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## Non Traditional Superintendent: A Case Study of the Transition from Military to Public School Superintendent

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NON TRADITIONAL SUPERINTENDENT:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE TRANSITION FROM  
MILITARY TO PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

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A Dissertation

Presented to

the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Luiza Miera Hernandez

August 2010

Advisor: Kent Seidel, Ph.D.

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Title: NON TRADITIONAL SUPERINTENDENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

Advisor: Kent Seidel, Ph.D.

Degree Date: August 2010

### **Abstract**

In June of 2006, Urban School District appointed the individual who is the focus of this study, a retired Air Force Two Star Major General, as its new superintendent.

Although the appointment represents the first nontraditional superintendent to lead Urban School District, it was one of several such appointments to large, urban school districts throughout the nation. This study investigates his transition from military leader to urban school superintendent, using a case study approach.

The study presents findings in response to the research question: How did the Participant transition from military leadership to urban school superintendent? The findings of the research indicate the Participant transitioned from retired military to public school superintendent by way of the extensive leadership training detailed by Benton (2005) in the United States Air Force Officer's Guide regarding the personal character of military officers. The personal character traits include flexibility, humility, and empathy. The development of the Participant's personal character was exemplified by a successful experience as a career officer in the Air Force. The Participant was able to transition from military to public school superintendent through personal integrity, flexibility and other character traits supported by leadership skills applicable in any organization. The study also proposes consideration of a 21<sup>st</sup> century education model of leadership as defined by the military model of leadership. Education leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century would be defined by the mission to educate children and would demonstrate the

emotional intelligence enabling them to manage systems and lead people to successfully accomplish the mission. A further adaptation of the military model of leadership to consider would be a biannual rotation of principal interns or principals to various education settings so as to develop and strengthen leadership characteristics such as political awareness and flexibility.

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- Dr. Kent Seidel, Advisor

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## **Chapter One—Overview of The Study**

### **Introduction and Recent Historical Background**

Since the 1830's, a white male has historically held the position of leader of an American public school district. He is about 40 years of age, with children (Hayes, 2001). This gentleman, generally speaking, has pursued a series of career steps that included teaching at a high school, most often as a PE or Math teacher. With about five years experience as a classroom teacher, he would have then advanced to a vice principal or athletic director position. After about two years, he would have taken a position as a high school principal. The final step in advancing to the position of superintendent was to assume a position in the central administration office. This has been the traditional path to school leadership.

The passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation in 2001, however, has brought academic accountability to the forefront of public education. As a result, the role and expectations of public school leaders has taken a more serious turn. This is especially true for superintendents of large urban school districts. Poverty, class and language diversity, high mobility rates, and low graduation rates among inner city students have become challenges difficult to overcome for even the most seasoned educational leader. School districts have begun to recruit leaders from outside the circles of education from which traditional superintendents have

been hired in an effort to improve student achievement. School boards are more open to looking for solutions from leaders in the business sector, the political arena, and from the military.

### **The Case**

Many urban school districts are turning to nontraditional superintendents to lead them through transformational reform. Although the jury is still out, the fact of a nontraditional superintendent leading a public school system has drawn much attention in the world of education. The focus of this case study is the transition of one such nontraditional superintendent from military to urban school superintendent. The Participant, a retired Air Force Two Star Major General, was hired to lead Urban School District. This case study will examine the transition of a nontraditional superintendent from military to public school superintendent.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001 brought to the forefront a new age of accountability in American public education. The leadership of American public school districts began to shift from the traditional superintendent to that of nontraditional school district leaders. If traditional superintendents, that is, school leaders who began their career as classroom teachers and continued a path within public education, were unable to successfully lead academic achievement in a school system of all children, where would effective leaders be found?

Attempts to answer this question has brought a growing trend in American public school leadership. The hiring of nontraditional superintendents is no longer an isolated incident. The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed account of the transition of a

retired major general to the position of public school superintendent. Military systems are, by nature of their function, structured with clearly defined expectations and outcomes for those in its service. Military organizations also require strict adherence to policy and regulations. Enlisted members follow the orders of superiors. Insubordination is not tolerated. Simply stated, the military is a top-down system in which the rights of its members are surrendered to superior officers at the time of enlistment.

In educational systems, however, educators are expected to be collaborative, to encourage and foster a climate in which all stakeholders have a voice in decision making processes. Teachers have rights articulated by a negotiated agreement and which are protected by a powerful union. This study will examine the experience of the transition of an Air Force Two Star Major General, henceforth referred to as the Participant, to public school superintendent, beginning August 2009 and continuing through June, 2010. The case will examine the Participant's transition from military to urban school superintendent and research the following questions:

1. How did the Participant, a retired Two Star Major General, transition from military to public school superintendent?
2. How did the Participant, a retired Two Star Major General, prepare for the role of public school superintendent?
3. How does retired Two Star Major General's experience as a military leader support the transition to public school leadership?

A case study methodology provides the framework for investigating and responding to the research questions. The principal sources of data collection, consistent with case study research, include observation of the Participant, field notes, personal

interviews, and public document review. Triangulation is employed in order to insure the credibility and validity of the results. Cohen and Manion (1986) define triangulation as an attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint. Triangulation also gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the case, a characteristic of qualitative research and an element necessary to this study (Stake, 1995).

### **Significance of the Study**

Because this is an emerging occurrence in American public education, the research on nontraditional superintendents is still in its infancy. This study contributes to the body of research by providing a detailed account of the phase of life during which the Participant transitioned to the role of nontraditional superintendent of a large, urban public school system. The study reviews a body of current research on the traditional superintendent in contrast to the nontraditional superintendent thereby providing a more clear representation of the nontraditional superintendent. The study also presents information valuable to the field of education leadership, the preparation of new superintendents, and to urban school district reform.

### **Research Questions**

The Participant, a retired Air Force Two Star Major General, was hired by the board of education of a diverse urban school district for the position of Superintendent. The Participant assumed the position on Monday, July 17, 2006. Although the literature on nontraditional superintendents presents myriad issues, such as the effect of a nontraditional superintendent on student achievement and the effect of a nontraditional superintendent on the culture of a school district, each a study in its own right, these

issues are not the focus of this study. The researcher chose one case in order to focus on the principal questions of this study. Further, the Participant is a complex being and as such, must be presented in this case study by the researcher assuming the role of “teacher,” learning from the case and then sharing findings with the reader (Stake, 1995). The teacher researcher will explore only one phase of the complex life experience of the Participant, that of the transition from military to urban school superintendent, in order to explain and inform the reader of the issues presented by the case. The researcher will follow the process taken by the Participant, Two Star Major General, from recruitment by the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents, which includes the role of military leadership as an officer in the Air Force, the preparation for the position of superintendent, and the selection and transition to the position of superintendent of an urban school district. nontraditional

### **Overview of Design and Methods**

Qualitative case study is highly personal research. In case study research, the researcher is encouraged to interject personal perspectives in the interpretation, resulting in very personal work (Stake, 1995). This is a unique case, an opportunity for study that could not be ignored, and using case study design offered a highly personal form of research perfectly suited to both the case and to the researcher. Observations of the researcher throughout the work will personalize the study, making the interpretation of the data unique to the researcher’s perspective.

The interview sessions included two sets of ten questions, (see Appendix A) and were conducted with the Participant in the administrative office. The observations took place during one day spent with the Participant as the Participant conducted regular

duties. School site visits, an interview session with the local media, and interactions with the administrative secretary and leadership team, were observed. The researcher also observed a school board session attended by teachers, parents, local media and television crews, and the president and vice president of the teacher bargaining union. Other sources of data include information regarding the Eli Broad Academy for Urban School Superintendents, the leadership expectations set forth by Benton's (2005) United States Air Force Officer's Guide, and a review of the John Kotter (1996) steps for successful organizational transformation used by Participant in the transition from military to urban school superintendent.

### **Organization of the Study**

The reader is introduced to the research in Chapter One with the introduction and synopsis of the case. In order to facilitate a thorough understanding, a section entitled "Definition of Terms," and the "Historical Background of the Traditional Superintendency" is included in Chapter One. This section is necessary to the understanding of the emergence of the nontraditional superintendent in American public schools. The purpose of the study and the research questions form the foundation of this work. Chapter Two presents a review of the current literature on the general topic of the traditional superintendent. The history of the public school superintendent and the traditional steps taken in preparation for this position are examined. Further, a general overview of the literature regarding the Eli Broad Academy for Urban School Superintendents, an organization dedicated to preparing nontraditional candidates for the role of public school superintendent, is presented. Also included as germane to this study is a review of the Air Force Officer's Guide, the official military text dedicated to

leadership protocol for all officers of the United States Air Force (Benton, 2005). The importance of the Officer's Guide cannot be understated, as it is the foundation of the Participant's military leadership.

Chapter Three discusses the procedures, participants and methods of data collection and analysis Chapter Three also presents a synopsis of ethical issues and limitations of the study. Chapter Four presents the compilation and analysis of data collected from open-ended interviews, observations, and public information documents. A summary of the research is provided in Chapter Five. The contributions of this study to policy and practice are also discussed, as are recommendations for further study.

### **Definition of Terms**

Air Force Two Star Major General:

Major Generals rank below lieutenant generals and above brigadier generals in the U.S. Air Force. Third from the top, they wear an insignia on their shoulder bearing two stars and are sometimes referred to as two-star generals. Major Generals are classified as O-8 on the military pay scale, which means a salary ranging from 8,270 to 11, 349 per month, depending on years of service. Major Generals serve as vice commanders of numbered air forces consisting of several wings. Wings are the basic organizational unit of the U.S. Air Force. Four or more squadrons make up a wing of 1,000 to 5,000 people in a single type of aircraft. There are currently 16 numbered air forces. Two star Generals also serve as high-level staff officers at major commands and at the Pentagon. The national commander of the Civil Air Patrol, an organization of about 60,000, also known as the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary, is a Major General.

Promotions occur as vacancies open within the ranks of commissioned officers. Boards composed of senior officers determine which candidates are promoted based on their service records. The Secretary of Defense convenes the selection boards every year to make decisions for ranks higher than 0-2 (first lieutenant). Most senior officer promotions also require confirmation by the U.S. Senate. In addition to achievement, promotions are dictated by number of years in service and how many positions are open in each pay grade. There were 86 active-duty Major Generals in the U.S. Air Force, including five women, in September 2005. Fewer than 0.5 percent of commissioned officers make it to the top three ranks. The President nominates officers for the rank of Lieutenant General, and the U.S. Senate must confirm the appointment. When a Lieutenant General retires or loses their rank for some other reason, the President suggests a replacement to be promoted from the list of nominees. Retrieved from <http://usmilitary.about.com/od/airforce/a/afmajgen.htm>, June 10, 2009).

#### Retired Officer Status:

An Air Force officer placed on the retired list is still considered to be an officer of the United States Air Force (Benton, 2005, p. 265).

#### Board of Education:

A body of elected representatives forms the community that provides direction for district educational programs and assures that the school system is efficiently and effectively operating. The school board concerns



itself primarily with establishing policy, planning school services and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of services provided by the district (School Board Member Handbook of Leadership Essentials, 2007).

**Public School Superintendent:**

Serves as principal advisor to school board on all matters having to do with district and education in general, and to serve as the executive administrator of the district, charged with the responsibility of ensuring the policies and directives of the school board are implemented.

(Colorado State Department of Education

<https://cdeapps.cde.state.co.us/jobdefs.htm>)

**Nontraditional Superintendent:**

Leader of a school district who has secured the position without having first served as a classroom teacher and/or school based administrator.

## **Chapter Two—Review of the Literature**

In order to understand the nontraditional superintendent, one must first understand the historical role of the traditional public school superintendent. The review of the literature begins with the historical background of a traditional superintendent and presents an overview of the origin of the superintendency and its evolution as a contrast to that of the nontraditional superintendent. In addition, an overview of the Eli Broad Academy for Urban School Superintendents is presented as a source of preparation for superintendent candidates from both educational and non-educational backgrounds, specifically that of the Participant.

Since one cannot study the transition of a retired military leader to school leader without an examination of military protocol, a review of the military reference, the Air Force Officer's Guide is included (Benton, 2005). This guide has been the primary source of military leadership protocol since 1948 and is indispensable to the development and success of all U.S. military officers.

### **Historical Overview**

Public education belongs to the people. Because a fundamental right for a public education is not addressed in the Constitution, the individual states have been given the responsibility for the educating America's greatest national treasure, the children. In today's society, the traditional system of public school governance is consistent throughout the United States. A local school board governs individual school districts

within each state. The school board then hires the superintendent to direct the affairs of the schools within its boundaries.

The history and evolution of the American public school superintendent had its beginnings with the creation of the common school movement of the 1800's (Bjork, Kowalski, 2005). It was soon after the creation of formal institutions of public education, that the office of the school superintendent was created. According to Paul Houston (2001), the creation of the first board of education has been attributed to Thomas Jefferson. His proposal for a governing board resulted in the election of three aldermen who would have oversight of the schools. The aldermen would in turn, appoint an overseer who would then appoint and supervise teachers. Prior to 1850, the role of the superintendent was merely one of 'administrative assistant' to the school boards. Superintendents performed clerical and administrative tasks at the behest of the board (Kowalski & Glass, 2002).

The superintendent's role was later expanded to include not only the supervision of teachers, but also the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of a state curriculum (Kowalski, 2002). The purpose of the public school initially was to gather immigrant children and "Americanize" them, to ensure that all children learned to speak English and to embrace the American way of life, thereby becoming contributing members of the American society (Bjork, Kowalski, 2005). The role of the superintendent was then simply to monitor teachers and school curriculum.

The common school then implemented a formal standardized curriculum (Kowalski, 2005). As the common school movement became more complex, the role of

the superintendent necessarily began to evolve. Initially, school boards governed the public school system. At this point in time, the board was giving to district superintendents its responsibility for oversight (Kowalski, 2005). As noted by Houston (2001), Buffalo, New York, and Louisville, Kentucky, are credited with establishing in 1837 the official position of superintendent and, until the 1870's, local boards hired superintendents.

It was after the American Civil War that rapidly developing urban school systems established standards for public elementary and secondary education (Houston 2001). By this time, the role of the superintendent had evolved from that of administrative assistant to the school board to that of instructional leader. Superintendents were now viewed as master teachers (Kowalski, 2005). Cuban describes the responsibility of the superintendent, in addition to training and inspiring teachers to high ideals, as to revise the course of study when improvement is possible. The superintendent was also to see that pupils and teachers would be supplied with needed "appliances" for the best possible work and to create rational methods of promoting pupils to higher levels of learning (Cuban, 1976, p. 16).

Bjork and Kowalski (2005) have described the traditional superintendent of the twenty first century as a manager, an instructional leader, a democratic leader, an applied social scientist, and a communicator. The definition of the superintendent, they argue, must also include mention of transformational leader.

While the role of the superintendent has certainly evolved, the fact is that the description of today's superintendent remains to a large extent the same as that of the

early American public school leader. In 1950, the stereotypical superintendent of schools would be a White male who dressed in a dark suit with a conservative tie, who might look like a United States senator (Hayes, 2000).

### **Traditional Superintendent Preparation**

The 1998 article from American Association of School Administrator, *Skills for Successful 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Leaders: Standards for Peak Performers* by Hoyle, English, and Steffy, offers the following summary of skills a superintendent must have in order to be a successful leader:

- Visionary leadership – skills and disposition to lead others to peak performance
- Political skills needed for governance in a democracy
- Proficiency in communication and community relations, required for articulating a vision
- Skills in organizational management
- Insights on developing a curricular design and delivery system for diverse school communities
- Expertise in instructional management and the development of data-based student achievement systems
- The related need to focus on staff evaluation and staff development
- Knowledge that school leaders need to make the most of educational research, evaluation and planning
- Importance of understanding and modeling appropriate value systems, ethics, and moral leadership

(Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998, pp. III-V)

In contrast, the Colorado superintendent's office of public instruction in 1870, included a salary of \$1,000 per year with the following duties:

- Recommend uniform series of textbooks
- File & make available all county superintendent report
- Prepare in print forms of records
- Report regularly to the legislation the condition of schools
- Prepare & distribute a course of study

([www.cde.state.co.us/](http://www.cde.state.co.us/), retrieved July 26, 2010).

While the role of the early superintendent in Colorado was that of business manager and supervisor, the role of the twenty first century school leader has become one of the most important and also one of the most complex roles in our nation. The state of Colorado current recommendations for the position of Superintendent of Schools includes the completion of a sequence of study at an accredited institution of higher education. Although prior experience as an educator is not required, according to the Colorado Department of Education, the state of Colorado requires candidates to pass a state assessment for superintendents. Ironically, the 2007 School Board Member Handbook of Leadership Essentials gives authority to the school board to waive any and all requirements and hire at will the candidate for superintendent they feel will best meet the needs of the school district.

### **Nontraditional Superintendents**

Do you want a Taco Bell superintendent or somebody who has actually run a school? Do you want chalupas with those test scores? If the business of education is teaching and learning, shouldn't the head have some background in teaching and learning? Without institutional knowledge, nontraditional candidates are at

greater risk of failing. That's one reason the American Association of School Administrators took a position against alternative superintendents last year. (Houston, 2006, p. 8).

Although the research is limited, the current body of literature proposes a mixed review as to the acceptance and success of the nontraditional superintendent as education leader of a public school district.

What... makes a good superintendent of schools? Someone who's been a principal, or school administrator, or a teacher? What about a minister? Or an investment banker? Or a marine? Some of the biggest urban school districts around the country are hiring outsiders to be superintendents of schools. Does that make sense? What do these people know about education? (Morrow, 1999, p. 5-6)

These are valid questions. The rise in the number of nontraditional superintendents in public urban school systems can be tied in part to the increase in accountability regarding student achievement, according to Jay Matthews, Association of School Administrators (1999). However, Tim Quinn (2007), Director for the Broad Academy, explains that struggling districts are more likely to hire nontraditional superintendents who bring a fresh perspective to persistent problems traditional education leaders have been unable to solve. Quinn argues that traditional and nontraditional superintendents share at least one characteristic: they both know how to lead. He also notes that since nontraditional superintendents don't have a history in education, they nontraditional don't accept traditional views of what can't be done. He explains that nontraditional superintendents come from worlds where things do get done, where excuses are not accepted (Quinn, 2007).

Others argue that business methods and a free-market approach applied to schools, such as a focus on management, would benefit American's school system

(Howard, Preisman, 2007). The argument is that if schools were run using business management principles, students would learn more, parents would be happier, and society would profit. John Stanford, author of *Victory in our Schools* states, “We can achieve the victory when we run our schools like businesses” (Stanford, 1999, p.11). To some this declaration evokes alarm. A recent move to end administrator certification in the state of Michigan prompted a strong reaction from B. Smith in the *Deregulation and the New Leader Agenda: Outcomes and Lessons from Michigan*. Smith (2008) argues that the position sets aside the idea of schools as communities of practice to emphasize instead the idea of schools as rational systems in which what leaders do determines whether or not schools reach goals and perform. The most recognized expression of this perspective, according to Smith, is the wave of corporate executives and military leaders hired over the past decade to lead many of the nation’s largest and most troubled urban districts.

While many agree that leadership at the national level is where the transformation of the public education will most likely begin, it is leadership of the district that will bring results for students. At a time when our nation’s education system is challenged by high dropout rates and low academic performance, leadership is critical to the success of our underperforming school districts. This is especially true in large, urban school districts where system wide transformation may be necessary. In an attempt to implement school reform, some urban cities have introduced reform by centralizing public school authority with the city, with a nontraditional leader at the helm.

However, not all see the nontraditional superintendent as a positive addition to an urban school district. The nontraditional superintendent is also perceived as coming to his



or her new role often unable to distinguish between a “Carnegie unit and a cantaloupe” (Matthews, 1999, para. 3). Nonetheless, such leaders are being considered and hired because of their management expertise and decision-making abilities rather than their professional training and experience in public education. The assumption hiring boards are making is that effective leadership skills in one organization can be applied to another.

For example, the current Washington DC mayor has eliminated the local school board and hired a nontraditional leader to reform the district. The mandate given to the new leader is to increase student achievement, increase the graduation rate, and to decrease truancy and dropout rate. Teachers and principals have been fired and many other dramatic changes have taken place as reform efforts in the district continue. “We liken these education outsiders, these nontraditional school system leaders to the ‘gunslinger’ of American frontier mythology, the stranger, like Shane, who rides into town and solves a menacing problem that the townsfolk cannot manage themselves” (Eisenger, Hula, 2004, p. 623).

Why are nontraditional superintendents attractive candidates to some districts? Tim Quinn (2004), Director of the Broad Foundation Academy for Urban Superintendents, explains that the nontraditional superintendents are simply unaware of the complexity of the education profession and the organized school labor unit. The nontraditional superintendents also tend to enter the positions with a results orientation, a perspective not always held by traditional superintendents.

In Matthews' (2001) view, the nontraditional superintendent is thought to be more comfortable with achievement measures and accountability. In the corporate and military worlds from which they are often drawn, success is continually assessed by the use of quantifiable indicators. In other words, Matthews (2001) argues that nontraditional superintendents are more comfortable with the pressures of accountability than are traditional superintendents.

Many new nontraditional superintendents tend to focus on management reforms rather than student achievement. Systemic reform is a manageable challenge in a way that boosting students achievement among grade-school children from impoverished families is not (Eisinger, Hula, 2004). This focus on systemic reform allows time for the nontraditional superintendent to become familiar with the education environment. Nontraditional leaders are less equipped to understand teaching or learning and are more qualified to impose order on a disorderly system, that is, a focus on management rather than on education. They are not, say Eisinger and Hula (2004), educational innovators. A single mission characterizes nontraditional superintendents. They bring order by streamlining, consolidating, and rationalizing thereby reducing inefficiencies and increasing accountability in a school system.

Further, the nontraditional superintendent is more likely to be found in larger districts such as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, where reform is needed in order to address issues such as academic performance (Eisinger and Hula, 2004). The average size of an urban school district led by traditional superintendents is about 83,000 students. However, Eisinger and Hula note that most school districts run by

nontraditional superintendents tend to be closer to 185,000. Interestingly, they report nontraditional leadership to most likely be associated with student populations that have higher percentages of free and reduced lunch qualified and African-American students. They describe non-traditional superintendents leading school districts where, on average, at least one half of students are from low socio-economic conditions, whereas traditional superintendents tend to lead districts with an average of 37% low income students (Eisinger & Hula, 2004). School districts with high numbers of students of color and in poverty are also most likely to be in need of reform.

Retired Army Major General John Stanford, Seattle Public Schools

Superintendent, is considered to be the first nontraditional superintendent of a large urban school district. In his book *Victory in Our Schools* (1999), one of the most important accounts of nontraditional leadership, he credits his experience as a military leader as the source of his success. His military training trained him to differentiate between “commanding” and “leading.” Stanford declares in his book, “Thirty years of leading in the military had taught me that leading means inspiring not commanding. Leading means loving the people you lead so they will give you their hearts as well as their minds” (Stanford, 1999, p. xi). He admitted his ignorance of Bloom’s Taxonomy and Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, arguing that to be a successful superintendent, he didn’t need to know all those details; he had in his district 5,000 experts who did. He explained his appointment to the position of superintendent by stating his position.

I’m not an educator. I am a leader of educators. That is the reason I was hired. People wondered how someone with no background in education could possibly fix the schools. But Seattle didn’t need an educator—Seattle needed a professional manager...what it lacked was a leader who could focus the organization on its

goals, unleash its potential, get the obstacles out of the way, and empower the educators to do their jobs. (Stanford, 1999, pp. xv-xvi)

In an interview on *The Merrow Report* (1999), Paul Houston, Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators and former traditional superintendent of schools, argued that Stanford's success was due to the fact that he had the human and leadership qualities that it takes to run a good school district, and those did not necessarily come with his Army officer's training, but because of who he was as a person. During the interview, Houston also acknowledged that although his organization recognizes the national superintendent of the year, the award has never been given to a nontraditional superintendent nor has there been a nontraditional finalist for the award.

Eisinger and Hula (2004) argue that school systems run by nontraditional superintendents are not any more troubled nor do they report lower student performance on standardized tests than districts lead by traditional superintendents. In addition, they propose that seeking out the leadership of a "gunslinger" is a reactive response to low educational outcomes, common to most large urban school districts and less common in middle-class districts. Also, school boards hire a nontraditional leader with hopes that a dramatic change of leadership will create the conditions that presently are lacking for learning in the classroom (Eisinger & Hula, 2004).

According to Matthews (1999), however, traditional educators are less comfortable with high stakes accountability and recognize that tests and assessments alone do not measure student learning. In contrast, military and business executives understand the concept of accountability because risking failure and recovering from failure is innate to the corporate world, a part of their world view. They

argue that hiring nontraditional leadership represents a decision to break from the traditional thinking and introduce new, fresh ideas and solutions to existing challenges. Finally, because most non-educator superintendents are retired and have a secondary source of income, they have little to lose in assuming the leadership of a troubled school district.

Are other skills more important in a time of educational crisis than those acquired through traditional classroom teaching or through coursework and training in educational leadership? Has the American public lost confidence in the education as a profession? In response, Eisinger and Hula (2004) conclude that the hiring of nontraditional leadership is a direct challenge to the competence of education professionals. While choosing a nontraditional leader may provide some success, it may not be the silver bullet hoped for. Further, they argue that when nontraditional leaders come to understand they face the same challenges of improving student achievement while meeting the demands imposed by limited budgets and varying stakeholder interests, generals, corporate executives, and governors may not have any more success than the traditional education leaders they replaced (Eisinger & Hula, 2004).

### **Nontraditional Preparation**

After all, how difficult could it be to manage a school district? Leadership is leadership. Having listened to that logic for several years and now being convinced there must be something to it, I am contemplating joining the Army or the Air Force as a general or landing a job as a federal prosecutor in a big city. Now, admittedly, I do not have any military training nor do I hold a law degree, but I have seen many war movies and have watched *Law and Order* on TV since its inception.

Furthermore, I am prepared to hire an assistant who understands the military or the law, depending upon which career I pursue. I hold an M.B.A. from the

Wharton School of Finance and a doctorate from Columbia University and have more than 30 years of administrative experience, including 13 years as a school superintendent. With these transferable skills, I feel perfectly suited to my new career in the military or law. The reality is I am not so presumptuous to even think I could run one of those organizations, yet many retired personnel are looking at school administration as a viable operation. Perhaps these retired general and corporate types believe that educators are so poorly trained and incapable that anyone could do better leading a school district

(Geiger, 2002, p.70).

How does the nontraditional superintendent prepare for the leadership role?

According to Quinn (2007), nontraditional superintendents will argue that they are prepared. Their skills are transferable between the private and public sectors and between the military and school districts. They also argue that as nontraditional superintendents, they bring a fresh perspective to school management. In most cases, the nontraditional leader will select their chief educational officers from a pool of internal candidates and add outside talent to their team so as to add the missing element, education leadership. Some nontraditional superintendents have hired outside consultants. According to Matthews (1999), others have enrolled in education leadership coursework or have found mentors and book study groups. Matthews (1999) tells of a non-traditional superintendent, inspired by the story of John Stanford, the former superintendent in Seattle and retired Army general, read 50 books on education in the six months he had to prepare himself for his position as district superintendent.

### **Nontraditional Superintendent Preparation: The Broad Foundation**

Tim Quinn, managing director of the Broad Superintendent's Academy located in Los Angeles, California, recalls the reaction of Thelma Meléndez de Santa Ana, a traditional superintendent and Broad Academy Fellow as being skeptical at first, thinking

those with educational backgrounds would have to spend a lot of time bringing the nontraditionals up to speed. He describes her amazement at how much they learned from one another and, in the end, she agreed that great leadership is a transferable skill (Quinn, 2007).

Quinn describes the Broad Superintendent's Academy in the August 2007 edition of the *American Association of School Administrators* as a rigorous 10-month executive management program. The program was created in 2001 and is designed to prepare CEOs and senior executives from business, non-profit, military, government and education backgrounds to lead urban public schools systems.

One of the few articles written by the Broad Foundation describes its program of recruitment and training of selected candidates from both within and from without the field of education to be superintendents of large public school districts. Director Tim Quinn (2007) explains the mission of the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents as a remedy to counter current educational leadership programs that are not preparing leaders, whether traditional or nontraditional, to handle the realities and complex challenges of leading an urban school district. Quinn (2007) is adamant in his view that a certified school administrator does not necessarily make a qualified urban school system leader.

Quinn (2007) reports that The Broad Academy actively recruits nontraditional leaders who are able to offer fresh ideas and new perspectives on solving systemic problems in urban education. While most school boards continue to hire traditionally prepared superintendents, the Broad Foundation carefully selects, trains, and supports the candidates it recruits from graduation of its program through the interview process for a

position as superintendent. A news release from the Broad Academy ([www.broadacademy.org](http://www.broadacademy.org), retrieved June 6, 2009) reported recruiting accomplished leaders in other roles who possess strengths and experiences of the role of school leader including:

- Experience managing large, complex, diverse operations
- Experience leading large-scale systems change and culture changes
- Skills in strategic visioning, planning and accountability
- Expertise in financial management
- Skills in systems and operational management

Those selected for participation in the Broad Academy program are able to keep their current employment and attend seven extended-weekend training sessions covering CEO-level skills in education, finance, management, operations, and organizational systems. The expectation is that Broad Academy candidates will pursue superintendent or other central office administrative positions within 18 months of completing the program. The Broad Academy staff members assist Fellows in their job search, the interview process, and contract negotiations once hired. The Broad Academy details on their website, [www.broadacademy.org](http://www.broadacademy.org), that it continues supporting its graduates with the following:

Plan of entry – The Broad recognizes the actions taken by a superintendent during the first 90 days on the job are critical to long-term success. Broad staff provides guidance as Broad fellows develop their own entry plans into the superintendency to pave the way for long-term success

Contract support – Feedback is provided on the new superintendent's employment contract, as well as attorney referrals.



Governance retreats – intensive off-site retreats between the new superintendent and the school board are facilitated to establish communication protocols and standards of practice

Functional area audits – Audits are provided as needed to give the new superintendent a quality snapshot of instructional, communications, human resources and other operational areas

Superintendent support – This includes a weekend retreat with a team of experienced urban superintendents to share findings, ideas and plans. New superintendents also are assigned an experienced urban superintendent as an executive coach

Facilitated evaluations – Constructive performance feedback is provided to evaluate the new superintendent's performance to ensure that positive dialogue occurs around critical issues.

([www.broadacademy.org](http://www.broadacademy.org), retrieved June 6, 2009).

They report on the website that, as of 2008, their graduates have been placed in 19 states and, having served for two or more testing cycles, have been successful in raising student achievement to the degree that they are outperforming comparison groups ([www.broadacademy.org](http://www.broadacademy.org), retrieved June 6, 2009).

Although the Broad Superintendent's Academy was created in 2001, detailed information describing its program has only recently been made public on its website. According to its informational web page, [www.broadacademy.org](http://www.broadacademy.org), regarding the program overview, participants must attend extended weekend sessions for ten months as they work with a Broad faculty advisor who provides leadership development, coaching and support. Further, the Broad Academy provides its Fellows with intensive studies as

detailed on the website of the Broad Academy, [www.broadacademy.org](http://www.broadacademy.org), in the following areas:

Instructional alignment:

- Raising overall student achievement and eliminating achievement gaps using research-based strategies
- Setting standards tied to national indicators
- Appropriate use of student assessment data
- Reviewing curriculum and instructional material
- Assessing professional development impact

Operational excellence:

- Recruitment, hiring and evaluation
- Multi-year budgeting and equitable allocation of resources
- Fair and transparent maintenance and capital improvement processes
- Performance management systems

Stakeholder engagement:

- Partnering with key stakeholders to support the district's work
- Strategic partnering with the school board to advance district priorities
- Maintaining labor-management partnerships aligned to student achievement goals
- Fundraising aligned with overall strategy
- Forging relationships with parents and the community
- Working effectively with the media to communicate good news and build community understanding of work

Organizational leadership:

- Communicating your vision and rallying internal and external support
- Theory of change and strategic and tactical planning
- Analyzing data to identify and understand performance and challenges
- Aligning all organizational decisions to support overall vision

Interpersonal leadership:

- Inspiring confidence, hope and positive action in others
- Leveraging unique talents in others and developing diverse leaders
- Adjusting leadership style for different situations
- Ethics

Management:

- Structuring the organization to support implementation of strategy
- Developing leadership at every level of the organization
- Prioritizing work for optimal quality, capacity and sustainability of reforms and providing mentoring and support to colleagues  
(Program Overview, n.d., [www.broadacademy.org](http://www.broadacademy.org), retrieved June 6, 2009).

In addition, tuition and expenses for Fellows are paid by The Broad Center for the Management of School Systems. The expected commitment on the part of the Broad Academy participants, or Fellows, includes attendance at all sessions, completions of all assignments and regular consultations with mentors and faculty advisors. Fellows are also required to complete a series of site visits and other hand-on projects designed to complete their leadership repertoire and deepen their understanding of urban school district management and operations.

During training sessions, Broad Fellows receive training from education experts including high-level government officials, non-profit executives, education policy makers, researchers and, successful urban school district superintendents, school board presidents, and teacher's union leaders. An example of a detailed agenda was provided through electronic mail on August 26, 2009, by Broad staff member G. Francis, and can be found in Appendix B.

**Military Preparation and the Air Force Officer's Guide**

The Air Force Officer's Guide is organized into six parts, each providing distinct protocols for behaviors and expectations held for Air Force officers (Benton, 2005). The Participant has been trained as an Air Force Academy cadet to adhere to the protocols and has, for thirty years, incorporated them in a career as an officer. Character attributes

such as integrity, honesty and openness have become a part of the way in which the Participant conducts business and self. The military expectations of excellence in all areas of duty performed are the foundation of the Participant's work ethic. Benton (2005) describes the need for officers to display self-discipline, teamwork and to demonstrate the willingness to work, learn and seek opportunities for advancement. As officers demonstrate success in the behaviors and expectations, they are promoted to high ranks. The Participant achieved the rank of Two Star Major General before retiring.

The Participant explained during the interview the personal qualities contributing to the Participant's career success and their relationship to the Participant's ability to transition from military to superintendent.

Well, the skills and personal qualities evolved over time. I mean, you don't wake up one day all of a sudden you have all the answers to being a military leader of any kind of leader. But I learned that first of all, your honest, integrity and loyalty were key elements in any of the development process of being a leader and that was imbedded in me very early on and I valued that all the way through my career in the military and on" (Interview, October 14, 2009).

The Participant was able to identify and articulate the attributes contributing to successful leadership as a military officer. When posed the question in regard to education leadership, the Participant readily acknowledged the lack of cultural knowledge of the public school environment and yet referenced the military leadership training as being the foundation on which all other experience is built.

So I moved from an ability to take this skill set that I had developed in the military, this was leadership and management and strategic planning, and personnel, budgets, construction, even, and take that skill set over to being a superintendent but I've often thought that I came probably with 85% of what I needed to do to be a superintendent and the Broad Academy helped me bridge that gap on the remaining 15% because any bureaucracy you change in to, even when I went to NASA, when I was a White House Fellow, and then later on as the

executive director for the...board, there's a change in there. You have to understand the nomenclature, the language, the culture, uh, certain things that are different than anything you want to do. It was that cultural element, that final 15% that I needed to be able to work on and the Broad Foundation provided me that opportunity.

(Interview, October 14, 2009)

### **Chapter Three—Methodology**

According to Stake (1995), qualitative case study methodology is expected to catch the complexity of a single case that is of special interest to the researcher. The researcher enters the scene with a sincere interest in learning how people function in their pursuits and with a willingness to put aside many presumptions while learning. So it is with the study of the transition from military to public school superintendent. The researcher is drawn to this particular case, enters the world of the Participant for a short time and will describe how the transition occurred. Stake describes the aspect of “interest” as the defining moment when the researcher becomes the author of highly personal research. He further explains that the persons studied are studied in depth, that researchers are encouraged to include their own personal perspectives in the interpretation. Stake states that the quality and utility of the research is not based on its reproducibility but on whether or not the meanings generated by the researcher or the reader, are valued. Further, the case is a specific, a complex, functioning thing falling within definitive time constructs and settings (Stake, 1995).

Creswell (1998) asserts that the study of more than one case dilutes the overall analysis; the more cases an individual studies, the greater the lack of depth in any single case. Although there are other nontraditional superintendents currently leading urban school districts, the researcher chose to focus on the unique case presented in this study. The issue of a nontraditional superintendent leading a large, urban school district caught

the attention of the researcher in July of 2005, when the Chief of Staff to the city mayor was hired to be superintendent of schools. Although the Chief of Staff presented an excellent opportunity for study, he soon left to pursue political aspirations. Fortunately, another nontraditional superintendent was hired to lead a nearby district and was willing to participate in the study. The new nontraditional superintendent was especially unique. Urban School District had hired a retired, Air Force Two Star General as its new education leader. They had placed their trust in someone not trained in public school administration, unfamiliar with the world of public education, and new to the community, with the expectation that the new leadership would take the district from low student achievement to higher performance. How could the Participant transition from a position of military leadership to one of education leadership? The researcher's investigation of the case is guided by the following questions:

1. How did this retired Two Star Major General transition from military to public school superintendent?
2. How does this retired Two Star Major General's military leadership support the transition to public school leadership?
3. How did this retired Two Star Major General prepare for the role of public school superintendent?

For many, the notion of a military leader may evoke a mental image of the common stereotype of a General George Patton type leader of cinema fame. A Major General would be rigid, brusque, and insensitive, and all the more so after 30 years of military leadership. It would be virtually impossible for a military leader to unlearn a

leadership style commonly assumed to be incompatible with education leadership. The researcher was particularly interested in the process by which a retired Major General could transition to becoming the leader of a public school district.

### **Context of the Study**

The researcher investigated the transition of the Participant from the role as retired Air Force Two Star Major General to that of newly hired superintendent of a large urban school district. The events precipitating the Participant's appointment were initiated by the retirement of then Superintendent Z.

Superintendent Z is an example of a traditional superintendent (e.g., see Hayes, 2001) in that he was male and he began his career as a classroom teacher. Further, he served as a high school assistant principal and then high school principal. He was promoted to director and assistant superintendent before assuming the superintendency of the school district. His education included a PhD in Education Policy. Superintendent Z was considered to be a successful education leader and served the school district in the capacity of superintendent for five years. On June 30, 2006, Urban School Superintendent Z announced his retirement. This was the first step in the circumstances that would eventually bring the Participant to Urban School District as its first nontraditional superintendent.

According to the official military website, the Participant retired from the United States Air Force effective January 1, 2004, as an executive director and at the rank of Two Star Major General. The Participant began his military career as an honor graduate from the US Air Force Academy and graduated in the top ten percent of the class. The



Participant also graduated from “Top Gun” Fighter Weapons School and was a test pilot. The Participant’s military career included selection as a White House fellow, service at NASA and service as the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense during operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Participant had retired after 30 years of distinguished military service in the Air Force at the rank of Two Star Major General.

After retirement, the Participant accepted a position in a civilian capacity for a global company, and was responsible for strategic planning, development and implementation of software sales. The Participant’s education includes a B.S. in Political Science and International Affairs from the United States Air Force Academy, and an M.A. in Public Administration from a public university. The Participant was also one of three National Security Fellows selected to represent the Air Force at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. The Participant was employed by the civilian company when recruited by the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents.

Urban School District accepted the resignation of Superintendent Z in June of 2006, and immediately began the search process for its next superintendent. Their hope was to have the new superintendent in place on July 1, 2006. Urban School District, the sixth largest school district in the state, reported on its website an annual 2005-2006 budget of \$377 million with the following demographics:

- Student enrollment 31,113
- 72% students of color, of which 49% were speakers of English as a second language
- 91 different languages representing 120 countries, 89% Spanish

- 47% free and reduced lunch
- 40% mobility rate.
- 48.08% Hispanic
- 25.84 White
- 21.7% African American

([www.urbanscholdistrict.org.](http://www.urbanscholdistrict.org.), retrieved February 27, 2007)

Urban School District secured a national firm to assist in its search for the superintendent. Their process, according to the Urban District Herald (pseudonym) news release of March 7, 2006, included analyzing the job, coordinating community engagement opportunities, recruiting candidates, screening applicants and interviewing candidates. A nationally recognized head hunter firm conducted a nation wide search for qualified candidates.

The Urban School District Board of Education narrowed the number of candidates and, at an open forum, introduced the four finalists. The news release of May 17, 2006, reported the Urban Board received 34 candidate applications from eighteen states, including Washington D.C., and one from a South American country. Sixty-five percent of the applicants held doctoral degrees and 35% of the candidates had current or past connections to the Urban City or to its state. See Appendix D for further information regarding the final candidates.

### **Role of the Researcher**

According to Stake (1995), qualitative case study is highly personal research and the researcher is encouraged to include their personal perspectives in the interpretation.

The Participant's transition represents a unique and complex case. The researcher's role is to investigate and explain this occurrence in the most descriptive terms possible.

The researcher's experience as an educator supports the role described by Stake as "teacher." The researcher began her career in education as a bilingual classroom teacher assistant and, as a classroom teacher, has been recognized for excellence by a school district, the state, and twice nationally by *Who's Who Among American Teachers*. The researcher is also an experienced Dean of Students and public school administrator. In addition, she was selected through a highly competitive process to attend the Harvard Graduate School of Education Principals' Center Summer Institute, where she furthered her administrative training alongside administrators representing school districts within the U.S. and from countries such as Australia and Japan. As an administrator, the researcher has formally and informally observed and documented the education performance of classroom teachers and classified staff. She has also submitted evaluation surveys for superintendents. As a parent of children in traditional public schools and in charter schools, the researcher has served on many accountability committees and has evaluated the performance of several school district superintendents, both traditional and nontraditional.

### **Data Collection**

Stake (1995) describes the methods of data collection in case study consist principally of observation, interview and document review. These multiple data sources were used by the researcher to investigate and answer the principal research questions which the guided the researcher during the study.

## **The Interview**

According to Kvale (1996), interviews are living conversations, a live social interaction, and tone of voice, bodily expressions and nonverbal language. The Participant agreed to open-ended interview sessions and, for more than three and one half hours, the Participant responded to a set of open-ended questions. A second set of ten follow-up questions completed the interview session (See Appendix A). The researcher recorded the interview and noted nuances of body language and facial expression as well. The interview took place in the Participant's office at the central administration complex of Urban School District. A standard cassette tape recorder was used to record the interview with a secondary, battery operated micro recorder also in use as a precautionary measure. The researcher transcribed the raw data as recorded verbatim.

Other data sources in case study research include observations of the Participant during interactions with Urban School District employees, school board members, community members and the community press. A portion of these observations occurred during a day spent shadowing the Participant. During this time, the researcher observed the Participant's interactions with staff, students, leadership team, and principals during several school visits. The researcher also attended a school board meeting where the Participant's interactions with school board members, district cabinet members, teachers, and parents were observed, with the local press in attendance. Documents used in this case study included public press releases, education journal articles, newspaper accounts of Urban School District events, and information related to the Participant's experiences, including a pod cast posted as public information on the Urban School District website.

## **Analysis of the Data**

The method best suited to the researcher for this study was coding data through the use of index cards and large chart paper placed in a study where the data were always available to the researcher. In this way, the researcher could, at any time, view, review, organize and reorganize the data and possible interpretations of the data efficiently. As the data were collected, the researcher took great care to search for patterns and began a process of color-coding key portions of the data for possible themes. In preparation for coding and interpretation, the researcher first organized the data by broad categories. For example, because of the Participant's career of 30 years as an officer in the Air Force, the Participant's military leadership training became an early category. Other lenses through which the researcher searched for emerging patterns were the Participant's education, civilian leadership experience, and the Participant's experience with the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents.

Once all data were collected, the researcher reviewed the coded chunks and finalized the analyzed patterns. The data were filed by their assigned color code. As the data were filtered and sifted from broad topics to specific lenses through which the researcher searched for emerging themes, they were reorganized to categories. Changes, adjustments and revisions to initial classifications were recorded using color markers and self-stick notes.

Stake (1995) reminds the case study researcher of the process of triangulation of data as a means of confirming interpretations of the data. By organizing the data in such a way that the emerging themes were more clearly evident, the researcher was able to

confirm the patterns. For example, in the interview sessions, the Participant frequently referred to “flexibility” as a critical component to transition from military to urban school superintendent. A second source of data, Col. Benton’s (2005) Air Force Officer’s Guide, directs its officers to be flexible saying the most effective leadership style is one that the leader tailors to the mission, the people and the environment. Further, successful leaders adapt their leadership styles to meet the demands of the mission. As the characteristic of flexibility began to emerge as a possible theme, the researcher was prompted to search for further data to either confirm or disconfirm the researcher’s interpretation. The researcher found that several incidents of the Participant’s flexibility emerged. The Participant was scheduled to attend a Rotary luncheon. A call from the Participant’s administrative secretary advising the Participant of a media interview caused the Participant to reconsider the day’s schedule. The luncheon was cancelled in favor of the interview. Although the decision meant there would be no lunch until much later in the day, the Participant demonstrated flexibility in his decision-making adjusting to what the Participant determined was more important to the need of the District. The element of flexibility was confirmed as a theme in the study. Other themes were developed and confirmed in similar fashion.

The data collected include interviews, document and artifacts, field notes, and other forms of public information. The data were organized into categories and through the use of triangulation, and common themes and patterns between the data sources were identified. A retired military officer verified military protocol as interpreted by the researcher for accuracy consistent with the code for military conduct. For further

validation, the Participant reviewed the data so as to insure its accuracy and interpretation. The Participant was sent via electronic mail the verbatim transcripts of the interview following their transcription and drafts of the work for verification of accuracy.

Although the researcher felt it was important to establish a comparison point against which to consider the topic of the nontraditional superintendent, the existing literature on superintendency provided nothing helpful on the transition from military to public school superintendent. Further, the Participant had no experience in the field of education or education leadership, leaving nothing to investigate. The researcher investigated possible connections between the Participant and other urban school superintendents that would perhaps support his transition from military to public school superintendent. The Participant had no prior connections or networks in the area that would provide him an advantage to securing his position or supporting his transition as superintendent. The researcher encountered a similar outcome in searching for data in Urban District's satisfaction surveys. While the satisfaction surveys addressed many categories, unfortunately none were specific to the Participant.

Table 1

*Summary of data collected and analyzed per research question*

Research Questions	Data Sources/Indicators
1. How did retired Major General transition from military to public school superintendent?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant’s Entry Plan (Kotter)</li> <li>• Observations, field notes, video</li> <li>• Personal interview</li> </ul>
2. How does retired Major General’s military leadership support the transition to public school leadership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air Force Officer’s Guide</li> <li>• Personal interview</li> <li>• Observation, artifact, documents</li> <li>• Field notes</li> </ul>
3. How did retired Major General prepare for the role of public school superintendent?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad Academy for Superintendents</li> <li>• Air Force Officer’s Guide</li> <li>• Personal interview</li> </ul>

Table 2

*Summary of data source themes*

Data Sources/Indicators	Themes
Observation	(Personal leadership characteristics)
Field Notes	Flexible
Interview	Empathetic
Podcast	Kind
Air Force Officer’s Guide	Strategic
Broad	Critical thinker
Documents	Transparent/honest/integrity
	Direct
	Detailed
	‘No excuses’

**Ethical Issues**

The researcher has no conflicting interests associated with Urban School District, its employees or the study itself. However, the researcher began this study with the belief that a military leader in the position of school district superintendent was a conflict in philosophy of leadership. All due precautions were taken so as not to influence the



outcomes of the data and to maintain the anonymity of the Participant, including gender free references to the Participant throughout.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited by the following factors:

1. The study cannot be generalized. Not all retired military officers are able to become superintendents, nor are they all recruited by the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents.
2. The findings are unique to the perspective of this researcher. Other interpretations of the case are possible.

Information needed to provide additional depth the study of this case is difficult to acquire and resources, including time, are limited. Important secondary issues such as employee satisfaction with a nontraditional superintendent demanded more time for study than was available.

## **Chapter Four—Overview**

This chapter presents data on the nontraditional superintendent collected from multiple sources during the investigation. These sources include literature, personal observations, interviews and survey data posted as public information on the Urban School District website. The data are presented in response to the research questions guiding the investigation of this case study.

### **Research Question One**

How did this retired Two Star Major General transition from military to urban public school superintendent? In order to provide a thorough response to the guiding question, the case researcher assumed the role of ‘teacher.’ So as to inform and explain the case to the audience, the researcher will follow the linear pattern of leadership preparation by the Participant beginning with the Participant’s course of study at the Air Force Academy, and will follow the Participant’s ongoing training through retirement from the military. The researcher as ‘teacher’ and ‘advocate’ will include the Participant’s experience as a civilian business executive and participation in the Broad’s training for aspiring public school superintendent to clarify the Participant’s transition from military to urban school superintendent. In keeping with the “personal researcher perspective” typical of qualitative case research, the following findings are presented in a more informal, first person style.

### **Initial Encounter with the Participant**

My initial encounter with Participant took place at the administrative offices of Urban School District. The superintendent's office is located on the second floor of a multiple office complex. My first impressions were of the building itself, then of the superintendent for whom the building had been redesigned. I noticed the Participant had located the inner office in a strategically important position. There is a front entrance used by the general public. The Participant's office is located facing directly opposite the public entrance and has a private exit to a back parking lot which the Participant uses as parking. Upon hearing that I was in the outer office area, he quickly left the inner office and came down the narrow hallway, hand extended, and personally welcomed me. I was immediately taken by the warmth and genuine kindness. The Participant was neither shy nor aggressive, and more importantly, did not break my hand with a dominating handshake. It was quite the contrary. The Participant took my hand in a handshake and then covered it with his other, a more subtle and gentle form of dominance. The Participant is not large in stature, or an imposing presence. The Participant seemed like just an ordinary person who might play the part of an underweight Santa Clause. He was wearing a black turtleneck sweater and a camel hair jacket. "A little warm for this time of year," I thought. "Returning from an important meeting, perhaps, or just a way of dress, of being in uniform."

I first met with the Participant in the "old" administrative complex. The Participant's office was smaller, and it was easy to notice the bookshelf against the far wall. Its shelves were filled with books on education leadership and policy. Yes, the

Participant had read *Fifth Discipline* by Senge (2000) and, it seemed, had also read the texts dealing with school leadership regarded to be essential reading for school leaders. The Participant demonstrated once again, a key characteristic of any education leader, that of being a life-long learner.

The four final candidates for the position of superintendent of Urban Public schools included three male candidates, one female. The female candidate, Hispanic, held a PhD and was employed as a Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction in a district of 350,000 students and a budget of \$2.3 billion. Of the three male candidates, two were Hispanic, one with a Ph.D. in Bilingual/Multicultural Education and an experienced Superintendent of a school district with demographics comparable to that of Urban School District. Another candidate was also a superintendent in a district with twice the student enrollment as that of Urban School District. This candidate had enrolled in a doctoral program at Columbia University. The fourth candidate was the Participant. Although the Participant's resume detailed a stellar military career, it was clearly evident the Participant had no experience as an educator or as an education leader. The Participant was the lone nontraditional candidate and the only Broad Fellow.

The Participant recalls during the interview of October 14, 2009, being well prepared by both the Broad Foundation and by the military to pursue a position as superintendent of an urban school district. The Participant began the transition from military to public school superintendent feeling prepared for the new challenge. The Participant described his interview with Urban School District school board, the system that would ultimately hire him to lead the district.

The Participant's appointment to the position was not without opposition. The Board of Education of Urban Public School District posted the vacancy announcement through a 'headhunter' service. The district identified attributes and experiences common to the position of urban school superintendent, listed the criteria and timelines. In response, four finalists, including the Participant, were selected. The vacancy notice titled, *Code of Ethics To Guide The Search For A Superintendent Of Schools*, and the resume of each finalist were posted on the Urban School District website.

After several open forum and candidate receptions, events advertised in English and Spanish, the Board of Education announced its final candidate for the position. Mr. School Board President announced the Board's decision. He declared confidence in their decision that The Participant would successfully lead the district with a fresh vision and strong leadership. He described the Participant as being a remarkable leader who would bring a unique perspective to the district, a nontraditional superintendent who would bring a fresh perspective to Urban School District. The board president also noted the Participant's experience working and living in multicultural and multilingual communities. Although no mention was made of the fact that the Participant would bring to Urban School District the many assets Broad offers its Fellows, this researcher has no doubt that resources of such caliber, not offered by the three other finalists, would have added weight to The Participant's candidacy. The board vote was 5 -2, in favor of hiring the Participant.

I went around and looked at people in their eyes. You know, you can tell a lot from people in their eyes. And I didn't see people who had given up, you know, like I'd seen, in other school districts, in vision around with Broad. I didn't see that in Urban School District. But what the elephant in the room was, was [*sic*]

student achievement. We're in the bottom 10% for literacy and the bottom 18% for Math in the state. We've got a lot of work to do. But it really allowed a laser focus on student achievement, which is really what I wanted to work on (Interview, October 14, 2009).

The Participant strategically identified the area where he could apply his leadership skills. According to the Military Officer's Guide, an effective leader must keep in mind two fundamental elements, the mission and the people (Benton, 2005). Further, the primary task of a military organization is to perform its mission. Officers are primarily responsible to lead people to carry out the mission successfully.

The Participant used to his advantage his military training, the Broad training and the implementation of the Kotter model for leading change to support the transition from military to superintendent. The Participant often referenced a fresh, new outlook on education as being a personal strength and described strategies for encouraging new hires to share what the Participant referred to as "rocks in the road, elephants in the room" perspectives. During the interview, these thoughts emerged:

But somebody new to the district can go, boy, what's going on here? That's the fresh outlook that I was able to bring. It wasn't because I was any smarter than anyone else, it's just that I was coming from a different vantage point, you know, and could see maybe some things clearer than some other people who had, uh, been too close to it. And it's a powerful recognition and that's why I think nontraditional superintendents, not in all cases, but I think can provide a very insightful vantage point that might not be able to be worked on if you've been in the organization for a long time (Interview, October 14, 2009).

The Participant has no experience in public education. However, the Participant's military training and experience in areas such as flexibility and the ability to adapt leadership styles to any given situation enables the Participant to recognize and articulate to district stakeholders issues that would otherwise go unaddressed. While the Participant

may be unable to identify and discuss issues relating to, for example, Carnegie units, the Participant has emphasized the lack of experience in public education as a strength rather than allowing it to become a point of weakness.

The Participant has also been able to instill a sense of urgency, a Kotter (1996) strategy, with honesty and integrity. The Participant is able to recommend, implement and hold staff accountable to the strategic plan so soon in the tenure perhaps because the Participant has not acclimated to the culture of low student achievement nor surrendered to what others may consider to be the hopelessness of changing a school culture. The Participant refers to this attitude in the interview as “normalizing deviance” and reacts with the forceful words, “I refuse to accept that” (Interview, October 14, 2009).

For example, on an occasion during which I accompanied the Participant to Urban School District’s daycare center, I was taken by the words of an elderly African American woman working in the infant daycare facility. She was sitting in a rocking chair holding a sleeping infant in her arms. “I’m pleased to meet you, Sir,” she says. “I just see you all the time knocking on doors, looking for our kids to get ‘em back in school.” The Participant quietly acknowledges her words and pats her gently on her shoulder. I observe the Participant to be gracious and kind.

The words of the elderly woman were in reference to the Participant’s goal to reduce truancy rates in Urban School District. In what has become an annual ritual, the Participant and six teams of school staff canvas the district neighborhoods making personal visits to the homes of students identified as habitually truant from school. The Urban City’s major newspaper (2008), reported trancies in middle and high schools

decreased to 403 in the first quarter of the school year from 1476 in the same period of the prior year. The Participant partnered with the court system to offer habitually truant students the choice of attending school or of being monitored by truancy court via an ankle bracelet. The partnership has resulted in 51 students reengaged in school thereby saving the district 350,000 in student revenue.

However, the Participant's inexperience has manifested itself in different ways. For example, the contrast between an experienced traditional superintendent and newly hired non-traditional superintendent was quite evident during a presentation to an audience of teachers, administrators and school board members. As I observed the Participant a podcast of January 29, 2007, several points caught my attention. First, as the Participant welcomed the audience, I noticed the Participant took time to recognize and introduce by name the school board members in attendance. Further, the Participant, holding the microphone in one hand, gesturing with the other, was pacing nervously from side to side, often facing the sides of the stage, head down, as he spoke. In contrast, Mr. Mentor Superintendent took the microphone after being introduced, squarely faced the audience and addressed the educators in the auditorium. He did not recognize the school board members in the audience as did the Participant, but spoke directly to the teachers. Most educators are well practiced in the art of public speaking as communicating to an audience is the essence of teaching. While it is true that not all educators make good public speakers, in this venue, visiting Mr. Mentor Superintendent was impressive, well received and seemed to easily generate support from the teachers for the new nontraditional superintendent and his district initiatives. It could be the Participant was



experiencing a case of nerves. Teachers can be a difficult audience for even the most veteran of public speakers.

Has the Participant transitioned from military to urban school superintendent? In an Urban City newspaper (2009) front-page article, the Participant is referred to as the “no excuses Superintendent.” In the same article written by Investigative Reporter, a former State Board of Education member from Urban School District relates experiencing a speech given by former Urban District Superintendent Z during which Superintendent Z offered a lengthy litany of obstacles impeding student achievement. The Urban City newspaper continues with the account of the State Board of Education member saying the tone of Superintendent Z’s presentation was lackluster and full of excuses. In contrast, within weeks after his hiring, the Participant had implemented his Entry Plan, which included decreasing the number of truant students, increasing parental involvement and increasing the academic achievement of students in Urban School District.

As a military officer, the Participant was compelled by a personal sense of mission to protect and defend our nation. The leadership skills that were a part of the Participant’s military training were developed over a career spanning thirty years. Although retired, the sense of mission remained and once again, compelled the Participant to seek an opportunity where the Participant could carry out the mission. The Participant accepted a position of leadership in the civilian sector but soon realized the sense of mission could not be fulfilled.

Not long after joining the civilian organization, the Participant was offered an opportunity where the sense of mission could be realized, the venue of public school superintendent. The critical factor in the Participant's transition from military leadership to public school leadership was this sense of mission, in this case, to protect and defend the right for children to learn (Interview, October 14, 2009). The combined sense of mission, military experience and training through the Broad Academy resulted in the Participant's transition from military to public school superintendent.

As will be further explained in Question Two, the Participant acknowledged military training as 85% of the preparation necessary to lead a school district. The leadership skills and character developed by the military were in alignment with the leadership skills and character expected of public school leaders.

### **Research Question Two**

How did retired Major General Participant's military leadership experience support his transition to urban school superintendent? Data used in response to this question include the Air Force Officer's Guide, personal interview data, documents and field notes taken during an observation of a school board meeting and of school site visits.

The Participant began his leadership experience as an Air Force Academy where he graduated in the top ten percent of his class. His training included practical military leadership beginning his "doolie" or first year and continuing to his senior year. The Officer's Guide, coupled with the training at the Air Force Academy, continued to instill

strong leadership values in the Participant. The Participant was first a follower and then a leader of fellow cadets. The Participant explained this further in the interview:

As you went up in grade from freshman to your senior year, you got more responsibilities to the point where you could be a commander of cadets, and so fourth, so I had an opportunity to do that and also got my first taste of flying, so [it] really gave you a chance to be an instructor. So I was an instructor in sailplanes (Interview, October 14, 2009).

The Participant has experienced 26 assignments in his 30 years as an officer in the Air Force and has worked in culturally diverse settings throughout the world. The Participant has also served as a White House Fellow, advising and supporting the leadership of our national government. In each setting, one must be acutely aware of cultural norms and quickly adapt to situations and conditions in order to be successful.

#### **The School Board Meeting (Topic: Budget Cuts)**

While waiting in the administrative office before our first meeting, I observed The Participant to be warm, sincere and eager to affirm this study. I observed him again during a very tense school board meeting. The board meeting room was filled to capacity with teachers, members of the press and parents. The Participant seemed calm, yet interested and seemed to carry with him a sense of resolve. The district budget for the incoming year was under review and many high school teachers were in attendance to protest the potential cuts to their departments. I happened to be seated beside the cameraman and reporter for a local television station. I had a perfect view of the proceedings of the evening. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and, as the meeting progressed, I observed that the Participant would remove and thoughtfully chew on the arm of his glasses for a few moments as he listened to the concerns of the teachers.

This was a gesture I noticed often when observing him in other settings. Neither his face nor his hands revealed his thoughts or reactions to the speakers. Having observed teachers and staff members many times, I recognize that body language can be as powerful as verbal language. Here, I believe his military training to be a valuable asset. Discipline and self-control, the Participant's ability not to indulge in self-pity, discouragement, anger, frustration, or defeatism and the moral obligation to the ones led, to strike a tone of confidence and forward-looking optimism in this situation, were critical to abating the frustration of those in attendance. From the interview:

So what I'm describing was the advantage that I had in being a fighter pilot in the Air Force was the ability to deal with very complex situations that required very quick decisions and that is something you get better at in your training. And then the skills, and I go back to the issue that leadership, strategic planning, management, budget, personnel, construction, just to name a few, those were qualities and skill sets that I could bring with me. I was a commander where I had had jobs underneath people before. But you know, still even as a wing commander, you're kind of in charge of a large city, like 20,000 people. That's the largest fighter wing in the Air Force, nine fighter squadrons, 4.2 billion dollars. I had a commissary, I had a hospital, I had contracting, I had police, and fire departments. They were all responsible to me as the commander and I had never been in that skill set but I was able to understand I could be the leader of those groups of people even though I wasn't head personal and the expert in the area (Interview, October 14, 2009).

All school districts in the state are facing budget cuts. This is true of Urban School District as well. The Participant's explanation to the audience and school board was confident. "I've dealt with budget cuts before." The Participant had expressed many times through the district website and concern for employees regarding the staffing reductions facing the district. Again, the Air Force Officer's Guide is clear that a good leader must always act in the certain knowledge that all people possess a fundamental worth as human beings. It seemed that thirty years of adhering to the Air Force Officer's

Guide has trained the Participant to make a clear distinction between leadership and management (Benton, 2005). “In essence, you lead people, and you manage things” (Interview October 14, 2009).

The communication from the superintendent’s office regarding staffing cuts was personal, caring and hopeful. Although the budget cuts were affecting teachers and staff, the Participant communicated often, maintaining a sense of transparency and honesty about the process while conveying a personal concern for each individual. Further, as an example of the military training that compels the Participant to demonstrate care for the staff, the Participant was one of the first superintendents in the state to recognize both teachers and nurses on National Teacher and Nurse’s Appreciation Day. The Participant had posted, early Monday morning, a letter of gratitude and appreciation addressed to both teachers and nurses of Urban School District. The letter was warm, sincere and validated the difficult yet rewarding work done by both groups. The Air Force Officer’s Guide emphasizes the fact that people perform the mission and are the heart of the organization. In order to be a successful leader, the Air Force Officer’s Guide exhorts military officers to continually ensure that the needs of the people in their unit are met promptly and properly (Benton, 2005).

In addition, the Air Force Officer’s Guide sets the expectation that military officers will take care of the people and be sensitive to human need. The rationale is that if people believe they are cared for as well as circumstances permit, the leader is in a position to earn the confidence, respect, and loyalty of those whom they lead.

In the Air Force Officer's Guide, Benton (2005) defines leadership as the art of influencing and directing people to accomplish the mission. As the Participant began the process of leading change using the Kotter model, the Participant demonstrated the willingness to act, to make timely decisions and then communicate the decision, a characteristic of military leadership defined in the Officer's Guide.

Although the Kotter (1996) model consists of eight steps to successful transformation of an organization, the Participant condensed the steps to five so as to accommodate the needs of the district employees, saying,

Our strategic plan, I think now, is 16 pages and pictures, ok. It's not, believe me, I've made that mistake. Big thick documents nobody reads. If you're lucky gets used as a paperweight. It has to be something people can read and understand and cite (Participant interview, October 14, 2009).

The Participant initiated the first step of the Kotter (1996) model, to establish a sense of urgency, by engaging the community in forums throughout the district. During the first 90 days of his superintendency, the Participant met with stakeholders of Urban School District and began to instill a sense of urgency based on academic achievement and truancy. As the Participant communicated this process during the interview, his body posture began to shift. While he had been leaning slightly back and on his left elbow, now he leaned forward and began to gesture with one hand. Obviously, this was an important point and the Participant was communicating the message with intensity and determination.

First of all, you have to get people to understand. There was no sense of urgency because "I think we're doing ok." And that's one thing that No Child Left Behind brought. But we had more data than we could swim in, but nobody was using it as well as we needed to, that's why we're putting it out in front of everybody. And making it transparent was powerful, and all of a sudden there was a sense of

urgency. The next thing is, you have to go out for collaboration with the community. And that's what we did with the engagement plan (Interview, October 14, 2009).

As the Participant recounts the steps as they were implemented, I am taken by the smooth transitions from idea to idea while speaking. I wonder if the Participant has prepared in some way for this interview. I'd sent the questions in advance but not so far in advance so as to detract from the spontaneity of the responses. I realize the Participant has been interviewed multiple times, has written articles and has presented this story on myriad occasions. The Participant is in control of the information the Participant considers to be important to the record. The Participant continues describing the transition:

The third step is to develop the strategic plan. You have to have a plan that makes sense...and you have to have some quick wins. You know, people are impatient, especially Americans. They say, ok fine, you've got a plan, talk to us, ok. But show me the stuff. Show me the results. So we got some quick wins the first year, on scholarships, on our ability to bring recognition to the district, promoting more comfortable climate, morale, things like that (Participant interview, October 14, 2009).

The Participant is relaxed and once again leaning back in his chair. He shows no signs of fatigue or of boredom. I'm fascinated by the Participant's story but a bit concerned that I may run out of recording time. It would not surprise me if the Participant has planned this discourse to the minute.

The Participant seems very organized and doesn't seem to waste words, or time, for that matter. He's an articulate speaker. I understand time is valuable and I definitely want to capture every word, every nuance of this meeting. The

Participant is a deliberate, strategic thinker and wants to communicate the information as accurately as possible as it pertains to the Kotter (1996) process to plan for and create short-term wins and institutionalize the new approaches.

And then you have to institutionalize that process. And a way to do it, not the only way, but a way to do it, is to put it in your policies. So it's reflective in your policies. We have 452 policies in this school district. That's more policies than I can remember in the Pentagon. You know, so we got rid of 82 and we severely changed about 120. The other ones we updated because they hadn't been updated since the 1970's, which is another thing that surprised me (Interview, October 14, 2009).

Fundamental to the leadership training of every Air Force officer is the ability to lead people to accomplish the mission and to manage the operation through which the mission is accomplished (Benson, 2005). The ability for military leaders to remain flexible and to be astute to the needs of the system and the people within the system are characteristics cultivated by the military. The Participant's military career included high level assignments in locations throughout the world. The Participant therefore developed a sense of flexibility, an ability to lead within diverse communities and organizations. The Participant was accustomed leading in an organization of cultural and political diversity.

In addition, the Participant had been responsible for complex organizations within the military. The Participant had effectively commanded military operations in which the Participant had little or no expertise. In leading a school district about which the Participant had no knowledge, the Participant was able to apply the military experience with diverse cultures and to the diverse culture of Urban School District. The military experience became a stepping stone in the transition from military public school



superintendent. The military experience effectively prepared the Participant for civilian leadership. However, as detailed in Question Three, the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents prepared the Participant for leadership of an urban school district.

### **Research Question Three**

How did the Participant, Two Star Major General, prepare for the role of public school superintendent?

I came probably with 85% of what I needed to do to be a superintendent and the Broad Academy helped me bridge that gap on the remaining 15% because any bureaucracy you change in to, you have to understand the nomenclature, the language, the culture, certain things that are different, you always had to learn something so it gave you that flexibility but this time, this Broad Academy allowed me to be able to bridge that gap and gave me that cultural awareness and understanding so when I finished the Broad Academy, I felt very comfortable about applying for being a superintendent (Interview, October 14, 2009).

The Broad Foundation recruited the Participant soon after the Participant's retirement from the Air Force. (Although retired, the Participant is still considered to be an officer of the US Air Force and can be called at any time to active duty.) The Participant's training lasted for a year during which time the Participant toured different urban school districts around the country. The Participant describes the experience, "Broad allowed us to be exposed to the best teachers, principals, superintendents, budget managers, cultural, curriculum developers, even headhunters were brought in to try [and] help you make that transition" (Interview, October 17, 2009). The Participant discussed his Mentor Superintendent in the interview:

...so that preparation coursework, that research provided the mentoring; they brought in superintendents, and panels with you and then they assigned you to a mentor. Now, my mentor was Mr. Superintendent. Now, Mr. Superintendent is generally recognized, before he retired, but generally recognized as probably the best superintendent in the nation. And to be able to have that kind of exposure to

an individual like that was an incredible advantage. So uh, the strategies for interviewing were given to us in so far as the headhunters that came in and provided us some good feedback. So again, I felt very comfortable when I finished with the Broad year to be able to put my name in the hat at districts. And by the way, the Broad Foundation helps you when you're applying (Interview, October 14, 2009).

Although a relatively new preparation program for superintendents, the Broad Academy for Urban School Superintendents has become known for preparing superintendents to lead urban school districts. They are prepared to develop a vision and strategy that encompasses successful leadership over budget, curriculum and instruction, human resources, labor relations, facilities and community relations. Their program includes training for superintendents to engage district staff, teachers, parents and the greater community to support student achievement.

The Broad Academy prepares CEOs and senior executives from business, nonprofit, military, government and education backgrounds to lead urban public school systems. According to their website, the Broad Superintendent's Academy is run like an executive training program. Those recruited to the program attend extended weekend sessions over the course of 10 months while continuing to work in their current jobs. In addition to attending session, they work with a faculty advisor who provides leadership development, coaching and support.

The Participant completed the program in 2004 and began his search for a district at which he would be able to utilize his military leadership experience, training and sense of commitment to America, this time with a focus on America's future, that is, the education of public school children.

The September 30 agenda of a Broad Academy training session begins at 12:00 p.m. with lunch followed by the welcome, review, and overview of the day. (See Appendix B for the full agenda.) On this particular day, the Participant is scheduled to share the experience as the leader of a major accident investigation. The assignment is to describe how the lessons learned from this experience are applicable to team culture, organization and management.

They'd give you a stack of books, case studies to review, so that preparation course work, that research and provided the mentoring. [Participant's mentor is a retired, traditional superintendent known as one of the premier superintendents in the nation.] And to be able to have that kind of exposure to an individual like that was an incredible advantage. I felt very comfortable when I finished with the Broad year to be able to put my name in the hat at districts. The Broad Foundation helps you when you're applying. One, they give you a listing of what jobs are available and would you be interested in applying for this one (Interview, October 14, 2009).

At this point, I wondered aloud, did the Participant have a state superintendent's license? "No." Did the Participant know in advance the states requiring a superintendent's license? "No, but they made us aware."

The Broad Foundation pays all expenses incurred during training, including travel to and from the training sites, provides training, mentoring, interview preparation, and feedback from actual headhunters. Broad also provided the Participant with ongoing support in the form of resources to the district at no cost and also, as described by the Participant during the interview, provided executive advisors to work with the Participant and the board of education, the staff and the entire Urban School District community. The consultants, both veteran traditional superintendents and experts in the field of education leadership and reform spent multiple weeks as strategic advisors throughout

the Participant's first year. It was virtually impossible for the Participant to fail to transition from military to urban school superintendent.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The Participant began his leadership experience at the United States Air Force Academy where he graduated as an honor cadet in the top ten percent of the graduating class. Of utmost importance to this study was not the military expertise as such, but rather the leadership training and experience that would eventually support the transition to urban school superintendent. I sought situations, experiences and relevant training in the Participant's experience through a focus on three guiding questions.

The Participant's military leadership includes service on the Council on Foreign Relations, commander of US Air Force bases, directorships and training officer. These assignments became the training ground for the Participant's leadership experience. Benton's (2005) Air Force Officer's Guide specifically details the conduct expected of all officers in the US military. Working among national politicians and international leaders is a valuable experience when applied to leading systems and organizations. Assuming the officer maintains fidelity to the Air Force Officer's Guide, the attributes necessary for all leaders, regardless of the environment in which the leader is found, are cultivated. What is notable to the researcher is the demeanor with which the Participant comports himself. I observed the Participant to be confident, a thoughtful listener, and a leader who is accustomed to articulating what must be said and what must be left unspoken. I have observed the Participant to be focused on the task at hand yet take time to speak to children, teachers and other staff members.

The Participant has a distinguished military career as a leader and manager of larger, complex military organizations. The element missing in the experience is the lack of knowledge of public education, the system and its culture. The findings show this was provided by the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents.

How did the Participant's military experience support the transition to urban school superintendent? The Participant explains the value of the military experience during a career of thirty years during the interview. "I moved from an ability to take this skill set that I had developed in the military, this was leadership and management, strategic planning and personnel, budgets, construction." (Interview, October 14, 2009).

The Participant's experience as a military leader supported the transition to urban school superintendent in that the managerial skills involved in the oversight of large organizations in culturally and linguistically diverse locations worldwide became the foundation upon which the training received by the Participant at the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents, was built. The Air Force Officer's Guide clearly articulates the expectations placed by the military on their officers and the Participant met the expectations (Benton, 2005).

How did Major General Participant prepare for the role of public school superintendent? The Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents provided the Participant with critical opportunities to be immersed in the culture of public education. Tours of various urban school districts and exposure to and support from experienced traditional superintendents closed the gap in the Participant's experience thus enabling the Participant to transition from military and public education. Further, by implementing

the Kotter (1996) model for change, the Participant was able to strategically focus on areas of needed improvement within the district. Rather than a hair-on-fire reaction to the challenges facing Urban School District, the Participant was prepared with a strategic plan to implement Kotter's (1996) steps for initiating transformation.

The Broad Foundation also provided the Participant with a mentor, an experienced and successful traditional superintendent. The mentor has been an invaluable resource of experience and knowledge of school systems and was able to fill the education gap for the Participant. To have access to such a highly regarded superintendent as mentor was indeed an asset to the Participant's preparation for the role of superintendent.

The purpose of this case study is to explore the transition from military to urban school superintendent of the Participant, a retired Major General and current Superintendent. I found through the study that the Participant was able to transition from military to public school as a result of the characteristics cultivated through military experience and further supported by the training received through the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents.

As a military officer, the Participant was stationed in one location performing in a leadership role for at most, two years. Within the Participant's 30 years of military service, the Participant was in at least 28 different assignments, in different locations, working within a different culture in each. Although the Participant had no formal experience as an education leader, what the Participant did possess was the flexibility to become a part of a large organization. The military training, reinforced through the Air

Force Officer's Guide, also instilled and strengthened in the Participant throughout the 30 years of the Participant's military career, character attributes all leaders must demonstrate in order to be successful (Benton, 2005).

In the interview the Participant include a strong sense of mission and protection of the freedom for children to learn in our society. The Participant spoke of implementing the mission through a strategic plan, leading with a pat on the back to encourage, but to also push along. The Participant has demonstrated the intelligence of leadership through empathy, a sense of caring and concern. In addition, the demonstration of affect toward the district staff is balanced by a detail oriented, critical and investigative thinker, and a life-long learner who is transparent, honest and who encourages perspectives different than his own.

Management skills, such as maintaining a balanced budget, a safe working and learning environment are skills taught through common business coursework. The Participant is an excellent learner, as demonstrated by the fact that the Participant is an honor graduate from the U.S. Air Force Academy and has continued, for example, at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, a personal commitment to being a life-long-learner.

Further, the Participant was able to absorb through the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents in a short period of months, what the Participant considered to be the missing 15% of knowledge the Participant needed in order to transition from military to urban school superintendent. The concept of 'managing things and leading people' is a critical component to leadership in any venue. Military officers recognize their duty is to

protect the lives of their troops as they carry out the mission; hence the charge to lead people and manage things takes a serious place in the leadership style of the Participant.



## **Chapter Five—Overview**

Chapter Five will present a summary of the case study of the transition from military to urban school district of the Participant, retired Two Star Major General, current superintendent of Urban School District. The discussion and conclusions drawn as a result of this study are discussed. The researcher presents recommendations for future study at the conclusion the chapter and also presents personal reflections concerning the study.

### **Summary**

The hiring of the former city mayor's chief of staff to the position of urban school superintendent caught the attention of this researcher. It was during the process of the hiring that this researcher began the exploration for information regarding other nontraditional superintendents. What were qualifications necessary to become the leader of a school district? An earlier opportunity for study presented itself in the form of the chief of staff to the mayor of Urban Big City. The opportunity was short lived; the chief of staff turned superintendent declined to participate in this study. Fortunately, Providence provided another "case."

The Participant, a retired Air Force Two Star Major General, had recently been hired as the superintendent of a neighboring urban school district. The Participant agreed to take part as the single case of this study, the focus of which is the transition from military to public school superintendent. How did the Participant's

military leadership support the transition to public school leadership and how did the Participant prepare for the role of public school superintendent? These questions were explored through the traditional data collection methods consistent with case study research and include the use of interviews, observations, field notes, public information including documents and a podcast.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

Since the passing of No Child Left Behind legislation (2001), public school districts have come under intense pressure to improve the academic performance of our children. Are traditional superintendents able to raise student achievement and high school graduation rates of the districts they lead or are nontraditional leaders more effective? Many school districts are searching nontraditional venues for leaders who can bring the necessary reform (Tallerico, 2000).

In the article, *Can Non-Educators Lead Our Schools* (Hopkins, 2000), the director of Planning and Communications for the American Association of School Administrators, Judy Seltz, acknowledged a growing number of superintendents from nontraditional backgrounds, particularly in the larger urban districts. Seltz, however, refused to associate the hiring of such individuals with a nationwide trend. She admitted that running a school district requires the teamwork of people with a variety of skills. She further explained that school districts need a real team of people with very different skills, including management skills of a scope and scale that might be found in individuals from outside education (Hopkins, 2002). Further complicating the issue of urban school leadership, the candidate pool of traditional superintendents willing

to accept the challenge of what could be a career ending assignment, continues to shrink (Merrow, 1999).

The Urban School District school board listed on its website the application criteria for the position of superintendent. The criteria included a minimum experience of five years at an executive level managing a large and diverse organization, citing preference for experience in an urban setting. The desired personal characteristics included a leader who possessed high energy and inspirational leadership, displayed vision, self-confidence, and risk taking and a willingness to be a relentless and passionate advocate for all children.

The most attractive section of the posting was the description of the educational requirements sought by the district. From the perspective of a nontraditional candidate, Urban School District was open to the possibility of an outside candidate as superintendent. Urban School District was asking for a leader with only a master's degree in education, public or business administration or other related fields and with an earned doctorate as a preferred, but not necessary, qualification. Certainly, a nontraditional candidate eager for the challenge would not hesitate to apply for the position.

Urban School District was one of many public school districts looking outside traditional settings for leadership. Other districts who have hired nontraditional superintendents include Washington D.C., Denver, Seattle, and Los Angeles. Notable nontraditional superintendents include the current Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, a former professional basketball player in Australia and Roy Romer, former Colorado State governor.

Given the increase of nontraditional superintendents, the question remains, are they more successful than their traditional counterparts? First, one must consider the preparation undertaken by a nontraditional candidate in order to be hired for the position. The Participant was actively recruited by the Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents with the understanding that Participant would immediately engage in the search for a position of superintendent.

The Broad Academy immersed the candidate in every aspect of public education. The Participant was a successful leader of organizations much larger than many urban school districts and in environments of vast diversity of cultures. The preparation received by the Participant served to fortify an obvious weakness in the experience of the Participant. The Broad Academy further supported the Participant's transition by providing a mentor, himself a retired, experienced and very successful traditional superintendent.

A further consideration is the military experience providing the Participant the venue from which he developed his leadership skills. During the interview, the Participant recounted the experience as a first year cadet.

"They kinda break you down and build you up again. You have to be a follower before you're a leader" (Interview, October 14, 2009). The Participant learned to lead from the lowest rank as a follower, an invaluable experience for leaders in any venue.

Another personal characteristic cultivated by the Participant's military experience, the characteristic found to be most important to success as a superintendent, is flexibility. The Participant's career spanned 30 years in numerous assignments in many different

environments including high-level government assignments, and being promoted approximately every two years to the next rank. The Air Force Officer's Guide (Benton, 2005) describes the service of the professional soldier as being more than a job; it is a calling to serve our nation.

The Participant took an oath of office to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and for thirty years, was faithful to the mission.

The Participant's commitment and loyalty to the mission was, in the opinion of the researcher, that which enabled the Participant to remain loyal, committed and live by the Core Values of all Air Force Officers regardless of the setting. The Participant explained the ability to transition from military to public school superintendent in that the Participant was able to apply the same commitment to the mission, in this case, the mission of protecting the right of children to learn, to the role of public school superintendent (Interview, October 14, 2009). The sense of "mission" certainly sustained his ability to transition from the military culture to the culture of public education.

### **Recommendations**

Although the focus of this case was the transition from military to public school superintendent, the district data show the participant has met professional goals as superintendent in that there has been a decrease the rate of truancy and an increase student achievement. According to the Urban School District website, the participant has used the framework of the strategic plan, and worked with the school board, the staff and stakeholders and give to every student the choice to attend college without remediation. The Participant's leadership is credited with the implementation of a

pilot school program, transparent data, truancy outreach and increased student achievement on state standardized assessments. It can be said that the Participant, the nontraditional Superintendent of Urban School District, has accomplished the initial mission and has transitioned from military to public school superintendent.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

A first recommendation for further study would be to conduct an analysis of student achievement in Urban School District beginning with the Participant's first year and continuing over a period of five years thereafter. The Participant has, been assigned to serve in many different settings over the course of a 30 year career in the Air Force. While this speaks highly of the Participant's ability to adapt in short-term assignments, the question of sustainability must be addressed. Is the Participant able to effectively institute initial reform efforts to school policy? Is the Participant able to sustain the reform to the degree that district transformation does indeed occur?

A second recommendation would be to conduct a review of the Participant's first and second strategic plans, comparing the academic achievement, climate, graduation rate, truancy, and dropout rates during the Participant's tenure. A further study would be a comparison of teacher and administrator retention beginning with the Participant's first year continuing over a period of three to five years so as to note the number of teachers and administrators who chose to leave the district during his tenure. Has the Participant's leadership style attracted and retained the candidates best able to meet the needs of the students of Urban School District?

The Broad Academy for Urban Superintendents played a significant role in the Participant's transition from military to superintendent. A recommendation for further study would necessarily include a comparison of Broad nontraditional superintendents with traditional superintendents serving in districts with similar demographics. Do Broad Fellows achieve more effective results with regard to district reform than traditionally prepared superintendents achieve in districts with similar demographics? Do Broad Fellows remain at the helm of a district longer than do traditional superintendents?

One might ask at this point how this study might inform the field of principal preparation programs. First, it has been my experience that principal preparation programs devote large amounts of time developing management skills. Given the state of many urban schools, such training is important.

However, the Participant clearly was motivated by intrinsic qualities I believe transcend a given management style or skill set. The Participant understands and lives by a code of ethics that, for thirty years, has supported the sense of mission from which the Participant functions. The Participant understands the difference between leadership and management. As defined by the Air Force Officer's Guide, leadership is of the spirit, compounded of personality and vision where management is of the mind, more a matter of accurate calculations, statistics, methods, timetable, and routine – its practice is a science. Managers are necessary; leaders are essential (Benton, 2005). Is the military definition of a leader and the corresponding characteristics in tandem to that of an education leader? Our work as educators is not with machines, buildings or systems. Our

work is with people, with children, teachers, parents and grandparents. People first need leaders; the need for managers is secondary.

Benton (2005) also admonishes military leaders to exercise leadership according to the need of the people and setting in which the leader is a part. In accordance, the Participant was trained by the military and as an officer for thirty years, has developed a strong sense of empathy for those whom the Participant leads. One cannot demonstrate empathy to things; the demonstration of empathy is directed toward people, toward those who carry out the mission. The Participant seems to know the people he leads. The letter recognizing teachers and nurses and the interaction with the elderly paraprofessional stands out as examples of empathetic leadership. That is not to say that the Participant has deviated from the mission. Hardly. The Participant spoke quite directly to a school principal regarding student data yet offered praise for accomplishments in areas where progress was evident. The Participant is an example of a leader whose sense of empathy supports and facilitates leadership.

The characteristics of successful leadership must be more clearly defined. Yes, in school leadership, results as they apply to student achievement are criteria of a successful leader. However, the route taken by a leader in order to attain said results is the crux of the issue at hand.

According to Reicher, Haslam and Platow (2007), effective leaders must understand the values and opinions of their followers rather than assuming absolute authority if they hope for long-term success. In addition, Golman (2002) describes emotionally intelligent leadership as an outcome of experience and growth. With age and



experience, the emotional intelligence increases and the leader experiences greater success. This view presents a conflict with the Kotter (1996) premise that, in general, the older worker represents a rigid worldview, resistant to change and is an obstacle to reform which must be removed.

Nontraditional leaders and traditional leaders alike can be defined by their character, integrity, empathy and loyalty to the mission. Is it possible the leadership model as described in the Air Force Military Field Guide is the building block upon which we construct the 21<sup>st</sup> century model of school leadership?

Further, military leaders gain experience as flexible leaders when they are transferred, usually every two years, to a different leadership assignment. Would our education system benefit from extending to education leaders an opportunity for professional growth if also reassigned on a regular basis? Would education leaders become more flexible, more empathetic and more politically astute if given the opportunity to experience leadership in different venues?

### **Reflections**

As I reflect on the journey this study has provided me, I cannot help but express gratitude for the opportunity to study the transition of a non traditional superintendent from military to an urban school district. I was cautious about the outcome of the study, as I had a strong bias against outsiders in general as school leaders, all the more, outsiders with a military background. Although I strongly support our military and hold all military personnel in high esteem, I held a firm belief that the military has its domain and public educators have a domain of our own. Each entity has system of governance particular to

their function and I was fairly certain the two systems could not mix, nor could military leadership transfer to anything other than retirement. How could a military officer immersed for a period of thirty years in a seemingly rigid system transfer said experience to an education environment? I recalled the thoughts of Thelma Meléndez, current Assistant Secretary of Education and Broad Fellow, that leadership skills are transferable, but remained unconvinced (Quinn, 2007). However, since my first meeting with the Participant, I began to wonder if my bias was unjustified. The Participant certainly carried self with the composure of a military officer yet, as I studied the transition from military to public school superintendent, I recognized a person of purpose, one determined as superintendent of schools to continue a personal mission of protecting and defending the right of children to learn.

While other nontraditional superintendents have entered their role with less finesse, the Participant was experienced as a leader to the degree that the existing culture of Urban School district and its leadership were kept intact during transition. Whether the participant was deliberate or directed by the mentor that the leadership team remain as it was found remains unclear. However, what is clear is that the Participant has chosen to develop the existing leadership of Urban School District. Following the example of John Stanford, the Participant has chosen rather than to create a new leadership “dream team,” to create an effective “dream team” of the existing leaders. The Participant has acknowledged the work of the previous superintendent and, rather than restructure to accommodate personal preferences, the Participant has shown respect and value for the

teachers, students, and community of Urban School District by maintaining and building upon the existing system.

Furthermore, I was more than surprised to find that despite our very different backgrounds, that is, military and education, the Participant and I share a fundamental personal belief about the role of educators. Indeed, I have learned it is possible for the two worlds of public education leadership and military to connect.

Paul Houston (Merrow, 1999), Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators, and a former traditional superintendent of schools, argued Stanford's success as a nontraditional superintendent was due to the fact that he had the human qualities and the leadership qualities that it takes to run a good school district, and that did not necessarily come with his army training, it came because of who he was as a person. Houston's statement may confirm my conclusion. I have learned through this study that good leadership skills are transferable when personal integrity and character are at the essence of the leader. I remain convinced that leadership is about people; management is about things.

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## Appendix A

### Superintendent Questionnaire I

1. Describe the military model of leadership and how your training as an Air Force Academy cadet prepared you for military leadership.
2. What skills/personal qualities do you possess that contributed to your success as a military leader? What were your areas of growth?
3. What were the motivating factors in your decision to apply for a position as public school superintendent? What were your concerns about your ability to succeed?
4. How did you prepare for the position of superintendent? (Describe any coursework, research, mentoring, strategies for interviewing etc.)
5. Describe the personal qualities, skills and/or experiences that have contributed to your transition to public school superintendent. (Discuss your areas of growth and tell how you have compensated in these areas.)
6. Describe the system of school leadership within which you now operate. What unexpected challenges in the education system have you encountered and how have you met the challenges?
7. Describe your strategies for fostering and maintaining positive relationships with the school board, the teacher's union and your school community. How do you address the diversity within each group?
8. Describe the areas in which as a nontraditional leader, you have met with greater success than your traditional counterparts in other districts.
9. Describe how being a nontraditional superintendent has hindered your success or has had a negative impact on your performance thus far.
10. Describe your entry plan and your process for creating and presenting the plan to your stakeholders.

## Superintendent Questionnaire II

1. In your opinion, why were you chosen over other candidates with a traditional background in education?
2. What were the issues facing the district that were communicated to you as being the issues of greatest importance?
3. In your opinion, what were the issues you identified as being of highest importance?
4. What systemic challenges have you encountered in your attempts to implement change?
5. How have you restructured the existing system in order to bring about success?
6. What were your first impressions of the school district, i.e., school board, administrators, schools, principals, teachers, students, parent community?
7. How do you measure your personal success as it pertains to your position as instructional leader?
8. Describe the relationship you have with your peer superintendents in Colorado.
9. How do you respond to opposition from within your leadership team?
10. Describe your most profound learning experiences as a superintendent of an urban school district. Knowing what you now know, would you again be a superintendent of schools?

## Appendix B

### The Broad Center for the Management of School Systems

Session Six: September 30-October 3, 2004  
 Doubletree Hotel-Post Oak, 2001 Post Oak Road, Houston, TX

#### Key Learning Objectives Covered in this Session:

Curriculum Strand	Specific Objective	Supportive Pre-Reading/ Pre-Work
CEO Leadership	Continue to develop and articulate a theory of action for achieving an effective urban school system Identify options and strategies for developing an effective leadership team, including selecting appropriate organization structure	Prepare presentation on own theory of action <i>"It Takes a City: Building a High Performance School District in Houston"</i> Case Study Part A <u>The Five Dysfunctions of a Team</u> , Patrick Lencioni, Jossey-Bass, 2002 <i>"Hire Power,"</i> Melissa Ezarik, District Administrator, December 2003 <i>Optional: "Leading Into the Unknown: How Lewis &amp; Clark Built a Great Team,"</i> Jack Uldrich, <i>Leader to Leader</i> , Summer 2004 <i>Optional: "Organizational Configuration and Performance,"</i> paper by William Ouchi, 2003 <i>"Facility Planning for Educational Change: The Perfect Storm,"</i> Thomas Brady, <i>Facilities Manager</i> , May/June 2002 <i>"School Facilities for the 21st Century: 12 Trends that Schools Facility Planners Need to Know About,"</i> Ken Stevenson, <i>School Business Affairs</i> , December 2001 <i>"The Condition of America's Schools: A National Disgrace,"</i> Faith Crampton, <i>School Business Affairs</i> , December 2002 <i>Optional: "Best Financial Management Practices for Florida School Districts: Maintenance,"</i> State of Florida, 2002 <i>"Cutting the Pie: Defining Equity,"</i> Cincinnati case study <i>"When Dollars Follow Students,"</i> DeRoche, Cooper, Ouchi, <i>The School Administrator</i> , August 2004 <u>Execution</u> , Larry Bossidy, Crown Business, 2002
Competence	Identify best practices and effective strategies in facilities management  Become familiar with effective strategies for alignment of resources for student achievement  Be committed to the efficient and effective management of district operations, with a focus on the support of student achievement	
Career	Understand typical and desirable processes for evaluating the superintendent's performance	<i>"Credible Evaluation: Not Yet State-of-the-Art,"</i> <i>"The Tenuous Nature of Superintendent Evaluation,"</i> <i>"Why the Evaluation Instrument May Not Matter,"</i> articles from <i>School Administrator</i> , February 2001 Complete portfolio and turn in 2 copies at session

## Agenda

Thursday, September 30

- 12:00 pm          Lunch
- 1:00 pm          Welcome, Review, Overview
- 1:30 pm          Leadership Story – Lynn Spampinato
- 1:45 pm          Facilitated Discussion: Readings on Leadership Teams –  
Nate Levenson
- 2:15 pm          Break
- 2:30 pm          Leadership Teams and Organization Structures – Tim Quinn  
*Tim will discuss the structure and composition of a superintendent's leadership team and how that relates to the organization structure, theory of action and current status of the district. Characteristics of peak performing teams and of dysfunctional teams will be reviewed. Issues regarding centralization vs. decentralization will also be covered.*
- 3:45 pm          Break
- 4:00 pm          When the Right Stuff Goes Wrong – John Barry  
*John will share lessons learned from the Columbia Accident Investigation that apply to team culture, organization and management.*
- 5:30 pm          Break
- 6:00 pm          Dinner
- 7:15 pm          Leadership Story – Cindy Loe  
Study Groups – Prepare for Houston Case Study and Cincinnati Case Study
- 8:30 pm          Adjourn

Friday, October 1

- 7:30 am Breakfast
- 8:00 am Facilitated Discussion of Execution – Helen Burt
- 8:30 am It Takes a City: Building a High Performance School District in Houston, Case Study Discussion – Tim Quinn
- 10:00 am Break
- 10:15 am Case Respondent – Cathy Mincberg, President, Center for School District Effectiveness and former Houston ISD Board Member
- 11:00 am Houston ISD: A Leadership Story –Abe Saavedra, Superintendent  
*Mr. Saavedra will share his leadership story, discuss his 100-day plan of entry, and provide an “outside-insider” perspective on the Houston ISD.*
- 11:45 pm Lunch
- 1:00 pm Operations Excellence – Cathy Mincberg  
*Operations excellence makes it possible for student achievement to happen. Ms. Mincberg will focus on Houston’s key initiatives in this area and share lessons learned. We will discuss various aspects of operations and talk about how the superintendent should structure each function for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. These areas will include procurement, outsourcing, food service, information technology and more.*
- 2:30 pm Break
- 2:45 pm Operations Excellence, continued
- 3:45 pm Break
- 4:00 pm Facilities Planning and Management – Tom Brady  
*Tom will share lessons he’s learned about planning and management of K-12 facilities, and discuss what a new superintendent should know about this area of operations.*
- 5:00 pm Final One-on-One Meetings with Faculty Advisors



*Faculty advisors will meet with advisees to conduct final review of portfolio and individual learning plan. Meetings will also be held with TBC staff to discuss individual plans for urban leadership.*

6:00 pm Dinner

7:00 pm One-on-One Meetings, continued

9:00 pm Adjourn

Saturday, October 2

7:30 am Breakfast

8:00 am Cutting the Pie: Defining Equity, Case Study – Karen

Hawley-Miles

Introduced by LaVerne Terry

*This case study demonstrates how one district implemented student-weighted budgeting and explores the choices they had to make. The concept of student-weighted budgeting will be covered in depth.*

9:30 am Break

9:45 am Budgeting and Resource Allocation – Karen Hawley-Miles  
*We will discuss the choices made in a district that impact the level of resources (time, people and money) that are directed to student achievement.*

11:45 pm Lunch

1:00 pm Leadership Teams, Organization Structure and Civic Capacity –  
Rob

Mosbacher, Jr., President, Mosbacher Energy Company

Introduced by Amy Rosen

*Mr. Mosbacher will provide a perspective on leading a large, complex, dynamic organization, building a strong senior management team, and business and community involvement in the success of an urban district.*

2:00 pm Break

2:15 pm Small Group Discussion: Theories of Action

*We will meet in small groups with our faculty advisors and present our theories of action for district reform.*

- 3:45 pm          Break
- 4:00 pm          Whole Group Discussion of Theories of Action  
*One presentation of a theory of action will be made from each small group for discussion by the whole group.*
- 5:15 pm          Adjourn
- 7:00 pm          Dinner - Café Annie, 1728 Post Oak Boulevard, 713-840-1111

Sunday, October 3

- 7:30 am          Breakfast
- 8:00 am          Leadership Story – LaVerne Terry
- 8:15 am          The Superintendent’s Performance Evaluation Process – Tim Quinn  
*We will discuss a variety of practices regarding evaluation of the superintendent’s performance, and identify the potential strengths and concerns of each. Professional ethics will also be addressed.*
- 9:15 am          Evaluation Metrics for Broad Superintendents – Becca Bracy
- 9:45 am          Weekend Wrap-Up
- “Amens and Epiphanies”
  - Preview and pre-work for next session
- 10:15 am          Adjourn

(G. Francis, Personal communication, August 24, 2009)

## **Appendix C**

### **The Air Force Leadership Concept**

Col. Benton (2005) describes the fundamental elements toward which effective leadership is directed as being the mission and the people. The primary task of the organization is to perform the mission. It is the people who perform the mission and the primary responsibility of an effective leader is to lead people to carry out a successful mission. Leaders care for the needs of the people quickly and fully so as to assure their support. (Benton, 2005)

Benton (2005) further explains personal characteristics such as integrity, commitment, loyalty, decisiveness and selflessness. The principles of leadership, guidelines for successful leadership as include self-knowledge, competency, communication and flexibility. He describes the responsibility of effective leaders as those who educate and train people, who are able to motivate others through public recognition. Benton (2005) goes on to describe the acceptance by leaders of responsibility for the mission and accountability for failure of the mission. He explains that there is no one perfect style of leadership; rather, effective leaders adapt to meet the needs of the mission, the people, and the environment. “Successful military leaders,” he explains, “adapt their leadership styles to meet mission demands and use approaches that capitalize on their strengths” (Benton, 2005, pp. 26).

## Appendix D

### Nontraditional Superintendents

<u>School District</u>	<u>Superintendent</u>	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Professional Background</u>
School District Of Philadelphia	Thomas Brady	2007- Present	Retired Army Colonel
Louisiana State Schools	Paul Pastorek	2007- Present	Attorney-at-law
Toledo Public School	William Harner	2007- Present	Army Lieutenant Colonel
Recovery District New Orleans	Paul Vallas	2007- Present	Budget Director, Chicago
Baltimore, Maryland	Andrés Alonso	2007 –Present	Attorney-at-law
Los Angeles. CA.	David L. Brewer, III	2006- Present	Navy Admiral
Aurora Public Schools CO.	John Barry	2006- Present	Air Force Major General
Pittsburgh Pennsylvania	Mark Roosevelt	2005- Present	Attorney-at-law
Duval County Schools	Joseph Wise	2005- Present	Walt Disney Studios Executive
Fairfied-Suisun Unified, CA.	Arnold W. Carter	2005- Present	Retired Army Colonel
Richardson School District	Jim Nelson	2004-2006	Attorney-at-law
E. Baton Rouge Schools, LA.	Charlotte Placide	2004- Present	Finance
Bowling Green Schools, OH	Hugh Caumartin	2004- Present	Marine Lieutenant
Seattle, WA. Public Schools	Raj Manhas	2003-2007	Finance
Minneapolis Public Schools	David Jennings	2003-2004	State Legislator
Benton Harbor, MI	Paula Dawning	2002-2000	AT&T Sales Executive
NY City Schools	Joel Klein	2002-Present	Attorney General, US Justice Dept.

School District of Philadelphia	Paul Vallas	2002-2007	Budget Director
Madison Plains Local Schools, OH	Adam Miller	2001-2002	Attorney
Savannah-Chatham, GA.	John O'Sullivan	2001-2004`	USAF Colonel
Miami-Dade FL.	Merrett Stierheim	2001-2004	Public Service
Bethel Schools, WA.	Thomas Seigel	2001-Present	US Navy Commander
East Valley Schools, WA.	Jim Scherzinger	2001- Present	Legislative Staff Member
Chicago Public Schools	Arne Duncan	2001- 2008	Professional Basketball Player
Philadelphia Schools	Philip Goldsmith	2000-2001	Banker
Brevard Count	Richard DiPatri	2000- Present	State Education Commission
Cobb County, GA.	Joseph Redden	2000-2005	USAir Force General
Los Angeles, CA,	Roy Romer	2000-2006	Three-term Co. Governor
Okaloosa Co. Schools, FL.	Dan Gaetz	2000-2005	Owner, VITAS Health Care
Greenville County, SC.	William Harner	2000-2004	Army Lieutenant Colonel
Oklahoma City, OK.	William Weitzel	2000-2002	Business
NY City Public Schools	Harold Levy	2000-2002	Attorney and Finance
Dallas Independent Schools	Michael Moses	2000-2004	Commissioner of Education
Polk County FL. Schools	Roscoe Thornhill	2002-2006	Government Administrator
Gig Harbor, WA.	J. J. Coolican	1999-2005	U.S. Marine Colonel
Austin Independent Schools	Pasquil Forgive	1999-Present	Government Administrator
New Orleans Public Schools	A.G. Davis	1999-2002	U.S. Marine Colonel

Seattle, WA. Public Schools Joseph Olchefske 1999-2003 Investment Banker

Kansas City, MO. Benjamin Demps, Jr. 1999-2001 Attorney

Eatonville, WA. #404 Raymond Arnett, III 1998- Present U.S. Army Colonel

Baltimore City Schools Robert Booker 1998-2000 Chief Financial Officer

Seneca County. OH. Michael Wank 1998-Present College Vice President

Cincinnati Public Schools Stephen Adamowski 1998-2005 Sec.of Education

Duval Co. Public Schools, FL. John Fryer, Jr. 1998-2000 USAF Major General

Detroit, MI David Adamany 1998-1999 University President

Greenville County William Harner 1998-1999 U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel

Denver Public Schools, CO. Jerry Wartgow 1998- 2005 University President

Boulder Valley, Co. Thomas G. Seigel 1997-2000 U.S. Navy Commander

District of Columbia Schools Julius Becton Jr. U.S. Army Lieutenant General

Chicago Public Schools Paul Vallas 1995-2001 Director, City of Chicago

Seattle Public Schools, WA. John H. Stanford 1995-1998 U.S. Army Major General

Houston, TX. Dr. Rod Paige 1994-2001 Dean, College of Education

School District of Philadelphia David Hornbeck 1994-2000 Attorney

Federal Way, WA. Thomas Vander Ark 1994-1999 Business

District of Columbia Michelle Rhee 2007- Present New Teacher Project

(Sanchez, 2008, pp. 228-232)