnership, rather than a “let’s see if we can find out what’s wrong” type of thing.

Through that committee, I was able to meet with her about other issues. Last June I was able to sit down with her with a couple of other people. We talked about jobs and the money that was coming from the federal government and how it needed to get to us.

So this year we got the “save a job” money. It’s coming directly to us without strings attached as the stimulus money was last year.

So those were the opportunities to speak to our legislators. And they do listen, if we make sense.”

Superintendent F (rating: 5)

“Oh, it enhances. I have K.M.’s and S.G.’s phone number so I can call them anytime. And they are good about returning phone calls. For example, there was a DCEO grant for some crosswalks that we want to put in and S.G. was very helpful. She helped us navigate the process. So we could understand what to do, at the right time, to make sure we got in the right place.”

Superintendent G (rating: 3)

“You know I’d like to think that it does more than it has. There is a lot of discussion that goes on but very little actually takes place. Nothing we can see is really tangible. That’s not to say that the people, our elected officials are uncaring, or that they don’t care about education. I don’t think that’s the case. I think what happens is the politics overtake some essential needs.”

Superintendent H (rating: 4)

“We work with our local school boards. We have worked with two different mayors in towns to provide programs for our kids. We work really close with our fire department and police department. Now they aren’t necessarily legislators, but they are key, inter-governmental players in the area. It is important to have positive relationships.”

Superintendent I (rating: 3)

“It probably helps somewhat. We have received money from our local legislator, E.S. We have also received opportunities from him to submit requests for funding for school projects.”

Superintendent J (rating: 3)

“We really have not worked a lot with our local legislators. Just last week, a group of superintendents and board members met with local legislators for the first time. Hopefully it will make a difference. However, I am going to say neutral because we don’t know at this point since it’s the first time we’ve done that.”

Superintendent K (rating: 5)

“In a village like ours, we don’t really have local legislators, but we do have elected officials. We did work with them around the TIF district. That was very important. We worked with them particularly on the issue of a TIF that was expiring in the network curve and how that would work. So yes, I think it is important to work with all levels of government.”

Question 12: You gave Working with State Legislators a _____. Can you tell me why or provide me with some examples?

Superintendent A (rating: 4)

“Again, that’s through IASA. We have political action committees through IASA and we also have what’s called the Alliance, which is a combined effort, of Superintendents, Principals, School Boards, and Business Officials. It’s another lobbying group that’s primarily at the state level.”

Superintendent B (rating: 3)

“Same thing, again, I think in this county their emphasis and focus is a bit more with the more needy.”

Superintendent C (rating: 5)

“The reciprocal role is important for us; requests made by the school are returned by...I will give you one example. Recently in our community they had a “Dogs on Chains,” similar to the cows they did in Chicago. It required a sponsorship so we requested that our state representative sponsor. We did it on a curriculum based project, developed it. The finished product is sitting in our lobby now. Those students went down to her office; they talked to her about the program. What we were doing is really promoting our curriculum through our state representative and letting her office know what was taking place in our school system. The sponsorship was a couple hundred dollars. So it wasn’t necessarily the money we were looking at, we were looking more at the public relations or developing a rapport. That’s the area that we utilize the relationship. We weren’t asking for anything specific in return.

Again it was developing the relationship. This is one that continues; we have received funding or support of funding in the past from our state representative. So it continues. We want to keep an open relationship and that support of our curriculum as well as finances and all aspects of public education.”

Superintendent D (rating: 3)

“It’s the same, neutral. They too do not; they just don’t get us.”

Superintendent E (rating: 3)

“It seems as though, through our professional organizations, we do have people that are part of the committees that go down and get involved. However, it just doesn’t seem as though anyone listens. It doesn’t really seem like they care, one way or another, what we have to say. They say they care, but their actions don’t show that they really care.”

Superintendent F (rating: 5)

“They are great.”

Superintendent G (rating: 3)

“At the state level, there is so much. I know this has become kind of a cliché but the lines are drawn so clearly that even when I meet with local officials, it’s all about what inhibits their opportunities to help us because of the other party. It’s kind of amazing. What I would really like to tell the legislator is it’s your job to find a way to get things done with the other party. But there’s so much of that. And we’re really concerned about it. That’s why we are going to have this forum (a forum on education finance, involving five school districts in Lake County, a state senator and two representatives). We are going to tell them, here are some areas, and we are not asking for huge changes here. We are asking for things such as an increase in special education funding since the state is only giving a fraction of what is mandated and local districts are making up the rest. We want our funding for transportation. We want a little bit of relief under the tax cap. That’s a start. We are trying to give them things that they can actually

do, rather than grandiose kinds of proposals that everyone knows aren't going to happen.”

Superintendent H (rating: 3)

“While working with them is an important aspect and we do that more to help them understand the realities of what happens, day to day in the schools, in the six years on this job and in my four years prior as the associate, I didn't see much follow through from them.”

Superintendent I (rating: 3)

“Our local legislators are our state legislators. It probably helps somewhat. We have received money from our local legislator, E.S. We have also received opportunities from him to submit requests for funding for school projects.”

Superintendent J (rating: 3)

“I am going to say three again because I really haven't been involved with them.”

Superintendent K (rating: 5)

“It is critically important to work with state legislators because so much of what we get comes from the state. Essentially, schools are the function of the state government. The legislation, rules and regulations in the school code are huge issues for schools. Our state legislators have the greatest impact on it.

There are a lot of examples. They are very accessible. S.G. has been very accessible to our community. For example, the state was looking at doing a kind of tax swap with property taxes and income taxes. Of course, we all know the state of Illinois doesn't have any money. Anyway, if they take the property taxes away from the districts

that use that to fund their school with the anticipation they'll give it back to you in income tax money, that's a fantasy. There was a large movement with the House bill to do that with the understanding that districts such as ours would be made whole. But you know, once you take that property tax away and give it to the state, and the state divides it up, there was little confidence we'd see the money. We felt the local control was going to be lost in the process. So our local legislators went to bat for us very heavily on that. The tide was moving in another direction. They spent a lot of time working with our communities, with ED-RED. They came to our school; we had meetings here. We believe it was very effective in not having a deleterious affect of the very small resource that we do get from the state but not impacting our local tax base. We get very little state money, so if they took the local property tax away we would have nothing."

Question 14: You gave Working with Federal Legislators a _____. Can you tell me why or provide me with some examples?

Superintendent A (rating: 3)

"I'd say that's neutral and my thinking there is, I think when we were a member of FED ED, we at least had a voice there. But we chose to withdraw from that organization, not because they weren't effective, but it was just a way to save some dollars for our district."

Superintendent B (rating: 1)

"I don't see it happening. I just think their focus is more with bigger systems and systems who are in more trouble financially."

Superintendent C (rating: 3)

“It does nothing. There is no relationship with our congresswoman. We’ve made attempts and it hasn’t inhibited or enhanced. Neither. It has just been non-existent.”

Superintendent D (rating: 3)

“I haven’t ever worked with federal legislators. Again, they typically don’t understand. They may have staffers that have some kind of understanding but when you talk to them directly, they often don’t even know what you are talking about.”

Superintendent E (rating: 4)

“Working with our federal legislators has been much more productive for us than working with our state legislators. One way is through grants. When I do the grants I have the opportunity to speak to people. When the Title One grant, for example, comes back “not approved,” then I have the opportunity to call and speak with somebody from the grant. They help me correct my application so that sometimes we can get more funding. We start to form a relationship. Last year, because of that relationship, they called us at the end of the year. There was money that others didn’t apply for that was still out there, unaccounted for. That connection gave us the opportunity to pick up that money. We were able to use it in our budget to support technology.

If I hadn’t called them to ask what I could use the money for, I would never have known. I always feel like I can call them and ask them what can I use this money for? If I know there is an extra \$50,000 that I can access, I ask if I can use it all on technology in one swoop and find out if that is okay.”

Superintendent F (rating: 3)

“I would say neutral because they are invisible. I mean M.K. has done some things for us here, but...He knows where we are.”

Superintendent G (rating: 2)

“They are farther away, their proximity, their availability. I get e-mails from Congresswoman M.B. occasionally. I don’t have any problems with her as a congresswoman, and I think she tries to be supportive. It’s just very much harder at the federal level.

I could go back and forth between a one and a two on this scale. I don’t think the direction the federal initiatives are going is the right one. I think they are way off the mark.”

Superintendent H (rating: 4)

“In our local area of Lake County, we have seen a lot of responsiveness from Congresswoman M.B.’s office, particularly in her desire to work with the schools to understand what is beneficial for our children and student achievement and what can inhibit that.

Her office is very open to getting feedback from the schools, about No Child Left Behind for example. Also, when the federal stimulus dollars came through, her office was very informative and very responsive to concerns we had.

We have a public information specialist who networks. She maintains a close relationship with M.B.’s office. So our district would be sought in an advisory capacity from the congresswoman’s office.”

Superintendent I (rating: 3)

“I believe S.D.D. has been in support of our after school coalition for after school clubs and after school programs. The district doesn’t receive those funds directly but the village or police department does.”

Superintendent J (rating: 3)

“Same thing, three. Haven’t been involved with them.”

Superintendent K (rating: 3)

“I would say it is neutral, except that it depends on the district you are in. When I was a superintendent in a district with a military base it was a five because we needed to have a federal government influence. But because schools are really delegated a responsibility of the state, the federal government in most districts doesn’t have as great an influence except other than special education, IDEA, or that kind of legislation. I think it’s important, but we get even less support from the federal government than we do from the state. So from that point of view, the range of influences is even less unless you have a significant impact.”

Question 16: You gave Lobbying a _____. Can you tell me why or provide me with some examples?

Superintendent A (rating: 5)

“I think that’s really one of the only ways that we can make sure our legislators understand that what they do does have an impact on us. Sometimes it’s a negative impact and financially it’s a negative impact. Because it causes us to change what we feel is a better way to instruct kids, for example. Or a better way to test kids. There are a

lot of mandates that come down. If we are not lobbying our legislators, we'll probably see some unforeseen consequences occur in many of those mandates—even from the legislator's standpoint. They really didn't know. So I think lobbying is very important.”

Superintendent B (rating: 4)

“I think ED-RED, and E. and A., who is her assistant, are very involved. They are not only knowledgeable but good about speaking. It just sort of seems redundant to be members of both ED- RED and FED ED. We have a good relationship with ED-RED. This district has been a member of ED-RED for at least ten years.”

Superintendent C (rating: 4)

“Lobbying at the state level enhances absolutely. Federal for our school district doesn't have much effect. A lot of our monies are coming in predominantly either from local dollars, which is our local representation and the secondary would be at the state level or state funding. We receive very little money from federal and we have no influence over it. It's going to be based on demographics and things of that nature here; but that's Title Funds. What we are talking about is state funding and this is essential to have our lobby presence to be effective; to receive the dollars that we need.”

Superintendent D (rating: 5)

“I think lobbying enhances. I think lobbying works. It's what every other organization does; lobby. That's what the politicians seem to pay attention to. They pay more attention to the lobbyist than the actual issues themselves. I am not sure why.

So we work with the lobbyist from ED-RED, who works in that capacity. For our school right now, we've got a local group, the feeder school districts to our local high

school. We have worked together to form a platform. We are asking and inviting local and state legislators to a forum so we could ask them to lift the tax caps for certain parts of our budgets. And I don't know. We'll see how well that works.

I am able to communicate with these lobbyist groups through face-to-face meetings, email, and phone calls.”

Superintendent E (rating: 4)

“It has to be in the four range because if it were neutral no one would do it. It seems to be a big thing for people to do. One example where lobbying has been effective is the retirement. There have been a lot of issues in the last year about retirement, when you can retire and what type of retirement package you can have. They were going to eliminate all that stuff. I think lobbying at least stopped them and cut them off at a certain place. We have the six percent increase without being penalized. Without lobbying, districts would have been penalized so much with pre-existing deals. Another example is the defibrillators. My God, they were going to have us...it would have been way too difficult for us to manage. We would have had to have somebody at every activity that an outside organization was running to make sure that there was a defibrillator available. We wouldn't have been able to allow anyone to use our facilities because we couldn't afford to have someone there all the time to make sure everything was taken care of.

I think those are two big examples, especially the defibrillator which was going to be just unmanageable. We felt better when someone was sharing our perspective and then they finally became more realistic about how that should work.”

Superintendent F (rating: 4)

“I think it’s important that you lobby at times. However, I also think you don’t want to be seen as somebody that’s just there talking. You have to be seen to listen too. If it’s always just about what I want, after a while you are kind of avoided.”

Superintendent G (rating: 4 or 5)

“It’s proven to be fairly effective if you have someone who is knowledgeable and can establish relationships with the legislators and gain access. It does make a difference. There are a couple lobbyists that operate on behalf of IASA and some of the other organizations: the Illinois Principals’ Association, the unions, both the Illinois Federation of Teachers and Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Association of School Business Officials. I also think there is an open dialogue with the Illinois School Board Association. Seriously, I think there is strength in that. But I don’t have any first hand experience with it; just what I hear from the association meetings I attend.”

Superintendent H (rating: 5)

“Without the lobbying efforts in Springfield, with regard to ED-RED and my professional organization, IASA, the Illinois Association of School Boards, and quite frankly the unions too, we all came together towards a common concern: pension funding. Some of the changes that occurred with regard to the two-tier system had to do with the joint lobbying efforts of all these different organizations. Unfortunately, my experience has found that the only way you get people to listen to us is to lobby.”

Superintendent I (rating: 2)

“I don’t believe it helps. It seems like money talks and we don’t have any money. The teachers unions have money. That’s not a slam, that’s an observation.”

Superintendent J (rating: 4)

“I have not lobbied here in Illinois but I did in New York. I spent the majority of my career in New York and it definitely helped. For example, I was trying to get funds for our early childhood program. We went to Albany on Lobby Day and actually met with state legislators or their staffers and explained why we needed the money. Both times I did that, I ended up with additional funds.”

Superintendent K (rating: 5)

“For example, an issue in this district, there is a change to a rule recommendation that goes in affect at the end of this year, which would not allow the district to hire a retired superintendent anymore. We worked with our legislators and with ED-RED. The school board president, the principal and I went before the Illinois State Board of Education and pleaded our case. They didn’t change the rule recommendation but did allow us a waiver.

So things can happen when you reach out and basically make your case. If you have a good position, you have your data in hand, and you are able to make a case, I think there is a good possibility that they listen. I think lobbying gets maligned sometimes. When people say lobbying, it’s almost like a negative effect. You think of the pharmaceutical and oil companies trying to influence legislators. But I look at it as educating your legislators about the issues that are very important to their constituents. If

we don't do that, then they have no real basis upon which to make an informed decision, other than those who they hear from. I think it's a critical issue we have to deal with."

Question 18: You gave Networking a _____. Can you tell me why or provide me with some examples?

Superintendent A (rating: 5)

"I'd say my primary networking group is other superintendents. Another organization I didn't mention earlier but I'll mention now is the Lake County Superintendents. It has a very active professional organization. We meet monthly. We also do one major staff development workshop, which meets for a couple of days in Galena each year. We also bring in a lot of one-day workshops for people. I think when you are talking with other people that are at the same level of responsibility as you, they can give you suggestions or say, "hey, here's how it worked in...or here's how it worked somewhere else." Whereas, when you talk to other groups, let's say principals for example, your experiences are quite different. It doesn't mean that we can't learn anything from them, but they are not making the same type of decisions as we are.

Another group I belong to is a consortium of all the school districts that feed into our local high school. This group also meets monthly. We talk about curriculum. We talk about new laws. We invite our colleagues in different levels, whether it's principals, assistant superintendents for curriculum, human resources, student services to come in and help keep us current. So I think networking is very important."

Superintendent B (rating: 4)

“I think, again here in Lake County, we have a very strong superintendents’ network. We have had the State Superintendent speak at our meetings. They’ve brought people in from various other organizations that are involved state wide and some of the politics in that. I think within Lake County we have a strong network of support.

We meet monthly. The executive board is very involved and members of our group are also involved with other organizations, as executive members of IASA for example. So that’s your voice. At least, easily once a month, and more if you need, to get that information to the messengers to take and speak to the higher ups.”

Superintendent C (rating: 5)

“Well it continues with the whole idea of developing a rapport. Most situations that happen in public schools may not have been seen by me, but they certainly have been seen by one of my colleagues. So with that relationship, I can pick up the phone and call a colleague, ask them the question and be able to address those issues that come up unexpectedly or expectedly...whether you have an anticipation of poor negotiations or if you have finance deficits.”

Superintendent D (rating: 5)

“I think it enhances. When you are networking with colleagues you can often talk informally about why you think this is a good platform or that is a good platform. You can convince them or they can convince you. There is a more informal discussion. You can often get more people to come out, to come see what you are talking about. Anytime you are sharing information, it’s a good thing.”

Superintendent E (rating: 4)

“It gives me an opportunity to talk to people who have more insight into certain ways in which I can use money or get funds. When we network with some of these places like Siemens, Ameresco, and even our architects, they have ideas about how we might be able to get some funds that can be used to our advantages. I think it is always good when you talk to people, listen to them, find out what they are doing. Then you can investigate to see if you could do it too. It helps, it doesn't hurt, that's not neutral.”

Superintendent F (rating: 5)

“Well going back to the original example, when I go down to Springfield now, I know other lobbyists. I used to be a superintendent in a different district. I knew and worked with different people. So, it's a lot easier for me to go down to Springfield because I know people and talk to them rather than wonder, “who's that guy?” Most of the time it's like, “Oh, I know that guy. That's D.. I know D., I can go talk to D.”

Superintendent G (rating: 4)

“I think this is important. It is very difficult to get a consistent message out. The forum is a result of a networking effort. One of the superintendents said we should get together and talk about finance and some of our common concerns. Out of that comment the forum grew. In addition to the legislators, superintendents, business managers, and board members will attend. Actually we decided it would be best if the board members presented to the legislators. So it's going to be elected official to elected official. We think it will be more effective than if superintendents were presenting. I mean, what do

you expect a superintendent to say? Of course, they are going to say we have finance concerns.”

Superintendent H (rating: 5)

“Just like with teaching, you get all your best ideas from someone else and then you tailor and craft it to help your children, to meet their needs. There are so many other school districts and organizations that are going through what we are going through. I think it is important not to take a myopic view towards problem solving, but to work with others in a collaborative manner to try to do what’s best for your children and their parents.”

Superintendent I (rating: 3)

“You learn about opportunities through networking. “

Superintendent J (rating: 4)

“When I am working with other superintendents, they often have different ways they’ve gotten money so I can get ideas from them.”

Superintendent K (rating: 5)

“I think networking, in a superintendent’s job, is essential. It’s essential because you are the one person in the organization doing the job. How we respond to certain legislative issues, how we respond to mandates, how we deal with situations, may or may not be unique. Being able to network around solutions and problem solving is invaluable. At least it has been for my entire career.”

Open-Ended Questions

Finally, all research participants were asked four open-ended questions, numbers 19-22. The purpose of the open-ended questions was to further explore the perceptions of Illinois superintendents as they relate to the topic of political activities and advocating for resources and services for student learning. The open-ended questions and the responses of each research participant are presented below.

Question 19: With whom does networking enhance your ability to advocate for resources and services?

Superintendent A:

“Mostly superintendents and then probably secondarily assistant superintendent level or director level administrators. Next would probably be legislators. So it’s internal first and then more at a local level legislators and then state level after that.”

Superintendent B:

“The Lake County Superintendents Group. Other superintendents at the same level because others in the organization are a little bit more removed from the superintendency. I think networking and trying to establish relationships with people that are executives and higher ups in an organization is always helpful. Being as active as you can in a professional organization is helpful. With this being my second year as a superintendent, I haven’t had time to get really involved in IASA and AASA as much as I did with the National Staff Development Council when I was an associate superintendent, or even ASCD or ISCD. The more time you have to develop those relationships with

some of the people whose passion and mission is to champion the cause of an organization the better.”

Superintendent C:

“Superintendent colleagues...the operations and practical side. For best practices, I do have colleagues in the university level.”

Superintendent D:

“I network with colleagues, various superintendents. I can’t say it’s been particularly effective with state, federal or local legislators. We’ll see what happens after this election.”

Superintendent E:

“Actually, the Lake County Superintendents Group. That’s a big one. We have a yearly conference. During the conference they bring a lot of groups. As a matter of fact, I was able to use two of their keynote speakers for our institute days. I was also able to use a lot of the materials from the keynote speakers with my board of education members. So that’s probably the biggest one. We network through that organization.

Also, the tri-conference is a big one. We all go downtown for the weekend. All of a sudden, you are getting to see everybody. I mean, everybody wants to sell you something. But they will also truly help you even if you are not their client. Of course, they are probably looking toward the future, but at least they will help you.”

Superintendent F:

“All legislators and their assistants and the lobbyists and the various heads of different state run organizations also.”

Superintendent G:

“The superintendents’ group. The school boards’ association, the groups I mentioned earlier. They are all important.”

Superintendent H:

“There’s lots. Your local area superintendents, your local area school boards too, intergovernmental agencies within your town and communities. While I rated the part about state legislators as a three, neutral, I believe that if you don’t network with them and you don’t have a collaborative relationship, it could be that laws get passed that would inhibit us. So you can never collaborate too much.”

Superintendent I:

“Fellow superintendents. Well, not just superintendents, I should say colleagues, make it a little more general. Colleagues which would include other school administrators, teachers, retired educators.”

Superintendent J:

“The Lake County Superintendents. Then we have the feeder groups; there are four elementary districts that feed into the high school district. So that’s a smaller group. And my husband’s also a school superintendent so we bounce ideas off each other.”

Superintendent K:

“Other superintendents, that’s a huge area to network. Obviously, networking with your community in general is the key. I just used the example of the tax swap. One of the important things there was that the community got involved. Our parent organization got very involved and demanded that our representatives come and speak

with us about this. Networking with all stakeholders in education is key; everything from legislators to the children whom we're here for."

Question 20: What other strategies or avenues do you utilize to secure or advocate for the resources and services needed for opportunities for student learning?

Superintendent A:

"We have a couple of local sources. We have very active parent organizations here; our Parent Teacher Organization and the Learning Fund Foundation. We get significant funds from them. A quick example; our Learning Fund just completed a digital initiative to equip all of our classrooms with SMART boards, document cameras and sound systems. They probably contributed close to a quarter of a million dollars in less than two years. Our Parent Teacher Organization has provided grants for teachers for curriculum writing and has plans to improve our athletic fields over the next couple of years.

We also use grant writing. We submit a lot of grants. We do not always get a lot of grants. We do not qualify due to some of the competitive grants due to the restrictors on the grants. For example, this is a high, socio-economic district. We do not have a high minority population. So there are some grants we will not even have a chance at. However, we submit anywhere from 10 to 15 grants each year and once a while those are a hit and we secure \$10,000 in additional funding."

Superintendent B:

"In my short tenure as a superintendent, not really. Since we are not as dependent upon state funds as other districts who are having to borrow money because the state is so

far behind in making payments that are owed to them, I think our situation is more local. We are challenged with, or struggling with, our financial advisory task force in prioritizing what we need to spend our monies on. The financial advisory task force consists of district and community members. We are in the process of finalizing the group this year. Their goal is to look at our budget and make some of those decisions about priorities.

Another organization that has been very helpful, not so much in lobbying or specific to funds, is the Educational Consulting and Research Associates (ECRA) group. They do surveys of the community and provide us with data and other information on what is a priority for the community as a whole. The partnership with ECRA has been very helpful to the district for a number of years.”

Superintendent C:

“The only thing that’s implied is that local advocacy, the smaller community dollars. This might be for an organization like the Rotary or a food pantry or similar organization. It is a much smaller level to support individual students, perhaps during the holidays or that sort of thing.”

Superintendent D:

“Well, there is a lot of writing. Sometimes we write letters to our legislators. But other than that, I think we’ve covered everything.”

Superintendent E:

“We go through our local Rotary Club. We will get resources and services from them sometimes. I’m on the board of another group in our community that provides services and funds. We tap into the Kiwanis for services and manpower or people.

Also, we just made a deal with a local college to bring Spanish GED classes into the district for our Spanish-speaking parents who requested to take GED classes, but needed them in Spanish. We have also been working with the college to bring English as a Second Language classes to one of the churches down here in an effort to get our non-English speaking parents involved. We’ve also tapped into the Townships to help get the message out. There is a Hispanic organization that came in and gave information to the people in our community about the services they could access. So these partnerships have been very positive. We didn’t get money from them, but they provide free classes, all we do is provide the space.”

Superintendent F:

“Apart from our property tax? We’ve got that. While we are always working on that, I’m making sure that we are maximizing our revenue without overtaxing people.”

Superintendent G:

“I haven’t done as much of this, but occasionally I will call a legislator and say, “I really have some concerns about this.” Or “I really think this is important and you should think about it.” I try to do that sparingly because I am sure they are just bombarded with stuff. If you don’t do it at all, that’s not correct. If you do it too much, then I think there would be a tendency to tune you out...”I heard from him two weeks ago.” I think you

need to be kind of selective. The forum we are hosting will be a time when we say, you really have to pay attention to this. We want results and we are going to invite you back in two months to see how things are going. We want them to know that this is not a one time event. Illinois is at the crossroads; we really are.”

Superintendent H:

“One of the avenues we use goes back to your question about our local area officials. We try to share resources with our local high schools and elementary schools. I can provide two examples. We might share the same food service or the same buses. We might go together on a joint bid for gasoline purchase or paper. There are some economies of scale that we can maintain there and share resources. But most important are the academic resources. We meet each month with the local high schools and feeder elementary schools. We are talking all the time about how our children are learning, what are our standards, what are their standards, how are the children we sent them doing, what can we do differently. I think that’s the most powerful one. Finally, I would just highlight the inter-governmental agencies such as the park districts, your police departments, your local mayor and villages. We have great relationships that benefit our children.”

Superintendent I:

Our think-tank, T.L.I. When we were in our battle with the state over our bilingual grant that they eventually gave us, T.L.I. supported us, supported our efforts and encouraged us to pursue it. When we were going through this battle with the state, three or maybe four years ago, the Tribune covered the story. They interviewed me and they

interviewed other people as well. The reporter told me the story would be in the next day's paper. It was on the front page. T.L.I. probably saw the story on the front page and then they contacted me."

Superintendent J:

"I do a lot of research online, looking at what others have done. I read, read, read what other school districts have done across the country because I think it is not a good idea to just look at what has been done in your area. I also talk to other business managers. I think they are a wealth of knowledge."

Superintendent K:

"Obviously, one of the things I think is important is working as a team with your board of education. They are the local elected representatives of your community. When we work in this arena, we do strategic planning, we do visioning, we talk about where we want our schools to be. And they are key. When everybody is on board, there is a synergy that brings the organization along. It has been very helpful to me when you get a really extraordinarily solid board working together. That's why I keep working because without that, my job is not as effective. I can't be an effective leader. I don't believe you can be effective if you have a board that bickers or a board that doesn't represent a solid belief in the mission of their schools."

Question 21: Given these behaviors, which one is the most effective and the least effective?

Superintendent A:

“The most effective for us in this district has been our local organizations. Between the parent and the foundation groups, in the seven years I’ve been here, they’ve generated between one and a half to two million dollars to our school district. I don’t think any other organization, including the State of Illinois has contributed that significantly in terms of finances.

After that, I would say grant writing. Unfortunately, the State of Illinois is in such dire financial conditions that we haven’t even gotten what we were anticipating. Most districts haven’t. But especially those with a flat grant like ours, we were really last on the list because we are not high-need. We are also heavily dependent upon the local tax base. Therefore, we are not as negatively impacted when the state can’t support some of their commitments.

We are not immune from being impacted. We did make some pretty significant cuts last year. But we are not as impacted as perhaps as other districts that get a pretty significant number of dollars on grants and general state aid. Those districts qualify for a lot more grants than we do in this type of district. If you had interviewed me in another district that was a little less affluent, it might be that we were much more heavily dependent on the state. I’ve worked in those situations too and I don’t want to trade. It’s much nicer to have some dollars that you have a little more control over yourself locally;

rather than counting on maybe the state will come through at seventy percent of the anticipated, promised, funds.

I would say we have been the least effective in this district, and even at the state level, with impacting the federal government. Again, we don't get a lot of dollars from the federal government; it is more the state mandated categorical grants. But those can be hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars. I don't think we have a good way to impact or influence that. We try to through our professional organizations. But I think it's very limited.

For example, the federal government recently had the Race to the Top grant. It caused the State of Illinois to jump through a lot of hoops and we ended up not getting any of the money. But we are still going to have to jump through hoops because they changed laws. So I don't think that is a good example of working effectively at the national level. It's more an example of how they've caused us to do things differently because there's the possibility of dollars tied to it. They may have good ideas but to be forced to do it, takes away the local control."

Superintendent B:

"The most effective is networking, those relationships you build with people. As for the least effective, on a personal level, I think lobbying. I don't know how people who are passionate about that do that. It's got to be extremely frustrating."

Superintendent C:

“I think the most effective is networking, developing a rapport. The least effective is working at the federal level. Any time I am working with federal legislators it is a big waste of my time.”

Superintendent D:

“I think the most effective is working with professional organizations. I think it is more effective because they often come with lobbyists. They have platforms; they have regular meeting times; they make it very easy to deal with them. It’s very organized. Somebody is usually hired strictly just to lobby. It is not someone doing it on a volunteer basis.

I would say working with legislators is the least effective. They just don’t have a good understanding of the issues. They may understand *one* issue, but if you change tracks, they can’t do it. They don’t have a good background knowledge.”

Superintendent E:

“Probably the most effective, the biggest amount of money that we get would be from the state. We hope that is our most effective because that would be our largest gain or opportunity of loss if we don’t tap into it. I mean locally, we get a lot of things, but we are talking about very small amounts of money. Federally, there is money out there from the feds, but that’s just within the last year or two and that’s probably going to go away. So the most effective has to be at the state, our state funding.

Talking to our local representatives, the lobbying that’s done by IASA down in the state and the various groups that put the pressure on. Through our professional

organizations and the lobbying that's done by them, it is the best way we have to influence what happens at the state level in terms of funding, either securing or not losing it. The organizations speak for all of us. As individuals, we can say what we need. But we are all different; even within this geographic area, we need different things. So we speak about what we want as individuals. If that organization talks more about it, it's good for everyone.

The least effective is talking to the Illinois State Board of Education. We try to. It seems that no matter what we do, whatever we tell them, they tell us what they think we want to hear. They tell us what they want to tell us. Often it's "Well, that's the way it is. Too bad. You have to live with it." It's very frustrating. You listen to the state superintendent talk around an issue. It's very political for him and I understand that. But I read his messages every week and I think, "Big deal. It's really not anything that's going to have a chance to change." I don't think they have a lot of influence. I think the influence comes from outside groups, the majority who vote."

Superintendent F:

"I think the most effective is working with state level people. I think they are the most responsive to our needs. They are good about making sure that you are at least heard. They are very good about taking your message down. So I don't have to go all the time, I can just call them. And they can say what I'd like them to say without me actually having to go.

The least effective is the federal. Why? Because there is lack of proof that I am wrong. I don't have any anecdotal evidence to show that it's ever really been successful."

Superintendent G:

"I think the most effective is lobbying and working with the associations. You have to have access and you have to have someone who can state your case. That's the way it works. Obviously we are not huge into campaign donations. There are some political action committee work that occurs and actually helps pay for lobbyists. But you have to be able to get your message across. You need somebody to do that because that's the way it works.

I think the least effective is local legislators. They don't have a big impact on us. I think they are supportive and all that. Maybe they are more influential than I realize. Actually, I'd probably put federal ahead of local as less effective. I just don't think working with the federal level has been very effective."

Superintendent H:

"I would have to say the most effective are your membership in professional organizations and lobbying. The least effective is working with your state legislators because unfortunately, they just don't get it. One hundred and ten unfunded mandates? Give me a break, Senator, it's not your profession."

Superintendent I:

"Networking with colleagues is the most effective because you learn about programs and opportunities from your colleagues. The least effective is lobbying.

Lobbying involves money and we don't have any. Maybe I am wrong about the connection between lobbying and money.”

Superintendent J:

“The most effective is networking with other superintendents. The superintendency, in itself, is lonely. When you look at all the different jobs and responsibilities that people have, really the superintendent is the only one that's looking at the entire big picture. So it helps when you can talk to another person in the same role. You can ask, “How do you see this?” You may not agree, but they may have an idea you hadn't even thought of, or you can bounce ideas off them. It's lonely.

The least effective is the federal, talking to federal legislators. When you are a federal legislator, you have such a large group and it's so political. Just listening to our ladies the other night, they were more concerned about how the Democrats were going to vote than really listening to what we were saying. I think it's just too political.”

Superintendent K:

“Well when you talk about advocating for resources and services, I guess I would answer that the most effective strategy is dependent on what it is. I couldn't say it's always legislative. For example, when we needed a referendum passed, it was our community all the way because we depend upon local property taxes. So networking with the community, making our case with the community, and getting community members out there to support it was the key to passing the referendum. If effecting legislation, then working with our legislators is the most important issue. If effecting change in the classroom, then working with our teachers is the key. A part of that would

be networking with other superintendents for strategies and help in terms of a good idea or a good consultant.

I am on the IASA List serve. I get every kind of email: Do you know? Do you need? Do you have? Very often I respond to somebody who has a question that I think my information might be helpful. Although I haven't used the List serve to inquire about anything yet, probably because I have been doing this for twenty plus years, I still think it is helpful to me to see what others are dealing with and what their challenges are. It's important to help them where they are, even if their districts may be very different.

I would say that all of the behaviors we talked about have a role to play in the big picture. I think when I was starting out as a superintendent, I depended a lot more on my professional organizations and networking than I do now. I network very strongly with the other feeder districts of the high school and the high school district. That's key when you talk about providing services for children. We need to make sure that we are all working together. The same students go to the same high school district. We work very closely together with our special education cooperative. We network with eighteen school districts all in the interest of students and how we can best serve our special need students. So with every issue, perhaps you need to reach out to a different stakeholder group.”

Question 22: Do you have any other comments or information to share about this topic that you think I might find helpful?

Superintendent A:

“I think the challenge is going to be, the federal government has taken a much more active role more recently. I think the challenge will be for us to decide how to respond to that. I think some wealthy districts will decide not to play and this may be one of them. All those changes made by the federal government cost money and the trade off may not be worth it for us. Unfortunately, that’s going to create even more disparity between the haves and the have-nots in terms of what you are offering kids.

It’s not a good thing. At least right now, the way the funding system is set up, you are really at the mercy of others to dictate how you are going to be funded. I think that’s a shame because kids in D.P. deserve as much or more than the kids in L. and maybe even have more significant needs. Where their parents happen to live may have an impact of the quality of education some students get. I think that’s a problem, but I don’t think we are going to solve that. Illinois is too far behind financially; they are in deep trouble.”

Superintendent B:

“I think in general being able to take that whole broad area of school finance and making it more down to earth, easy to understand. In a district like ours, where we’ve not been dependent upon the state and federal funding, the majority of our funding is local through property taxes. We are going through some challenging times because when this area was growing, we had all new construction, and the impact fees that went with it. We

had not only all that growth but an economy that isn't like it is now. It was a prime opportunity for community support to pass referendums, build new facilities, and support the education fund. It's hard now because people have never heard the word, "no." They feel entitled, that we should just be able to do it, keep doing whatever we want. It is more challenging to say, "Wait a minute. We don't have some of the same revenues. Construction has dried up. You don't have the same interest rates on the money and reserves you used to have. CPI (consumer price index), EAV (equalized assessed value). All of that is hard to explain.

It is going to be really important with our financial advisory task force that we have all the different stakeholder groups represented to sort through this and go through a Finance 101 on school funding. Where does our money come from? What is the impact of flat revenues or even declining revenues? What are our expenses? What is the impact of our pretty expensive teacher contract that we have for five years? I inherited that. It was settled before I officially took over and one I questioned myself: "How are we going to afford this?" It will be a lot of educating and communicating through our monthly budget bulletins. And we will need to explain it in layman's terms so that people understand it. That's challenging."

Superintendent C:

"No."

Superintendent D:

"Frankly, there aren't any resources, so no. Illinois is in deep trouble. That means we are all in trouble."

Superintendent E:

“Just that it’s frustrating; it’s difficult to deal with. We’re trying to survive. Our community has told us, approved certain tax limits, and yet we can’t touch it because it is under a cap. So we can’t even access the money that they’ve already approved. And it’s more difficult when the State doesn’t pay. Last year, they were a million and a half dollars short with us. And that was money that we budgeted.

They sent it to us this year...late. So it could have a cumulative affect. Luckily we came in under budget last year, so it didn’t hurt us as much as it did the year before where it made us feel like we were off of budget. However, if they had sent it to us, we would have been even more under budget and better off financially. They sent us the final payment this year from last year. They are probably not going to send us the two payments this year that they owe us. Eventually, I think it is going to be a year’s worth of funding that they won’t send. That’s very frustrating. They are just going to conveniently forget about it. It’s just, “Oh well, too bad.” If I didn’t pay my mortgage for a year, because I didn’t have the money, that probably wouldn’t work.

They are doing that to the funding of the retirement system. They just took the money and used it for other things and didn’t fund our system. It was one of the only ones making money. They borrowed from it and never paid it back. And now they are messing around with the retirement system. It is very frustrating. When you’ve done something for 35 or 40 years, and then they start talking about how they are going to make changes. Well, it’s kind of too late for some of us who plan on retiring. We don’t have time to make an alternate plan.

It worries me a lot. I don't know what they are going to do with the pension system. What really worries me is that if you have to teach until you are 65, before you can even get a pension, who is going to do the teaching. Who is going to imagine, I've got to work 45 years before I can even quit or retire. Who will we get going into this profession? Who are the young people coming out, who are going to want to become teachers and stay in it for the long haul? You know, I don't see the best and brightest becoming teachers.

And then there's tenure. You know I am not for tenure completely. I think there needs to be some happy medium. But if you go to the other extreme with tenure, then you can get rid of people anytime you want. Who is going to teach because once you start making too much money, they will replace you. And so you've given ten to fifteen years of your life to something, and they are going to dump you and then what do you do? Why would anyone go into the profession? Anyone with a half a brain is not going to work there. It's too risky and you don't make enough money. It's not like you make a ton of money where you can salt it away. You are making itsy bitsy money until your tenth to fifteenth year. And once you start making money, you become too expensive. You get released and we go back and hire these first and second year teachers. So again, why go into the profession?

As bad as tenure may be, I think it's too far the other way. You can't go to the other extreme either. There has to be some middle ground. I think whoever changes the tenure law is going to go to the other extreme. I don't see it being a reasonable decision because they don't make reasonable decisions. It's just going to extremes."

Superintendent F:

“Well I have some other experience that I don’t know if it would help or be just different. My previous superintendency, I was a superintendent in a district with a nuclear plant. So we were very heavily involved in lobbying in Springfield because of the nuclear plant. They pay a team of people to lobby all the time and they kind of get what they want. So we constantly had to counter that with our own effort in Springfield. It was very clear that even though I believe we were on the moral side of things, trying to educate children, it basically came down to how much money you had.

The nuclear plant got their way because they paid a lot of politicians. I don’t mean illegally. But they contributed to them. They definitely had more of a voice in Springfield than we were ever going to. It was disheartening to see the game was basically fixed when you get down there. There wasn’t a whole lot we could do beyond a little narrow band of opportunity that we had to make any real change in that area. Ever since I experienced that, I don’t go to Springfield as much. If I hadn’t been the Superintendent of a district with a nuclear plant, I wouldn’t have had that type of experience; to be in Springfield doing that advocacy work. I’m glad I have that experience, but I’m also glad I don’t have to do it anymore.”

Superintendent G:

“Not that I can think of right now.”

Superintendent H:

“In year one of my job, I didn’t realize how important networking was. Because I have been here nearly five years now, I now know that building those relationships,

building those bonds, somehow figuring it out in your day, is key to doing what you need to do for your students and their families in your learning community.

One of the things I think you learn in your first couple of years is that you can't be a part of everything. You need to learn to delegate and follow up. Trust the people you work with and then verify the trust to free yourself up more to be in the classrooms and to network. Whether you are networking in your schools, with your children or whether you are networking in a state meeting that we had last Tuesday with our state legislators. There were eight districts that came together to talk about the common messages from our eight districts. This is what we are all concerned about. This is what we want your voice to be or us in Springfield. You balance your time like you did when you were a teacher. Your first year as a teacher it took you hours to do your lesson plans, by your fourth year, it doesn't take as long."

Superintendent I:

"The issue of affecting politics. It's important to be visible and to make connections. To develop new connections and network with a wide range of professionals."

Superintendent J:

"Well it's an interesting topic and I would love to see your results when you're finished. But I can't think of anything else though."

Superintendent K:

"I think it is a difficult time right now. I think it's a difficult time for everyone, period. In particular, it's difficult for education because our costs go up, there are people

out of work, and taxes are tough, whether it's income taxes or property taxes. People are struggling. I think we have to be very sensitive to our communities and recognize that even though we want more resources for our students, how can we make the resources that we already have available to us work to the maximum? How can we basically maximize services? How can we be creative with our limited resources? How can we think outside the box? What are the things we can do that don't require people to make sacrifices that are unreasonable in times that are tough?

Schools are getting a lot of bashing, bashing, bashing. Basically, I think people in this business try really, really hard. We are going into negotiations and I know it's not going to be fun; it's not going to be easy. But I am hoping that people will understand that the public pays for public education. They can only do so much. I think they support their local schools in general. But there are limits. We need to be more sensitive to where the community is coming from right now. We hear it a lot...we know people are struggling; homes are in foreclosure. Look at our community: it's a gorgeous beautiful community. But we have had families have to leave our community because they couldn't afford to live here. When you think about that impact, a good portion of it is the cost of school here. It's not something that we need to take lightly.

We need to work with our community around how do we not ask for more than we need. There are challenges. The tax cap laws can work both ways. We can't even abate taxes without making a long-term impact on us. We can't do it for one year. So we have to recognize and work with the CPI. If we have a fund balance, we can't give it back to the taxpayers. Or if we see in three years we are going to be really negative, we

can't recover that. There are some things institutionally that are difficult to work with. But I do think we need to communicate a sensitivity with our community that they are making sacrifices and still be able to be proud of the high quality of services that we provide for our children.”

Summary

Eleven active superintendents in Lake County, Illinois were interviewed for this study. Chapter IV presents the answers to the questions they were asked. In the next chapter, the interview data will be analyzed and triangulated with the literature review and the conceptual framework to answer the questions posed for this research study. The primary research question is *what are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning?*

The specific, fundamental research questions are:

- a. To what professional organizations do superintendents belong?
- b. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe their professional affiliations enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- c. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe networking enhances or inhibits their ability to secure resources and services?

- d. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe lobbying and working with local, state and federal legislators enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- e. As superintendents advocate for student learning, with whom and how do they network to enhance their ability to secure resources and services?

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this research study is to gain an understanding of the perceptions of Illinois superintendents on the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for the resources and services needed for increased opportunities for student learning. The primary research question is *what are Illinois superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning?*

Using a qualitative research approach, the researcher interviewed eleven active superintendents in Lake County, Illinois to answer the following specific, fundamental research questions:

- a. To what professional organizations do superintendents belong?
- b. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe their professional affiliations enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- c. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe networking enhances or inhibits their ability to secure resources and services?

- d. As superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe lobbying and working with local, state and federal legislators enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services?
- e. As superintendents advocate for student learning, with whom and how do they network to enhance their ability to secure resources and services?

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze and interpret the data obtained during the interviews in this research study. The data will be triangulated with the literature review from chapter two, the conceptual framework of equity and justice and the websites of the professional organizations to which the research participants identified they were members. Then the data will be analyzed to see which themes emerged. Finally, in this chapter, limitations of this study and the opportunities for further research will be identified.

Question A: Professional Organization Membership

Bauman (2008) defines a professional organization as an organization that advocates for members, advances and disseminates specialized knowledge and information, provides opportunities for continuing education and professional development, influences public policy and informs the public within their area of expertise. Martin (2007) believes that professional organizations also play a part in developing advocates.

One hundred percent of the research participants (n=11) are members of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA). According to the IASA website, “IASA is the premier advocacy organization for school administrators in the state.

IASA's mission is to support school leaders in the pursuit of educational excellence through continued school improvement” (retrieved from http://www.iasaedu.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=52&Itemid=157 on January 15, 2011). As such, IASA supports Bauman’s (2008) definition that a professional organization advocates for its members.

Seventy-two percent of the research participants (n=8) are also members of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Eighty-three percent of the male superintendents and sixty percent of the female superintendents interviewed are members of AASA. Fifty percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, one hundred percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and fifty percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years are AASA members. “The mission of the American Association of School Administrators is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children.” When talking about it members, AASA states, “AASA members are the chief education advocates for children. AASA members advance the goals of public education and champion children’s causes in their districts and nationwide. As school system leaders, AASA members set the pace for academic achievement. They help shape policy, oversee its implementation and represent school districts to the public at large” (retrieved from <http://www.aasa.org/About.aspx> on January 15, 2011.) As such, AASA supports Bauman’s (2008) view of professional organizations as advancers and disseminators of specialized knowledge and information

and as influencers of public policy and sources of information to the public within their area of expertise.

Sixty-three percent of the research participants (n=7) are members of Education Research Development (ED-RED). Thirty-three percent of the male superintendents and one hundred percent of the female superintendents interviewed are members of ED-RED. One hundred percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, eighty percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and twenty-five percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years are ED-RED members. “ED-RED is an advocacy organization that monitors and actively influences education policy at the Illinois Statehouse. The vision of ED-RED is to be a premier education policy resource for Illinois legislators and ED-RED membership. Their mission is to be a united voice advocating for the diverse needs of suburban schools” (retrieved from <http://ed-red.wetpaint.com/page/ED-RED+Organizational+Information> and <http://ed-red.wetpaint.com/> on January 15, 2011). Therefore, ED-RED is aligned with Bauman’s (2008) definition of a professional organization as an organization that advocates for its members, advances and disseminates specialized knowledge and information and influences public policy.

Additionally, ED-RED believes that the State must provide adequate financial support for all public schools and that the funding for public schools must be stable, reliable and predictable. It believes the state is responsible for fully funding the additional costs for programs that support special education and at-risk students and all

state mandates (retrieved from <http://ed-red.wetpaint.com/page/ED-RED+Organizational+Information> on January 15, 2011). These belief statements by ED-RED can be directly tied to the current discrepancy between the Illinois Constitution claiming primary responsibility for financing public education (Illinois Constitution, 1970) and the current reality of school funding where approximately sixty-two percent of statewide total school revenues come from local sources in Illinois with the state contributing roughly 30% (Fritts, 2008).

Sixty-three percent of the research participants (n=7) are also members of the Lake County Superintendents Group. Sixty-six percent of the male superintendents and eighty percent of the female superintendents interviewed are members of the Lake County Superintendents Group. Fifty percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, forty percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and one hundred percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years are members of the Lake County Superintendents Group. Although this is a more informal professional group rather than a professional organization, it is included in the study since a large percentage of the research participant pool mentioned it throughout the interviews. As such, this group aligns itself more with the research in the literature review on networking than with the literature about professional organizations. “Networking is the deliberate process of exchanging information, resources, support, and access in such a way as to create mutually beneficial relationships for personal and professional success” (Baber & Waymon, 2007, p. 17).

Fifty-four percent of the research participants (n=6) are members of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). Sixty-six percent of the male superintendents and forty percent of the female superintendents interviewed are members of ASCD. Fifty percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, sixty percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and fifty percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years are ASCD members. “ASCD is a membership organization that develops programs, products, and services essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead. ASCD membership offers more information and ideas about learning and teaching than any other single source” (retrieved from <http://ascd.org/membership/learn-more.aspx> on January 15, 2011). ASCD’s mission to develop programs, products and services essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead is aligned to Bauman’s (2008) understanding of professional organizations as organizations that advance and disseminate specialized knowledge and information and organizations that provide opportunities for continuing education and professional development.

Thirty-six percent of the research participants (n=4) are members of Federal Representation, Education and Communication (FED ED). Sixteen percent of the male superintendents and sixty percent of the female superintendents interviewed are members of FED ED. Fifty percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, forty percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and twenty-five percent of the

research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years are FED ED members. “FED ED is a consortium of Illinois school districts, educational organizations, and corporate sponsors that represents the interests of suburban schools in our nation’s capitol. FED ED was created in recognition of the fact that school districts can no longer be satisfied with representation only in the state capitol, but also need forceful, positive representation in our nation’s capitol. The mission of FED ED is to:

1. advocate for suburban schools and other related organizations to federal legislators and policy makers,
2. assist members in formulating and articulating positions on federal legislation, funding, and policy,
3. keep members informed regarding relevant federal legislation and policy issues” (as retrieved from <http://thefeded.org/> on January 15, 2011). FED ED is also in alignment with Bauman’s (2008) view of professional organizations as an organization that advocates for its members, influences public policy and advances and disseminates specialized knowledge and information.

Thirty-six percent of the research participants (n=4) are members of Phi Delta Kappa (PDK). Fifty percent of the male superintendents and twenty percent of the female superintendents interviewed are members of PDK. None of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, twenty percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and seventy-five percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years are PDK members. “The mission of Phi Delta

Kappa International is to promote high-quality education, in particular publicly-supported education, as essential to the development and maintenance of a democratic way of life. This mission is accomplished through our tenets of leadership, research, and service.” PDK’s tenet of leadership focuses on recognizing and celebrating the outstanding contributions of PDK members and chapters. PDK’s tenet of research focuses on sharing and distributing accurate knowledge and education research. PDK’s research tenet aligns with Bauman’s (2008) definition that a professional organization is an organization that advances and disseminates specialized knowledge and information. PDK’s tenet of service has a focus on cultivating and supporting the next generation of educators (as retrieved from <http://www.pdkintl.org/about/mission.htm> on January 15, 2011).

Twenty-seven percent of the research participants (n=3) are members of the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO). Sixteen percent of the male superintendents and forty percent of the female superintendents interviewed are members of IASBO. Fifty percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, forty percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and none of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years are IASBO members. As retrieved from <http://www.iasbo.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3280> on January 15, 2011, “the mission of the Illinois Association of School Business Officials is to provide its members and stakeholders a comprehensive range of professional development activities and services through networking and participation.” IASBO

aligns with Bauman's (2008) view of professional organizations as organizations that provide opportunities for continuing education and professional development.

Justice can be defined as the fidelity of the claims in a relationship. Specifically, social justice looks at the relations of a society based on internal institutional patterns and structural preconditions (Rawls, 2005). When ED-RED proposes that the State must provide adequate financial support for all public schools and that funding for public schools must be stable, reliable, and predictable, it promotes social justice by holding the State accountable to the fidelity of its promise in the Illinois Constitution to have the primary responsibility for financing the education system.

Ward and Anthony (1992) state, "More than ever before in the history of our nation, the acquisition of economic and political power is dependent upon access to high-quality education" (p. 242). Therefore, social justice would demand that all children have access to a high-quality education. Both IASA and AASA have at the core of their mission statements the pursuit of the highest quality public education for all children.

Question B: Superintendents' Perceptions of Professional Organizations

When asked to rate the degree to which they believe membership in professional organizations inhibits or enhances their ability to advocate for resources and services, using a scale of one to five, where one is inhibits, three is neutral and five is enhances, none of the superintendents (n=11) rated their perception of professional organizations with a one, inhibits or a three, neutral. Nine percent (n=1) rated professional organizations as a two, 63% (n=7) rated professional organizations as a four, and 27% of the superintendents (n=3) rated professional organizations as five, enhances their ability

to advocate. Ninety-one percent of the male superintendents and one hundred percent of the female superintendents interviewed rated their perceptions of professional organizations as a 4 or a 5. One hundred percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, one hundred percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and seventy-five percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years rated their perceptions of professional organizations a 4 or a 5.

Bauman (2008) identifies one of the purposes of a professional organization as influencing public policy. Martin (2007) ascertains that professional organizations help their members anticipate needs. One example is they provide information and support for connecting school programs to new state and federal mandates. Superintendent G shares, “There has been a lot of discussion, through professional organizations, IASA and the Lake County Superintendents Group, regarding how to best impact what happens in Springfield. A little bit at the federal level too, but primarily it’s at the state level.”

Superintendent H adds:

“They (professional organizations) provide up-to-date information that keeps you abreast of what’s going on, whether it’s at the state level, the national level, whether it’s ED-RED and legislative activity or whether it’s IASA with regard to professional practices.”

Superintendent D supports this with her comments, “Professional organizations have built-in platforms and built-in sessions for discussing platforms. They make it easy to participate.” Superintendent K concludes,

“I think that from an educational perspective you keep informed of what the issues are and in that respect you are better able to reach out to or contact legislators if there is a need to do that. It helps you become better prepared for what’s coming down the pipe in terms of regulations and requirements.”

All of the professional organizations, identified by the research participants in this study, work to affect public policy. Two of the professional organizations, ED-RED and FED ED, have at the core of their mission, the purpose of not only influencing, but affecting public policy. AASA encourages all its members to “make their voices heard in Washington to help ensure better, more responsive policy. Members of Congress and their staffs rely on you to provide them with real-world information about how policies are impacting schools and children every day. The best way to ensure better educational decisions by Congress is to become a source for your Congressional delegation and their Washington, DC, educational staff person” (retrieved from <http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=128> on January 15, 2011). The Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) Education Foundation seeks to influence public policy by providing operating support for the Center on Education Policy in Washington, DC. “The center conducts education research and publishes numerous reports on current issues in education, particularly those at the federal level. Center staff also provides input on the questions that will be asked during

the annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools” (retrieved from <http://www.pdkintl.org/foundation/policy.htm> on January 15, 2011). In an effort to influence and shape public policy, ASCD submits position statements on issues relevant to education (retrieved from <http://ascd.org/news-media/ASCD-Policy-Positions/ASCD-Positions.aspx> on January 15, 2011). IASBO works with the Delegate Advisory Assembly that makes recommendations to the Illinois ASBO Board in regards to issues of public policy and/or legislation involving resource management of education (retrieved from <http://www.iasbo.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3287> on January 15, 2011). Finally, IASA has a Legislative Committee that works closely with the Governmental Relations Specialist to monitor those legislative and otherwise political activities that may impact Illinois public schools (retrieved from http://www.iasaedu.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=54&Itemid=158 on January, 15, 2011).

Another purpose of professional organizations identified by both Bauman (2008) and Martin (2007) is providing opportunities for professional development and continuing education through workshops, conferences, websites and publications. Superintendent H shares,

“I use the information from professional organizations in my day-to-day activities in a variety of ways...With regard to IASA and ASCD, we use those for professional development for ourselves as well as the entire leadership team and our staff.”

Many of the professional organizations to which the research participants identified themselves as members have professional development pages on their websites. For example, ASCD's mission is to develop programs, products, and services essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead. IASA, AASA, ASCD and IASBO have annual conferences for their members. Furthermore, ASCD and PDK provide opportunities for continued education through publications. PDK publishes the highly-regarded, *Phi Delta Kappan*, an education policy magazine. ASCD publishes *Educational Leadership* and cosponsors, *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, an online journal. "IJEPL is dedicated to enriching the education policy and leadership knowledge base and to promoting exploration and analysis of policy alternatives" (retrieved from <http://ascd.org/Publications/IJEPL.aspx> on January 15, 2011).

A third purpose identified by Bauman (2008) of professional organizations is to advocate for its members. Superintendent B states, "I think they have been, as an organization, very good advocates for school districts. Whereas, I wouldn't have the time to be doing that type of work." Superintendent E supplies,

"Well IASA and AASA are strong advocates for administrators. You have people from professional organizations out there advocating for you, but you don't always know what they are doing. The best part is when you have an opportunity to sit down and speak with the person from the professional organization who is lobbying for you. You can sit and talk to

him to find out what exactly they are doing in IASA and AASA for us.

You learn what they are advocating for.”

Superintendent G concurs, “There are advocates and lobbyists that work on behalf of IASA.” Superintendent H adds, “They (professional organizations) provide advocacy that when you are working the day-to-day operations it’s hard to put your fingers on.”

However, Superintendent I had a different opinion.

“I think it has very little impact. A few years ago we had a battle with the state; our district was in a battle with the state over the bilingual education mandate. We were not in compliance with the state mandate even though our test scores for our ELL students have improved dramatically. The fact that we were not in compliance with the policy did not affect student achievement. However, student achievement was secondary to being in compliance with the policy from the state’s perspective. And so they held our grant back. They didn’t give us our bilingual grant.

I worked with many professional organizations. The Lake County Superintendents supported my district’s position. IASA supported my district’s position. In fact, they developed and adopted a regulation, I guess. They took an official position in support of my district. IASB did the same thing. The official position with my district was, not speaking out against bilingual education, just saying districts should have an option to go with another program if the district could show that the other

program is in the best interests of students. However, all of that did nothing; actually did nothing. We still didn't get the money."

Martin (2007) believes that professional organizations also play a part in developing advocates. He believes that professional organizations validate their members and model advocacy to their members. On their website, ASCD states, "ASCD has been a strong voice in the debate about educational issues that affect learning and teaching. As a nonpartisan education association, ASCD continues to advocate for policies and practices that ensure each child has access to educational excellence and equity." ASCD also provides opportunities for its members to become Educator Advocates (retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/ProfileRegistration.aspx?signup=educatoradvocates> on January, 15, 2011). "Congress is making education policy decisions that affect you, your local schools and your students. Do not let Congress make decisions without the critical information you can provide. You can help them, and they will welcome your input. As an Educator Advocate, you will receive e-mail alerts when your action can make a critical difference. We will provide the materials and information to make sure your advocacy time will be minimal, but your influence will be significant."

A final purpose of professional organizations according to Bauman (2008) is to advance and disseminate specialized knowledge and information. Superintendent H states,

"Professional organizations provide a great depth of knowledge. They provide up-to-date information that keeps you abreast of what's going on, whether it's at the state level, or the national level, whether it's ED-RED

and legislative activity or whether it's IASA with regard to professional practices. I use the information from professional organizations in my day-to-day activities in a variety of ways. With regard to the work from ED-RED, we send the legislative updates out to our Board of Education as well as our district and school leadership teams so they are aware of what's happening in Springfield."

Superintendent E puts it, "They do a lot to keep superintendents in the loop."

Superintendent F shares, "If I wasn't a member of those organizations, I wouldn't have the knowledge I have now."

The websites of the professional organizations are abundant with information and knowledge, including articles, position statements, related videos, and online learning opportunities. Additionally, members can post on blogs, ask questions on the list-serves, and listen to podcasts.

Hoefler (2006) believes that the purpose of advocacy is the pursuit of social justice. He defines advocacy as "the systematic, purposeful action that defends, represents, or advances the cause of an individual, group, organization, or community in order to promote social justice" (p. 8). Professional organizations promote social justice through their role in developing advocates.

Hoefler (2006) states, "It is important to tell those with decision-making authority what is wrong with the world so that something can be done to fix it" (p. ix). All of the professional organizations mentioned in this research study work to affect public policy. They provide a framework for systematic, purposeful action to their members. Some

provide that framework on their websites, others through their lobbying efforts, and others through the committees and delegations with which they work.

Question C: Superintendents' Perceptions of Networking

When asked to rate the degree to which they believe networking inhibits or enhances their ability to advocate for resources and services, using a scale of one to five, where one is inhibits, three is neutral and five is enhances, none of the superintendents rated networking as a one, inhibits or a two. Nine percent (n=1) rated it as three, neutral, 36% (n=4) rated it as a four, and 54% (n=6) rated it as five, enhances their ability to advocate. Ninety-one percent of the male superintendents and one hundred percent of the female superintendents interviewed rated their perceptions of networking as a 4 or a 5. One hundred percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, one hundred percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and seventy-five percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years rated their perceptions of networking as a 4 or a 5.

Baber and Waymon, (2007) define networking as “the deliberate process of exchanging information, resources, support, and access in such a way as to create mutually beneficial relationships for personal and professional success” (p. 17). Additionally, Baber and Waymon identify many benefits of networking. First, networking is a powerful tool for intelligence gathering. Regardless of the business setting; whether it be a conference, a meeting, or a golf outing, networking skills enable people to find the latest information on resources, trends and best practice. Second,

networking is a critical strategy for professionals to gain visibility and credibility within their field and for building and maintaining relationships for long-term growth. Finally, networking is an essential professional competency. Developing strategic networking skills and practices allow professionals to create, cultivate, and capitalize on relationships that get things done. Abramo et al. (2009) identify another benefit. Networks are an essential tool for sharing knowledge and promoting innovation towards the achievement of specific goals.

Many of the research participants identified the importance of networking as a tool for intelligence gathering; as an avenue for finding the latest information on resources, trends and best practices. Superintendent A shares,

“I’d say my primary networking group is other superintendents. Another organization I didn’t mention earlier, but I’ll mention now, is the Lake County Superintendents. It has a very active professional organization. We meet monthly. We also do one major staff development workshop, which meets for a couple of days in Galena each year. We also bring in a lot of one-day workshops for people. I think when you are talking with other people that are at the same level of responsibility as you, they can give you suggestions or say, “hey, here’s how it worked in...or here’s how it worked somewhere else.”

Superintendent D adds,

“I think it enhances. When you are networking with colleagues you can often talk informally about why you think this is a good platform or that is

a good platform. You can convince them or they can convince you. There is a more informal discussion. You can often get more people to come out, to come see what you are talking about. Anytime you are sharing information, it's a good thing."

Superintendent I believes, "Networking with colleagues is the most effective because you learn about programs and opportunities from your colleagues."

Superintendent E provides this example,

"It gives me an opportunity to talk to people who have more insight into certain ways in which I can use money or get funds. When we network with some of these places like Siemens, Ameresco, and even our architects, they have ideas about how we might be able to get some funds that can be used to our advantage. I think it is always good when you talk to people, listen to them, find out what they are doing. Then you can investigate to see if you could do it too. It helps, it doesn't hurt, that's not neutral."

Superintendent J concurs, "When I am working with other superintendents, they often have different ways they've gotten money so I can get ideas from them."

Superintendent H shares this perspective,

"Just like with teaching, you get all your best ideas from someone else and then you tailor and craft it to help your children, to meet their needs. There are so many other school districts and organizations that are going through what we are going through. I think it is important not to take a

myopic view towards problem solving, but to work with others in a collaborative manner to try to do what's best for your children and their parents.”

Superintendent K concludes,

“I think networking, in a superintendent's job, is essential. It's essential because you are the one person in the organization doing the job. How we respond to certain legislative issues, how we respond to mandates, how we deal with situations, may or may not be unique. Being able to network around solutions and problem solving is invaluable. At least it has been for my entire career.”

Superintendent J adds,

“The most effective strategy is networking with other superintendents. The superintendency, in itself, is lonely. When you look at all the different jobs and responsibilities that people have, really the superintendent is the only one that's looking at the entire big picture. So it helps when you can talk to another person in the same role. You can ask, “How do you see this?” You may not agree, but they may have an idea you hadn't even thought of, or you can bounce ideas off them. It's lonely.”

Superintendent C's response aligns with two benefits of networking, intelligence gathering and building and maintaining relationships for long-term growth.

“Well it continues with the whole idea of developing a rapport. Most situations that happen in public schools may not have been seen by me, but they certainly have been seen by one of my colleagues. So with that relationship, I can pick up the phone and call a colleague, ask them the question and be able to address those issues that come up unexpectedly or expectedly...whether you have an anticipation of poor negotiations or if you have finance deficits.”

Superintendent F also alludes to the importance of the relationships that are formed through networking.

“Well going back to the original example, when I go down to Springfield now, I know other lobbyists. I used to be a superintendent in a different district. I knew and worked with different people. So, it’s a lot easier for me to go down to Springfield because I know people and talk to them rather than wonder, “Who’s that guy?” Most of the time it’s like, “Oh, I know that guy. That’s D. I know D., I can go talk to D.”

Superintendent B and Superintendent C identify the most important advocacy strategy as networking. Superintendent B says, “The most effective is networking, those relationships you build with people.” Superintendent C agrees, “I think the most effective is networking, developing a rapport.”

Superintendent B and Superintendent G acknowledge the importance of networking as an essential tool for sharing knowledge and promoting innovation towards the achievement of specific goals. Superintendent B shares,

“I think, again here in Lake County, we have a very strong superintendents’ network. We have had the State Superintendent speak at our meetings. They’ve brought people in from various other organizations that are involved state wide and some of the politics in that. I think within Lake County we have a strong network of support. We meet monthly. The executive board is very involved and members of our group are also involved with other organizations, as executive members of IASA for example. So that’s your voice. At least, easily once a month, and more if you need, to get that information to the messengers to take and speak to the higher ups.”

Superintendent G adds:

“I think this is important. It is very difficult to get a consistent message out. The forum is a result of a networking effort. One of the superintendents said we should get together and talk about finance and some of our common concerns. Out of that comment the forum grew. In addition to the legislators, superintendents, business managers, and board members will attend. Actually we decided it would be best if the board members presented to the legislators. So it’s going to be elected official to elected official. We think it will be more effective than if superintendents were presenting. I mean, what do you expect a superintendent to say? Of course, they are going to say we have finance concerns.”

The forum is the collective effort of eight area superintendents and their Boards of Education to seek assistance from state legislators regarding financial concerns.

Superintendent G shares,

“The forum we are hosting will be a time when we say, you really have to pay attention to this. We want results and we are going to invite you back in two months to see how things are going. We want them to know that this is not a one-time event. Illinois is at the crossroads; we really are.”

Ethics attempt to resolve the fundamental paradox of the human experience:

People are by disposition (more or less) egocentric or self-centered. Simultaneously, they are by nature collective, or in need of others. Hence, ethics is the attempt to balance ego-needs with the ego needs of others; to be objective even when personal interests are at stake. Therefore, ethics is the pursuit of justice, fairness and equality. Ethics is an attempt to work out the rights and obligations people have and share with others (Gini, 2004; Katz et al., 1999; Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Marshall & Oliva, 2009).

The phenomenon of networking speaks to the collective nature of the human race, our need for others. Commutative justice revolves around the claims that exist in relations between individuals (Rawls, 2005). Baber and Waymon’s (2007) definition of networking speaks to those claims. “Networking is the deliberate process of exchanging information, resources, support, and access in such a way as to create mutually beneficial relationships for personal and professional success” (p. 17). Superintendents network with each other to reduce the loneliness inherent in their positions, an ego-centric need.

However, they also network to identify solutions to problems and avenues for securing resources, serving the needs of others.

**Question D: Superintendents' Perceptions of Lobbying
and Working with Legislators**

Lobbying

When asked to rate the degree to which they believe lobbying inhibits or enhances their ability to advocate for resources and services, using a scale of one to five, where one is inhibits, three is neutral and five is enhances, none of the superintendents rated their perceptions of lobbying as a one, inhibits or a three, neutral. Nine percent (n=1) rated lobbying as a two, 54% (n=6) rated lobbying as a four, and 36% (n=4) rated lobbying as a five, enhances their ability to advocate. Ninety-one percent of the male superintendents and one hundred percent of the female superintendents interviewed rated their perceptions of lobbying as a 4 or a 5. One hundred percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, one hundred percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and 75% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for eleven or more years rated their perceptions of lobbying as a 4 or a 5.

Current research has identified three distinct benefits of lobbying; affecting public policy, providing opportunities to educate and communicate with legislators, and protecting group interests (Gelak, 2008; Guyer, 2003; Rosenthal, 2001).

First, lobbying allows for the opportunity to affect public policy. Guyer (2003) contends that a positive result of lobbying is the opportunity to work constructively with

members of state legislatures on matters of public policy. Rosenthal (2001) supports that special interest groups that lobby have been able to shape the agendas and policies of the legislature. Gelak (2008) states that one of the two primary aspects of lobby work is advocacy with policymakers. “In essence, lobbyists are involved wherever public policy decisions are made that impact the citizen concerns they represent” (p. 15).

Superintendent A’s, Superintendent E’s and Superintendent H’s comments all support the benefit of affecting public policy. Superintendent A shares,

“I think that’s really one of the only ways that we can make sure our legislators understand that what they do does have an impact on us. Sometimes it’s a negative impact and financially it’s a negative impact. Because it causes us to change what we feel is a better way to instruct kids, for example. Or a better way to test kids. There are a lot of mandates that come down. If we are not lobbying our legislators, we’ll probably see some unforeseen consequences occur in many of those mandates—even from the legislator’s standpoint. They really didn’t know. So I think lobbying is very important.”

Superintendent E adds,

“It has to be in the four range because if it were neutral no one would do it. It seems to be a big thing for people to do. One example where lobbying has been effective is the retirement. There have been a lot of issues in the last year about retirement, when you can retire and what type of retirement package you can have. They were going to eliminate all that

stuff. I think lobbying at least stopped them and cut them off at a certain place. We have the six percent increase without being penalized. Without lobbying, districts would have been penalized so much with pre-existing deals.

Another example is the defibrillators. My God, they were going to have us...it would have been way too difficult for us to manage. We would have had to have somebody at every activity that an outside organization was running to make sure that there was a defibrillator available. We wouldn't have been able to allow anyone to use our facilities because we couldn't afford to have someone there all the time to make sure everything was taken care of. I think those are two big examples, especially the defibrillator which was going to be just unmanageable. We felt better when someone was sharing our perspective and then they finally became more realistic about how that should work.”

Superintendent H adds,

“Without the lobbying efforts in Springfield, with regard to ED-RED and my professional organization, IASA, the Illinois Association of School Boards, and quite frankly the unions too, we all came together towards a common concern: pension funding. Some of the changes that occurred with regard to the two-tier system had to do with the joint lobbying efforts of all these different organizations. Unfortunately, my experience has found that the only way you get people to listen to us is to lobby.”

A second benefit of lobbying is that it provides an opportunity to educate and communicate with legislators. Guyer (2003) states, “everyone involved with the development of legislation influences its outcome” (p. 7). According to Guyer “lobbying is teaching legislators about your issue and providing the facts needed to convince them to support your view rather than those of your competitors” (p. 8). Rosenthal (2001) supports this position. “In their capacity as lawmakers, legislators need to know where various groups stand on issues” (p. 6). Therefore, “lobbyists play a necessary role in American democracy” (p. 7). They represent their clients’ interests before the legislature and legislators depend upon them for the information they communicate. Superintendent D, Superintendent F, Superintendent G, Superintendent J, and Superintendent K all commented on the importance of educating and communicating with legislators.

Superintendent D comments,

“I think lobbying enhances. I think lobbying works. It’s what every other organization does; lobby. That’s what the politicians seem to pay attention to. They pay more attention to the lobbyist than the actual issues themselves. I am not sure why. So we work with the lobbyist from ED-RED, who works in that capacity. For our school right now, we’ve got a local group, the feeder school districts to our local high school. We have worked together to form a platform. We are asking and inviting local and state legislators to a forum so we could ask them to lift the tax caps for certain parts of our budgets. And I don’t know. We’ll see how well that

works. I am able to communicate with these lobbyist groups through face-to-face meetings, email, and phone calls.”

Superintendent G shares,

“It’s proven to be fairly effective if you have someone who is knowledgeable and can establish relationships with the legislators and gain access. It does make a difference. There are a couple lobbyists that operate on behalf of IASA and some of the other organizations: the Illinois Principals’ Association, the unions, both the Illinois Federation of Teachers and Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Association of School Business Officials. I also think there is an open dialogue with the Illinois School Board Association. Seriously, I think there is strength in that. But I don’t have any first hand experience with it; just what I hear from the association meetings I attend.”

She adds,

“You have to have access and you have to have someone who can state your case. That’s the way it works. Obviously we are not huge into campaign donations. There are some political action committee work that occurs and actually helps pay for lobbyists. But you have to be able to get your message across. You need somebody to do that because that’s the way it works.”

Superintendent J adds,

“I have not lobbied here in Illinois but I did in New York. I spent the majority of my career in New York and it definitely helped. For example, I was trying to get funds for our early childhood program. We went to Albany on Lobby Day and actually met with state legislators or their staffers and explained why we needed the money. Both times I did that, I ended up with additional funds.”

Superintendent K provides the following example and comments,

“For example, an issue in this district, there is a change to a rule recommendation that goes in affect at the end of this year, which would not allow the district to hire a retired superintendent anymore. We worked with our legislators and with ED-RED. The school board president, the principal and I went before the Illinois State Board of Education and pleaded our case. They didn’t change the rule recommendation but did allow us a waiver.

So things can happen when you reach out and basically make your case. If you have a good position, you have your data in hand, and you are able to make a case, I think there is a good possibility that they listen. I think lobbying gets maligned sometimes. When people say lobbying, it’s almost like a negative effect. You think of the pharmaceutical and oil companies trying to influence legislators. But I look at it as educating your legislators about the issues that are very important to their constituents. If we don’t do that, then they have no real basis upon which

to make an informed decision, other than those who they hear from. I think it's a critical issue we have to deal with."

Although Superintendent F also agrees that lobbying provides opportunities to communicate and educate legislators, he cautions,

"I think it's important that you lobby at times. However, I also think you don't want to be seen as somebody that's just there talking. You have to be seen to listen too. If it's always just about what I want, after a while you are kind of avoided."

A final benefit of lobbying is protecting group interests. Another key role of lobbying is uniting citizens with like concerns (Gelak, 2008). Guyer (2003) adds, "legislators want to do the most good for the largest number of people" (p. 9). Becoming a member of an association or an organization is a tool that can be used to multiply the potential of an individual's political power. Avner (2002) puts it simply "people can do together what they cannot do separately" (p. 16). Superintendent E shares,

"Talking to our local representatives, the lobbying that's done by IASA down in the state and the various groups that put the pressure on. Through our professional organizations and the lobbying that's done by them, it is the best way we have to influence what happens at the state level in terms of funding, either securing or not losing it. The organizations speak for all of us. As individuals, we can say what we need. But we are all different; even within this geographic area, we need different things. So we speak

about what we want as individuals. If that organization talks more about it, it's good for everyone."

Superintendent A adds,

"Well I think, depending upon the organization, some are much more involved in lobbying than others. I'll give you a quick example, IASA (Illinois Association of School Administrators). I serve on that Board so I am much more actively involved. We have an arm that does lobbying for example."

Superintendent B concurs,

"They (professional organizations) are very good about not only putting out general information but they establish relationships with some of the people at the top. They are very good about contacting you. Or you can contact them to go and lobby or go to the state for different things to get your viewpoints across."

Superintendent F supports,

"There are times I go down to Springfield and I know some of our IASA and IASBO lobbyist. I know the IASBO lobbyist particularly well. So they've asked me to go down to Springfield and advocate for certain things at certain times. If I wasn't a member of those organizations, I wouldn't have the knowledge that I have now."

Superintendent I had a different perspective on the effectiveness of lobbying.

“I don’t believe it helps. It seems like money talks and we don’t have any money. The teachers unions have money. That’s not a slam, that’s an observation. Lobbying involves money and we don’t have any. Maybe I am wrong about the connection between lobbying and money.”

Superintendent F supported this challenge to effectively lobby.

“Well I have some other experience that I don’t know if it would help or be just different. My previous superintendency, I was a superintendent in a district with a nuclear plant. So we were very heavily involved in lobbying in Springfield because of the nuclear plant. They pay a team of people to lobby all the time and they kind of get what they want. So we constantly had to counter that with our own effort in Springfield. It was very clear that even though I believe we were on the moral side of things, trying to educate children, it basically came down to how much money you had.

The nuclear plant got their way because they paid a lot of politicians. I don’t mean illegally. But they contributed to them. They definitely had more of a voice in Springfield than we were ever going to. It was disheartening to see the game was basically fixed when you get down there. There wasn’t a whole lot we could do beyond a little narrow band of opportunity that we had to make any real change in that area. Ever since I experienced that, I don’t go to Springfield as much. If I hadn’t been the Superintendent of a district with a nuclear plant, I

wouldn't have had that type of experience; to be in Springfield doing that advocacy work. I'm glad I have that experience, but I'm also glad I don't have to do it anymore."

Guyer (2003) states, "Today and in the future, legislators will rely more and more on lobbyists to provide the information they need to vote responsibly" (p. xv). As the states have expanded the range of areas they address, the range of special interest groups has also expanded. With the reduction of federal budgets, a number of advocacy groups need to get their money from different sources. Therefore, they are much more active at the state level than they once were. The message is clear. "Any group that can be touched by state government...cannot afford to be without representation" (Rosenthal, 2001, p. 4). ED-RED and FED ED have fulfilled the role of representation through lobbying for the school districts of many of the research participants. ED-RED identifies itself as "an advocacy organization that monitors and actively influences education policy at the Illinois Statehouse, particularly issues that are priorities for our member school districts" (retrieved from <http://ed-red.wetpaint.com/> on January 15, 2011). ED-RED aims to provide all three benefits of lobbying to its members; affecting public policy, educating and communicating with legislators and protecting group interests.

Gelak (2008) adds that additional key roles of lobbying are to "connect and communicate citizen concerns to public officials and lawmakers, inform citizens of impending legislation and public policy developments, and raise public awareness of legislation and public policy changes" (p. 16). According to their website, FED ED was "created in recognition of the fact that school districts can no longer be satisfied with

representation only in the state capitol, but also need forceful, positive representation in our nation's capitol. The increasing importance of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) demand that public schools have an organized presence in Washington, DC.” Additionally, their mission statement aligns perfectly with the key roles of lobbying identified by Gelak. FED ED’s mission is “to advocate for suburban schools and other related organizations to federal legislators and policy makers, assist members in formulating and articulating positions on federal legislation, funding, and policy, and, keep members informed regarding relevant federal legislation and policy issues” (etrieved from <http://thefeded.org/> on January 15, 2011).

Working with Local Legislators

When asked to rate the degree to which they believe working with local legislators inhibits or enhances their ability to advocate for resources and services, using a scale of one to five, where one is inhibits, three is neutral and five is enhances, none of the superintendents rated their perception of working with local legislators with a one, inhibits, or a two. Forty-five percent of the superintendents (n=5) rated working with local legislators as a three, neutral, 18% (n=2) rated working with local legislators as a four, and 36% (n=4) rated working with local legislators as a five, enhances their ability to advocate. Sixty-six percent of the male superintendents and forty percent of the female superintendents interviewed rated their perceptions of working with local legislators as a 4 or a 5. Thirty-three percent of the male superintendents and 60% of the female superintendents interviewed rated working with local legislators as a 3, neutral. None of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to

five years, 80% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and 50% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years rated their perceptions of working with local legislators a 4 or a 5. One hundred percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, twenty percent of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and 50% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years rated their perceptions of working with local legislators as a 3, neutral.

Gelak (2008) explains, “our founding fathers understood human nature. They recognized that it leads individuals to represent their own interests, rather than the greater public interest” (p. 5). They constructed a system of checks and balances that relies on government accountability by a plurality of interests, not just the select voices of a few. The United States government was built on this system of a plurality of special interests, all expected to participate in the American political system. Participation of citizens in the political system was a fundamental concept in the formation of our government, and effective legislation depends on it (Gelak, 2008).

Roughly half of the research participants (55%) reported positive experiences working with local legislators. Superintendent C states, “I would find them to be the strongest advocates for local education. We found more success working with our local and state legislators.” Superintendent A shares,

“We are actually in transition depending on how this election goes. But I make myself available to them and so a couple of our local legislators are

very comfortable, I think, calling and asking an opinion on a law that maybe is going to be passed or how it might impact at least the elementary school district. So I think it's improved communication and helped them with knowing how some of the things they do are going to impact us."

Superintendent F adds,

"Oh, it enhances. I have K.M.'s and S.G.'s phone number so I can call them anytime. And they are good about returning phone calls. For example, there was a DCEO grant for some crosswalks that we want to put in and S.G. was very helpful. She helped us navigate the process. So we could understand what to do, at the right time, to make sure we got in the right place."

Superintendent I concurs, "We have received money from our local legislator, E.S. We have also received opportunities from him to submit requests for funding for school projects."

Superintendent E shared these examples,

"I have worked with J.H. I've talked with her about some of our issues and through that we've gotten some funding for some projects we needed. We have built a new school, we put in some boilers and other things that were part of the budget that we would never have gotten if we hadn't talked with her about some of our issues.

Recently I've had the opportunity to work with M.B. on a committee for her. It's an advisory committee for her about NCLB. I've

been on it a couple of years now. We were meeting quite a bit there for a while and then things quieted down with NCLB. I think it's benefited us a lot. We've been able to get our feelings out about NCLB and how we would like to see it change and become more of a partnership, rather than a "let's see if we can find out what's wrong" type of thing. Through that committee, I was able to meet with her about other issues. Last June I was able to sit down with her with a couple of other people. We talked about jobs and the money that was coming from the federal government and how it needed to get to us. So this year we got the "save a job" money. It's coming directly to us without strings attached as the stimulus money was last year. So those were the opportunities to speak to our legislators. And they do listen, if we make sense."

Superintendent H's and Superintendent K's comments about working with local legislators aligned more with the literature about networking. "Networking is the deliberate process of exchanging information, resources, support, and access in such a way as to create mutually beneficial relationships for personal and professional success" (Baber & Waymon, 2007, p. 17). Superintendent H's comments reflect the importance of building positive relationships with local legislators.

"We work with our local school boards. We have worked with two different mayors in towns to provide programs for our kids. We work really close with our fire department and police department. Now they

aren't necessarily legislators, but they are key, inter-governmental players in the area. It is important to have positive relationships."

Superintendent K adds,

"In a village like ours, we don't really have local legislators, but we do have elected officials. We did work with them around the TIF district. That was very important. We worked with them particularly on the issue of a TIF that was expiring in the network curve and how that would work. So yes, I think it is important to work with all levels of government."

However, not all research participants found engaging in the political process at the local level to be effective. Superintendent G shares,

"You know I'd like to think that it does more than it has. There is a lot of discussion that goes on but very little actually takes place. Nothing we can see is really tangible. That's not to say that the people, our elected officials are uncaring, or that they don't care about education. I don't think that's the case. I think what happens is the politics overtake some essential needs."

Superintendent D adds,

"Why is it neutral? Because, most of the time local legislators don't have a good background or understanding of what we are talking about. They just don't. They don't want to do anything to hurt us but they often don't understand the full implications of what they are voting for so it doesn't often help us."

Finally, Superintendent B states, “They seem to be spread so thin. I think they probably focus their efforts more on districts in greater need.” Interestingly enough, none of the professional organizations’ websites or documents engaged in the discourse on working with local legislators.

Working with State Legislators

When asked to rate the degree to which they believe working with state legislators inhibits or enhances their ability to advocate for resources and services, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is inhibits, 3 is neutral and 5 is enhances, none of the superintendents rated working with state legislators as a 1, inhibits, or a 2. Sixty-three percent of the superintendents (n=7) rated working with state legislators as a 3, neutral; while 9% (n=1) rated working with state legislators as a 4 and 27% (n=3) rated working with state legislators as 5, enhances their ability to advocate. Fifty percent of the male superintendents and 20% of the female superintendents interviewed rated their perceptions of working with state legislators as a 4 or a 5. Fifty percent of the male superintendents and 80% of the female superintendents interviewed rated working with state legislators as a 3, neutral. None of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, 40% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and 50% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years rated their perceptions of working with local legislators a 4 or a 5. One hundred percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, 60% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and

50% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years rated their perceptions of working with state legislators as a 3, neutral.

The research participants' comments provide a fairly bleak view of working with state legislators in Illinois. Superintendent E shares,

“It seems as though, through our professional organizations, we do have people that are part of the committees that go down and get involved.

However, it just doesn't seem as though anyone listens. It doesn't really seem like they care, one way or another, what we have to say. They say they care, but their actions don't show that they really care.”

Superintendent H concurs,

“While working with them is an important aspect and we do that more to help them understand the realities of what happens, day to day in the schools, in the six years on this job and in my four years prior as the associate, I didn't see much follow through from them.”

Superintendent G adds,

“At the state level, there is so much. I know this has become kind of a cliché but the lines are drawn so clearly that even when I meet with local officials, it's all about what inhibits their opportunities to help us because of the other party. It's kind of amazing. What I would really like to tell the legislator is it's your job to find a way to get things done with the other party. But there's so much of that. And we're really concerned about it. That's why we are going to have this forum (a forum on education

finance, involving several school districts in Lake County, a state senator and two representatives). We are going to tell them, here are some areas, and we are not asking for huge changes here. We are asking for things such as an increase in special education funding since the state is only giving a fraction of what is mandated and local districts are making up the rest. We want our funding for transportation. We want a little bit of relief under the tax cap. That's a start. We are trying to give them things that they can actually do, rather than grandiose kinds of proposals that everyone knows aren't going to happen."

Superintendent D adds support,

"It's the same, neutral. They too do not; they just don't get us. They just don't have a good understanding of the issues. They may understand *one* issue; but if you change tracks, they can't do it. They don't have good background knowledge."

Superintendent H concludes,

"The least effective strategy is working with state legislators because unfortunately, they just don't get it. One hundred and ten unfunded mandates? Give me a break, Senator, it's not your profession."

The current economic picture in Illinois is equally bleak. In July 2009, Illinois officials approved a budget based on borrowing \$3.5 billion to pay for routine government services. Additionally, \$3.2 billion dollars in invoices to businesses providing services to the state will remain unpaid. The budget includes \$2.1 billion in

spending cuts with a potential \$1.1 billion in additional cuts later in the year. Governor Quinn has yet to provide a plan to address the \$11.6 billion deficit he inherited when taking over the office (Baram, 2009). With education accounting for roughly 37% of the Illinois General Fund expenditures, it does not appear as if the Illinois government can meet their current fiduciary responsibilities let alone provide additional relief to local school districts. Education has barely maintained its limited share of the state's budget, let alone become a priority over any of the other demands for state dollars. In fact between 1976 and 1995, state funding for education in real terms declined by 25% (Everett, 1995). As Ward (1987) states, "Maybe it is inevitable during times of limited fiscal resources, but most policy issues are seen in the context of their potential costs and the availability of revenues" (p. 8).

A few of the research participants had more positive experiences working with state legislators. Superintendent K shares,

"It is critically important to work with state legislators because so much of what we get comes from the state. Essentially, schools are the function of the state government. The legislation, rules and regulations in the school code are huge issues for schools. Our state legislators have the greatest impact on it. There are a lot of examples. They are very accessible. S.G. has been very accessible to our community.

For example, the state was looking at doing a kind of tax swap with property taxes and income taxes. Of course, we all know the state of Illinois doesn't have any money. Anyway, if they take the property taxes

away from the districts that use that to fund their school with the anticipation they'll give it back to you in income tax money, that's a fantasy. There was a large movement with the House bill to do that with the understanding that districts such as ours would be made whole. But you know, once you take that property tax away and give it to the state, and the state divides it up, there was little confidence we'd see the money. We felt the local control was going to be lost in the process. So our local legislators went to bat for us very heavily on that. The tide was moving in another direction. They spent a lot of time working with our communities, with ED-RED. They came to our school; we had meetings here. We believe it was very effective in not having a deleterious affect of the very small resource that we do get from the state but not impacting our local tax base. We get very little state money, so if they took the local property tax away we would have nothing."

Superintendent C shares,

"The reciprocal role is important for us; requests made by the school are returned by...I will give you one example. Recently in our community they had a "Dogs on Chains," similar to the cows they did in Chicago. It required a sponsorship so we requested that our state representative sponsor. We did it on a curriculum based project, developed it. The finished product is sitting in our lobby now. Those students went down to her office, they talked to her about the program. What we were doing is

really promoting our curriculum through out state representative and letting her office know what was taking place in our school system. The sponsorship was a couple hundred dollars. So it wasn't necessarily the money we were looking at, we were looking more at the public relations or developing a rapport. That's the area that we utilize the relationship. We weren't asking for anything specific in return. Again it was developing the relationship. This is one that continues; we have received funding or support of funding in the past from our state representative. So it continues. We want to keep an open relationship and that support of our curriculum as well as finances and all aspects of public education."

Many of the professional organization websites encourage contact with state and federal legislators. AASA, IASA, IASBO, and ASCD have links on their websites to help members identify who their senators and representatives are. IASA also has links that will help members stay up to date on all aspects of legislative committees, including who sits on the committee, which bills they have been assigned, and the schedule for processing the bills. AASA will help members compose letters and emails to their legislators online to increase communication.

Working with Federal Legislators

When asked to rate the degree to which they believe working with federal legislators inhibits or enhances their ability to advocate for resources and services, using a scale of one to five, where one is inhibits, three is neutral and five is enhances, 18% of the superintendents rated working with federal legislators as a one, inhibits (n=2), 63%

(n=7) rated working with federal legislators as three neutral, and 18% (n=2) rated working with federal legislators as a four. None of the superintendents rated working with federal legislators as a two or a five, enhances their ability to advocate. Sixteen percent of the male superintendents and 20% of the female superintendents interviewed rated their perceptions of working with federal legislators as a 4 or a 5. Sixty-six percent of the male superintendents and sixty percent of the female superintendents interviewed rated working with federal legislators as a 3, neutral. Sixteen percent of the male superintendents and 20% of the female superintendents interviewed rated working with federal legislators as a 1 or a 2. None of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, 40% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and none of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years rated their perceptions of working with federal legislators a 4 or a 5. Fifty percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, 60% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and 75% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years rated their perceptions of working with federal legislators as a 3, neutral. Fifty percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, none of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and 25% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years rated their perceptions of working with federal legislators as a 1 or a 2.

A majority of the research participants responded that working with federal legislators was a neutral enterprise. Superintendent A shares,

“I’d say that’s neutral and my thinking there is, I think when we were a member of FED ED, we at least had a voice there. But we chose to withdraw from that organization, not because they weren’t effective, but it was just a way to save some dollars for our district. I would say we have been the least effective in this district, and even at the state level, with impacting the federal government. Again, we don’t get a lot of dollars from the federal government; it is more the state mandated categorical grants. But those can be hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars. I don’t think we have a good way to impact or influence that. We try to through our professional organizations. But I think it’s very limited.

For example, the federal government recently had the Race to the Top grant. It caused the State of Illinois to jump through a lot of hoops and we ended up not getting any of the money. But we are still going to have to jump through hoops because they changed laws. So I don’t think that is a good example of working effectively at the national level. It’s more an example of how they’ve caused us to do things differently because there’s the possibility of dollars tied to it. They may have good ideas but to be forced to do it, takes away the local control.”

Superintendent C adds,

“It does nothing. There is no relationship with our congresswoman. We’ve made attempts and it hasn’t inhibited or enhanced. Neither. It has just been non-existent. The least effective strategy is working at the federal level. Any time I am working with federal legislators, it is a big waste of my time.”

Superintendent D states,

“I haven’t ever worked with federal legislators. Again, they typically don’t understand. They may have staffers that have some kind of understanding but when you talk to them directly, they often don’t even know what you are talking about.”

Superintendent F adds, “I would say neutral because they are invisible. I mean M.K. has done some things for us here, but...He knows where we are.” Superintendent F continues with,

“The least effective strategy is working at the federal level. Why? Because there is lack of proof that I am wrong. I don’t have any anecdotal evidence to show that it’s ever really been successful.”

Superintendent J explains,

“Same thing, three. Haven’t been involved with them. The least effective strategy is the federal, talking to federal legislators. When you are a federal legislator, you have such a large group and it’s so political. Just listening to our ladies the other night, they were more concerned about

how the Democrats were going to vote than really listening to what we were saying. I think it's just too political.”

Superintendent K concludes,

“I would say it is neutral, except that it depends on the district you are in. When I was a superintendent in a district with a military base it was a five because we needed to have a federal government influence. But because schools are really delegated a responsibility of the state, the federal government in most districts doesn't have as great an influence except other than special education, IDEA, or that kind of legislation. I think it's important, but we get even less support from the federal government than we do from the state. So from that point of view, the range of influences is even less unless you have a significant impact.”

Two of the research participants shared they thought working with federal legislators inhibits their advocacy ability. Superintendent G shares,

“They are farther away, their proximity, their availability. I get e-mails from Congresswoman M.B. occasionally. I don't have any problems with her as a congresswoman, and I think she tries to be supportive. It's just very much harder at the federal level. I could go back and forth between a one and a two on this scale. I don't think the direction the federal initiatives are going is the right one. I think they are way off the mark.”

Superintendent B adds, “I don't see it happening. I just think their focus is more with bigger systems and systems who are in more trouble financially.”

Two of the research participants had more positive perspectives. Superintendent E shares,

“Working with our federal legislators has been much more productive for us than working with our state legislators. One way is through grants. When I do the grants I have the opportunity to speak to people. When the Title One grant, for example, comes back “not approved,” then I have the opportunity to call and speak with somebody from the grant. They help me correct my application so that sometimes we can get more funding. We start to form a relationship. Last year, because of that relationship, they called us at the end of the year. There was money that others didn’t apply for that was still out there, unaccounted for. That connection gave us the opportunity to pick up that money. We were able to use it in our budget to support technology.

If I hadn’t called them to ask what I could use the money for, I would never have known. I always feel like I can call them and ask them what can I use this money for? If I know there is an extra \$50,000 that I can access, I ask if I can use it all on technology in one swoop and find out if that is okay.”

Superintendent H adds,

“In our local area of Lake County, we have seen a lot of responsiveness from Congresswoman M.B.’s office, particularly in her desire to work with the schools to understand what is beneficial for our children and

student achievement and what can inhibit that. Her office is very open to getting feedback from the schools, about No Child Left Behind for example. Also, when the federal stimulus dollars came through, her office was very informative and very responsive to concerns we had. We have a public information specialist who networks. She maintains a close relationship with M.B.'s office. So our district would be sought in an advisory capacity from the congresswoman's office."

Superintendents E and H have worked to build social capital with their federal legislators. "Successful networking is all about building and maintaining solid professional relationships" (Misner et al., 2009, p. 4). The purpose of networking is "to develop a professional rapport with individuals that will deepen over time into a trusting relationship that will eventually lead to a mutually beneficial and continuous exchange" (p. 117). Misner et al. defines social capital as the accumulation of resources developed in the course of social interactions, usually personal or professional networks. These resources include ideas, knowledge, information, opportunities, and contacts. Most of the other research participants, who rated working with federal legislators as a one, inhibits, or a three, neutral, indicated a lack of relationship as the reason.

Politics is the process of deciding how resources are allocated. Social justice demands that school administrators take part in those decisions. "If you are not the decision-maker yourself, then advocacy is the process by which you help make the decisions on these matters" (Hoefer, 2006, p. 21). In order for superintendents to advocate for the students they serve, it is necessary to identify the decision makers who

can help them reach their goals. It is also important to be well informed on the topics and issues surrounding their goals. “The most important task of someone who wants to use advocacy to make a difference is to have information that is accurate and convincing” (p. 13).

School administrators are civic leaders and politicians who need to view their district as one component of a much larger political system and who need to understand that there are people out there with agendas that don't include education as a top priority (Rosberg et al., 2006). Gelak (2008) adds, “Our founding fathers understood human nature. They recognized that it leads individuals to represent their own interests, rather than the greater public interest” (p. 5). Gelak's comment aligns with what we know about ethics. Ethics is the attempt to balance ego-needs with the ego needs of others; to be objective even when personal interests are at stake. Therefore, ethics is the pursuit of justice, fairness and equality. Ethics is an attempt to work out the rights and obligations people have and share with others (Gini, 2004; Katz et al., 1999; Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Marshall & Oliva, 2009).

As the political parties in the United States have become more polarized in recent years, most policy changes have resulted in decreased funding and support for social programs and for education. However, social policy is made on the basis that people do matter, particularly those on the bottom of the economic and social ladder, including children (Hoefler, 2006). Social justice honors the intrinsic value of all people and seeks to be the voice for those that are often disenfranchised. Social justice seeks to defend the greater public interest over that of individual or special interests. And so, the school

administrator must be the voice for the students she serves; advocating for adequate funding.

Question E: With Whom and How do Superintendents Network?

Networking is built on mutually beneficial relationships that are powered by the most enduring principle in society; the idea that the good one does will eventually come back to them in one form or another (Misner et al., 2009). “Successful networking is all about building and maintaining solid professional relationships” (p. 4).

The vast majority of research participants identified other superintendents as the group they network with the most. Eighty-three percent of the male superintendents and 100% of the female superintendents interviewed identified other superintendents as a key, networking group. One hundred percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, 80% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and 100% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years identified other superintendents as a key, networking group. Superintendent E shared,

“Actually, the Lake County Superintendents Group. That’s a big one. We have a yearly conference. During the conference they bring a lot of groups. As a matter of fact, I was able to use two of their keynote speakers for our institute days. I was also able to use a lot of the materials from the keynote speakers with my board of education members. So that’s probably the biggest one. We network through that organization.”

Superintendent C identifies, “Superintendent colleagues...the operations and practical side.” Superintendent B shares,

“The Lake County Superintendents Group. Other superintendents at the same level because others in the organization are a little bit more removed from the superintendency. I think networking and trying to establish relationships with people that are executives and higher ups in an organization is always helpful.”

Superintendent K responds, “Other superintendents, that’s a huge area to network.” Superintendent J adds,

“The Lake County Superintendents. Then we have the feeder groups; there are four elementary districts that feed into the high school district. So that’s a smaller group.”

Thirty-three percent of the male superintendents and 40% of the female superintendents interviewed identified legislators and intergovernmental agencies as a key, networking groups. None of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, 40% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and 50% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years identified legislators and intergovernmental agencies as a key, networking groups. Sixteen percent of the male superintendents and 80% of the female superintendents interviewed identified feeder school districts as a key, networking group. Fifty percent of the interview participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for one to five years, 40% of the research

participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for six to ten years and 50% of the research participants who have served as Illinois superintendents for 11 or more years identified feeder school districts as a key, networking group. Other networking groups included others in the field of education, professional organizations, school boards, other executives in fields outside education, and college or university professors.

Social capital is earned and accumulated through networking. The good that one does will come back to the person, over the long term and often in indirect ways. Social capital is accumulated by providing help, advice, information, referrals, and other benefits to fellow networkers with no thought of quid pro quo. “By gaining the trust of others, gratitude for value provided, and a solid reputation for integrity and expertise, you become a person whom others wish to help whenever an opportunity to do so presents itself” (Misner et al., 2009, p. 6).

Many of the professional organizations provide their membership with opportunities to network and build social capital. Both ED-RED and FED ED list their member school districts and corporate sponsors on their websites to provide easy access for networking opportunities for their members. Members can follow ASCD or AASA on Facebook and Twitter and participate in social networking. In addition to their website, you can get information from AASA radio, AASA’s blog, AASA Video Center’s Channel through YouTube, or connect to their RSS Feed. AASA even has its own app through iTunes so that members will have access to the information using their mobile device. IASA has a Listserv, which is a tool to communicate with peers. By visiting professional organizations’ websites, members not only have access to the

information on the website, but they have access to each other; thus multiplying the sphere of influence and information on resources, trends and best practice.

Networking and building social capital fall within the realm of commutative justice. Commutative justice looks at the fidelity of the claims that exist between individuals (Rawls, 2005). A savvy superintendent will work to build trust, gratitude for value provided, and a solid reputation for integrity and expertise. She will do this with all networking groups and constituents, not knowing when the goodwill she has garnered will come back to her, but trusting that it will.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The researcher has identified eight main themes from these data obtained during this qualitative research study. From these themes the researcher has developed conclusions from the research study. The themes are presented below in alignment with the order of the literature review in Chapter II. Additionally, some of the themes have a cascading affect. Each conclusion will be discussed in this section, in light of social justice.

Themes

1. Illinois superintendents perceive the overall economic climate in Illinois and the specific economic realities regarding the state of Illinois' budget as negatively impacting schools in Illinois.
2. Illinois superintendents recognize the importance of networking as a strategy to advocate for resources and services for student learning.

3. Illinois superintendents identified the feeder school districts of their local high schools as key networking groups.
4. Illinois superintendents perceive working with their communities and intergovernmental agencies as an important strategy for advocating for resources and services for student learning
5. There appears to be a level of disillusionment to working with legislators felt by Illinois superintendents, especially at the state and federal level.
6. Despite the level of disillusionment, Illinois superintendents recognize the importance of working with legislators as an opportunity to affect policy and to inform them of the impact of proposed legislation on school districts.
7. Illinois superintendents perceive party politics to impede the legislative process.
8. Despite recognizing lobbying as the accepted and expected process for informing and influencing legislators, some Illinois superintendents are concerned that Illinois school districts do not have the necessary funds to be highly effective.

Conclusion 1: Some Illinois superintendents (54%) perceive the overall economic climate in Illinois and the specific economic realities regarding the state of Illinois' budget are negatively impacting schools in Illinois.

Public education is a function of the state. Despite the Illinois Constitution claiming primary responsibility for financing public education, the current reality of school funding plays out much differently. Illinois schools receive revenue from local,

state and federal sources. Approximately 62% of statewide total school revenues come from local sources in Illinois compared to 44% for schools in the United States. The state's share of school revenue runs about 30% while the federal share is about eight percent (Fritts, 2008).

Additionally, Governor Quinn inherited an \$11.6 billion deficit in 2009 (Baram, 2009). With education accounting for roughly 37% of the Illinois General Fund expenditures, it does not appear as if the Illinois government can meet their current fiduciary responsibilities let alone provide additional relief to local school districts. As Superintendent A shared, "Unfortunately, the State of Illinois is in such dire financial conditions that we haven't even gotten what we were anticipating. Illinois is too far behind financially; they are in deep trouble." Superintendent E added,

"It's frustrating. It's difficult to deal with. We're trying to survive. Our community told us, approved certain tax limits, and yet we can't touch it because it is under a cap. So we can't even access the money that they've already approved. And it's more difficult when the State doesn't pay.

Last year, they were a million and a half dollars short with us. And that was money we budgeted."

Superintendent D concluded, "Frankly, there aren't any resources. Illinois is in deep trouble. That means we are all in trouble."

Justice is the fidelity to claims in a relationship. Social justice is the relations of a society based of internal institutional patterns and structural preconditions (Rawls, 2005). In its Constitution, the State of Illinois claims primary responsibility for funding the

public education system. It also claims primary responsibility for providing an efficient system of high quality public education. Unfortunately, the State of Illinois is failing to keep its promises. As a result, as Ward and Anthony (1992) point out, “the quality of school received and the amount of money spent on that schooling differ greatly depending on where one lives and in what social strata one’s parents reside” (p. 242).

Conclusion 2: Many Illinois superintendents (90%) recognize the importance of networking as a strategy to advocate for resources and services for student learning.

“Networking is the deliberate process of exchanging information, resources, support, and access in such a way as to create mutually beneficial relationships for personal and professional success” (Baber & Waymon, 2007, p. 17). Networking is built on mutually beneficial relationships that are powered by the most enduring principle in society; the idea that the good one does will eventually come back to them in one form or another (Misner et al., 2009). The majority of the research participants rated networking a five, enhances their ability to advocate for resources and services.

Superintendent H shares,

“In year one of my job, I didn’t realize how important networking was.

Because I have been here nearly five years now, I now know that building those relationships, building those bonds, somehow figuring it out in your day, is key to doing what you need to do for your students and their families in your learning community.”

Superintendent E adds,

“We network through the Lake County Superintendents Group. That’s a big one. We have a yearly conference. During the conference they bring a lot of groups. As a matter of fact, I was able to use two of their keynote speakers for our institute days. I was also able to use a lot of the materials from the keynote speakers with my board of education members. So that’s probably the biggest one.

Also, the tri-conference is a big one. We all go downtown for the weekend. All of a sudden, you are getting to see everybody. I mean, everybody wants to sell you something. But they will also truly help you even if you are not their client. Of course, they are probably looking toward the future, but at least they will help you.”

Networking speaks to commutative justice. Commutative justice is the claims that exist in relationships between individuals (Rawls, 2005). Through networking social capital is accrued. Networking is a key advocacy behavior for the superintendent. It helps secure the resources and services needed by the students she serves.

Conclusion 3: Some Illinois superintendents (45%) identified the feeder school districts of their local high schools as key networking groups.

Working with high school feeder districts was not part of the literature review in Chapter II. However, collaborating with the other elementary districts in your high school feeder pattern emerged as a key, networking group in the interview data. Superintendent D shared this example of collaborating with feeder school districts;

“For our school right now, we’ve got a local group, the feeder school districts to our local high school. We have worked together to form a platform. We are asking and inviting local and state legislators to a forum so we could ask them to lift the tax caps for certain parts of our budgets.”

Superintendent A shares,

“Another group I belong to is a consortium of all the school districts that feed into our local high school. This group also meets monthly. We talk about curriculum. We talk about new laws. We invite our colleagues in different levels, whether it’s principals, assistant superintendents for curriculum, human resources, student services to come in and help keep us current.”

When talking about important networking groups, Superintendent J states, “Then we have the feeder groups; there are four elementary districts that feed into the high school district. So that’s a smaller group.” Superintendent H provides this perspective,

“One of the avenues we use goes back to your question about our local area officials. We try to share resources with our local high schools and elementary schools. I can provide two examples. We might share the same food service or the same buses. We might go together on a joint bid for gasoline purchase or paper. There are some economies of scale that we can maintain there and share resources. But most important are the academic resources. We meet each month with the local high schools and feeder elementary schools. We are talking all the time about how our

children are learning, what are our standards, what are their standards, how are the children we sent them doing, what can we do differently. I think that's the most powerful one."

Superintendent K shares,

"I network very strongly with the other feeder districts of the high school and the high school district. That's key when you talk about providing services for children. We need to make sure that we are all working together. The same students go to the same high school district."

Working with the feeder school districts to the high school is another form of commutative justice (Rawls, 2005). The purpose of these meetings is to guarantee that the students going into high school are all receiving a quality education in elementary school. The superintendents of the elementary schools work together to make sure their students are entering high school on an even playing field; that the name or location of their elementary school doesn't determine the options available to the students who enter high school.

Conclusion 4: Some Illinois superintendents (45%) perceive working with their communities and intergovernmental agencies as an important strategy for advocating for resources and services for student learning.

"Successful networking is all about building and maintaining solid professional relationships" (Misner et al., 2009, p. 4). The purpose of networking is "to develop a professional rapport with individuals that will deepen over time into a trusting relationship that will eventually lead to a mutually beneficial and continuous exchange of

referrals” (p. 117). Networking supports the acquisition of social capital. Misner et al. define social capital as the accumulation of resources developed in the course of social interactions, usually personal or professional networks. These resources include ideas, knowledge, information, opportunities, and contacts. Another theme that emerged throughout the interview data was the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships with the intergovernmental agencies in your town or village. Superintendent K shared this example:

“In a village like ours, we don’t really have local legislators, but we do have elected officials. We did work with them around the TIF district. That was very important. We worked with them particularly on the issue of a TIF that was expiring in the network curve and how that would work. So yes, I think it is important to work with all levels of government.”

Superintendent I shared this perspective,

“I believe S.D.D. has been in support of our after school coalition for after school clubs and after school programs. The district doesn’t receive those funds directly but the village or police department does.”

Superintendent E provided these examples of working with community organizations to provide services to students and families.

“We go through our local Rotary Club. We will get resources and services from them sometimes. I’m on the board of another group in our community that provides services and funds. We tap into the Kiwanis for services and manpower or people.

Also, we just made a deal with a local college to bring Spanish GED classes into the district for our Spanish-speaking parents who requested to take GED classes, but needed them in Spanish. We have also been working with the college to bring English as a Second Language classes to one of the churches down here in an effort to get our non-English speaking parents involved. We've also tapped into the Townships to help get the message out. There is a Hispanic organization that came in and gave information to the people in our community about the services they could access. So these partnerships have been very positive. We didn't get money from them, but they provide free classes, all we do is provide the space."

Superintendent H concludes,

"Finally, I would just highlight the inter-governmental agencies such as the park districts, your police departments, your local mayor and villages. We have great relationships that benefit our children."

By establishing and maintaining positive relationships with intergovernmental and community organizations, superintendents are able to extend the level of services to their students and families. Social justice is served in the recognition that all members of the community have a role to play in the education of their children.

Conclusion 5: There appears to be a level of disillusionment to working with legislators felt by some Illinois superintendents (63%), especially at the state and federal level.

The majority of superintendents rated their perceptions of working with local, state and federal legislators as a neutral enterprise. Hoefler (2006) states, “It is important to tell those with decision-making authority what is wrong with the world so that something can be done to fix it” (p. ix). Although Illinois superintendents have attempted to inform their legislators about their needs, their perceptions are that no one listens or cares. Superintendent D states, “They (legislators) do not, they just don’t get us.” Superintendent E adds,

“It seems as though, through our professional organizations, we do have people that are part of these committees that go down and get involved. However, it just doesn’t seem as though anyone listens. It doesn’t really seem like they care, one way or another, what we have to say. They say they care, but their actions don’t show that they really care.”

Superintendent E continues,

“The least effective is talking to the Illinois State Board of Education. We try to. It seems that no matter what we do, whatever we tell them, they tell us what they think we want to hear. They tell us what they want to tell us. Often it’s “Well, that’s the way it is. Too bad. You have to live with it.” It’s very frustrating.”

Superintendent H shares,

“While working with them (legislators) is an important aspect and we do that more to help them understand the realities of what happens day to day in the schools, in the six years on this job and the four years prior as an associate, I didn’t see much follow through from them.”

She adds, “The least effective strategy is working with your state legislators because unfortunately, they just don’t get it. One hundred and ten unfunded mandates? Give me a break, Senator, it’s not your profession.”

Ethics is the pursuit of justice, fairness and equality. Ethics is an attempt to work out the rights and obligations people have and share with others (Gini, 2004; Katz et al., 1999; Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Marshall & Oliva, 2009). In light of social justice, legislators and superintendents have an ethical imperative to work out the obligations they share regarding the future of Illinois children.

Conclusion 6: Despite the level of disillusionment, many Illinois superintendents (90%) recognize the importance of working with legislators as an opportunity to affect policy and to inform legislators of the impact of proposed legislation on school districts.

Politics is the process of deciding how resources are allocated. The *only* question is whether school administrators want to help make those decisions. “If you are not the decision-maker yourself, then advocacy is the process by which you help make the decisions on these matters” (Hoefler, 2006, p. 21). When knowledge and beliefs are shared, decision makers are exposed to a fresh point of view. Rosberg et al. (2006) agrees, “To be a leading citizen means you lead others. You persuade them, challenge

them, inform them, and educate them” (p. 21). Many of the research participants agreed that educating legislators is an important role in affecting policy or legislation.

Superintendent A states,

“But I make myself available to them and so a couple of our local legislators are very comfortable, I think, calling and asking an opinion on a law that maybe is going to be passed or how it might impact at least the elementary school district. So I think it’s improved communication and helped them with knowing how some of the things they do are going to impact us.”

Superintendent E adds,

“Recently I’ve had the opportunity to work with M.B. on a committee for her. It’s an advisory committee for her about NCLB...We’ve been able to get our feelings out about NCLB and how we would like to see it change and become more of a partnership, rather than a “let’s see if we can find out what’s wrong” type of thing...So those were the opportunities to speak to our legislators. And they do listen, if we make sense.

Another example is the defibrillators. My God, they were going to have us...it would have been way too difficult for us to manage. We would have had to have somebody at every activity that an outside organization was running to make sure that there was a defibrillator available. We wouldn’t have been able to allow anyone to use our facilities because we couldn’t afford to have someone there all the time to

make sure everything was taken care of. I think those are two big examples, especially the defibrillator which was going to be just unmanageable. We felt better when someone was sharing our perspective and then they finally became more realistic about how that should work.”

Superintendent K adds this example,

“For example, an issue in this district, there is a change to a rule recommendation that goes in affect at the end of this year, which would not allow the district to hire a retired superintendent anymore. We worked with our legislators and with ED-RED. The school board president, the principal and I went before the Illinois State Board of Education and pleaded our case. They didn’t change the rule recommendation but did allow us a waiver. So things can happen when you reach out and basically make your case. If you have a good position, you have your data in hand, and you are able to make a case, I think there is a good possibility that they listen.”

Superintendent H adds this perspective,

“While I rated the part about state legislators as a three, neutral, I believe that if you don’t network with them and you don’t have a collaborative relationship, it could be that laws get passed that would inhibit us. So you can never collaborate too much.”

Working with legislators is another form of commutative justice with the goal of affecting public policy. Affecting public policy enters the realm of social justice as

policy often becomes the structural preconditions that may positively or negatively affect society or pockets of society.

Conclusion 7: A few Illinois superintendents (27%) perceive party politics impede the legislative process.

Although none of the research reviewed in Chapter II, Literature Review, explored the topic of party politics, the theme emerged in the interview data. Illinois superintendents identified party politics as one of the roadblocks to effective communication with legislators. Superintendent G shares,

“You know I’d like to think that it (working with legislators) does more than it has. There is a lot of discussion that goes on but very little actually takes place. Nothing we can see is really tangible. That’s not to say that the people, our elected officials are uncaring, or that they don’t care about education. I don’t think that’s the case. I think what happens is the politics overtake some essential needs.”

Superintendent G continues,

“At the state level, there is so much. I know this has become kind of a cliché but the lines are drawn so clearly that even when I meet with local officials, it’s all about what inhibits their opportunities to help us because of the other party. It’s kind of amazing. What I would really like to tell the legislator is it’s your job to find a way to get things done with the other party. But there’s so much of that. And we’re really concerned about it.”

Superintendent J adds,

“When you are a federal legislator, you have such a large group and it’s so political. Just listening to our ladies the other night, they were more concerned about how the Democrats were going to vote than really listening to what we were saying. I think it’s just too political.”

Superintendent E concludes,

“You listen to the state superintendent talk around an issue. It’s very political for him and I understand that. But I read his messages every week and I think, “Big deal. It’s really not anything that’s going to have a chance to change.” I don’t think they have a lot of influence. I think the influence comes from outside groups, the majority who vote.”

Unfortunately, party politics has become an institutional pattern of our government system (Rosberg, et al, 2006; Van Clay & Soldwedel, 2009). Social justice would echo Superintendent G’s sentiments that it is our legislators’ responsibility to figure out how to accomplish what needs to be done. Social justice purports the ethic of care far outweighs political party agendas (Noddings, 2005). Caring isn’t just about doing something. It is also a matter of attitude. Caring is a matter of doing the right thing, to the right people, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right attitude, with the right reason, and in the right way.

Conclusion 8: Despite recognizing lobbying as the accepted and expected process for informing and influencing legislators, a few Illinois superintendents (18%) are concerned that Illinois school administrators do not have the necessary funds to be highly effective.

Lobbying is yet another avenue of advocacy for the superintendent. “Lobbying is the practice of attempting to influence the decisions of government” (Rosenthal, 2001, p. 1). As the states have expanded the range of areas they address, the range of special interest groups has also expanded. With the reduction of federal budgets, a number of advocacy groups need to get their money from different sources. Therefore, they are much more active at the state level than they once were.

A few superintendents shared their concerns about effective lobbying depending upon who their opponents were. Superintendent I shares,

“I don’t believe it helps. It seems like money talks and we don’t have any money. The teachers unions have money. That’s not a slam, that’s an observation. Lobbying involves money and we don’t have any. Maybe I am wrong about the connection between lobbying and money.”

He provided the following example of using professional organizations to help him lobbying in Springfield:

“A few years ago we had a battle with the state; our district was in a battle with the state over the bilingual education mandate. We were not in compliance with the state mandate even though our test scores for our ELL students had improved dramatically. The fact that we were not in

compliance with the policy did not affect student achievement. However, student achievement was secondary to being in compliance with the policy from the state's perspective. And so they held our grant back. They didn't give us our bilingual grant.

I worked with many professional organizations. The Lake County Superintendents supported my district's position. IASA supported my district's position. In fact, they developed and adopted a regulation, I guess. They took an official position in support of my district. IASB did the same thing. The official position with my district was, not speaking out against bilingual education, just saying districts should have an option to go with another program if the district could show that the other program is in the best interests of students. However, all of that did nothing; actually did nothing. We still didn't get the money."

Superintendent F shared this experience,

"Well I have some other experience that I don't know if it would help or be just different. My previous superintendency, I was a superintendent in a district with a nuclear plant. So we were very heavily involved in lobbying in Springfield because of the nuclear plant. They pay a team of people to lobby all the time and they kind of get what they want. So we constantly had to counter that with our own effort in Springfield. It was very clear that even though I believe we were on the moral side of things,

trying to educate children, it basically came down to how much money you had.

The nuclear plant got their way because they paid a lot of politicians. I don't mean illegally. But they contributed to them. They definitely had more of a voice in Springfield than we were ever going to. It was disheartening to see the game was basically fixed when you get down there. There wasn't a whole lot we could do beyond a little narrow band of opportunity that we had to make any real change in that area. Ever since I experienced that, I don't go to Springfield as much. If I hadn't been the Superintendent of a district with a nuclear plant, I wouldn't have had that type of experience; to be in Springfield doing that advocacy work. I'm glad I have that experience, but I'm also glad I don't have to do it anymore."

Distributive justice would turn to ethics to shed light on this issue. Ethics attempt to resolve the fundamental paradox of the human experience: People are by disposition (more or less) egocentric or self-centered. Simultaneously, they are by nature collective, or in need of others. Hence, ethics is the attempt to balance ego-needs with the ego needs of others; to be objective even when personal interests are at stake (Gini, 2004; Katz et al., 1999; Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Marshall & Oliva, 2009). Distributive justice would ask one to consider not only who benefits from a policy or decision but also the basis upon which that decision was made (Rawls, 2005).

Limitations

This research study is subject to a number of limitations imposed by the research design and time constraints. These limitations include:

1. The sample of respondents does not truly represent all superintendents in the state of Illinois. By limiting the participant sample, due to time and means constraints, only superintendents in public, suburban Lake County working in elementary school districts are represented in this study.
2. The sample participants all serve as superintendents in one geographical location. Generalizability of results, such as to unit or high school districts, urban or rural settings, private schools, may not be possible due to the limitations of data collection. Data may not be representative outside the state of Illinois.
3. Identifying themes and patterns is a subjective process, thus the researcher's bias and worldview may limit the generalization of the results.
4. The researcher did not provide the research participants with definitions for local, state and federal legislators. Therefore, the interpretation for those terms was left up to each individual participant. Since some of the state and federal legislators were local to Lake County, some research participants used those terms interchangeably.
5. Since the interview protocol used a Likert Scale of one through five, with one being inhibits, three being neutral and five being enhances; numbers two and four on the scale were not given specific identifiers or descriptors. Therefore,

it was left up to the researcher's interpretation what a four and two mean to the research participants.

Call for Further Research

The following are suggestions for further research based on these data from this qualitative research study.

1. Whereas Illinois superintendents recognize the importance of working with legislators as an opportunity to affect policy and to inform legislators of the impact of proposed legislation on school districts. However, they also identify a sense of disillusionment when actually working with state legislators. Therefore further research into specific behaviors that positively impact a positive relationship between Illinois superintendents and legislators may be warranted.
2. Since Illinois superintendents recognize lobbying as an accepted and expected process for informing and influencing legislators, but express concern about whether school districts have the necessary funds to affect change, further research may be warranted on how school districts can most effectively lobby as a form of advocacy.
3. Illinois elementary district superintendents perceive networking as a positive strategy for advocating for resources and services for opportunities for student learning. Furthermore, they have identified key local networking groups in high school feeder districts and local intergovernmental agencies. Research should look into other key networking groups that exist for superintendents.

How Illinois superintendents build social capital with their key networking groups may also warrant further research.

4. Illinois superintendents identified party politics as an obstacle to the legislative process. Therefore, further research may be warranted on the role of the political party system as a barrier to the legislative process.

Final Thoughts

The purpose of this research study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions of Illinois superintendents on the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for the resources and services needed for increased opportunities for student learning. Advocacy is an ethical imperative for Illinois superintendents set forth in Standard Six of The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC) Standards for School Leaders: An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. Hoefer (2006) states, “The main purpose of advocacy practice is the pursuit of social justice” (p. 2). Social justice is the relations of a society based on internal institutional patterns and structural preconditions. Social justice therefore draws attention to the unfairness of the situation described by Ward and Anthony (1992) that most U.S. children do not have access to the quality of education needed to close the widening income gap between the wealthy and the poor. Since politics is the process of deciding how resources are allocated, it is critical from a social justice perspective to understand the perceptions of Illinois superintendents on the effectiveness of political activity as they advocate for resources and services.

The first research question asked, to what professional organizations do superintendents belong? In summary, many Illinois superintendents belong to the Illinois Association of School Administrators, the American Association of School Administrators, ED-RED, FED ED, Phi Delta Kappa, ASCD, Illinois Association of School Business Officials and their County Superintendents' Group. All of these professional organizations look to affect public policy through their interactions and lobbying of legislators. They promote social justice through advocating for high quality education.

The second research question asked, as superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe their professional affiliations enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services? In summary, Illinois superintendents perceive their membership in professional organizations provides them benefits through lobbying efforts in Springfield, providing professional development, and networking opportunities.

The third research question asked, as superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe networking enhances or inhibits their ability to secure resources and services? The majority of Illinois superintendents perceived networking to enhance their ability to advocate for resources and services. Networking primarily enhanced their advocacy ability through providing information on how other superintendents have handled similar situations. It also reduces the loneliness inherent in the position. Networking is a form of commutative justice that looks at the claims in relationships between individuals. By building social capital through networking, Illinois

superintendents gain the information they need to successfully advocate for the students they serve.

In order for superintendents to advocate for the students they serve, it is necessary to identify the decision makers who can help them reach their goals. It is also important to be well informed on the topics and issues surrounding their goals. “The most important task of someone who wants to use advocacy to make a difference is to have information that is accurate and convincing” (Hoefer, 2006, p. 13). Networking is one avenue by which to collect that information.

The fourth research question asked, as superintendents advocate for student learning, in what ways do they believe lobbying and working with local, state and federal legislators enhance or inhibit their ability to secure resources and services? In summary, Illinois superintendents have mixed feelings about lobbying and working with legislators. Whereas they understand the potential positive benefits of lobbying of affecting policy and educating legislators about the impact of legislation, their experience has been that legislators do not listen; that legislators let party politics interfere with making good decisions for education; and that other lobby groups with more available funding sources can out-sway legislators.

School administrators are civic leaders and politicians who need to view their district as one component of a much larger political system and who need to understand that there are people out there with agendas that don't include education as a top priority (Rosberg et al., 2006). As the political parties in the United States have become more polarized in recent years, most policy changes have resulted in decreased funding and

support for social programs and for education. However, social policy is made on the basis that people do matter, particularly those on the bottom of the economic and social ladder, including children (Hoefler, 2006). Social justice demands that the intrinsic value of people, especially those on the bottom of the economic and social ladder, be honored and recognized (Rawls, 2005). Additionally, social justice would implore legislators to prioritize the promises made to our children in the Constitution for a free, high quality public education over the demands of party politics.

The final research question asked, as superintendents advocate for student learning, with whom and how do they network to enhance their ability to secure resources and services? In summary, Illinois superintendents recognize the importance of networking with all stakeholder groups depending on the nature of the issue for which they are advocating.

With the current state of the economy in general, and Illinois' budget problems specifically, it is essential that Illinois superintendents effectively advocate for resources and services. The research shows that in order to acquire economic and political power, all students require access to a high-quality education (Ward & Anthony, 1992). Therefore, social justice demands that all Illinois children deserve a high-quality education. Furthermore, since politics is the process of deciding how resources are allocated, social justice would also demand that Illinois superintendents possess the skills to effectively navigate the political arena in which those decisions are made.

By combining the body of research on lobbying, working with legislators, networking, and membership in professional organizations with the findings of this

research study, there are implications for future leaders and universities preparing future education leaders. First, it may warrant consideration to move networking from the implicit to the explicit curriculum in education leadership preparation programs. Secondly, it may also warrant consideration to add working with legislators to the explicit curriculum with a focus on specific strategies for accessing legislative information, improving communication, and affecting public policy. Third, as Superintendent H shares, “future leaders need to structure their day or week in such a way that allows for building relationships and creating bonds in order to help the students and their families in the learning community.” Finally, future leaders need to commit to the pursuit of effectively navigating the political arena. Our children deserve no less.

APPENDIX A
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

Freedom of Information Office
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001
ATTN: FOIA Request

February 15, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

I, Julie Fogarty, hereby request that the Illinois State Board of Education produce the following public records pursuant to the provisions of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 140/1 *et seq.* for the purposes of Doctoral research at Loyola University Chicago which is being supervised by Dr. Marla Israel, Associate Professor in the School of Education.

- 1. The name, district name, district mailing address and phone number for all Illinois public school elementary district superintendents in DuPage and Lake counties.**

Please produce the requested records to **Julie Fogarty, 2216 W. Fletcher St. #3, Chicago, IL 60618** or (if provided electronically) to juliefogarty@comcast.net, within seven (7) working days of your receipt of this request (Ill. Comp. Stat. 140/3 (c)). If the requested records cannot be produced within seven (7) working days, please notify me in writing of the reason(s) for the delay and the date by which requested records will be available.

If you do not understand this request, or any portion thereof, or if you feel you require clarification of this request, or any portion thereof, please contact me at 847-606-5936.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Julie Fogarty

Sent via FAX to 217-524-8585

APPENDIX B
PHONE SCRIPT

Project Title: Political Activity as Advocacy: Through the Eyes of the Illinois Superintendent

May I please speak to _____ (insert name of superintendent).

Hello. My name is Julie Fogarty. I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Loyola University of Chicago. I am calling to invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting for my dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Marla Israel.

You are being asked to participate because of your professional experiences as an Illinois superintendent and the fact that your position as superintendent deems you the instructional leader and chief executive officer of the district.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they relate to advocating for the resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning. Specifically, the political behaviors of membership in professional organizations, networking, lobbying and working with local, state and federal legislators will be explored.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Sign a "Letter of Consent to Participate in Research." indicating your agreement to participate in this research study.
- Participate in a 45-minute interview about your perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they relate to advocating for the resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning. The interview will be recorded for transcription purposes.

Risks/Benefits:

There are slight risks to be considered in the participation of this study. It is my intent to have an open conversation about the superintendency and the effectiveness of political activity as it relates to advocating for resources and services.

Confidentiality:

- All responses will remain confidential.

Are you willing to assist me in my doctoral research?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX C
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Political Activity as Advocacy: Through the Eyes of the Illinois Superintendent

Researcher: Julie Fogarty

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Marla Israel

Introduction:

You are being invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Julie Fogarty for her dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Marla Israel in the School of Education at Loyola University of Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because of your professional experiences as an Illinois superintendent and the fact that your position as superintendent deems you the instructional leader and chief executive officer of the district.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in this study.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore superintendents' perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they relate to advocating for the resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning. Specifically, the political behaviors of membership in professional organizations, networking, lobbying and working with local, state, and federal legislators will be explored.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a 45-minute interview about your perceptions of the effectiveness of political activity as they relate to advocating for the resources and services to improve opportunities for student learning. The interview will be taped and transcribed. The transcriber hired for this purpose has also signed a confidentiality agreement. Throughout the interview, your responses will be checked for accuracy. You will have the opportunity to review your interview transcripts and provide the researcher with any further clarifications. Through this process of member checking, you will be asked to examine drafts of the writing for accuracy. Once the transcript is in a final stage, all identifiers will be removed.

Risks/Benefits:

There is minimal risk to be considered in the participation of this study. The researcher's intent is to have an open conversation about the superintendency and the effectiveness of political activity as it relates to advocating for resources and services. There are no

foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Scrupulous precautions will be taken to ensure your confidentiality as a study participant. The researcher will use pseudonyms and cleanse any identifying information.

There are no direct benefits to your participation; however, it is hoped that this study will add to the body of research in leadership, education, and the superintendency. Additionally, it is hoped the information cited in this study will benefit current and future superintendents by providing insight on what current practitioners perceive to be effective behaviors and use of their time as it relates to securing the necessary resources and services to increase learning opportunities for the students they serve.

Confidentiality:

- All responses will remain confidential. Each respondent will be assigned a unique identification number. All data will be analyzed/coded using the identification number. Individual names and names of school districts will not be mentioned in the final writing.
- The audio tape recordings of the interviews will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's home. Once the final writing of the research is completed, the recordings will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you do decide to participate, you may elect not to answer a specific question or to withdraw from participation in the study at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions about this research study, please contact:

Julie Fogarty at juliefogarty@comcast.net

Dr. Marla Israel at misrael@luc.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Loyola's Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Superintendent's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D
SUPERINTENDENT ORAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Your district Elementary _____ Which grades?
2. Gender ____ Male ____ Female
3. Number of Years as an Illinois Superintendent _____ 1-5 Years ____ 6-10 Years
____ 11 or more
4. To which professional organizations do you belong?
 - a. ____ Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA)
 - b. ____ American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
 - c. ____ Education Research Development (ED-RED)
 - d. ____ Federal Representation, Education and Communication (FED ED)
 - e. ____ Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO)
 - f. ____ Other

5. Your level of state funding
 - a. ____ Foundation Level
 - b. ____ Alternate Method
 - c. ____ Flat Grant
6. Is your district subject to tax cap laws? ____ yes ____ no

7. To what degree do you believe **Membership in Professional Organizations** enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning:

1	2	3	4	5
Inhibits		Neutral		Enhances

8. You gave it a _____. Tell me why and tell me how...

9. To what degree do you believe **Working with Local Legislators** enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning:

1	2	3	4	5
Inhibits		Neutral		Enhances

10. You gave it a _____. Tell me why and tell me how...

11. To what degree do you believe **Working with State Legislators** enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning:

1	2	3	4	5
Inhibits		Neutral		Enhances

12. You gave it a _____. Tell me why and tell me how...

13. To what degree do you believe **Working with Federal Legislators** enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning:

1	2	3	4	5
Inhibits		Neutral		Enhances

14. You gave it a _____. Tell me why and tell me how...

15. To what degree do you believe **Lobbying** enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning:

1	2	3	4	5
Inhibits		Neutral		Enhances

16. You gave it a _____. Tell me why and tell me how...

17. To what degree do you believe **Networking** enhances or inhibits your ability to advocate for resources and services to provide opportunities for student learning:

1	2	3	4	5
Inhibits		Neutral		Enhances

18. You gave it a _____. Tell me why and tell me how...

19. With whom does networking enhance your ability to advocate for resources and services?

20. What other strategies or avenues do you utilize to secure or advocate for the resources/services needed for opportunities for student learning?

21. Given these behaviors, which one is the most effective and the least effective?

22. Do you have any other comments or information to share?

APPENDIX E

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT: TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES

I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Julie Fogarty related to her doctoral study on Political Activity as Advocacy: Through the Eyes of the Illinois Superintendent. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audiotaped interviews, or in any associated documents.
2. To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Julie Fogarty.
3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.
4. To return all audiotapes and study-related documents to Julie Fogarty in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any back up devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed): _____

Transcriber's signature: _____

Date: _____

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VITA

Julie Fogarty was born and raised in West Bend, Iowa. Before pursuing her graduate studies, she attended Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with minors in Spanish and reading with honors Summa Cum Laude in 1992.

From 1995-1997, she attended National-Louis University in Evanston, Illinois to complete a Master's program in Curriculum and Instruction. From 1998-2000, she attended Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois earning a Type 75 Certification in Educational Leadership.

In 2006, Julie began the doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois.

Currently, Julie is the principal at Forest Elementary School in Des Plaines, Illinois. She lives in Chicago, Illinois.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Dissertation submitted by Julia Fogarty has been read and approved by the following committee:

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