

# PREPARING AND TRAINING SUPERINTENDENTS FOR THE MISSION OF EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT\*

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## Abstract

Superintendent preparation and training has remained substantially unaltered for a half century. State certification requirements drive the content and activities for preparation programs housed in higher education institutions. State agencies never participated in superintendent preparation beyond awarding certification to post master's educators completing an "approved" course of study. However, high stakes testing and accountability pressures are now causing a few states to reconsider traditional paths to superintendent certification. Illinois and Washington have "opened" the superintendency to individuals without educational, managerial, executive, or higher education backgrounds. What the effects of these attempts "to" provide local school districts with "superintendent choice" is unclear at this time.



NOTE: This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

## Preparing and Training Superintendents for the Mission of Executive Management

Superintendent preparation and training has remained substantially unaltered for a half century. State certification requirements drive the content and activities for preparation programs housed in higher education institutions. State agencies never participated in superintendent preparation beyond awarding certification to post master's educators completing an "approved" course of study. However, high stakes testing and accountability pressures are now causing a few states to reconsider traditional paths to superintendent certification. Illinois and Washington have "opened" the superintendency to individuals without educational, managerial, executive, or higher education backgrounds. What the effects of these attempts "to" provide local school districts with "superintendent choice" is unclear at this time.

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Reform literature discussing preparation, selection, and evaluation of superintendents generally questions the abilities of superintendents to bring about higher student test scores. Seldom discussed is effective management of resources and systems. Policy literature often tosses aside superintendent management responsibilities as being a “technical” matter, not germane to the development of transformational executive leadership.

This paper focuses on “real” superintendent management preparation or training necessary to effectively and efficiently manage district fiscal, personnel, and physical resources. The creation of an effective and functional management system is most definitely a pre-condition for exercising effective leadership. Seldom are high scoring districts found without effective superintendent led management systems.

What is needed is a new vision of superintendent executive level management training consisting of a cooperative effort between universities, state agencies, and professional associations. This new paradigm should cast management training in an equal role with leadership preparation. The existence of higher education and degree programs should not be eliminated but augmented by state agency resources and involvement with professional associations.

#### Preparing Superintendents to be Executive Managers The Need for a New Paradigm

Often school reformers sarcastically criticize superintendents as “mere” managers not capable of leading, schools, districts and communities. Education literature abounds with conventional wisdom rhetoric advocating “silver bullet” leadership stratagems guaranteeing higher test scores. For the sake of self preservation, many superintendents “talk the talk” of transformational, creative, challenged, results based, follower based, distributive and situational leadership but few actual “walk the walk” toward verifiable results and “managerially” improved districts. District improvement is more likely achieved through “appropriate” board and superintendent leadership behavior in conjunction with effective management. One strategy alone in most cases will not maintain or bring about organizational effectiveness and reform.

Large urban districts poignantly and tragically illustrate this paradigm. These large urban districts (often mammoth impersonal hierarchical bureaucracies) serve more than a third of the nation’s public school children and provide a majority of No Child Left Behind’s (NCLB) “failing” schools. The picture of “failing schools within failing districts” in “failing communities” provides a chilling view of urban America today. By 2015 at least one out of two public school students will be a minority enrolled in one of these “failing districts” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000).

What massive set of policy initiatives can turn around this urban (actually national) catastrophe? More money, more teachers, better teachers, better principals, better curriculum, parental involvement, better governance or current “jingoistic” leadership by principals and superintendents?

Recent reform literature offers “quick school fixes” via “better” leadership. Foundations, state agencies, universities, private sector groups, and school districts have in the past, and are today, spending significant amounts to “implant” leadership skills in principals and superintendents. How this “new” leadership is to be evaluated, except by very nebulous test scores increases, is not discussed. Many reform writers slip into the beginning graduate student error of assuming high correlation denotes causation.

#### The Roles of Superintendents

In some respects the superintendent’s role is an anomaly in comparison to many complex organizations. The roles of leadership (executive) and management are discrete functions carried out by separate role incumbents in large private sector organizations. This is only true in perhaps 1% to 2% of American public school districts.

A body of literature in the field of business not only separates the two roles but also discusses personality traits and types best needed to fit each role. These “managerial” and “leadership” personalities are portrayed many times to be in opposition and conflict (Zaleznik, 1977). If this business organization literature aptly describes leadership and management needed in public school districts, a curious paradox is created for superintendents. Can a superintendent possess both a leadership and management personality? Or does the more confining role of the manager inhibit the less confining role of executive leader?

Importantly, is there sufficient inter-role conflict to render the superintendency a plural role forcing incumbents to choose between often conflicting role expectations and responsibilities? If effective managers

and effective leaders possess different personalities, can one superintendent be effectively trained for a role requiring a bi-polar personality? This is certainly another way to view the common description of leaders as being either relations or task oriented in selected practices and situations (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). This may also account for the reluctance of many superintendents to adopt a change agent role requiring “visionary” leadership and risks.

There appears to be an absence of literature examining the “managerial” and “leadership” attributes of superintendents in terms of emotional involvement, empathy, and social discourse. Leaders are typically characterized as being extroverted and intensely emotionally involved with followers and colleagues in a realm of ideas. Managers on the other hand relate to others according to roles and sequences of events in decision-making and task completion (Zaleznik, 1977). Which of the two best fits or describes current superintendents?

#### Callahan Revisited

Callahan’s identification and description of four distinctive roles of the superintendent, scholarly educational leader, business executive, educational statesman in democratic society, and applied social scientist, suggest a plural role with built-in conflict (Callahan, 1962). Cuban (1976) and others correctly point out that superintendents must manifest behavior elements of these four roles at different times and places in their practice. This is correct as the superintendent is a highly situational position dictated by boards and unique sets of local circumstances. Lutz and Merz (1992) and others suggest three “general roles” for superintendents as, change agent, developer, or maintainer of the status quo. These roles are situational based requiring distinct sets of leadership and management skills. Do these skill sets require psychosocial attitudes? It is likely this trio of roles significantly affects a board’s decision when selecting a new superintendent.

A board satisfied with the performance of the district may carefully select a superintendent with excellent management skills charged to keep the district at its present level of operation. Or a board may choose a management skilled superintendent to carefully manage a district with very few resources and little possibility of implementing reform initiatives. This status quo superintendent role is very prevalent.

Another board may have already passed through an era of repeated failed reform initiatives led by a change oriented visionary leader and feel the time is ripe for a new superintendent to pick up the pieces and develop and manage them into a whole program. The developer role may be the superintendent many large urban districts need at this time.

The hard charging visionary change-agent leader is resplendent in today’s reform literature. This is particularly true in the urban districts where change agent superintendents stay fewer than 3 years and initiate three new reform initiatives each year of their brief tenure (Hess, 1999). Contrary to conventional wisdom relatively few boards are actively seeking this usually short term leader. Only 8 % of superintendents participating in the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Ten Year Study in 2000 said their boards hired them to be “reform leaders” (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2004).

The majority of school boards appear to be seeking a superintendent with ability to develop programs and effectively manage district resources. These boards probably agree with Zaleznik (1977), effective change agent leaders often create disorder, a condition many boards desire to avoid. This is a far different view from what school reformers and their political policy makers arrogantly and blindly demand of boards. A reality seen by boards is that a majority of school districts possess central office staffs of one or two administrators and while strong leadership is desired, management is imperative.

Unfortunately, what is not discussed in the literature is whether a superintendent can be adequately proficient in Callahan’s (1964) or other multiple role models. Callahan’s four conceptual roles expand the superintendency far beyond the business paradigm of leadership and management. The role models of change agents, developers, and maintainers of the status quo are overlapping and many boards may even require superintendents to act to a degree in each.

A complication certainly must arise in practice when superintendent leadership situations change due to board elections or adjustments in community expectations. The reform era has “politicized” the role to the point in some districts where the superintendent is the “chief political officer.” Carrying out this role takes a superintendent “out” of the district and in extreme cases makes the role of superintendent a community rather educational role. This may be occurring more than we are presently aware.

### Leaders and Managers

Bennis and Nanus (1985) in their review of more than 1,000 studies of leadership and management found more than 350 definitions of effective leadership. Not finding a clear understanding of non-leaders versus leaders, they coined the term “a leader does the right thing” and “manager does the thing right.”

Drucker (1985) states that effective leaders make relatively few decisions regarding the “total” picture and the future of the organization. If this is true, then superintendents in most districts are obligated by the board to make few “day to day” management types of decisions. Perhaps Drucker’s axiom best fits the superintendent-board team role that may be cast as the district’s “visionary-effective leader.” In the context of American schools decisions resulting in broad policy statements are the responsibility of the board.

What is the board’s role in superintendent leadership? Management traditionally has been expected of superintendents by boards. Over involvement in management by board members (micro-management) has never been an approved practice. The National School Board Association (2000) and its state affiliates particularly condemn the practice, often creating conflict between boards and superintendents. The problem has been what is the demarcation line between policy, leadership, and management? When does superintendent leadership join or separate from board leadership? In addition, boards and superintendents often have very different ideas as to what constitutes board micromanagement.

Policy and procedures in school districts often appear to be management statements. The division between superintendent, leadership, and management might be:

- Leadership is “influencing” the community, staff, board, and students.
- Leadership is “guiding” in setting abstracts such as goals, vision, etc.
- Leadership is “persuading” staff to put aside self interests.
- Management is “shaping” district management systems to produce results.
- Management is “supervising” and insuring worker productivity.

Leadership overall recognizes the total school district and attempts to influence it or its employees in a certain direction. Management is actually accomplishing the task (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988).

As Lunenberg and Ornstein (2000) point out, a school organization does not need good leadership to survive. Poor leadership in a district may not affect the overall operation for years. However, poor management quickly impairs the organization effectiveness.

#### A Management Training Platform

Most education leadership literature is strangely silent about district level management as the essential foundation or platform necessary for productive district system leadership. Without a solid district level management platform, leadership strategies of any type are likely to flounder or be seriously impeded. It is a challenge to find a high academic achieving district without competent fiscal, budget, facilities, personnel, curriculum, and support services management. A plethora of school based activities, if well supported by the central office, allow principals to better focus on the tasks of academic improvement.

If this management support is not present, principals may be likely to be in a continual struggle “against” the central office. This dichotomy of the principal’s struggle to improve achievement and the struggle with a district central office is likely a strong contributor to “failing schools.” Superintendents in high achieving districts are often characterized as being effective leaders; and those in chronically poor achieving districts are frequently thought of as ineffective leaders (Education Writers Association, 2003). Seldom is there discussion as to whether they are effective or ineffective managers in “leading” district management efforts.

By necessity, massive urban districts supporting hundreds of schools have created large hierarchical “classical” bureaucracies featuring a reliance on classical “scientific management” theory (now reinforced by NCLB). The number and complexity of essential management functions is difficult to see if looking from outside the organization. Few reformers and critics realize these large bureaucracies are very much a part of federal and state government actions created over a hundred years. In many respects they mirror any large governmental bureaucracy. They are unlike large corporations that change organizational structure when threatened with loss of profits and possible extinction. Smaller districts (like smaller private sector businesses) are usually closer to “customers” and can change organizational structures to meet public demand.

Superintendents seldom are well trained or experienced to simultaneously lead and manage school bureaucracies. The not too surprising result for urban superintendents is failing to raise test scores and bringing about institutional reform. They never get the management “system” to sufficiently support instructional programs (Hess, 1999). In short, the hub of the wheel cannot support the spokes. Managerial ineffectiveness by superintendents in smaller districts may also hurt instructional programs, but the task of fixing these systems is less difficult.

An excellent example of “fixing” a large organization is the Chrysler Corporation under the leadership of Lee Iacocca. When the Chrysler board hired Iacocca, the corporation was on the brink of bankruptcy. Iacocca immediately hired a team formerly working with him at Ford and began working on rebuilding corporate management systems. They did not immediately rush to the car assembly plant lines correcting the poor quality of Chrysler cars. This was a later step after corporate management was rebuilt sufficiently to manage needed changes in the production lines corporate image and creating a future for the corporation (Iacocca & Novak, 1987).

This is an excellent illustration of the need for effective management systems to be in place before visionary leadership dominates the district leadership paradigm. Urban school systems would be well advised to look at how failing corporations are rebuilt from the top down. Reform efforts since *A Nation at Risk* have been generally bottom up.

#### Superintendents and the Management Imperative

The following managerial tasks are common to every school district regardless of size and wealth. They are prescribed actions both in highly centralized or decentralized organizational structures. Most are closely monitored by state departments and other regulatory agencies. In brief, they constitute a non-negotiable managerial imperative for superintendents to supervise, coordinate, perform and be held accountable to the school board and community. If performed efficiently and effectively fiscal costs to the district can be substantially reduced creating an opportunity to transfer “saved” dollars to “instructional” accounts.

If not managed properly district credibility with the community, state, and staff suffer making all district operations more difficult. More superintendents are dismissed for mismanaging finances with the exception of a poor relationship with the board (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

#### Finances

A school district is a trustee of both the community’s children and its tax dollars. Efficient and appropriate management of public tax dollars is a key responsibility for every superintendent. Inarguably, this is a complex and time consuming task for superintendents in districts of all sizes. School districts are not “stand alone” businesses in managing revenues and expenditures. Instead, they are part of large state school funding programs that are complex and difficult to comprehend and implement at the local level. Lack of competent fiscal and operational management skills is a leading reason for board dismissal of superintendents. High quality financial management is a characteristic of academically high performing districts. The following are fiscal management components found in all districts.

#### Fiscal Planning

This important management task plans and sets spending patterns for present and future budget years. Competent fiscal planning establishes a reality frame around which a district can create a strategic plan. A critical decision made yearly by the superintendent is the forecasted revenue upon which to build next year’s budget. Incompetent fiscal planning and revenue forecasting may result in the district not meeting program commitments, incurring unexpected budget deficits, and creating distrust with district personnel and in the community. Knowledge of state, county, and local tax revenue systems is imperative.

An often overlooked fiscal planning task is that of forecasting the future number of children to be served. Particularly in districts with budgets driven by state aid formulas, the number of children to be served is a critical budget variable. Knowledge of demographic variables and forecasting is very important to fiscal and facility planning.

#### Budgeting

Allocating sufficient funds to each district program is a very difficult process. The superintendent does not usually make budget decisions alone. However, the superintendent must deploy and supervise the budget system in the district. The structure of budget systems is often mandated by the state. Although district

staff may participate in the budgeting process by providing input, the final decisions about how scarce resources are to be allocated rests with the superintendent and ultimately the school board. After board (and state) approval, the superintendent must implement a plan to implement and manage the budget. This task can be complicated in districts with bottom up types of budget systems.

#### Accounting

While superintendents are not expected to be certified accountants it is important for them to competently manage cash (sometimes accrual) accounting systems. Most important they must be able to adequately use the fund accounting systems required by state departments of education. In perhaps nine out of every ten districts the superintendent participates daily in district accounting processes (Ray, Hack, & Candoli, 2001).

#### Debt Management

Due to reliance of school districts on state funding systems, most districts on a routine basis incur short and long term debt. Understanding bonding systems and borrowing options available to the district are very important management options. Districts frequently use short term borrowing to meet cash flow problems. In most districts cash flow management is a very important task for the superintendent to oversee.

#### Investing

All districts, large and small, have funds to invest in short term or long term options. These funds augment regular program funds and often provide for a “rainy day” crisis. Superintendents often make almost daily decisions regarding the structuring and use of district financial investments.

#### Auditing

The annual external audit is but one part of the districts auditing requirements. Cash accounts must be internally audited on a frequent basis. Program progress audits are often required by states as well. Federal auditing procedures, many times, do not align with state systems and this creates a challenge for superintendents. Understanding state auditing standards is a legal as well as professional obligation of superintendents. Bad audit reports in recent years have claimed the careers of more than several urban superintendents unaware their districts were many millions of dollars in debt.

#### Purchasing and Contracting

States have strict laws requiring school district purchasing practices and superintendents must comply even if their boards disagree. Many states hold superintendents personally liable for violation of state purchasing procedures.

The issuing of contracts for goods and services is often a controversial issue for superintendents. Service contracts obligating millions of taxpayer dollars can be very complex. Examples are contracts for architectural services, transportation, and food services. Simple contracts for district foodstuffs and fuel can also be controversial if not done correctly. A medium size district of 2,400 students might process 400 to 500 purchase orders a month.

#### Property Management

School districts are required by state law to maintain demonstrable control of all district property. Periodic inventory of all district property must be conducted and discrepancies reconciled. Disposal of unusable property is strictly regulated in most states. Distribution of new purchased property and materials is an important task that can impact programs. In smaller districts, superintendents are very involved in this process. In large districts, they generally have little knowledge whether proper supplies are reaching the schools. And, even less knowledge of whether schools are controlling and accounting for public property.

#### Risk Management

Every school district carries several types of insurance coverage including fire and casualty, errors and omissions, blanket policies, student insurance and employee performance bonds. Superintendents must keep the district adequately insured at a reasonable premium level. Thousands of districts in recent years have found it very difficult to obtain liability coverage and have resorted to multi-district cooperatives largely managed by participating superintendents.

#### Salary and Wage Management

While some district employee salaries are determined by collective bargaining agreements, others are not. Periodic salary studies are necessary management activities in many districts. States sometimes regulate

selected wage and management conditions. Salaries are a very sensitive issue. Unhappy employees and poorly managed payroll procedures can quickly put a superintendent in hot water.

#### Facility Management

In perhaps a majority of communities across the nation, the value of local school buildings constitutes the single largest investment of public funds. Superintendents must understand the dependence of school programs on appropriate facilities and be able to guide the community in a financially responsible manner in replacing, remodeling, and retrofitting the district facility inventory. This process involves millions of public tax dollars and has a decided long term effect on educational programs. Managing construction projects has become a very challenging task in the past several decades. Successful management of facilities is an integral part of a district's community relations program. The condition of facilities to the majority of patrons not having children in school often represent an efficient or inefficient use of public tax dollars.

#### Facility Assessment

Superintendents must be able to conduct or supervise frequent formal assessments of district facilities to insure they are providing suitable spaces for instruction and support. An increasing number of school facilities are overcrowded or outdated for use of technology. The superintendent working with the board and community should develop short and long range facility plans. This management function reaches into curriculum development, program management, and funding.

#### Replacing, Retrofitting, and Remodeling

The superintendent is responsible for the implementation of plans to replace worn out buildings, change the functions of other buildings by remodeling, and bringing others up to current building and safety codes via retrofitting. This management plan requires a significant amount of funding acquired through community support. Some states require a short and long range use plan for every on line school facility.

#### Safety and Health Concerns

The primary legal responsibility of a superintendent is to insure the health and safety of students and staff. A plan to maintain safe environments and work practices is a paramount responsibility for the superintendent. A safety management plan is a critical district document. This includes electronic and other security systems to ensure the safety of students and staff. An increasing number of districts are employing security personnel to patrol school buildings and parking lots.

#### Human Resource Management

Most districts dedicate about 80% to 85% of the budget to personnel costs. The employment of appropriate employees for the right jobs is a critical financial matter. Insuring employees perform adequately and in the public interest is a primary responsibility for all superintendents. Although building administrators may select and evaluate employees, the district hires and fires them. In most states only the superintendent may take the names of prospective employees to the board for hiring and firing. Therefore, the superintendent is ultimately responsible for the management of all human resources in the district. Equally important is the superintendent and district compliance with the plethora of legal requirements surrounding personnel management. Personnel actions are the management area most fraught due to time consumption and expensive legal problems, which can be potentially dangerous to superintendent tenure.

#### Personnel Needs Assessment

Superintendents typically are responsible for developing a personnel utilization plan for the district. This plan is integral to developing present and future district budgets. What types of employees are needed to match program requirements and at what costs are important decisions made yearly by every superintendent. The superintendent must be knowledgeable about state employee retirement systems, workers compensation, and state mandated personnel reporting and accounting methods. In many states this is audited yearly and a portion of state financial aid is affected by the accurateness of personnel records.

#### Personnel Recruitment and Induction

Recruiting quality applicants for open district positions is not an easy task. Superintendents typically establish parameters for recruiting and interviewing prospective employees. Inducting new teachers is an especially important task as drop-out rates for new educators is very high in most areas of the country.

#### Staff Evaluation

The dismissal of professional and support staff is probably the first or second most contentious community and legal issue confronting superintendents and boards. The superintendent's legal knowledge and ability to implement evaluation systems is extremely important. This is a key management responsibility with little room for error.

#### Professional Development

The continuous improvement of employee skills and efficiency is often linked to state certification and licensing requirements. District resources used for staff development are sometimes linked to evaluation of district employees and often a legal and political "hot button."

#### Payroll and Record Keeping

District payroll operations and record keeping management is usually not seen as a key superintendent management responsibility. However, state and legal requirements must be closely followed and a good management system must be in place for these functions.

#### Fringe Benefits Management

Fringe benefit costs in many school districts constitute about 10 % of the total district budget. Health care, life insurance, and student insurance are complex programs to manage. Superintendents must be very knowledgeable to wisely advise the school board on the best options for the district. Health care benefits are becoming a very "hot" item in many districts as budgets are reduced.

#### Worker's Compensation

The laws and procedures surrounding state worker's compensation programs are complex. The cost to the district is substantial and costly mistakes are often made by district administrators.

#### Collective Negotiations and Contract Management

A form of bargaining or "meet and confer" option for personnel exists in every state. Successful bargaining evolves from well planned personnel and fiscal plans. Superintendents are a key figure in the districts bargaining program. Day to day management of the collective bargaining agreement(s) is a prime responsibility for superintendents. Superintendents are also the lead district administrator in managing grievances arising from the implementation of the contract or the formal understanding with employee groups.

#### Student Personnel Management

Although students attend individual schools and programs, the district office has important responsibilities in managing student focused programs. Central management of school health, special education, student records, and serious discipline is required by statute in many states. Special education is a very complex program requiring a considerable portion of the district budget and is prone to problems requiring legal services. Compliance with state and federal regulations (such as NCLB) is a serious management challenge for every district and superintendent.

#### Student Attendance

Accurate management of the district's attendance program is critical. In most states the district's state revenue is driven by attendance count. State reporting for secondary school drop-outs is becoming a frustrating management problem for many districts and superintendents due to NCLB legislation.

#### Support Services Management

##### Student Transportation

If buses do not run, many districts do not run. Transporting children to and from school safely is an important legal responsibility for the district and superintendent. Management systems creating bus routes, bus replacement, maintenance, and personnel is a critical management function.

##### Food Services

Food service operations take place daily in school districts and consume district resources in buildings, personnel, utilities, budget, supervision, and required management hours.

##### Legal and Professional Services

Districts employ the services of attorneys on a frequent, if not permanent, basis. Superintendents must be able to use these services to be the best financial benefit to the district. Other professional services managed by the superintendent are certified public accountants, engineers, architects, and medical personnel.

##### Outsourcing Services

Many districts currently outsource services such as payroll, food service, janitorial service, technology, and transportation. Superintendents are required to be competent in understanding bids, contracts, contract management, and evaluation of out sourced services.

#### The Context of Superintendent Management

The level of superintendent participation in the preceding management areas is primarily determined by district size, not training, experience, or personal inclination. The number of district administrators or managers available to work with or under the supervision of the superintendent to accomplish management tasks typically depends on available dollars, enrollment size, and board approval. Larger districts have larger central office staffs allowing the superintendent to assign and delegate many management responsibilities. In most American school districts, superintendents perform the tasks themselves or share them with one or two other administrators.

While superintendents may “delegate” tasks to other administrators and managers, they still retain supervisory and oversight responsibility to insure the management task is completed promptly and correctly. Importantly, they are ultimately responsible to the board, community, and the state for effective and legal district management.

There appear to be four identifiable superintendent management roles within the nations 14,500 school districts. Again, the size of the district largely determines the context of the role. The district size categories used in this paper illustrate or describe four superintendent “management” break out roles. These size groups have been used in the last fifty years in the American Association of School Administrator’s “Ten Year” superintendent studies.

The very large districts serve more than 25,000 students. There are 225 of these districts. The second size category is large districts serving 3,000 to 25,000 students. About 2,700 districts fall into this category. There are 7,400 medium size districts enrolling 300 to 3,000 students each. The fourth and last category is small districts, which is comprised of 2,300 districts. Each of the small districts is comprised of 300 or fewer students. The average size of the nearly 14,000 functioning school districts in the United States is about 2,400 students (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

#### Very Large Districts

In this group of 225 districts containing 25,000 or more students, the superintendent is a general supervisor of deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, and managers assigned to both leadership and management responsibility for district finances, budget, planning, personnel, pupil services, community relations, instruction and curriculum, grants, facilities, maintenance, transportation, safety, food services, special education, evaluation, testing, and accountability.

The level of participation in supervising the management of critical district management functions is sometimes minimal due to the substantial number of managers. In these highly visible “bureaucratic” (often not well managed) districts, the superintendent is not a “hands on” manager. Typically the span of supervisory control for these superintendents is four to seven top level administrators. This means critical daily and long range management functions are performed by managers reporting and being supervised by other managers who report to the superintendent. The superintendent typically “manages” district management systems from a distance of periodic “key staff” meetings and “need to know” sessions.

Management in large urban districts with billion dollar budgets is a very complex undertaking, which requires great skill and experience. The large district superintendent, while not a “hands on” manager, must possess sufficient expertise to confidently know important functions are being performed correctly. It is difficult and tenuous to competently supervise a high level manager without personal knowledge and experience in that management specialty. Another burden placed on urban superintendents is recruiting and hiring competent senior level managers. This is problematic for superintendents with little or no experience in the wide array of central office management responsibilities. Many current large district superintendents are hired for their “curriculum” (school reform) knowledge and experience rather than demonstrated abilities to manage billion dollar budgets.

Board members should not be surprised when serious fiscal, audit, budget, facilities or legal problems occur. These incidents not only reveal superintendents lacking management skills, but also question the competence of second tier management.

### Large Districts

Superintendent in districts over 10,000 have the opportunity to hire several office administrators to delegate managerial responsibilities. Their level of participation in management is similar to that of coordinator. Instead of supervising four to seven top aides in weekly scheduled meetings, they daily coordinate the districts' management by meeting with managers, making frequent visits to sites, reviewing documents, and providing adequate supervision. They are sometimes "hands on" with the top management tier, but not so with program managers. They usually have to keep fewer board members informed than in very large districts where boards are usually nine or more members.

Districts between 5,000 and 10,000 provide opportunities for superintendents to be "hands on" coordinators. In this size district, a manager or administrator hired by the superintendent typically accomplishes most functions instead of delegating them to a lower layer of management. It is likely the most effective district management occurs in this size of district.

Districts with between 3,000 and 5,000 students provide unique opportunities for superintendents desiring to have their "hands on" the pulse of the school district. In these districts, superintendents can usually lead, supervise, and "manage by direct coordination" of principals and central office staff. In this size district, the "formal" distance between the superintendent staff is narrowed to the point where employees feel the superintendent is accessible to hear their problems.

### Medium Size Districts

A majority of American school districts fall into the 300 to 3,000 student size category. The district and the superintendent do not usually have the financial capability to hire a needed complement of central office staff. In these districts, most superintendents managerially become co-workers with one or two central office administrators. They are "hands on" managers working singly or with another manager in completing management tasks. The superintendent must be able to actually perform the management tasks in a medium size district.

A typical central office staff of the average American school district (2,400 students) would be a business manager, assistant superintendent, facilities director, transportation director, and food service director. Again, the superintendent in this size of district can realistically supervise the central office staff as well as building principals.

### Small Districts

Nearly 2,400 districts fall into the category of districts enrolling fewer than 300 students. In these districts, the superintendent works with a business manager and a principal in performing the myriad of management tasks common to districts of all sizes. The role of the superintendent is a "management worker." There simply is no one else to do the work. Fortunately, county, regional, intermediate, and cooperatives often assist these small "one or two administrator" districts (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

### A Management Grid

The superintendent literature generally assumes the managerial role of superintendents is supervising and insuring the work of assistant superintendents for finance, personnel, curriculum, support services, student services, and special programs.

Table 1 does not continue to contribute to this myth nor the existence of a "monolithic" superintendent role. Superintendents in medium size districts singly or cooperatively perform numerous managerial tasks that superintendents in larger districts delegate to one or more lower levels of administration. The role and level of involvement differs greatly among districts of varying size, wealth, and program configuration.

Table 1				
Superintendent Managerial Grid for the Average (2400 Student) District				
Task/Function	Level 1 Supervise	Level 2 Coordinate	Level 3 Co- Worker	Level 4 Do-It
<b>Managing Finances</b>				
Fiscal Planning			X	
Fiscal Management			X	
Budgeting/Forecasting/Demographics			X	
Accounting/Cash Management		X		
Purchasing/Contracts		X		
Inventory Management	X			
Materials Distribution	X			
Risk Management			X	
Salary/Wage Management			X	
Worker's Compensation			X	
<b>Facility Management</b>				
Replacement			X	
Maintenance		X		
Retrofit			X	
Technology		X		
Equipment		X		
<b>Personnel Management</b>				
Needs Assessment			X	
Recruitment			X	
Evaluation			X	
Induction			X	
Staff Development			X	
Record Keeping		X		
Payroll		X		
Fringe Benefits			X	
Safety/Environment		X		
Negotiations/Contract Management			X	
Grievance Management				X
<b>Student Personnel &amp; Special Services</b>				
Program Organization and Management			X	
Supervision of Services			X	
Personnel Management			X	
Assessment/Compliance				X
Adjudicate Problems		X		
Student Health				X
School Attorney		X		
<b>Support Services</b>				
Student Transportation		X		
Food Services		X		
Contracting			X	

The reader should not believe all superintendents of average sized districts (2,400 students) perform every managerial task as it is displayed in Table 1. Superintendents and their staffs differ in training, background, and inclination. Often they “rearrange” management tasks to fit local situations. The purpose of Table 1 is to illustrate the managerial role and work of the “average” American superintendent. Most management areas in Table 1 are found listed in Kowalski’s (1999) *The Superintendency*. Strangely this is the only “superintendent” text to do so since days of the “compendiums of best practice” prior to 1940 by the “founders” of educational administration such as Elwood Cubberly and Jesse Sears (Glass, 2004).

In developing a comparable table for large urban districts, nearly all of the X’s would be inserted into the Level 1 category as the superintendent would primarily be a supervisor of management performed by key senior managers and lower level designees. In a very small district, the majority of the X’s would be found in Level 4, meaning the superintendent performs nearly all the tasks. The point made is the variability between management roles of superintendents in districts of varying sizes.

#### A Superintendent Leadership Matrix

The role of the superintendent is certainly that of executive leader. In the role, there is both a managerial imperative and a leadership imperative. One cannot be separated from the other without removing expectation for effectiveness.

The inclusion of a leadership matrix in this paper, focused on management, is because each leadership task includes management planning and execution. Leaders are often said to be those who do the right things and managers are those who do things right. This paper’s point is that “right things” must be done “right”, thus a leadership matrix corresponding to the management matrix.

In Table 2, the superintendent in the 2,400 student district coordinates others, works with others, and does a great deal of “hands on” leadership. This means the superintendent motivates, works with, and supervises others in these important leadership activities.

Table 2				
Superintendent Leadership Matrix for Districts with 2400 Student Enrollment				
Task/Function	Level 1 Supervise	Level 2 Coordinate	Level 3 Co-Worker	Level 4 Do-It
<b>Instruction/Curriculum</b>				
Alignment			X	
Assessment/Testing			X	
Adoption			X	
In-service		X		
Accreditation		X		
Strategic Planning			X	
<b>Community Relations</b>				
Service Clubs				X
Board Relations				X
Citizen Complaints				X
Parent Organizations		X		
Governmental Agencies				X
Board Orientation/Training				X
Professional Groups				X
Level 1 – Supervise	The superintendent has little if any direct involvement.			
Level 2 – Coordinate	The superintendent has coordinator role and is directly involved.			
Level 3 – Co-Worker	The superintendent is actually performing some of the work.			
Level 4 – Do It	The superintendent performs the task.			

#### Instructional Leadership Also Requires Management

The list of superintendent activities in Table 2 requires both leadership and management actions. Each of the activities must have leadership and management support from the central administration to be effective at the building level. A good example is curriculum management responsibilities found in special education and Title I programs requiring day to day management action.

A serious miscalculation of school reformers has been that “schools” can be “fixed” at the neighborhood level. For schools to work at the neighborhood level, they must have the timely and appropriate support from their “corporate headquarters”– the central administration.

Special note should be taken of the superintendent role in community relations. In all district sizes they are the “front line” person working with community groups and responding to citizen concerns. Due to high public visibility, superintendents must put community relations at the forefront of agendas and schedules. This considerable part of the working day often makes completing other management tasks more difficult and creates job stress. The AASA Ten Year studies from 1910 through 2000 show the superintendency to be victim of ever increasing stress. In the 2000, AASA study superintendents indicate the job to be “very stressful” (Glass, 2003b).

#### Training Superintendents to Lead District Management

School districts with budgets of a million or a billion dollars require competent professional management and effective leadership. Currently, some management responsibility is performed by managers lacking background in professional education. However, in a majority of districts key management positions are occupied by former teachers and principals. It is likely few superintendents and assistant superintendents envisaged a career in upper level management when entering the teaching field (Glass, 1992).

Large private sector organizations with multimillion dollar budgets hire professional management at senior, middle, and lower levels. Managers in the private sector are typically trained prior to employment. In school districts, management personnel often receive basic management training after initial hiring. Private sector organizations far outspend school districts in providing professional development training for managers at all levels.

More than 70% of superintendents are former secondary school principals (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). This role usually affords a limited opportunity to participate in the development of district revenue plans, manage cash accounts, plan budgets, manage facilities, purchase materials, and supervise personnel management activities.

Middle school and elementary principals supervising fewer students, teachers, staff, and less complex programs typically have less opportunity to perform managerial functions similar to those in the central office.

In districts using forms of site based management, principals may be responsible for a myriad of (oftentimes inadequately supported) management functions separate from contact from “connecting” district central office management roles. Site based management models may even restrict principal knowledge of important central office management functions (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2000).

Principals in large districts may spend a whole career never developing more than a superficial knowledge of district financial and operation management. This is not likely to occur in small districts. In very small districts, principals are typically required to be lead managers for selected district-wide management functions.

Initial training for current superintendents to perform and supervise district level management activities ideally begins during the initial assistant principal level and continues to principal and central office experience. Most new superintendents today possess central office experience prior to the superintendency. There should be a seamless path of professional development in management training, abilities, and experiences. Today, educational administration training and preparation is conceptually disjointed between building and central office levels.

In the last decade, a majority of new superintendents have come from the ranks of central office administrators than in past decades (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000; Glass, 2002). This change in traditional career path offers opportunities for future superintendents to begin articulated training for district executive management while serving in both building and central office administrative roles.

#### Current Paths of Preparation

Along with current discrepancies in superintendent preparation, certification requirements vary from state to state. In the past certification requirements have “driven” content of superintendent preparation. Certification or licensing codes generally require university coursework and passing a written exam. In about 30 states, the certification or licensure code is closely or loosely based on 6 standards developed for a “generic” K-12 principal position (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996).

This application of generic “principal standards” may be due to the traditional structure of many university superintendent programs being extensions of principal preparation (Kowalski & Glass, 2000). Standards developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium and the National Policy Board for Education Administration. Standards documents essentially are guidelines pointing out “general” areas of concern to the profession.

Administrators typically “space” their university preparation program out over many years. A good example of “time” displacement is that an initial school law class taken in the principal preparation will be followed by an advanced class in the educational specialist or doctoral program. This is often not the case (Kowalski & Glass, 2000). This part-time effort toward administrator preparation results in a situation where the university programs are populated by part-time students in very drawn out part-time and poorly sequenced programs.

The national number of superintendents yearly “needing” new certificates is about 2,200, as the superintendent turnover rate has hovered around 14 % for several decades. Superintendent tenure currently is between 6 to 7 years (Glass, 2003b). Critics argue there are hundreds to thousands of “unused” superintendent certificates. This is true but superintendent applicant pools are more and more “local” each year.

Applicants apply frequently only for nearby positions. About 60 % of superintendents have a professionally employed “trailing spouse” (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

Most states grant superintendent certification in toto for districts of all sizes and types. Some states require superintendents participate minimally in “Administrator Academy” programs but for the most part “actual” superintendent preparation is through on the job training supplemented by university content laden coursework. Entry into the field is through self-selection from a career path beginning with classroom teaching (about 5 years). Superintendents from non-teaching backgrounds presently hold a very small number of superintendencies (Glass, 2002b).

#### Higher Education Preparation

Traditionally, superintendents have gained access to credentials and positions through attendance in university based (heavily management based) degree and credential programs. In past decades most states have required about 30 semester hours of coursework beyond the masters degree for a superintendent’s credential. In numerous educational administration programs this 30 to 36 semester hours culminates in an educational specialist’s degree. Or, it satisfies a significant portion of the coursework required for a doctoral degree.

University coursework, theoretically training superintendents to be “management experts” beyond the principal’s office, requires courses in school finance, personnel administration, school law, and very occasionally facility planning. In recent years many, if not most, educational administration programs have eliminated “management” types of courses in favor of policy and leadership since superintendents should be “leaders” not mere managers. The result has been the majority of “management” training has been through on the job experiences and spasmodic or periodic in-service training provided by districts or state agencies (many times by private vendors).

#### How Superintendents Might Be Trained for Management Roles

There are few if any supporters of current superintendent preparation programs. A reason being there are so few stand alone programs. Most preparation programs consolidate the superintendent credential into doctoral course program requirements. Strangely, to criticize superintendent credentialing is to criticize doctoral programs! This has created a situation where superintendent preparation has been “pushed” out of the way for academics.

This paper will not debate the appropriateness or inappropriateness of existing quasi-programs or the few stand-alone providing services to a small handful of aspiring superintendents. They serve a miniscule number of the year 2000 new superintendents (Glass, 2002). Superintendents themselves have over the years evaluated their preparation programs to be “good.” Interestingly, this positive evaluation is also held by “superintendent leaders” in the profession (Glass, 2002).

A key question is what agencies or institutions might best provide superintendent training to manage tax payer supported school districts. Historically, this has been largely the role of graduate programs in educational administration, housed in institutions of higher education. A modicum of pre and post employment training has been provided by professional associations, state agencies, and the occasional district. Perhaps the primary expectation held by the profession has been for higher education programs to provide important content knowledge. The skill training necessary for actual day to day work is left to chance or loosely organized.

Preparation program content for principals and superintendents has been and is still dominated by certification and licensing requirements. What is required for licensing and certification is what is taught. An example is that until the 1980’s most states required a school facility planning class. Today, only one or two states require the class and most educational administration programs no longer require or teach it. This is despite the need to replace aging infrastructure in a majority of the nation’s school districts.

One possible course of action to guarantee superintendent managerial expertise may be to restructure present certification requirements. Considering the critical nature of management, a separate or extended certification might be provided by a specialized university preparation track that is supplemented by direct state agency involvement. University programs should not continue to be isolated from local districts and the state agency in licensing superintendents.

This restructured certificate or license should be sized for large, medium, and small districts. It seems

incongruent to certify a superintendent-manager for responsibility to manage a budget ranging from one million to one billion dollars. Present superintendent certification assumes a superintendent is qualified for any size of district. This assumption may have been appropriate 50 years ago but not in today's complex world of public education.

#### Role of Professional Associations

In developing or creating a new or restructured certificate, states might choose to require superintendents to obtain professional recognition from a national or state professional association. A good example of a professional recognition program is one currently sponsored by the Association of School Business Officials. Applicants wishing to become recognized school business officials must meet criteria based on academic preparation, specialized training, experience, and recommendations from other practicing Registered School Business Officials. This program fills a void in school business officer state certification and university based preparation.

A possible model for superintendent executive management recognition is a coordinated consortium effort by universities, state agencies, and professional organizations. The university role would be to academically prepare applicants in appropriate content knowledge and essential skills enriched by field based experiences (practicum) aligned to course content/standards. The state agency's role would insure essential skills and knowledge were assessed and validated. The state agency might additionally assume responsibility to provide training in "essential" skills beyond university preparation requirement levels. The university and state, then together, could recommend candidates to professional associations for a "recognition" (or registration) assessment at the appropriate district size and budget level.

Portfolio review and interviews by professional organizations certainly seem to be logistically feasible. Each year about 2,200 new superintendents (about 50% new to the superintendency) actually are employed from pools averaging from 10 to 20 applicants (Glass, 2002). At the state level, the normal annual turnover of superintendents is about 20 %. National associations could organize and complete the recognition process working in conjunction with state affiliates.

The AASA currently provides numerous professional development opportunities for its membership. State affiliates often offer an even greater and broader number of opportunities. Although AASA might be thought to be the "lead" organization in preparing superintendents, other groups such as the principal associations provide professional development closely aligned with some aspects of the superintendency.

Numerous professional organizations serve superintendents and central office administrators; superintendents (AASA), personal directors (American Society for Public Administration [ASPA]), business managers (Association of School Business Officials [ASBO]), facility directors (Council of Educational Facility Planners International [CEFPI]), and curriculum directors (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD]) along with umbrella organizations such as the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), University Council on Educational Administration (UCEA), National Council of Professors of Educational Administration and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The American Association of Management (AAM) might also be considered an allied professional group. These organizations sponsor numerous training opportunities for members. Several have made recent efforts to become quasi-licensing organizations.

#### Recognition Levels

The vast range of district sizes, types, and budgets create a three tier "mastery" of professional superintendent management: (1) executive management, (2) registered management, and (3) qualified management. This scheme would accommodate district size differences as executive superintendent managers would likely be found in very large districts, registered managers in medium sized districts, and qualified managers in smaller districts.

A separate set of requirements need to be developed for each tier. An applicant should not necessarily be required to begin at the bottom tier. Many experienced central office administrators may be well prepared for the "executive management" tier without first going through the "registered" and "qualified" tiers.

A reasonable question evolving from this scheme is whether principals and central office administrators might be discouraged from seeking the superintendency because of raised levels for preparation, assessment, licensing, and professional recognition. A recent study found there to be no lack of qualified applicants for

superintendents (Glass & Bjork, 2003).

Superintendent applicants with demonstrated and “recognized” management expertise in all likelihood would be more desirable (and qualified) candidates for vacant superintendent positions. Professional recognition by universities, states, and professional organizations would accentuate the importance of competent district management. Many boards now seem to “assume” that every state licensed superintendent is a competent manager of district fiscal, human, and physical resources. Considering the haphazard manner of current preparation and licensing, this simply is not true in a high percentage of cases. Superintendent research shows management expertise is and has been, over the years, the prime hiring criteria used by boards (Glass, Bjork & Brunner, 2000).

#### The Role of Standard and Performance Indicators

Many essential skills and knowledge bases are currently being offered by higher education programs as required by state sponsored programs and standards based licensing requirements. Specific management skills areas such as cash accounting, auditing, and financial investing are often provided by private sector groups.

Current National Policy Board and Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards are vague and insufficient to serve as an accurate means to identify and verify quality district superintendent management. In fact, the ISLLC “performance indicators” do not even mention essential areas of district management! And, they do not differentiate between district sizes, budgets, types, and programs (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). The performance indicators, while mostly appropriate, are merely outline “statements” of required training and performance.

The AASA superintendent standards are sufficiently credible (validated) to serve as an appropriate initial launch point for establishing a “management curriculum” for the superintendency (Hoyle, 1993). A credible training program should be based on both validated standards and indicators. This joint undertaking between higher education preparation programs, state agencies, and professional associations to develop a “validated” training program could prove to district improvement.

The depth of a “management” curriculum is precise and detailed. An example would be that superintendents must be able to insure the state accounting manual provisions are being adhered to in a proper manner. Few superintendents have taken undergraduate courses in accounting and fewer have had a general introduction to accounting in their education administration preparation program. These state accounting manuals are typically hundreds of pages of complex information and detailed forms. This information is currently only provided occasionally by state agencies and professional associations and rarely provided by higher education classes. Most often this information is acquired (sometimes well and sometimes not so well) via on the job training. Many citizens might be quite upset to learn their superintendent (“chief executive officer”) managing a 50 million dollar budget has little if any understanding of basic accounting (or bookkeeping) functions. The same can be said of many other important (and expensive) areas of district operations such as fringe benefits, workers compensation, and investments.

#### A Compendium of “Best Practices”

The complexity of district management requires a substantial compendium of “best practices” to insure efficient and effective management. This compendium, built on a verified knowledge and a validated standards base, should be a joint work of university, state agency, and professional associations. This district management “bible” might merge university textbooks, state manuals, and professional association publications into a usable “best practices” text. The curriculum needs to be built on research, not anecdotal accounts or conventional wisdom based on flawed professional practice.

Again, an extensive validation process is needed to insure “best practices” in the compendium are realistic, appropriate and inclusive for the various sizes and types of districts. The compendium topics might influence the curriculum of higher education courses, topics of state agency training, and evaluation standards for professional recognition. It should insure alignment between the university programs, state agency, and professional associations concerns. These compendia of best practices would serve as the base documents for the three tier recognition assessment.

#### Five Domains of Superintendent Executive Management

There are five domains of management preparation for superintendents (1) fiscal, (2), personnel, (3)

support services (4) facilities, and (5) student services. Each domain can be developed into an instructional and performance module.

<b>Module 1 – Fiscal</b>		
<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Verification</b>
University Program	Content knowledge about finance systems, accounting, auditing, salary management, budget systems	Written documents, successful practicum's, portfolios, interviews
State Agency	Topical training in state fund accounting, reimbursement documents, compliance documents, purchasing, inventory	Successful participation in topical training, state monitored internship or apprenticeship, portfolio
Professional Associations	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio review, state and higher education recommendations, regional interviews.

#### Module 1 – Fiscal

This critical module is focused on planning and managing the finances of school districts. The role of the university based program should be to disseminate content knowledge about state financing, taxing systems, budgeting systems, basic contract law, risk management programs, and structures of salary/wage management. This probably should be a 9 or 12 semester hour course sequence in finance, budget, and operations management. Practicum and field experience hours need to be required for students to experience first hand fiscal, budget, and operations systems at work in “model” school districts. Importantly, the course content (if possible) would extend previous learning at the master’s (principal licensing) level. An example is “budgeting at the building level,” a common content area in many master’s programs in educational administration.

The state role should be to provide specialized training (example being state accounting manual procedures) introduced in the university fiscal sequence augmented by practicum and field experience contacts. Other examples would be requiring students to attend state agency sponsored workshops and training sessions focused on implementing and managing district management programs in inventory, material distribution, fund accounting, auditing, and purchasing. The participation might be kept in “professional portfolios” containing specifics of the training (objectives, hours, content etc.) and of course the performance level of the participant.

Every state has very specific requirements on how these management functions are to be performed and accounted for by local districts. Most states have already learned the best way to achieve management uniformity is through agency sponsored workshop and training sessions. Hopefully, state agencies feel participants in these state sponsored training sessions perform better if they already have received baseline content knowledge in prior higher education coursework.

An excellent example is the state of Washington’s practice where the state auditor general directly audits the finances of school districts. Districts reimburse the auditor general’s office for these costs and in return

receive excellent staff training in how the state desires districts to maintain fiscal records, control budget processes, and insure proper accounting practices. Superintendents many times receive the same training from the auditors as the district bookkeepers and clerks.

Internships and Apprenticeships.

Once a student has completed a 9 or 12 semester hour sequence and met state requirements in specialized management curricula, a 2 year internship or 1 year “apprenticeship” in a district central office should be required for licensing and nomination for professional recognition. A comprehensive internship would be planned and sequenced “on the job training” woven into the student-administrators “normal” working day as principal or central office administrator. This on the job internship would be supervised by the district superintendent and a university faculty member.

A 1 year apprenticeship in executive management would involve at least 25% to 50% time release. Internships would qualify applicants for initial recognition subject to further training. A completed apprenticeship would qualify applicants for “full” recognition. The most intense part of the internship and apprenticeship would be in the area of fiscal, budget, and operations management.

<b>Module 2 - Personnel Management</b>		
<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Verification</b>
University Program	Content knowledge about personnel planning, evaluation, recruiting, interviewing, induction, payroll management, and staff development	Written documents, successful practicum, portfolios, interviews, and journals.
State Agency	Topical training in state evaluation systems, personnel reporting systems, state laws and regulations	Successful participation in topical training subjects, state monitored internship or apprenticeship, portfolio.
Professional Associations	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio review, state and higher education recommendations, regional interviews.

### Module 2 Personnel Management

In this module, 9 semester hours of university course content would be required to provide essential knowledge of personnel practices such as managing recruitment, evaluation, induction, and staff development programs. Three semester hours need to be required in personnel operation management areas such as fringe benefits, safety, and collective bargaining contract management. The last 3 semester hours need to be an advanced school law class focusing on legal issues particularly related to various types of contracts affecting staff and students.

As in Module 1, students need to be constantly required in practicum hours to observe and participate in district based personnel programs. Again, much of the content in this module is related to some content at the master’s level. Again, attention should be paid to sequencing master’s degree (principal licensing) and superintendent preparation.

The state role in this module might be the same as in Module 1. Similar to Module 1, internship or

apprentice hours need to be spent in the personnel office or division of a school district. In the private sector and in schools of business, the training of personnel managers is a graduate degree enterprise. Again, an internship needs to require release time. The state, as in Module 1, might develop a battery of “check” tests for students to pass in each of the personnel management specialties before being eligible for review by a professional “personnel” association.

<b>Module 3 - Facilities</b>		
<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Verification</b>
<b>University Program</b>	Content knowledge in facility planning process, assessment, financing, construction, retrofit, and remodeling	Written documents, successful practicum, project review.
<b>State Agency</b>	Topical training in state requirements for facility reports, construction, safety inspection.	Successful completion of topical training, internship and apprenticeship.
<b>Professional Associations</b>	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio and project review, state and higher education recommendations, regional interviews.

### Module 3 Facility Management

The essential content of this module might be taught in a 3 semester hour course supplemented by practicum hours working in a local district on a school facility planning project. This would include facility assessment, educational specifications, bonding issues, bond campaigns, and management of existing facilities.

The state role in Module 3 might be specialized training in state sponsored facility construction programs, rules and regulations applying to facilities, and required safety programs. Again, the state might develop a series of check tests to insure mastery of content in these areas prior to recommending to a professional group for recognition.

Creating a training module in facility maintenance could easily be coordinated as most superintendent trainees are either practicing principals or in central office roles.

<b>Module 4 - Student Personnel</b>		
<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Verification</b>
<b>University Program</b>	Content knowledge in special education management, student records, NCLB management, health, juvenile services, attorney services.	Written documents, successful practicum, project review, portfolios.
<b>State Agency</b>	Topical training in state regulations in special education, student records, student assessment, compliance, safety, and health issues.	Successful completion of topical training, internship and apprenticeship.
<b>Professional Associations</b>	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio review, state and higher education recommendations.

#### Module 4 Student Personnel

The content for this module might be contained a 3 semester course in the university program reinforced by practicum experiences in school districts. Experienced principals and central office administrators often receive training at the master's level or via on the job training in some this area. In this module special attention must be paid to the superintendent's role in managing district special education programs.

The state role is again to provide needed specialized topical training and develop a series of check tests for students prior to being forwarded to the professional association for recognition.

<b>Module 5 - Support Services</b>		
<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Verification</b>
<b>University Program</b>	Content knowledge about transportation, food services, outsource contracts, service contracts, legal, health, accounting, maintenance.	Written documents, successful practicum, project reviews.
<b>State Agency</b>	Topical training in state contracting and food service.	Successful completion of topical training, internship and apprenticeship.
<b>Professional Associations</b>	Recognition at appropriate level	Portfolio review, state and higher education recommendations, regional interviews..

**Module 5 Support Services**

University based course hour requirements may not be required, but extensive topical training sessions should be conducted by the state agency to insure prospective superintendents possess sufficient knowledge in state regulations about busing, transportation, and out sourcing services. The agency training should be supplemented by “practicum” hours in a local district with hands on experience in bus scheduling, completing reimbursement forms, food inventories, safety, and other relevant experiences. State agency developed check tests again would be administered to students.

Table 3 provides a tentative outline of a superintendent management training structure. The scope of the training involves many more classroom hours and in field placements. The result will be more costs to students, districts, and states. However, the payoff would be in higher levels of superintendent job performance and in the long run, provide a better school system.

**Conclusion**

**Superintendent Management Program and Profile**

At the conclusion of the university based courses and training provided by the state agency, each student could present a composite profile illustrating content learning, experiences, and demonstrated competencies attested to by state agency tests, university based tests and assessment and feedback from district superintendents. This broad based assessment should be sufficient to convince school boards and communities that a superintendent is competent to manage district fiscal and physical resources.

Fortunately, most of the management training needed by superintendents is assessable, as there is a right way and a wrong way to perform a task. In brief, it is a measurable type of training at the pre-service and in-service level.

The principal challenge for a state to develop and implement a superintendent management training program will be to:

1. Align efforts between higher education programs, professional associations, and the state agency.
2. Require districts to provide release time for training, internships, and apprenticeships.

3. Provide incentives for principals and central office administrators to enter a superintendent training program.
1. Establish a program to continually update and monitor the skills of central office administrators already recognized.

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