The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on the Leadership of Public School Superintendents

Antoinette Fulcher Gutierrez
Brandman University, annie-julio@hotmail.com

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The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on the Leadership of Public School Superintendents

A Dissertation by

Antoinette Fulcher-Gutierrez

Brandman University
Irvine, California
School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

April 2017

Committee in charge:
Dr. Phil Pendley, Ed.D, Committee Chair
Dr. Marilyn Saucedo, Ed.D
Dr. Martinrex Kedziora, Ed.D
BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY
Chapman University System
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of Antoinette Fulcher-Gutierrez is approved.

Dr. Phil Pendley, Ed.D

Dr. Marilyn Saucedo, Ed.D

Dr. Martinex Kedziora, Ed.D

Associate Dean Patricia Clark-White, Ed.D

April 2017
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout this journey, I have had many people who have lifted me up, pushed me along, and overall made sure I didn’t quit. Without Dr. Pendley’s constant reminder that working on my own timeline is ok, I wouldn’t have made it this far. Thank you for grounding me and keeping me moving towards this moment.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my husband and family. My husband, Julio Gutierrez, told me before beginning that “you are only really happy when you are learning” as he agreed to support this venture. He has seen the crying and answered the questions about whether I could really finish. He never wavered in his response to me “you have never quit anything before, why would you now?” Thank you, love, for being my strength. To my children who somehow made me feel supported even when they told me “we never see you anyways, what would be the difference?” but have made me slow down during those times we were together to appreciate the quality of the time I did get to spend with them over the last three years.

Secondly, I would like to thank the person who suckered me into this in the first place. My mentor, my cheerleader, my friend, Marilyn Saucedo, who supported me throughout the program while I worked for her and still, hers is the voice I hear in my head as I make decisions and strive to be the best me I can be.

Finally, I would like to thank Marisol Sanchez, who always made sure I made it to where I needed to be and on time as well as counseled me on some of my days of frustration, and my Billings neighbors who understood that I couldn’t be there for things for the last three years. Cheers!
ABSTRACT

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on the Leadership of Public School Superintendents

by Antoinette Fulcher-Gutierrez

**Purpose:** The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the perceptions of current public school superintendents in Southern California regarding the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. An additional purpose of this study was to describe any differences between current male and female superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership.

**Methodology:** The phenomenological study design was a semi-structured interview process (Patton, 2015) of a sample of current California public school superintendents with an equal number of both male and female interviewees. The instrumentation of the study was a set of interview questions adapted from Bradberry and Greaves’ emotional intelligence framework.

**Findings:** Emotional intelligence contributes to the superintendents’ being able to lead effectively, supporting the following attributes: appropriately reacting and responding to a variety of situations, learning through coaching and mentoring, effectively communicating with all stakeholders, building relationships, being aware of the emotional intelligence in others, living up to the expectations of being a leader, providing strategies to mitigate emotional reactions, and creating emotional safety. There are no significant differences in the responses between male and female superintendents.
**Conclusions:** Emotional intelligence is an essential part of a superintendent’s leadership. Although the majority still believe it can be learned and developed, many see it as difficult to teach. Females are more aware of the differences in standards between genders than men are; however, both men and women share the same perception of the effect of emotional intelligence on their leadership.

**Recommendations:** Examine whether race changes perceptions of the effect of emotional intelligence on the superintendents’ leadership: Extend the study to different regions in California and outside of California to see if the same themes hold true or if it is regional: Examine models of emotional intelligence in administrative development programs and their effectiveness: Examine the comparison between responses in the effects of emotional intelligence on the superintendent’s leadership with those in their organization such as employees, board, and other stakeholders: Explore willingness to mentor of female and male superintendents: Explore effect of networking or coaching and mentoring to the effectiveness of a superintendent’s leadership.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The students of today are going to grow up and be the members of society who make decisions on the direction our country will take in the future. Educational leaders must prepare the students for this future by effectively leading educators to adopt best practices, starting from the top personnel in an organization (Sinek, 2014). With all of the changes in education over the past 5 years, there is a greater need for leaders with a different set of skills (Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Fullan, 2011). Although the research collectively uses the term transformational leadership to define a set of skills that can effectively mitigate change (Anderson & Anderson, 2010), what those skills are vary by study. Although the variables differ, there is a general understanding that what defines transformational leaders as different from transactional or managerial leaders is the component of human change (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Anderson & Anderson, 2010).

Emotional intelligence is one such component of transformational leadership that is a part of leading change. Being a relatively new field of research, emotional intelligence is largely regarded as the human component of being able to understand, reflect, and self-monitor emotional reactions to self and the environment (Bar-On, 2006; Goleman, 2006a; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Bradberry and Greaves (2009) wrote that leaders who have strong emotional intelligence have the ability to lead more effectively. Chapter II explores the research supporting that statement as well as the studies on the emotional intelligence of leaders in organizations across industries. Top-level leaders in education have the ability to model emotional intelligence for leaders who work for them in the organizations but first must lead from the inside out (McKee, Boyatzis, &
Leading from the inside out would include the evaluation of the leader’s emotional intelligence and the perceptions of his or her employees.

Reviewing the three frameworks for emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2006; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), leaders must be able to understand and control their emotional response to the people around them as well as to respond appropriately to the emotions and behavior of others. This is an important part of effective transformational leadership as defined by Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010). As an effective transformational leader, emotional intelligence helps leaders lead their employees through the changes the organizations go through. In this technological age, not only do business organizations change, but education is also going through record changes (California Department of Education, n.d.-b).

Background

There are many changes occurring in education at the time of this study with Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, discipline policy attention, and a cry for equity throughout the state (California Department of Education, n.d.-b; Education Trust-West, 2015). Leaders need to have new skills now more than ever to lead the change that education is going through (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010).

Public Education

According to Tuthill’s (2012) definition, public education can be “all learning options that satisfy mandatory school attendance laws, including those that don’t receive public funding, such as private schools and home-schooling” (para. 1). Despite the variations of the definition, this study considers a public school (n.d.) to be as defined by
Webster’s Dictionary, a “school that gets money from and is controlled by a local government.”

**Changes in Public Education**

According to California Department of Education, Common Core State Standards went into effect in 2010, replacing No Child Left Behind as the current standards that drive the curriculum and instruction of schools throughout California. The changes in standards shift in a couple of ways. First, the Common Core refers to standards adopted by many states across the United States, allowing collaboration and comparative testing throughout much of America (California Department of Education, n.d.-b). Second, common core standards were developed by looking first at the skills that students needed to possess upon entering postsecondary schools. The focus now is more on skill development, including problem solving and creative thinking in both literacy skills and math, than on retained and regurgitated information (California Department of Education, n.d.-b).

**Next Generation Science Standards.** Following Common Core State Standards, which focuses on literacy and math skills, the California State Board of Education adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These standards incorporate engineering components as well as reevaluate the course sequence that students should take in both middle and high school. The course sequence suggests a more integrated approach to the standards by identifying reoccurring themes throughout nature (California Department of Education, n.d.-d) instead of the historic separation of disciplines such as life science, physical science, and so forth.
Legislation on discipline policies and equity. There is a focus on equity that incorporates two bodies of work that have received attention recently that highlight the discrepancy in the equality of education in California schools. They are *Black Minds Matter*, a publication put out by Education Trust-West documenting the history of policies affecting African Americans in California’s school system and the “School-to-Prison Pipeline,” a publication outlining the effects of the zero-tolerance stance that schools in the United States took that resulted in a high number of suspensions of students of color (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], n.d.). These have resulted in legislative action to reverse these trends, causing schools to implement “other means of correction” in accordance to AB 1729 (California Legislative Information, n.d.), attempting to prevent suspensions and break the patterns of high student dropout rates, which lead to high incarceration rates.

Role of the Superintendent in the Current Environment

Although the structures of public school systems vary, with many grade-level configurations and sizes (McEntire, 2002), there are usually a superintendent and a governing board for the district, however it may be configured. The superintendent is the chief executive officer of a school district. A superintendent is usually hired by the school board of the district as an executive leader to the board (Browne, 2015).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders are aware of the complexities of the company they run as well as the people that it takes to run them (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010). Ackerman Anderson and Anderson included mindset, behavior, culture, and systems of the individual all the way to the marketplace where the organization is situated. An
additional component is added while going through the change process. The argument is that for leaders to effectively lead through change, these characteristics of transformational leaders are necessary for success of the organization.

An added layer is the idea of leading from the inside out (George, 2007; Goleman et al., 2013; McKee et al., 2008). This is a reflective process where leaders get to know themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, hot buttons, and values, so they may better lead others to know themselves better and be present in every moment (McKee et al., 2008; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004), leading to deeper levels of leadership according to Maxwell (2013).

**Transformational Leadership in Public Education**

The current changes in education require a transformational leader to assist with the higher order of change that is happening (Ackerman Anderson, & Anderson, 2010; Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Fullan, 2014; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). The new kind of leader in business is just as applicable in education. More than anything, the stakeholders in education are multiple layers of people, from the superintendent and the board, to the site leaders, the educators, and staff, to parents. Even the “product” is human, being the students themselves. The productivity of the people in organizations is linked to the actions of the leader (Wiseman, Allen, & Foster, 2013). The transformational leader in education requires more than management and a content knowledge of the business. An educational leader needs skills in human development and the ability to influence human behavior (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Covey, 2006; Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, & Switzler, 2008; Sinek, 2014; Wiseman et al., 2013).


**Emotional Intelligence**

One such component in leading from the inside out as influencing others is emotional intelligence. The ability to understand one’s emotions, manage them, and understand and effectively manage the emotions of others (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Goleman, 2006; Mayer & Salovey, 1997) was coined as emotional intelligence by Mayer and Salovey and was further popularized by Daniel Goleman in the 1990s. Emerging out of the study of effective businesses, researchers looked at organization theory to identify what made companies successful as opposed to other companies without such success. This led to the conclusion that inferred there was something more at play in organizations than just the hierarchical structure, business model, or other plan. Researchers discovered that the human element was a vast and complicated component of whether a company exists or thrives in its respective market. Delving deeper, the research began to look at leaders in successful organizations. Emotional intelligence emerged as a component of effective leadership alongside other attributes (Goleman, 2006; Goleman et al., 2013; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Bradberry and Greaves came out with an emotional intelligence test in their publication *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* in 2009. This combined the original ideas of Mayer and Salovey of emotional intelligence as a concept in leadership with the further studies of Goleman and brought it to the general public in the form of a self-assessment, with strategies on improving one’s emotional intelligence. This models the results of research that emotional intelligence can be learned and developed (Mukhuty, 2013).
Theoretical frameworks for emotional intelligence. There are three frameworks for measuring EI. They are interrelated with the differences being in the skills they attribute to being part of an emotionally intelligent leader.

Mayer and Salovey. The original researchers who coined the term referred to previous research on leadership and synthesized concepts they deemed to have similar qualities that had not yet been explicitly segregated from other qualities. They looked at previous emotion-communication instruments such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory by Butcher, Dahlstrom, Graham, Tellegen, and Kreammer (1989) and the Schalling-Sifneos Personality Scales Revised by Sifneos (1986). Salovey and Mayer (1990) suggested that a more accurate assessment of expressing emotions is emotional intelligence. They highlighted regulation of emotion in the self and in others. They further listed components that indicate strong emotional intelligence as the ability to have flexible planning, to be creative thinkers, to be able to have mood-directed attention, and to motivate emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Bar-On. Finally, a more detailed measurement by Reuven Bar-On contained five overall domains with 15 subscales. Dr. Bar-On described the Bar-On model as having two distinct parts: the conceptual construct or theory of emotional intelligence and the psychometric component as the measure of emotional intelligence combined as a collective entity (Bar-On, 2006).

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee. In this framework, there are four domains of emotional intelligence competence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. These four domains are also seen in Bradberry and Greaves’ emotional intelligence test (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). According to Goleman et al.
(2013), self-awareness is defined as “reading one’s own emotions and recognizing their impact” (39). Goleman et al. defined self-management as “keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control” (p. 39). They defined social awareness as “sensing others’ emotion, understanding their perspective, and taking active interest in their concerns” (p. 39). Finally, according to Goleman et al., relationship management is “guiding and motivating with a compelling vision” (p. 39). Leaders with all four of these skills, they argued, are transformational leaders. This study used their framework as a basis of the interview questions, given the broad overview and lack of complexity compared to Bar-On’s instrument.

**Emotional intelligence and transformational leadership.** Leadership has been defined in a variety of forms, but according to Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010), transformational leadership “requires a broader and deeper knowledge of the people and process dynamics of change” (p. 3). In organizations, a strong leader results in a strong organization. What makes a strong leader, however, has always been elusive. There have been a variety of theories about what makes a good leader, including knowledge, personality types, and expertise in the field (Clark White, Harvey, & Kemper, 2007; Covey, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005; McKee et al., 2008; Patterson et al., 2008). Emotional intelligence started to explain how leaders interact with themselves and each other as being a leadership quality crucial to maintaining relationships and thus motivating people to be a part of something greater than they are (Goleman, 2006; Goleman et al., 2013; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

**Emotional intelligence and gender.** There have been extensive studies on gender differences in leadership; however, emotional intelligence is a relatively new concept, so
there are fewer studies on exploring gender as it pertains to emotional intelligence and effective leadership. Results are mixed, however, and researchers have found both significant gender differences (Mandell, & Pherwani, 2003) and no gender difference, depending on the study (Higgs & Aitken, 2003; Lokelani Bryson, 2008; Mukhuty, 2013; Sosik, & Megerian, 1999; Tang, Yin, & Nelson, 2010; Yunus & Anuar, 2012).

**Emotional intelligence in other fields of study.**

**Medical.** There have also been studies in the medical field on the effect of emotional intelligence on leaders. One such study found that there is a correlation between reflective practice and the development of the physician to improve in two of the six core clinical competencies (Hammerly, Harmon, & Schwitzberg, 2014).

**Business.** This has the largest body of research contributing the validation that emotional intelligence is a predictor of effective leadership (Davis Jordan, 2009; Hopkins, O’Neil, & Williams, 2007; Yuan & Hsu, 2012).

**Education.** This is the area with the least amount of research on emotional intelligence of its leaders. Although many of the concepts of emotional intelligence studies can theoretically be applied to education, there have not been many studies to validate these concepts. Overall, these studies confirm that that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on effective leadership (Benson, Fearon, McLaughlin, & Garratt, 2014; Hall, 2007; Hanlin, 2013).

**Emotional Intelligence in Superintendents’ Leadership**

Since there have been fewer studies of emotional intelligence in education, it follows that there are even fewer studies on the emotional intelligence of leaders within education. The rarest studies have been on superintendents in the public school system.
What is known about emotional intelligence. It is known that emotional intelligence is a component of effective transformational leaders (Goleman, 2006; Goleman et al., 2013; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It has been further demonstrated that emotional intelligence can be learned and fostered (Benson et al., 2013; Muyia, 2008; Yuan & Hsu, 2012). It was also explored that emotional intelligence can be a way for leaders to effectively manage stress (Hall, 2007). These studies, however, do not pertain specifically to a superintendent’s leadership and how emotional intelligence plays a part.

Future research. There are many contradictions in the studies throughout the industries. One difference in findings of whether emotional intelligence is an important trait to being an effective leader was solved in a meta-analysis (Martin, 2008) that found that emotional intelligence is an important factor of effective leadership. In addition to the meta-analysis, there are additional studies that further strengthen this finding (Hanlin, 2013). There is a study on emotional intelligence and how it compares to the perception of employees of these transformational leaders (Harrison, 2006). Another discrepancy is whether or not there is a gender difference in emotional intelligence. This has resulted in the need for further research by many of the studies that explored gender in the context of emotional intelligence (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003; Megowan, 2012). Finally, there is a lack of studies on emotional intelligence of leaders in education including principals, district office personnel, and superintendents.

Statement of the Research Problem

The educational system is where future generations are being trained and prepared for the world as it is and as it will be. With the changes in education such as the new Common Core State Standards (California Department of Education, n.d.-b), new science
standards (NGSS; California Department of Education, n.d.-d), legislation on discipline (California Legislative Information, n.d.), and focus on equity by the state as seen by the recent publications, there is a need for understanding change and change dynamics by the educators and leaders who are employed to educate during these times (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010). This requires a shift in teaching but more importantly in leading these changes, requiring the ability to help lead others in their emotional journey through change (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Fullan, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005).

Current research labels leaders with a unique set of skills as transformational leaders, those who differ in their skill set than the traditional or transactional leaders of the past industrial age (Anderson & Anderson, 2010). These skill sets include emotional intelligence, which is the ability to be aware of both personal and group emotions and to monitor one’s owns emotions as well as those in a group (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Goleman, 2006a; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

In leading these changes, a superintendent must work not only with the other leaders throughout the organization but also with other groups that could affect the tenure of the superintendent in that district. One of these is the school board, who is responsible for governing the school district, including “employing the superintendent” (California School Board Association, 2007, p. 4). The requirements to be a part of a school board in California consist of being 18 or older, a citizen of the state and resident of the school district, a registered voter, and not disqualified to serve in the position (California School Board Association, 2007). There is no requirement to have any background in education or in leading change, creating a wide range of people whom the superintendent must also
lead through this time of change. Another group that interacts with the superintendent is the unions that represent the bargaining members of that district. Union members may also influence the effectiveness of a superintendent through negotiations in contracts and what may or may not be allowed to move forward, such as changes in positions or districtwide initiatives. Other groups and stakeholders, such as minority constituents, athletic boosters, municipal governments, special education advocates, and parent groups, are examples of the variety of issues and stakeholders a superintendent must be able to deal with effectively. These are specific examples of where emotional intelligence, the ability to be aware of both personal and group emotions as well as to monitor one’s own emotions as well as those in a group, affects the success or tenure of a superintendent (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Goleman, 2006a; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Emotional intelligence has been explored in a variety of fields of leadership, including business, medical, and education (Benson et al., 2014; Davis Jordan, 2009; Hall, 2007; Hammerly et al., 2014; Hanlin, 2013; Hopkins et al., 2007; Yuan & Hsu, 2012); however, there has been very little exploration of emotional intelligence on the leadership of school superintendents. Emotional intelligence has been shown to be a contributing factor of effective leaders, based on different quantitative studies using instruments of emotional quotient such as EQ-i or other such measures (Goleman, 2006; Goleman et al., 2013; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

These studies provide the correlation between emotional intelligence scores and other data related to leadership such as 360-degree surveys but have not provided qualitative data on how emotional intelligence affects a superintendent’s leadership from day to day. In addition, due to the disparity in male to female superintendents (Kowalski,
McCord, Petersen, Young, & Ellerson, 2011), there have been mixed results from comparative studies of the effect on emotional intelligence on leaders’ effectiveness based on gender.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the perceptions of current public school superintendents in Southern California regarding the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. An additional purpose of this study was to describe any differences between current male and female superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership.

**Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research question: How do current superintendents describe the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership with respect to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management and what similarities and differences exist between male and female perspectives?

**Research Subquestions**

1. How do current male and female district superintendents describe the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in the following four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management?

2. What differences in perception exist between current male and female district superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership?
Significance of the Problem

According to McKee et al. (2008), “The best leaders get results by courageously striving to become the best people they can be, while making decisions that ensure a viable future for the individuals, organizations, and countries they lead” (p. 2). Superintendents not only have to make the best decisions for their organizations, but they especially need to ensure a viable future for the people who work for them as well as their clients, a unique charge. They must do this while leading through the variety of external change drivers (Ackerman & Anderson, 2010) such as Common Core State Standards, NGSS, discipline legislation, and the conversations about equity for students. To do this, McKee et al. (2008) argued, leaders must reflect and become aware of themselves, their passions, beliefs, and reactions to things. This is the resonant leadership, which is their term for transformational leadership. In a school district, the superintendent is generally the person who makes the day-to-day decisions, oversees district- and site-level leadership, and serves the needs of the students and community members with the board’s help (Martins, 2012).

As part of this reflection and striving to improve, emotional intelligence has arisen as a skill that is seen by effective leaders in many organizations despite the differences in terms that are used (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Tang et al., 2010; Yunus & Anuar, 2012). It was only recently that the terms emotional intelligence and emotional quotient have risen to popularity (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Since these terms are relatively new, there has not been exhaustive research on how emotional intelligence applies to educational leaders. This study will add to this body of knowledge in this field. Specifically, it explores how superintendents
view the effect of emotional intelligence on their leadership. How the top leaders in education view the effectiveness of emotional intelligence in their leadership provides information about its relevancy in leading through these current changes.

In addition, the study can affect more than just adding to the literature. Superintendents in California have an average tenure of less than 3 years, according to an EdSource review (Freedburg, 2014). Many of the reasons cited are involved in the relationships between the superintendent and the board as well as special interests, including unions, that cause superintendents to fall out of favor (Frey, 2012). An election change of board members alone can affect the dynamic of a superintendent’s tenure. Managing such change requires the exercise of advanced emotional intelligence skills. Given the turnover rates of superintendents, an ability to have improved relationships might decrease the turnover rates and increase tenure and therefore effectiveness in implementing change. According to Yuan and Hsu (2012) and Bradberry and Greaves (2009), emotional intelligence can be learned. If this is the case, the study would affect not only the turnover rate of California superintendents, but also possible leadership training programs to better prepare future educational leaders to deal with the inconsistency and ambiguity that is a part of their environment. Not only does this study have implications for retention, but it can also serve as an opportunity for coaching and improving current site- and district-level leadership to the level of superintendent. Finally, the research question about gender may also assist in these coaching or recruitment practices as well as help these training programs incorporate growth mindsets (Dweck, 2008) about the abilities of both genders to be proficient as a transformational leader with high emotional intelligence.
Definitions

The following definitions were used throughout the study.

**Emotional intelligence.** The ability to understand one’s emotions, manage them, and understand and effectively manage the emotions of others (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Goleman, 2006a; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

**Impact of emotional intelligence.** Impact is defined by Webster’s dictionary as having a strong effect on someone or something. The impact of emotional intelligence is a perceptual understanding of the interviewee as to the degree that emotional intelligence plays a role in their daily duties as a superintendent.

**Public education.** Schools that get money from and are controlled by a local government (Webster’s Dictionary).

**Self-awareness.** One of the four domains in the emotional intelligence framework, this is defined as the ability of a person to accurately perceive one’s own emotions in the moment and understand one’s tendencies across situations (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

**Self-management.** One of the four domains in the emotional intelligence framework, this is defined as what happens when a person acts or does not act using his or her awareness of his or her emotions reacting to situations or people (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

**Social awareness.** One of the four domains in the emotional intelligence framework, this is defined as the ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people and understand what is really going on with them, including perceiving what others are thinking and feeling (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).
**Relationship management** also known as **social management**. One of the four domains in the emotional intelligence framework, this is defined as the ability to use one’s own awareness of one’s emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

**Transformational leadership.** Leadership that contains a “broader, deeper knowledge of people and process dynamics of change” (Ackerman Anderson & Ackerman, 2010, p. 3).

**Delimitations**

This study is delimited to current superintendents in Riverside County and San Bernardino County who meet the criteria of both having served as a superintendent for a minimum of 1 year and currently residing and/or serving in either Riverside or San Bernardino County.

**Organization of the Study**

The first chapter of this research paper was designed to provide an overview of the literature review and the overall scope of the study and introduce the topics further explored throughout the paper. Chapter II includes a comprehensive literature review pertaining to the topics pertinent to this study. Chapter III outlines the process of the research done, including sampling and methodology. Chapter IV reviews the findings, and Chapter V describes the findings of the study as well as suggesting further research.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter explores the current changes in education which are prompting the need for a different type of leader than ever before. These leaders are changing from being transactional leaders or managers to transformational leaders. This chapter delves into the research on emotional intelligence as a component of transformational leadership and how it relates to facilitating change in a variety of settings, including the medical industry, business world, and in education, including the three main frameworks used in the research, which are the works of Salovey and Mayer (1990), Bar-On’s (2006) EQ-i, and Bradberry and Greaves’ (2009) Emotional Intelligence 2.0, based on the research by Goleman et al. (2013). The four domains of the framework that are used in this study are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. Finally, the chapter discusses the role of a superintendent in a school district, the research on gender differences in that role, and the gap in the research on the emotional intelligence of superintendents. Matrices were created to highlight the categories present in the research (see Appendix A).

Educational Changes and Leadership

Public Education

Students across the nation are required to attend school per the original Compulsory Attendance Act of 1852. California “requires children between six and eighteen years of age to attend school, with a limited number of specified exceptions” (Legislative Analyst’s Office, 2004). Each state modifies these laws to require all children to attend these schools, making schools a major influence in all our lives. In California alone, roughly 6.2 million students were enrolled in public schools in the
2014-2015 school year compared to 541,000 enrolled in charter schools (California Department of Education, n.d.-c). This makes the majority of students in California enrolled in public schools in the state, as defined by California Department of Education.

According to Tuthill’s (2012), public education is defined as “all learning options that satisfy mandatory school attendance laws, including those that don’t receive public funding, such as private schools and home-schooling” (para. 1). Despite the variations of the definition, this study considers public school (n.d.) to be as defined by Webster, a “school that gets money from and is controlled by a local government.” Given the general definition and the percentage of students who attend public schools, it is imperative that students have positive experiences that prepare them for the future. In addition to the large body of students, there are many shifts in the educational system.

**Changes in Public Education**

There are many changes occurring in education at the time of this study and over the past decade with Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, discipline policy attention, and a cry for equity throughout the state (California Department of Education, n.d.-b, n.d.-d; Education Trust-West, 2015). Leaders need to have a different set of skills now than they have had in the past to lead the people through the change that education is going through (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997; Zuieback, 2012).

**Common Core State Standards.** According to California Department of Education (n.d.-b), Common Core went into effect in 2010, replacing No Child Left Behind (NCLB) as the current standards that drive the curriculum and instruction of schools throughout California. The changes in standards shifted in a couple of ways.
First, the Common Core refers to standards adopted by many states across the United States, allowing collaboration and comparative testing throughout much of America (California Department of Education, n.d.-b). Second, they were derived from the required skills needed for postsecondary institutions such as college and career opportunities after the K-12 system. The focus now is more on skill development, including problem solving and creative thinking in both literacy skills and math, than on retained and regurgitated information (California Department of Education, n.d.-b). Common Core focuses on higher depth of knowledge levels, such as analyzing and applying, than the previous NCLB standards as well as a cross-disciplinary approach to literacy (California ELA Framework, 2015).

**Next Generation Science Standards.** Following Common Core State Standards, which focuses on literacy and math skills, the California State Board of Education adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in September of 2013 (Academic Benchmarks, 2015). These standards incorporate engineering components into the standards as well as reevaluating the course sequence that students should take in both middle and high school. The course sequence suggests a more integrated approach much like the Common Core State Standards (California Department of Education, n.d.-b) than the historic separation of disciplines such as life science, physical science, and so forth.

The shift to NGSS was attributed to a group of distinguished researchers, both public and private in 2009, determining that the U.S. science and math education is not producing the results that allow for U.S. citizens to compete in a global society (Next Generation Science Standards, n.d.-b). This conflicts with the idea that a modern
workforce requires innovation for Americans to achieve the American Dream and continue to grow in the current economy. The evidence cited to support this deficit are reduction of the United States’ competitive edge, including lowered share of patents being issued worldwide and a lowered amount of high-tech exports. Another common reason for the need to increase science education is the lagging achievement of U.S. students in Program for International Student Assessments (PISA) scores, scoring 23rd in science out of the 65 developed countries around the world. In addition, 54% of high school graduates did not meet the ACT’s college readiness levels in science (Next Generation Science Standards, n.d.-b). Given the lack of preparation the committee felt American students had, they cited the scientific concepts as essential preparation for all careers in the modern workforce as well as crucial in being prepared for the problems society will face in today’s world such as energy shortages, environmental threats, and interpreting one’s own health data. The entire report published by the Carnegie Corporation can be viewed on their website (Carnegie Corporation of New York, n.d.).

Given these reasons, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) convened a committee of 18 people who were renowned in their fields, including practicing scientists, cognitive scientists, science education researchers, and science education and policy experts as well as four design teams to create the framework for what the standards became (Next Generation Science Standards, n.d.-a). These are now the foundation of the science curriculum in public education today.

**Legislation on discipline policies and equity.** There are two bodies of work that have received attention recently that highlight the discrepancy in the equality of education in California schools. They are *Black Minds Matter*, a publication put out by
Education Trust-West (2015) documenting the history of policies affecting African Americans in California’s school system. Another publication that examined equity in education is the “School-to-Prison Pipeline,” which outlined the effects of the zero-tolerance stance that schools in the United States took that resulted in a high number of suspensions of students of color (ACLU, n.d.). These have resulted in legislative action to reverse these trends, causing schools to implement “other means of correction” in accordance with AB 1729 (California Legislative Information, n.d.), attempting to prevent suspensions and break the patterns of high student dropout rates, which lead to high incarceration rates. This shift in paradigms is prompting community movements and activism such as #schoolsnotprisons, a political group trying to shift the funding from prison to education in an effort to provide additional supports in schools as a prevention from feeding the school-to-prison pipeline Californians for Safety and Justice, n.d.).

These publications all touch on changing the paradigms education has functioned under for centuries. Common Core unites the nation’s educational system more cohesively by allowing states to compare their progress with one another, and NGSS requires more critical thinking. In addition, the no tolerance stance in discipline that has been embraced in education is being replaced with one that requires an understanding of how to interact with children to modify behavior in an effective way. These changes are being led by various levels of leaders including teacher leaders, principals, and district administration. The person leading all of those leaders is the school superintendent.

**Role of the Superintendent in the Current Environment**

Although the structures of public school systems vary, with many grade-level configurations and sizes (McEntire, 2002), there are usually a superintendent and a
governing board for the district, however it may be configured. A superintendent is usually hired by the school board of the district as an executive leader to the board (Browne, 2015). The duties include everything from personnel decisions such as hiring and firing leadership; setting the vision of the school district and the direction it will be going; overseeing student achievement, budget, and resource allocations; and being a liaison with community partners and board members (Browne, 2015). Throughout this, the superintendent must lead his or her employees through the changes previously discussed, dealing with the human elements of the change process.

In addition to leading his or her employees throughout the organization, the superintendent also educates the governing board, union leaders, and the general public about education. Much of the high turnover of superintendents in California is attributed to a lack of consensus building with these groups (Frey, 2012). While superintendents are expected to be serving these groups, they are often also educating them, as not all have a background in education (California School Board Association, 2007). All the while, the primary responsibility for any superintendent is student achievement results. They must achieve results through leading change efforts and communicating with a multitude of stakeholders including their respective boards of education. This task is grander than previously required of leaders in education who were just responsible for managing the plant (Anderson & Anderson, 2010).

There are various levels of leadership in education responsible for leading the changes to education, including Common Core, NGSS, and the shift in discipline paradigm; however, the district superintendent is ultimately responsible, as the chief executive officer, of everything within the domain of a functioning school district.
(Browne, 2015). Other issues that have been involved in education that also require
direction and sometimes action from the superintendent include bullying in schools,
ensuring diversity in the hired staff as a representation of the student population, and
mitigating gender and/or LGBT concerns including which bathrooms students can use,
depending on their identified gender. A superintendent must be aware of politics of a
given district, including special interests, and the overall needs of the community and
must be able to effectively read and anticipate the interests and reactions of his or her
community.

In addition to these changes, there are everyday duties that have not been
mentioned that require the superintendent’s attention, indicating a much more complex
job than student achievement. Many of these job duties are outside the classroom or
school site but require attention, such as construction and modernization to ensure that
there is a master plan for the future predicted enrollment. While all of these and more are
a part of the job, relationships are critical with all factions with which a superintendent
comes into contact every day. The wide variety of individuals and interest groups with
which a superintendent interacts and does business with requires advanced ability to read
and anticipate others as well as manage one’s own behaviors and emotions. The
superintendency is a varied, challenging, and highly active position that requires the
superintendent to be effective in a wide variety of arenas and circumstances.

**Research on Transformational Leadership**

Most of the literature on transformational leadership has been focused on business
organizations, often quoting CEOs and other levels of leaders in business (Ackerman
Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Anderson, & Anderson, 2010; Fullan, 2014; Maxwell,
Due to the constantly changing world of business, constant competition, and the speed of technological advances, it makes sense that businesses would seek to identify an edge over the other companies. The research on leaders of successful businesses led to identifying differences in the old paradigm of a leader to the current idea of the transformational leader.

The differences between the previous style of leadership as more of a plant manager and the one that is needed for leading in today’s environment, often known as transformational leadership, have stark differences in the focus of their work. There has been a large body of research and books written about the need for a different type of leadership needed for today’s organizations (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Fullan, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005; Maxwell, 2013; McKee et al., 2008). Although the definitions vary slightly about what transformational leadership is versus what previous leadership looked like, such as management, transactional leadership, or being a plant manager, there is an overall agreement that transformational leadership contains a “broader, deeper knowledge of people and process dynamics of change” (Ackerman Anderson & Ackerman, 2010, p. 3). This describes the shift from managing a location to managing people, which is a more complex task. People have emotions; opinions; ideas; and varying motivations, values, and beliefs. With the focus for leaders now on leading through the myriad changes that companies go through as well as operating in a technological age, the leaders of today must now consider the human aspect of their employees in the workforce.

Even as early as 1997, Bennis and Goldsmith predicted that the decades following the publication of their book would “most likely experience a period of unrest unequalled
in this century” (p. 19), citing social concerns such as growing disparity between rich and poor and inverted trust factor with authority. They also cited what leaders now need is to inspire trust, to do the right thing, to challenges the status quo, and to have a long-range perspective. This creates additional responsibility of leaders to navigate the skepticism about those in charge, the expectation that leaders must earn respect instead of demand things using their title, and being the forward thinker to challenge the status quo to improve society.

Transformational leaders are aware of the complexities of the companies they run. They are also more aware of the mindset and behavior needed from the employees to be successful and the culture and systems that need to be created to maximize the effectiveness of these employees. Not only are transformational leaders aware of these things in the organization but they are also aware of the context their organization is operating in in the marketplace (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010). Things such as mindset and behavior are deeply embedded concepts within an individual and are not the same for any two people in an organization. The challenge for any leader then is how to use that diversity for the good of the company.

Not only does the leader need to recognize the attributes of their employees, but in some cases, they also must create shifts in the areas of mindset and behaviors to move the organization forward. To change behavior or mindset is a complicated process that requires more skills than the knowledge of the systems and structures of a company. Dweck (2008), in her book Mindset: The New Psychology of Success, attributed much of her success to a shift in her belief system to a growth mindset instead of a fixed mindset. In very simple terms, this is a change in belief that people can grow and change and are
not fixed in any of their abilities. She argued that “changing people’s beliefs—even the simplest ones—can have profound effects” (p. ix). While an organization is going through a change process, even changes in belief systems or mindsets, there is a human element that must be mitigated to effect change. The argument is that for leaders to effectively lead through change, transformational leadership is necessary for success of the organization (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010).

Another transformational leadership concept is the idea of leading from the inside out (George, 2007; Goleman et al., 2013; McKee et al., 2008). This is a reflective process where leaders get to know themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, hot buttons, and values, so they may better lead others to know themselves better and be present in every moment (McKee et al., 2008; Senge et al., 2004). Maxwell (2013) suggested that self-reflection and actualization leads to deeper levels of leadership. By focusing inward, transformational leaders can model continuous improvement; can work on their own mindset, beliefs, and vision; and be aware of strengths and weaknesses to better lead using their strengths and improving their weaknesses.

**Transformational Leadership in Public Education**

Although there has been less research and literature on transformational leaders and change focused specifically in the educational field, many of the findings have been parallel to what is being published in business (Marzano et al., 2005; Wiseman et al., 2013). Wiseman et al., in their book *The Multiplier Effect*, cited effective leaders as people who can create a highly motivating work environment, removing fear, creating safety, and demanding people’s best effort, paralleling the human element as a component of an effective leader in today’s organizations. Their meta-analysis began
looking at business leaders where they discovered these aspects of great leaders. They then went back and applied their research specifically to education to see if the results held true in a different field. The results did indeed prove to be true. Wiseman published two books based on her research: one was focused on the field of business in Multipliers (Wiseman & KeKeown, 2014) and the other one in education called The Multiplier Effect (Wiseman et al., 2013). This is the only study found that purposefully began in business and was re-done in education. Ultimately, Wiseman et al. (2013) discovered that the concepts were prevalent in both business and educational organizations.

Previously, education had not changed as rapidly as it has today. Education has operated with paradigms that were established when the public school system was preparing its citizens for the assembly lines in industrialization. One example is the way the school day is set up at most high schools, with segmented time blocks around an hour at a time, regulated by a bell ringing that signifies the beginning and end of each time block. This mirrors the factory work experience. That world is no longer the world we send our children out to once they exit the public school system, as the committee that developed NGSS argued (Next Generation Science Standards, n.d.-b). The world has changed to a more global society, requiring students to be prepared with a different set of skills than before. Technology has also changed the way education functions. Previously, teachers were the givers of information, providing access to history and other things in the world. Now anyone can look anything up online. This access to information changes the function of teachers and of the educational system. Students in today’s education system are different with different skills than ever before (International Education Advisory Board, n.d.). These teachers and site leaders are all charged with
preparing students differently than they were prepared, creating a system-wide need to shift. These current changes in education require a transformational leader to assist with the higher order of change that is happening (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Fullan, 2014; Marzano et al., 2005).

The idea of a transformational leader, as already stated, is one who can focus on the human aspect of those he or she leads. There are a multitude of stakeholders in education, including the superintendent, the board, the site leaders, the educators and staff, and parents. Although these are the people that educational leaders interact with, the difference with business is that even the intended “product” is human, being the students themselves. Since the productivity of the people in organizations is linked to the actions of the leader (Wiseman et al., 2013), the leader is essential to the success of the organization—in this case the success of the students. The transformational leader in education requires more than management and a content knowledge of the business. An educational leader needs skills in human development and the ability to influence human behavior (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Covey, 2006; Patterson et al., 2008; Sinek, 2014; Wiseman et al., 2013).

**Emotional Intelligence as a Transformational Leadership Concept**

Transformational leadership includes a variety of skills, including knowledge of people and the change process (Ackerman Anderson & Ackerman, 2010), but also leading from the inside out. One concept that encompasses these things such as inspiring trust, being self-aware, and guiding people through change is emotional intelligence. For a person to be a transformational leader, they must have a level of proficiency in emotional intelligence.
**Emotional Intelligence**

The ability to understand one’s emotions, manage them, and understand and effectively manage the emotions of others is called emotional intelligence (EI; Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Goleman, 2006a; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The term emotional intelligence was coined by Mayer and Salovey and was further popularized by Daniel Goleman in the 1990s. Emerging out of the study of effective businesses, multiple researchers looked at organization theory to identify what made companies successful as opposed to other companies without such success. This led to the conclusion that inferred there was something more at play in organizations than just the hierarchical structure, business model, or another plan. Researchers such as Goleman discovered that the human element was a vast and complicated component of whether a company exists or thrives in its respective market. Delving deeper, the research began to look at leaders in successful organizations. Emotional intelligence emerged as a component of effective leadership alongside other attributes that largely are considered the traits of transformational leadership (Goleman, 2006b; Goleman et al., 2013; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Some of the concepts the research looked at were similar to what the literature referred to in transformational leadership concepts such as employee motivation, trust in their leaders, and outcomes.

Following the extensive writings of Goleman, Bradberry and Greaves published an emotional intelligence test in their publication *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* in 2009. This combined the original ideas of Salovey and Mayer on emotional intelligence as a concept in leadership with the further studies of Goleman and brought it to the general public in the form of a self-assessment, with strategies on improving one’s emotional
intelligence. Bradberry and Greaves’s book incorporated strategies on improving in each of the four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management, including concrete activities to use to build the skills in each of the four domains of emotional intelligence as they defined it. Although there is a belief that some leadership skills are inherent in personality, Bradbury and Greaves model the concept that emotional intelligence can be learned and developed (Mukhuty, 2013).

**History.** Although the term emotional intelligence was coined in the 1990s by Salovey and Mayer, the theme of having social behavior expectations dates back to primary sources such as the Code of Hammurabi, the Ten Commandments, and Edicts of Emperor Ashoka (Goleman, 2006). Goleman explored the history of the concepts beginning with the laws of the land, including social norms of behavior, to impose a rule over its people. In the Code of Hammurabi (n.d.), the laws stated are the expectations of how to handle disputes and other social norms such as theft, property disputes, and the expected behavior of those with authority such as judges while performing their professional duty. The Ten Commandments summarized the moral and behavioral expectations of its followers into 10 laws. The Edicts of Emperor Ashoka are the 14 laws, adapted from Buddhism to be his law of the land, governing the behavior of its people. All of these documents are the beginning of the idea that common rules should be stated instead of assumed and that there are varying degrees of social awareness and acceptability, prompting the need for such social norms (Ashoka, n.d.). From these times throughout history, the focus on how societies act changed to the individual in the literature.
The concept of social intelligence was seen in the literature once research began trying to understand the individual, primarily in psychology. Thorndike and Stein (1937) attempted to define social intelligence as “the ability to understand and manage people” (p. 275), describing how people interact with one another in social settings and trying to understand why some people were able to better relate to others. Cronbach (1984) wrote in his article in “Essentials of Physiological Testing” that “despite 50 years of investigation, social intelligence remained undefined and unmeasured” as late as 1960s (p. 188). In looking in the previous research, the idea of social intelligence was more of an abstract idea than a concrete measure as researchers looked at various levels of success of individuals. Although referenced in the literature, the concept was never truly defined nor was there a measurement tool created to identify what a socially intelligent person looked like. Salovey and Mayer (1990) furthered the research, validating Cronbach’s claim.

The term emotional intelligence was the outcome of the furthered research by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as an attempt to define social intelligence and became “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (p. 189). They were the first to create a framework, a list of abilities that define what emotional intelligence looks like. They succeeded in defining the vague idea of social intelligence and established a foundation for further research.

The concept of emotional intelligence was further expanded by Goleman (along with other researchers such as Boyatzis, McGee, and Cherniss) by applying these concepts to a variety of contexts in a human’s life (Goleman, 2006b) as well as creating a
measurement tool for those pieces that make up emotional intelligence (Goleman et al., 2013). Goleman (2006a) expanded on the literature through several books, including *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. In the book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, Goleman (2006a) created a case about the existence of emotional intelligence as a claim that “all emotions are, in essence, impulses to act, the instant plans for handling life that evolution has instilled in us” (p. 6). He further described how the brain functions when the body experiences an emotional response as “one way the prefrontal cortex acts as an efficient manager of emotion-weighing reactions before acting is by dampening the signals for activation sent out by the amygdala and other limbic centers” (p. 26). This shows that although emotional reactions are normal and elicit a physical response, there is a moment in time between the emotional trigger and the decision to react. It is in this space that emotional intelligence can be developed to change the outcome of the interaction.

In *Working With Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman (2006b) explored how taking advantage of this space between feeling an emotional response and reacting can benefit individuals in the workplace. Stating the need for organizations to have employees and leaders with self-mastery as well as people skills, Goleman argued for emotionally intelligent organizations. In *Primal Leadership*, Goleman et al. (2013) took the idea of emotional intelligence deeper not only to focus on the organization as a whole but also to make the case for the emotionally intelligent leader and the importance of emotional intelligence on creating an effective and successful business. All of these publications argued for the definition of emotional intelligence, its importance in an effective work
environment, and more importantly, how leaders having proficiency in emotional intelligence are more likely defined as transformational leaders.

**Theoretical frameworks.** In the *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology* (Spielberger, 2004), there are three main frameworks for measuring emotional intelligence: Salovey and Mayer, Bar-On, and Goleman. Although stated in 2004, the same three are prevalent in today’s research. They share the basic assumptions of what makes up emotional intelligence as seen in the research. Some of the ways that they differ are the skills and way of measuring the different components they attribute to being part of an emotionally intelligent leader.

**Salovey and Mayer.** The original researchers who coined the term emotional intelligence referred to previous research on leadership and synthesized concepts they deemed to have similar qualities that had not yet been explicitly segregated from other qualities. They looked at previous emotion-communication instruments such as the *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory* (Butcher et al., 1989) and the *Schalling-Sifneos Personality Scales* (Sifneos, 1986) to determine whether these measures identified what they thought to be emotional intelligence. They determined that the measures gave a different result than they were previously given. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined the areas that they felt were important, which then became the tenets of emotional intelligence. Since these researchers discovered that emotional intelligence had yet to be identified in past research, they described it in their publication and began comparing existing measures to their definition of what emotional intelligence entails. Salovey and Mayer defined it holistically as the regulation of emotion in the self and in others. They did, however, diagram the more intricate pieces of their theory to include
subsets of each of those areas, including appraisal and expression, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion (see Figure 1). The subcategory appraisal and expression includes people’s verbal and nonverbal expression as well as the interpretation of those nonverbal expressions. They further listed components that indicate strong emotional intelligence as the ability to have flexible planning, to be creative thinkers, to be able to have mood-directed attention, and to motivate emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Figure 1. Emotional intelligence.

This model became the original framework for discussing and researching emotional intelligence. In their original publication, no new assessment was created or recommended. They referenced existing measures to the ideas they believed made up emotional intelligence (stated previously in this chapter). This collection of previous research and the creation of the definition served as the foundation for the other two major frameworks identified in the research on emotional intelligence as seen in the next two models.
**Bar-On.** The researcher Reuven Bar-On (2006) built on Salovey and Mayer’s research. Their framework is the most complex of the three models and incorporates an assessment to measure an individual’s emotional intelligence as defined by Bar-On. The original version of the assessment contained 133 items in the form of short sentences with a Likert scale measuring from *very often true to me* to *very seldom true to me*. The Bar-On Model of Social and Emotional Intelligence (EQ-i) is divided into two parts: a theory or general construct and the actual measure of the intelligence. These two parts of the model have also been referred to as (a) the Bar-On conceptual model of emotional-social intelligence and (b) the Bar-On psychometric model of emotional-social intelligence, respectively. The tool identifies an overall score and subscores for 15 different categories, including the following:

- Self-regard
- Emotional self-awareness
- Assertiveness/emotional self-expression
- Independence
- Empathy
- Social responsibility
- Interpersonal relationship
- Stress tolerance
- Impulse control
- Reality testing
- Flexibility
- Problem solving
• Self-actualization

• Optimism

• Happiness/well-being

The literature references the Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence, which includes both the conceptual idea of emotional intelligence and the measure of it as a comprehensive whole. The instrument classifies the 15 different areas into five domains. The five domains are intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood (Bar-On, 2006). The changes from the original assessment reduced the number of responses from 133 to 125 and finally to 51, re-normed and recorded in 2011 but basically remaining the same in the domains and categories.

In addition to the EQ-i, Bar-On also created the EQ-360, an assessment based on the same categories as the EQ-I, but intended for others to rate the person based on their perceptions of their emotional intelligence instead of the original style of self-rating. When done together, Bar-On found that there was an 89% alignment between the self-ratings and the ratings on the individual by others (Bar-On, 2006).

Although the EQ-i is most commonly seen in the research on emotional intelligence, Bar-On (200) argued that there will be a third major paradigm shift in psychology, citing the first two as being social intelligence and emotional intelligence. Bar-On argued that this next shift is being seen already, the change from overemphasizing the importance of emotional-social intelligence toward the inclusion of other important predictors of human behavior and performance, a more balanced approach to the entire individual. Bar-On also created variations of his assessments to
prepare for this shift. The MMP, Multifactor Measure of Performance, includes the following components, according to his webpage:

1. Physical and health factors
2. Cognitive and adaptive factors, including cognitive intelligence, that help us to do the correct thing
3. Emotional and personal factors, including emotional intelligence, that help determine how successful we are in the things we do
4. Social and inter-personal factors, including our moral competence and spiritual development which are community-oriented, that guide us in doing the right thing
5. Motivational factors that energize us and keep us engaged in navigating life

Bar-On continued to have emotional intelligence on the list; however, he included physical health and other factors including the whole person. In addition to Bar-On’s prediction of future research, he created the newest assessment being piloted which focuses on motivation, the MQ-I, Motivation Quotient Inventory, not directly targeted for emotional intelligence but focused on motivation, a derivative of the MMP and developed as a stand-alone assessment.

**Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKeely and Bradberry and Greaves.** The most current assessment tool targeting only emotional intelligence comes from the researchers Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKeey. Goleman coauthored the original *Primal Leadership* document in 2013 with fellow researchers, not only staking claim of the importance of emotional intelligence but also describing in detail how it affects people and leaders in their life in the work setting. Bradberry and Greaves (2009) cited this
publication as the origination of their assessment in *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*. In Bradberry and Greaves’s framework, there are four domains of emotional intelligence competence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. These four domains are also seen in Bradberry and Greaves’s (2009) emotional intelligence test.

Self-awareness was defined by Goleman et al. (2013) as “reading one’s own emotions and recognizing their impact” (p. 39) or by Bradberry and Greaves (2009) as the “ability to accurately perceive your emotions in the moment and understand your tendencies across situations” (p. 24). This is how one is aware of one’s own biases and things that may make one angry or emotionally reactive.

Self-management was defined by Goleman et al. (2013) as “keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control” (p. 39). In direct relationship to being self-aware is the ability to then consciously “act-or do not act” on those emotional responses (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009, p. 32).

Social awareness was defined by Goleman et al. (2013) as “sensing others’ emotion, understanding their perspective, and taking active interest in their concerns” (p. 39). This is an awareness outside of one’s self about the emotional state of those around oneself, including what they may be thinking and feeling.

Relationship management, according to Bradberry and Greaves (2009), combines all three of the previous skills by incorporating them into the “ability to use your awareness of your own emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully” (p. 44). Goleman et al. (2013) added that this skill allows leaders the ability of “guiding and motivating with a compelling vision” (p. 39).
Leaders with all four of these skills, they argued, are transformational leaders.
The book also provides strategies on improving each of the four skills based on the outcome of the assessment, which is done online. This study used this framework as a basis of the interview questions, given the broad overview and lack of complexity compared to the Bar-On instrument. In addition, it is the newest framework and assessment identified in the research.

**Emotional intelligence and gender.** There have been extensive studies on gender differences in leadership; however, emotional intelligence is a relatively new concept, so there are fewer studies on exploring gender as it pertains to emotional intelligence and effective leadership. Results are mixed, however, and researchers have found both significant gender differences and no gender differences at all depending on the study. The research is not conclusive regarding gender and whether there is or is not a difference in emotional intelligence; however, there is more research concluding that there is a difference than there is disputing it.

One such study that determined that females exhibited a higher score than males in every emotional intelligence ability was a descriptive study on project managers (Burgan, 2013). These managers were evaluated on perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. The subjects were administered the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence test (MSCEIT) as well as a questionnaire to determine which emotional intelligence ability was the most important to the subjects. Although Burgan (2013) concluded that the subjects in her study were very close to the average population’s emotional intelligence, females outscored their male counterparts in each of the areas.
Another study done in 2003 by Mandell and Pherwani determined that although there were no differences in the transformational leadership scores of males and females, there was a significant difference in the emotional intelligence scores of male and female managers. The mean total of emotional intelligence scores of females was higher than that of males. These are just two examples of studies demonstrating differences in gender related to emotional intelligence.

There are, however, a few studies that concluded that no gender difference was found (Akintunde, 2012; Benson et al., 2014). One example is a correlational study of emotional intelligence on bio-pharmaceutical industry district sales managers. According to the study, the differences between men and women were noticeable on two of the scales they measured; however, the differences were less than one segment difference and thus not meaningful with regard to the overall profile of men and women (Megowan, 2012). In another study done on emotional intelligence of principals (Condren, 2002), when the data were split by gender, correlations still were not statistically significant; however, it is to be noted that while there were slightly positive relationships for females between levels of emotional intelligence and leadership areas, for males there were slightly negative relationships noted. These, however, were not found to be significant.

When differences were found, the emotional intelligence components were usually higher in feminine roles versus masculine roles or in women than in men (Duehr, 2006; Megowan, 2012; Rivera-Cruz, 2004). For example, one study done in the lighting industry discovered a relationship between gender (women) and the interpersonal composite EQ-i scores (Bar-On, 2006) supporting previous research that women tend to
be more skilled in the interpersonal relationship areas consisting of empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationships (Noland, 2008).

Other aspects of the differences between males and females in regard to gender and emotional intelligence were pointed out in various studies throughout the literature. One such study concluded that women showed a significant difference in seven competencies and men in six of the 21 competencies of the emotional intelligence competency framework used in the study. It was also shown that women display a higher level of their competencies at home and men at work, a result of what she determined to be behavior that is in line with the gender role dynamics and the cultural characteristics of the sample (mostly Latino/a). These differences in displaying emotional intelligences in differing contexts such as work and home were also attributed to societal stereotypical roles (Rivera-Cruz, 2004).

Two other studies confirmed the socialization of gender roles playing a part in the proficiency of emotional intelligence skills (Lopez-Zafra, Garcia-Retamero, & Berios Martos, 2012; Zomer, 2012). One study by Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) asserted that both gender roles (femininity) and emotional intelligence (emotional clarity and emotional repair) are related to transformational leadership and predict the extent to which an individual is transformational in his or her leadership style. This is, however, dependent upon gender roles and not necessarily related to sex (male and female). Another study by Zomer (2012) made a similar claim that gender differences in both emotional intelligence and coping strategies emerged from the study, with the differences being “mostly attributed to the socialization of gender role (i.e., the degree of agentic and communal traits) rather than sex (i.e., being male or female)” (p. 150).
Another finding on emotional intelligence and gender was refuting previous research that female leaders have poor self-awareness and therefore underrate their own performance as leaders. In a study by Turkel (2008), the 360-degree assessment was administered to leaders’ direct reports, and Turkel compared those results to her self-reported skills. The findings refuted the previous claims and discovered that the female leaders did not underrate themselves, were aligned with what their direct reports perceived their emotional intelligence to be, and thus were self-aware of their leadership skills (Turkel, 2008).

**Emotional intelligence in other fields of study.** Overall, the research contradicts itself with findings that emotional intelligence has little or no effect on leadership effectiveness and other findings that emotional intelligence does have an effect on leadership effectiveness. There are a variety of findings on both sides in the various fields of study such as in the medical field, the business field, and in education. Studies with both findings in each of the industries are explored further in this section.

Some researchers found little or no effect of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness (Hall, 2007; Kirkland, 2011; Lokelani Bryson, 2008; Smith, 2005; Snuggs, 2006), and others, such as Heindel (2009), questioned the instrument itself, stating that the “conclusion drawn after interacting with this leader and hearing feedback from her direct reports was that that results of her assessment were more an indication of how she viewed and took standardized test and less about her emotional intelligence” (Heindel, 2009, p. 56). Another study on the effect of senior managers’ emotional intelligence on employee morale found there was no correlation between emotional intelligence and employee morale (Nagy, 2008). Similarly, Brown’s (2005) study suggested no
correlation between leaders’ use of emotional intelligence and the motivational behavior of employees/followers.

While some studies conclude that emotional intelligence has little or no correlation with effective leadership, there is just as much research concluding that emotional intelligence does influence leadership effectiveness. A study by Hanlin (2013) on high school principals exemplifies this with the finding that a “strong positive correlation was found between a high school principal’s research-based leadership practices and their emotional intelligence” (p. 71). Other studies also support these finding (Alston, 2009; Evans, 2016; Hernandez, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2007; Mukhuty, 2013; Schmitz, 2004; Stevens, 2010; Stubbs, 2005; Tang et al., 2010). One study specifically indicated that a subset of the emotional intelligence competency of relationship management was found to be the best predictor of leadership practices and accounted for approximately 26% of the variability (Heiken, 2006).

With a multitude of studies on both sides, it is difficult to determine empirically whether emotional intelligence has an effect or does not have an effect on leadership just by reading the individual studies. There was, however, a meta-analysis done with 48 studies, including studies that determined there was no correlation between leadership effectiveness and studies that found there was a correlation. The meta-analysis had a total of 7,343 participants and revealed a moderately strong relationship that emotional intelligence shares with leadership effectiveness (Martin, 2008), concluding that overall, there are more studies that have a correlation between emotional intelligence and effective leadership.
These studies ranged over a variety of contexts to determine the findings that are commonly seen in the literature on emotional intelligence and leadership. There are three common fields into which these studies can be classified; they are the medical or healthcare professions, business, and education.

**Medical.** In the medical field, the idea of emotional intelligence is not new. There have been studies on the effect of emotional intelligence on leaders in this field at varying levels of leadership. One such study found that there is a correlation between reflective practice and the development of the physician to improve in two of the six core clinical competencies, using the 360 feedback along with self-reflection (Hammerly et al., 2014). Other studies explored the relationship between overall emotional intelligence and leadership potential, and Higgs and Aitken (2003) found “evidence that EI [emotional intelligence] may be a predictor of leadership potential” (p. 821). Another quantitative descriptive study was designed to measure perceptions of emotionally intelligent behaviors for nurse administrators. Results indicated that conflict management and empathy may be prevalent in this group of subjects (LaMerle Duckworth, 2011).

Another study on bio-pharmaceutical industry sales managers also found a link but extended it to prove the concept that emotional intelligence can be learned and developed, which has strong support in the literature (Megowan, 2012). This has implications for how this study on emotional intelligence can be used in the future. The study of research and development teams also determined there was a link between emotional intelligence and effectiveness in their job functions (Yuan & Hsu, 2012). Overall, these studies mentioned similar findings that emotional intelligence is linked to effective leadership or otherwise effective employees across a variety of medical jobs.
**Business.** The bulk of the research on emotional intelligence has been done in the corporate or business setting. This has the largest body of research contributing the validation that emotional intelligence is a predictor of effective leadership (Davis Jordan, 2009; Evans, 2016; Gonzales, 2010; Hamilton, 2008; Hernandez, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2007; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003; McLaughlin, 2012; Mukhuty, 2013). In addition to the validation of the link between emotional intelligence and leadership, there are also differing results in the research that determined no correlation between emotional intelligence and leader success (Amundson, 2003; Harris, 2009; Lokelani Bryson, 2008; Nagy, 2008; Noland, 2008; Ohrberg, 2010; Sykes Hendee, 2002). Many of these studies, among others, were already included in the meta-analysis.

Other findings from business concluded that project managers in mortgage sales have average emotional intelligence compared to the general population (Burgan, 2013). In addition, emotional intelligence instruments are really a self-assessment instrument, which may be the cause of some of the discrepancies in studies (Heindel, 2009).

**Education.** This is the area with the least amount of research on emotional intelligence of its leaders. Although many of the concepts of emotional intelligence studies can theoretically be applied to education, there have not been many studies to validate these concepts. Overall, these studies confirm that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on effective educational leadership (Benson et al., 2014; Condren, 2002; Hall, 2007; Hanlin, 2013; Heiken, 2006; Solan, 2008).

Other findings about emotional intelligence in education, however, are few and are not generalizable to the leadership of the superintendent. One study specifically stated that emotional intelligence was not significantly linked to individual performance.
In another study, there was no significant relationship found between emotional intelligence and teacher burnout, but there was a link between emotional intelligence and general mood (De Vito, 2009). In the field of education, board of education members also are successful with higher emotional intelligence (Hopkins et al., 2007), and some researchers found no link between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness (Hall, 2007; Snuggs, 2006). These variations parallel the studies of emotional intelligence in the other fields of study.

It is known that emotional intelligence is a component of effective transformational leaders (Goleman, 2006; Goleman et al., 2013; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It has been further demonstrated that emotional intelligence can be learned and fostered (Benson et al., 2014; Muyia, 2008; Yuan & Hsu, 2012). It was also explored that emotional intelligence can be a way for leaders to effectively manage stress (Hall, 2007). Moore (2009) argued that without “leaders who understand, accept, and work with emotions associated with school reform, the intellectual, collaborative, and social capacities of students and teacher may never reach their full capabilities” (p. 25). This argues not only for the importance of knowledge of emotional intelligence but also the usage of the skills in leadership. These studies, however, do not pertain specifically to a superintendent’s leadership and how emotional intelligence plays a part.

**Emotional Intelligence in Superintendents’ Leadership**

Since there have been fewer studies of emotional intelligence in K-12 education, it follows that there are even fewer studies on emotional intelligence in educational leadership and as a result, fewer studies of superintendents’ leadership within education and the emotional intelligence of these leaders. To provide quantifiable data to
demonstrate this, the researcher reviewed all of the dissertation abstracts listed on the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations (2015); its purpose was initially to study all that is known about emotional intelligence in the workplace. There were 275 abstracts of dissertations done between 1998 and 2015. These studies were in all industry sectors and contained only the concept of emotional intelligence in common. The total of studies done in K-12 education was 42 (15%), the total done in educational leadership was 36 (13%), and the total number involving school superintendents was four (1.5%). Similar results were found in the Leatherby Library, through Chapman University, where there were 88,654 results for emotional intelligence, 1,234 results using both emotional intelligence and educational leadership, and 18 using emotional intelligence, educational leadership, and superintendent. Only one result was found that incorporated all of the previous terms plus gender as part of the study.

What We know

Of the 18 total results from the Leatherby Library search, nine were discounted for not being specific to superintendents, such as Social and Emotional Learning for Leaders by Cherniss (1998). An additional study was not included in the research because it was a case study of a man and his transition from the military to a superintendent, and another one was a duplicated listing. This left seven studies to explore from that search and an additional two from the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations (2015) that were not duplicates in the prior list. In addition to these searches, additional studies were found using cited works as well as Google scholar.
The research has determined that emotional intelligence, in the various fields, does overall have a positive relationship to leadership effectiveness in other fields of study such as medical, business, and education, it may also be the case for superintendents. There is not a substantial amount of evidence in the research; however, there are three quantitative studies validating these findings. One quantitative study by Richard Hansen (2010) determined there was a connection between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership that was not affected by age, race, or gender. Another quantitative study found there was a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and superintendent success as defined as district performance (Perez, 2008). Finally, Hargett-Neshyba (2015) examined 137 superintendents in Texas using both a self-report emotional intelligence test and a multifactor leadership questionnaire and correlated the two concepts. She found there to be a correlation.

A qualitative study found on superintendents’ effectiveness and emotional intelligence was A Descriptive Study Describing the Emotional Intelligence Abilities of Superintendents and Identifying the Personal and Professional Strategies They Utilize to Develop and Maintain High Levels of Emotional Intelligence (Harrison, 2006). All eight superintendents interviewed agreed that emotional intelligence was critical to leading the school district, claiming that “evaluating the emotions of others and understanding their perceptions was identified as key components in communicating effectively with other people” (Harrison, 2006, p. 233).

An additional responsibility of a superintendent is to work with the board of education. Two studies focused on this relationship and, although not exclusively, linked emotional intelligence and working superintendent-board relations. Johnson (2011) used
emotional intelligence, rational leadership theory, and multiple intelligences to provide effective leadership practices that facilitate teamwork between the superintendent and the board. Wilson (2016) focused on African American superintendents and their longevity as it relates to having the superintendent’s perception of his or her leadership and emotional intelligence and the board having the same perception of the superintendent’s leadership and emotional intelligence.

Another quantitative study on the characteristics of effective superintendents listed leadership/vision стратегический мышечник/problem solver, communication, community relations, and interpersonal skills as the top four characteristics needed to be a successful superintendent as cited by district superintendents (Henry et al., 2006). Communication, community relations, and interpersonal skills are all identified as needing emotional intelligence skills (Goleman, et al., 2013). This demonstrates that three of the four listed skills to be an effective superintendent are related to emotional intelligence. Although this outcome lists these skills, there was no framework used in the study on emotional intelligence.

One study on superintendents and gender identified three perceived barriers women face when trying to attain a superintendent position. These barriers, Wickham (2007) stated, included “conflicting demands of family, lack of ability to relocate as a result of personal commitment, and exclusion from the informal socialization process of the Good Old Boy Network” (p. 78). No mention of emotional intelligence was found in this study, but based on the limited amount of research on superintendents, this was included to demonstrate the limited amount of research on superintendents.
Given the need of superintendents to lead an organization through the many changes it is enduring, the many entities with which they must maintain positive relationships, and the evidence that emotional intelligence is linked to leadership effectiveness, further research is necessary. Since emotional intelligence has been linked to effective superintendents and is necessary to relationships with others such as the board, the perception of the effect of emotional intelligence on superintendents’ leadership can be explored more fully to provide guidance on training and professional development of leaders seeking to advance to the superintendency and to strengthen the research to include the geographic area of Southern California.

**Summary**

This chapter explored the changes in educational paradigms as well as the role of the superintendent in facilitating these changes. The research on transformational leaders discussed the variety of skill sets needed to lead organizations currently, in both business and educational organizations. It looked deeper into emotional intelligence as a concept associated with transformational leaders, including the recent and past history of its inception and the research in a variety of contexts including medical, business, and education. The research on emotional intelligence and gender was mixed on whether there is or is not a difference of emotional intelligence depending on whether one is male or female. It was concluded that there is a lack of substantial research on emotional intelligence of school superintendents, thus creating the purpose of this study.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Chapter III describes in detail how the study was conducted. The phenomenological study design was a semi structured interview process (Patton, 2015) of a sample of current California public school superintendents. This chapter restates the purpose and research questions, the research design, and the population and sample. This chapter also discusses the instrumentation of the study, which was a set of interview questions adapted from Bradberry and Greaves’s emotional intelligence framework. It also describes how the researcher increased both the reliability and validity of the study during the creation of the instrument, the process of conducting interviews, and the triangulation of the data once they were collected. Finally, this chapter includes the data collection process and limitations of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the perceptions of current public school superintendents in Southern California regarding the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. An additional purpose of this study was to describe any differences between current male and female superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question: How do current superintendents describe the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership with respect to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship
management and what similarities and differences exist between male and female perspectives?

**Research Subquestions**

1. How do current male and female district superintendents describe the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in the following four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management?

2. What differences in perception exist between current male and female district superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership?

**Research Design**

This phenomenological qualitative study was designed to address emotional intelligence and its effect on district superintendents’ leadership. According to Flipp (2015), qualitative research “explores the meaning of people’s experiences, cultures in particular issues or cases” n.p.). This study sought to gather human perceptions about the world around the subjects or about the situations in which they find themselves. Since this study sought to explore the perceptions of emotional intelligence from both male and female superintendents, a qualitative study was an appropriate method as it sought to explore the meaning of emotional intelligence in the context of their professional roles.

A phenomenological study, according to Patton (2015), “aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” (p. 115). The phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study because the interviews were seeking information from the subjects about their everyday experience with emotional intelligence and how it applies to their leadership, seeking meaning in those experiences. This study focused on emotional intelligence, a component of every person’s reality, as
people’s minds comprise both intellectual and emotional thinking. According to Goleman (2006), “These two minds, the emotional and the rational, operate in tight harmony for the most part, intertwining their very different ways of knowing to guide us through the world” (p. 9). Using the phenomenological framework allows the exploration of the everyday experiences of one’s emotional mind and the perceived importance of emotional intelligence on the role of both male and female superintendents.

The primary data collection process for this research study was the interview. This allowed the researcher to be allowed into the other person’s perspective, which is based, according to Patton (2015), on the “assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful and knowable and can be made explicit” (p. 426). This process aligns with the design of the study and the research questions that sought to answer what superintendents perceive the impact of emotional intelligence is on their leadership.

**Population**

The population of a study, according to Patton (2015), is “the group in which researchers are ultimately interested” (p. 45) and is further defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) as “a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn into which results can be generalized” (p. 129). Given the generality of the description, the population for this study is all current public school superintendents in California. This population was chosen because the research questions require a population of both male and female superintendents with similar job responsibilities. This allows some generalizability to current superintendents.
California was specified so that the credentialing similarities were the same for each superintendent and to ensure that the state-adopted standards and expectations for implementation were similar. In total, there are 1,022 current public school districts in California (California Department of Education, n.d.-a), indicating that there are a possible 1,022 current public school superintendents. Since school superintendents are public employees, their contact information is available through the directory on the California Department of Education website (California Department of Education, n.d.-a). This allowed all superintendents throughout California to be part of the population by being accessible to the researcher by looking at each county’s listed superintendent.

**Target Population**

The target population is a subset of the population defined as “the entire group of people or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the study findings” (University of Missouri, St. Louis, 2016). The target population for this study was current superintendents from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Using the county directories of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, the researcher identified members of the target population. Table 1 represents the target population divided by male and female. Current data were retrieved from the respective county websites.

Table 1

**Target Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ensuring access to the participants limits the number of possible superintendents to interview but ensures the ability to acquire an adequate number of participants. There are currently 58 superintendents (17 female and 42 male) serving in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties (Riverside and San Bernardino County school district directories). The percentages of male and female are representative of the overall Californian numbers of roughly 30% female and 70% male. This group was the targeted population.

**Sample**

Patten (2009) stated, “When it is impractical to study an entire population, researchers draw a sample, study it and infer that what is true of the sample is probably also true of the population” (p. 43). With the targeted population being a total of 58 possible participants, a sample of 10 males and 10 females made up a total of 34% of the total targeted population. This qualitative study was designed to conduct face-to-face interviews, so the sampling method that was used to identify the sample population was a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling.

Purposeful sampling in qualitative studies is considered more of a strength than in quantitative studies, according to Patton (2015), allowing for more in-depth understanding and information-rich data to understand the perceptions of the subjects. This model allowed the researcher to select individuals who she believed would be good sources of information, allowing satisfying a purpose as well as meeting the criteria required for the study. The participation criteria for this study were as follows:

1. Minimum of 2 years of experience as a district superintendent
2. Recognition as a local or regional leader in his or her area through Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) or another professional organization
Even more specifically, Patton (2015) deemed the purposeful sampling strategy as the continuum or dosage sampling, which he defined as “select cases along a continuum of interest to deepen the understanding of the nature of implications of different levels or positions along the continuum” (p. 267). In this study, the purposive or purposeful sample included superintendents in both San Bernardino and Riverside but contained a continuum of experience from 2 years of experience in the position to many years of experience. In addition, both male and female subjects were included in the range of subjects chosen for this study.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) described convenience sampling as selecting subjects based on the convenience of the researcher. Restricting the target population to superintendents within Riverside and San Bernardino Counties allowed the researcher to access the superintendents regionally, taking into consideration the travel time to get to them. Being able to use connections through ACSA networks increased the ability of the researcher to obtain an equal number of male and female superintendents in the study. In addition, the criteria were set to be as inclusive as possible. Requiring only 1 year of experience takes into consideration the average tenure of a superintendent in California while also ensuring they had been in their current position more than 1 year. This also increases the subject pool.

The sample was 10 selected current female superintendents and 10 selected current male superintendents from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. As the purposive and convenience sampling suggests, the sample participants were chosen based on the possibility of providing the information necessary to address the purpose statement of the study as well as to provide access to the researcher.
There were equal numbers of interviews conducted of both male and female superintendents. Although there are no hard rules about sample size for qualitative studies, other than it needs to be appropriate for the study (Patton, 2015), Patton also stated, in a review done on sample size for qualitative and quantitative studies done by the American Psychological Association, that a sample size of qualitative studies ranged between 10 and 36, with the median being 13. Patton (2015) corroborated this, stating the most common sample sizes were 20 and 30. This study had 20 participants (10 each male and female) in the sample size, matching the median of the appropriate sample size for a qualitative study.

Sample Selection Process

Continuum sampling is also a form of purposive sampling where the researcher chooses the participants along a continuum (Patton, 2015). In this case, the continuum was the number of years of experience. The selection process was conducted as follows:

1. The sample selection began by listing superintendents who were currently serving in districts in either Riverside or San Bernardino County. Each individual was listed by gender, thus creating two lists.

2. Once the lists were complete, the researcher eliminated superintendents from the sample who did not meet the following criteria:
   a) Minimum of 2 years of experience as a district superintendent
   b) Currently residing in San Bernardino or Riverside County

3. All remaining possible participants were contacted via e-mail to secure willingness to participate in the study (see Appendix B).
4. From the list of willing participants, 10 participants from each gender were chosen based on the order in which the prospective subjects responded to the request to be interviewed.

5. Once these participants were confirmed, an invitation, additional information, and consent forms were sent to them (see Appendices B and D). In most cases, personal contact was made either by phone or in person.

6. Participants’ privacy and confidentiality were maintained throughout the process. Participants were informed that all data collected would be stored for 3 years in password-protected electronic files or in locked file cabinets to which the researcher had sole access. At the end of the 3-year period, all data would be destroyed.

7. If a participant declined to participate, the researcher used the same selection process to select a replacement (in order of response to the invitation).

Instrumentation

Instrument

Due to the nature of the qualitative design, the researcher is the primary instrument in the collection of the data. According to Creswell (2014), there is a danger of the researcher’s “biases, values, and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status (SES) that [can] shape their interpretations formed during a study” (p. 237). Upon reflection, there are three ways that the researcher was connected with the study: (a) a personal experience with the subject of emotional intelligence; (b) as a female, the researcher may be biased toward the outcome of Research Question 2 relating to the difference between male and female; and (c) a familiarity with some of the subjects who were chosen for this study due to the
participation in some of the same organizations such as ACSA. In a study by Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day (2012), inherent biases of the researcher are not the only factor in the researcher’s serving as the primary instrument. They found that interview characteristics/practices are effective in engaging the interviewees and that in the interview process, the consistency should be “focused on research procedures (e.g. securing consent, managing empirical materials) and not on standardizing interviewer characteristic” (p. 182). Despite the variety of research characteristics, all were effective in “conducting engaging conversations with participants and eliciting information (p. 182). The researcher in this study maintained consistency in the research procedures outlined in the methods section. In addition, the researcher self-reflected after the interview process to determine what characteristics were used throughout the interview process.

The data gathering instrument was a set of interview questions based on the framework of emotional intelligence by Goleman et al. (2013), focused on the four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management (see Table 2). The first two questions were more general in nature, designed to create rapport with the participant as recommended by Patten (2009). Then two questions from each domain of emotional intelligence were adapted from the framework, with a total of eight questions from the domains, and then a final question inquiring about how emotional intelligence has affected the superintendent’s leadership either positively or negatively.
The interview questions were tightly aligned with the Bradberry and Greaves’s (2009) framework. A draft of the interview questions as well as the script are in Appendix D. Emotional intelligence has already been identified as a component of leadership (Goleman et al., 2013). The framework identified in the literature was derived from the initial research by Goleman et al. (2013) and was classified into the four domains by Bradberry and Greaves (2009). The literature also referenced a connection between emotional intelligence and leadership in other fields of study, such as medical and business fields; but the literature still lacks in applying it to educational administration, specifically to the leadership of public school superintendents.

**Reliability**

According to Patton (2015), there are four ways of determining credibility in a study; they are systemic, in-depth fieldwork, systemic and conscientious analysis of the
data, credibility of the inquirer, and the philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry. Systemic, in-depth fieldwork addresses the creation of the instrument, the choosing of the participant sample, and the consistent interview process in reducing bias from each of those stages. Along with the credibility of the researcher comes the honest evaluation of previous experiences and beliefs (self-disclosure) regarding the topic, which increases the reliability by decreasing bias.

**Field-Test**

After the interview questions were created, a pilot test was completed by asking two retired superintendents these same questions to determine the clarity of the questions. If there was ambiguity in the questions, those were modified prior to the semistructured interviews. Using the book, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, where the Bradberry and Greaves (2009) framework is found (which is based on the research by Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee), the interview questions were adapted from the questions provided in the book to be targeted to how those domains affect the superintendent’s leadership.

In addition, colleagues familiar with but not involved with the study observed the field-tests to identify any influencing or biased behavior on the part of the researcher so any such behaviors could be corrected for the final administration of the interviews. The belief in the value of qualitative studies could not be mitigated on a large scale, so the fourth component could not be addressed other than to adhere to the process and procedures identified by experts to create a reliable and valid qualitative study.

**Validity**

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument is designed to measure and accurately perform the function it is intended to (Patten, 2009). Although no instrument
can have 100% validity, there are multiple ways in which validity can be improved. The most frequent form of bias that can affect the validity of an instrument is the researcher’s bias when creating the questions. One way to mitigate this bias is to be reflective and provide self-disclosure, a conscious effort to evaluate the researcher’s points of view, experience, and interaction with the topic being studied prior to initiating the interviews (Patten, 2009). A self-reflection regarding emotional intelligence was done by the researcher to become aware of biases. In addition, colleagues reviewed the instrument and the questions as they were developed to provide feedback on possible bias in their creation. The literature review and specifically what is described in Chapter II in the section, “Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee and Bradberry and Greaves,” detailing the four domains used to create the questions using both Goleman et. al.’s and Bradberry and Greaves’s definitions, represents content validity.

In addition, the phenomenological study deemed to extract perceptional data from the participants to answer the research questions. This increased the validity of the questions, as they asked for the perception of the participants themselves, addressing the research questions of this study.

**Data Collection**

Chapters I-III were submitted to quality review and then, having passed, were submitted, along with the application and required appendices and forms, to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). No data were collected for this study until these steps were completed. Once approved by IRB, consent forms were collected either via e-mail or were physically picked up prior to the beginning of the interviews. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant. A statement of confidentiality was
provided to the participants prior to interviews. No data were collected for this study until BUIRB gave permission to conduct the study.

The process of creating an interview schedule was to schedule interviews in the first couple of months of the 2016-2017 academic year based on the availability of the superintendents who agreed to be participants in the study. These were recorded, transcribed, and coded for themes as the interviews were concluded.

Interviews were administered during in-person scheduled meetings with superintendents who accepted the invitation to be studied. Questions comprised 11 open-ended questions based on Bradberry and Greaves’s emotional intelligence assessment and adapted to extract responses on superintendents’ perceptions of the effects of emotional intelligence on their leadership as well as their understanding of what it is. The interviews also asked for demographic information including gender and length of time they had served as a superintendent.

These interviews were audio recorded via an app called Rev Voice Recorder: Audio Transcription and Dictation after permission was obtained by the participant (included in the consent form). Using the same app, the recordings were sent to the transcription service to be transcribed. Once all the interviews were held and transcribed, the data were coded and examined for themes to determine the effect of emotional intelligence on their leadership.

**Data Analysis**

Creswell (2014) described the analysis process to include the organization and preparation of the data, reading and reviewing all the data, then coding the data. In following that process, the researcher interviewed 20 superintendents with prior consent
and audio recorded each interview. The audio recordings of these interviews were transcribed by a confidential third-party transcription service. These transcriptions were then sent to the respective interviewee to review for accuracy, which allowed for feedback by the interviewee and corrections to be made prior to analyzing the content of these transcriptions. In addition, any notes taken by the researcher were typed up and included with the transcriptions of the interviews. In addition, these materials were separated into two groups by gender (with no other identifying information on them).

Following the organization and preparation of the data, the researcher read, reviewed, and reflected upon the data to develop an overall sense of the meaning of the responses. Interrater reliability was established by providing to another researcher not connected to the study an anonymous transcript to code. These codes derived by the third-party researcher were compared to the codes derived by the researcher for this study. If they were in alignment, the next steps were followed; if they were not in alignment, another transcribed interview was coded by both researchers. This process continued until alignment was achieved. A preliminary list of themes and patterns emerged. These transcriptions and additional materials were uploaded into NVivo, a qualitative analysis software. The data were then formally coded using this software to identify patterns and repetition that can speak to categories, subcategories, themes, concepts, and then assertions (Patton, 2015).

The data-coding process for this study involved three steps:

1. The codes were scanned for themes, more specifically, looking at the frequency of support or lack of support of the theoretical framework of emotional intelligence used in this study (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).
The researcher reviewed the data for each of the areas (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social management/relationship management).

2. The codes were scanned for frequency using NVivo, a qualitative analysis software. Using the emerging themes, each line of the interviews was coded in the NVivo software, tracking the number of recurring codes. The frequency of codes was one indication of the strength of a possible theme developing from a particular code.

3. The researcher proceeded to use the codes, themes, and frequencies of codes to analyze the data to understand the effects of each emotional intelligence component on a superintendent’s leadership.

An authentic narrative described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) is “one that may be read and lived vicariously by others. A narrative is authentic when readers connect to the story by recognizing particulars, by visioning the scenes, and by reconstructing them from remembered associations” (p. 337). The questions asked by the researcher invited such authentic narratives by asking for examples in their day-to-day work that might exhibit the emotional intelligence trait they were being asked about. This allowed for the analysis of the data to be more narrative in nature. Once the themes and pattern were identified, the research was then linked to the research questions.

**Limitations**

This research study has a few limitations. One limitation of the study is the demographic makeup of the sample. Due to the structure of choosing the participants
based on having access, there may not be an equal representation either geographically, racially, in age, or in other unidentified ways.

Another limitation of the study is the purely qualitative method. With qualitative research, the research questions could be answered, but there were no quantifiable data to identify whether emotional intelligence is significant in educational leadership.

Another limitation of the study is the questionnaire itself. Since it was self-reported, the responses did not consider an overinflated sense of emotional intelligence, any misunderstanding of the topic, or misreporting by the participants themselves. A final limitation is the constraint on the generalizability of the data, given the sample was chosen based on access and networks.

Summary

The phenomenological study design was a semistructured interview process of a sample of California public school superintendents both past and current. The target population focused on current and former superintendents with a minimum of 5 years of experience to determine the impact and application of emotional intelligence on their leadership. This chapter discussed the instrumentation of the study, which was a set of interview questions adapted from Bradberry and Greaves’ emotional intelligence framework. It also described how the researcher increased both the reliability and validity of the study during the creation of the instrument, the process of conducting interviews, and the triangulation of the data once they were collected. Finally, this chapter described the data collection process as well as limitations of the study.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter reviews the data collected through the 16 semistructured interviews held with superintendents in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, answering how the different components of emotional intelligence affect their leadership. In addition, it documents the comparison between the responses of both male and female superintendents. The chapter begins with a review of the purpose, research questions, methodology, data collection, population, and sample. Then the demographic data are presented with the breakdowns of sample by county and gender. Additionally, themes that arose are reviewed, with examples of each as quoted by the participants as well as frequency charts. A comparison between gender responses are presented as well as an overall summary of the themes and patterns of all the data.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the perceptions of current public school superintendents in Southern California regarding the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. An additional purpose of this study was to describe any differences between current male and female superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question: How do current superintendents describe the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership with respect to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship
management and what similarities and differences exist between male and female perspectives?

**Research**

1. How do current male and female district superintendents describe the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in the following four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management?

2. What differences in perception exist between current male and female district superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership?

**Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures**

The phenomenological study design was a semi-structured interview process (Patton, 2015) of a sample of current California public school superintendents. Using the phenomenological framework allowed the exploration of the everyday experiences of one’s emotional mind and the perceived importance of emotional intelligence on the role of both male and female superintendents.

The primary data collection process for this research study was the interview. This allowed the researcher to be invited into the other person’s perspective, which is based, according to Patton (2015), on the “assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful and knowable and can be made explicit” (p. 426). This process aligns with the design of the study and the research questions that sought to answer what superintendents perceive the impact of emotional intelligence is on their leadership.

The researcher sent out the invitation to all public school superintendents in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties to the e-mail listed on the California Department of Education (CDE) website for each district. Included in the e-mail invitation was the
official invitation letter explaining in detail the nature of the study (Appendix B). A list was generated with all potential participants, and once they responded with their acceptance to be interviewed, the researcher tracked the order in which they were accepted as well as whether the candidate was male or female to ensure equal representation. After the initial round of e-mails and participants’ accepting the invitation, the researcher sent out duplicate invitations until a sufficient number of superintendents, both male and female, responded. The informed consent and confidentiality form (Appendix C) and bill of rights (Appendix E) were reviewed and signed prior to beginning the interview.

The researcher then engaged in semi structured interviews with a total of 16 superintendents in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties (eight male and eight female) using the referenced interview script and protocol. Questions were created using Bradberry and Greaves’s (2009) book, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, focusing on the four domains of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (also known as social management). A second part of the question asked for a specific example of that domain (i.e., self-management) in their leadership.

Each participant agreed to be audio recorded during the interview. Each interview was recorded using an app on the iPhone called Rev Recorder. Fourteen of the 16 interviews were conducted face-to-face, and two interviews were conducted over the phone due to distance and time constraints of both the researcher and the participants.

Upon completion of the interviews, each audio recording file was sent for professional transcription (using the Rev app). Once transcription was available, the
researcher sent via e-mail a copy of the transcript to the participant to review it for accuracy. Once all interviews were completed, each interview transcription was uploaded into NVivo coding software. Each transcript was then coded in order to produce themes and patterns. An interrater, another doctoral candidate, coded one of the same transcripts to ensure interrater reliability. The researcher and the interrater compared their coding results. After some discussion, the interrater agreed with the researcher’s interpretation of themes identified, and they determined that there was interrater reliability.

**Population and Sample**

All 16 participants in this study were public school superintendents in Riverside or San Bernardino County. There was, however, difficulty in obtaining the original sample size of 10 of each gender with the criterion of having a minimum of 2 years of experience. The researcher interviewed every superintendent who agreed to be a participant (totaling eight male and eight female), but three of those superintendents had only 1 year of experience as a superintendent (two male, one female). The researcher kept them as part of the data and included a section on the similarities and differences of their responses relative to the other 15 participants.

Purposeful sampling in qualitative studies is considered more of a strength than in quantitative studies, according to Patton (2015), allowing for more in-depth understanding and information-rich data to understand the perceptions of the subjects. Even more specifically, Patton (2015) deemed the purposeful sampling strategy as the continuum or dosage sampling, which he defined as “select cases along a continuum of interest to deepen the understanding of the nature of implications of different levels or
positions along the continuum” (p. 267). In this study, the purposive or purposeful sample included superintendents in both San Bernardino and Riverside but contained a continuum of experience from 2 years of experience in the position to many years of experience. In addition, both male and female subjects were included in the range of subjects chosen for this study.

This model allowed the researcher to select individuals who she believed would be good sources of information, allowing satisfying a purpose as well as meeting the criteria required for the study. The participation criteria for this study were the following:

1. Minimum of 2 years of experience as a district superintendent
2. Recognition as a local or regional leader in his or her area through ACSA or another professional organization

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

**Data Analysis by Demographic Data**

Overall, there was an even representation of participants from both Riverside and San Bernardino, having eight from each county. There was also even representation from each gender and a range of experience from 1 to 9 years having served as a superintendent. The breakdown of the demographics of each participant is found in Table 3. Although there were different numbers of male and female participants in each county, the breakdown can be seen in Table 4.
Table 3
Description of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 13</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 14</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 15</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 16</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4
Participant by County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Riverside</th>
<th>San Bernardino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total participants</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Years of experience.** In Table 5, the years of experience by gender reveals the differences found in demographic information collected during the interview process. The data were taken by adding up the years of experience and dividing it by the number
of participants to arrive at the average number of years of experience. In looking at the overall years of experience of the sample (4.94 years), it is above the average tenure of superintendents, which is under 3 years (Freedburg, 2014). However, Riverside is closer to having superintendents with an average of 3 years and San Bernardino closer to 7 years.

Table 5

Year of Experience by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average # of years</th>
<th>Riverside</th>
<th>San Bernardino</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.2 years</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>4.63 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>6.6 years</td>
<td>5.25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.13 years</td>
<td>6.75 years</td>
<td>4.94 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**By gender.** In breaking the data down by gender, it can be seen that the female sample in each county has fewer average years of experience than their male counterparts, although they only make up three of the eight participants in Riverside and five of the eight participants in San Bernardino. When both counties are joined, however, females collectively have more years of experience than males.

**Data Analysis by Common Themes in Research Questions**

The researcher began by reading through the transcripts of the interviews of all 16 superintendents to start looking for themes. Once the transcripts were loaded into NVivo, a more detailed coding procedure commenced (going line by line and identifying themes in the responses). This process created 18 different themes (see Table 6). The next step was to group these into more overarching themes, so the researcher started reading the citations from the transcripts and classifying them into broader ideas. This process
resulted in nine different overarching themes (see Table 7). Each of these is discussed in the following sections, and all responses can be found in Appendix G.

Table 6

Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate reactions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build capacity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching-mentoring-training</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication common ground</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI is learned</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation of their leader</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having empathy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innate skill</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritizing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate person from performance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress or health issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withholding emotions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emotional safety.** By far the most referenced concept was emotional safety.

Combining the subthemes of feeling safe, having empathy, separating person from performance, team, and trust, the necessity for emotional safety of those who are led was cited by 15 of the 16 participants. One participant stated, “Well, leadership is all about trust and feeling safe.” Another participant said,
I’m in meetings a lot of times; it’s being able to create those zones where people will talk, because as superintendent, you only know what people will tell you . . . and if they always feel like a person’s going to be emotional, or going to get angry, or going to beat them up, or do all those things, then they are not going to tell you. It’s about building that level of trust.

Table 7

Overarching Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New themes</th>
<th>Combined themes from original coding</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional safety</td>
<td>Feeling safe; having empathy; separate person from performance; team; trust</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communication/common ground</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate reactions to situations</td>
<td>Prioritizing, withholding emotions</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching and mentoring</td>
<td>Build capacity</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI skills being developed</td>
<td>EI is learned; innate skill</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation of the leader</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress or health issue</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another participant stated that “employees do their best work when they’re feeling safe and secure and respected.” Not only did superintendents feel that their own employees need emotional safety, but many referenced the need for students to have that feeling as well and that the leader must model the behavior. One exemplified it as follows:
We are many times the place in the 6, 7 hours of a kid’s day that needs to be the most steady, predictable, safe, positive place; and when the leader doesn’t show that and express that, that creates a lot of turmoil.

Part of feeling safe is having empathy for others as human beings. As one participant put it, “When you empathize, when you can put yourself in their position, people tend to trust you.” Another said, “People will work more diligently for you if they have a sense that you care and you value the work that they do and that you care.” One went so far to say that mirroring emotion is effective for leadership:

It helps me to mirror or project the same level of intensity or emotion that others are feeling. Being able to fully understand the emotion of others helps me to internalize that, so the emotion also becomes mine. When the emotion is mine, I can lead better. If I share that emotion with somebody. Trying to get to that kind of common ground on an emotional plain is helpful.

An additional component of emotional safety that five superintendents mentioned was the ability to separate the person from the performance. One superintendent struggled early in her career with having crucial conversations. She stated,

I know how much I care about people, and even when I can’t stand them at work, I love them separately. And so, I knew I would have to figure out a way to separate things so that I didn’t overdo myself and I would remain in a way where I could make decisions that were balanced; but they were all about work.

Another said,

One thing that really helps me is keeping in mind when other people get upset and, I don’t know, emotional about a situation, trying to take it back to facts and
data about the work, not about the person, has really helped me take it out of the personal space and make it about how we can improve the work.

Finally, trust was discussed in the context of emotional intelligence. As one superintendent put it, “You know, people want trust. It’s all about trust, right? Leadership is all about trust.” This was a sentiment shared about various groups. One said, “Your cabinet, it’s all about connecting and that they trust you.” Another mentioned colleagues, the board, and the site leadership. Overall, one said, “I think it’s [emotional intelligence] increased the level of trust that others have for me, working with me, that I will support them and help build their capacity.”

Communication. Although emotional safety was referenced the most number of times, communication was just second with 66 but was mentioned by every superintendent who was interviewed. The importance of communication, including finding common ground, reading other’s nonverbal communication to determine their emotional state, and being open and honest with communication were all shared throughout the interviews. Although some superintendents emphasized the importance of using their emotional intelligence to create emotional safety for people in the organization, others said that the emotional intelligence largely allowed for the most important part of their leadership, communication. Two quotes from the interviews exemplified this: As a superintendent “you’re the one that talks to everybody, who calms everyone down, keeps the ship going, and tries to stay out of the paper”; another person said,
I think being able to manage your own emotions, being able to . . . I don’t want to say manipulate other people’s emotions, but I think that awareness in knowing what to say and how to guide the conversation, leads to better decisions.

One aspect of communication that was repeated was the idea of finding common ground. One superintendent stated, “When things happen, you start with those conversations, and you try to disarm the other person, and try to hear them through the emotion. . . . Then it’s about solving the problem together.” Another suggested,

It doesn’t matter if it’s a one-on-one when you can find that common, it’s the same thing when you are talking to a whole group, whole staff. The more you know about what they are feeling, their situation, and can be with them in that.

Additional comments related to empathy in getting to the common ground (see section on the empathy theme).

Nonverbal cues to picking up and expressing emotional states and meaning were expressed by at least five of the participants. These comments included picking up on other’s nonverbal cues, such as one superintendent who said, “

Well. I could tell you I can pick up on body language really well. That has allowed me to tell when people are lying to me, when they are being deceptive, when they are really trying to set something up politically. So consequently, I tend to pick up when other people are doing something, and I think it has helped me steer clear of hiring certain people, or promoting certain people, or even getting involved in the stories, or making sure I stay away.

Another superintendent stated, “Like 85% of our communication is nonverbal. You can even pick some of it up over the phone on how people are receiving your information.”
Other participants focused on their own nonverbal cues. One such example is one who said, “I really had to learn my body language. I had to learn to be very self-aware of what my button-pushers were gonna be in the board meeting.”

In most of the statements regarding communication, either verbal or nonverbal or expressed or received from others, there was a repeated sentiment about open, honest communication. Some were searching for others to be honest with them: “I think for me I have to seek out people who are going to be honest with me based on what they hear, what they see.” Others discussed their own honesty, such as, “I am a discloser, and when I say that, I mean I hope I am not an inappropriate discloser . . . and it’s personal. I’m not afraid to share.” An overall statement that summarizes most of the statements about honesty is that “whatever you are, however you are communicating this, . . . you are communicating honestly.”

**Appropriate reaction to situations.** The third most frequent theme was appropriate emotional reactions to situations. Along with the two themes previously mentioned, a majority of the superintendents (15 of 16) mentioned this theme during their interviews. Overall, this theme focused on two main ideas: (a) a leader must appropriately respond to situations that they find themselves in, and (b) superintendents have to withhold their own emotions for a variety of reasons.

Multiple examples of appropriate responses in varying situations were given. One example was the following:

I went to two services this weekend because I go to every funeral I can possibly go to for employees. And in both of those services, I bawled my head off. Okay?
That was a real reaction and there, I believe it’s appropriate to grieve with my school community.

On the other hand, another superintendent described a different experience after a family lost their home next to one of their schools as well one of the children in the home: “I had to rehearse what I was going to say so that I didn’t appear so emotional because that would have been a time when my level of sensitivity would have been touched.” The responses demonstrated the need to respond appropriately as opposed to the same at all times.

More frequently stated were how emotions about whatever was going on needed to be withheld from being expressed and the person needed to remain calm. Some examples of that are as follows:

“People have told me that you are so calm, but inside that’s not what’s happening.”

“So my awareness now when things come up, is that I have to be aware that other people are looking at me in terms of how I respond.”

“No matter what you are feeling, don’t yell; you have to be in control. Because you are in control, everyone feels safe. And everyone will remember. “

“You know, going back to my first response, it’s really important to hold your tongue, be calm, think about things, and take an opportunity to reflect before responding in that way.”

“I think it is really important to know your triggers in terms of controlling your . . . not your anger, but just not getting stressed and upset by what you have to deal with. I think that’s really important.”
“I think that nonaction has been the most important part of it because we can all think of things we deal with and act on, but it’s the nonacting when things are happening that are . . . it’s difficult at a board meeting, when parents are in there blasting the district about something that is going on that they don’t agree with, just to keep a poker face.”

“I’ve learned over time by not acting on those emotions. I’ve tried to remain calm, which is a better place to lead from.”

**Coaching and mentoring.** Two concepts emerged about coaching and mentoring. One was that superintendents frequently referenced opportunities to grow professionally either through networks, receiving coaching, or professional development opportunities. Another was the need to build capacity (although this was less frequently mentioned than the first concept).

One superintendent attributed emotional intelligence with building capacity by saying,

You really have to know yourself, and know how to work with people, and know how to control your sense of pressure because you have to just accept all that and then help everybody else kind of build their capacity as we move along.

They added to it later in the interview: “And I think it increases trust so that you can work with those who work with you and for you to build that capacity . . . and build your capacity as a leader.” It was also attributed to knowing when to back off from pushing an employee’s growth:

You might just be overwhelmed right now. And if I put one more thing on our plate, you’re going to explode. . . . I will push, push, push till the ends of the
earth. But if I know that I am going to push you past your breaking point, I absolutely won’t do that.

Although the previous idea was that the superintendent was leading the capacity building, another part of the theme that emerged was that superintendents themselves were building their own capacity. Three ways were mentioned: having a coach, relying on colleagues, and other professional development. The following three quotes represent the three concepts:

“Very quickly in my superintendency did I reflect on the things that I was doing and went out and got a coach, so I had an executive coach.”

“So, when you are a superintendent, much like when you are a principal, you have your sister principals, your closest group. I have my cabinet and work closely with them.”

“I have received trainings on effective strategies and effective exercises to use to be able to get to a means to an end or whatever. A person that I’ve received training from is Steve Zuiback.”

**Emotional intelligence being developed.** Two opposing viewpoints were shared in regard to emotional intelligence being developed. One was that it can be developed and learned, and the other was that is something you either have or do not have. Although there were by far more references to emotional intelligence being learned than being an innate skill, some of the same superintendents made both statements and sometimes contradicted themselves or conceded to its being more plausible even if not more difficult than the other. Most believed that emotional intelligence can be
developed, but the few who made both statements believed that it was a difficult task to develop it.

Some of the statements made about emotional intelligence being an innate skill were external evaluations of others:

I think some people have it, some people don’t, you know? We’ve done some emotional intelligence training for our administrators, and we’ve tried to you know, you can really pick up the ones that have it. They are just masters of it because I think it comes naturally, and others where it maybe doesn’t as much.

Another superintendent stated,

[Self-monitoring] has been a key factor in . . . it’s almost innate. . . . I want to say you almost have to have it because those people that don’t have it, you just shake your head going why did you say that? If you would have just said it that way.

One superintendent was reflecting on her own skills in stating, “In reflecting back [about emotional intelligence], I think some of it is just instinctual in terms of who I am.” One statement called out both views: “The research says you can train, but you have to have something special about you.”

Although a few superintendents ascribed emotional intelligence as natural, innate, or a gift, far more stated their own learning regarding emotional intelligence. One superintendent provided an example: “I think that [emotional intelligence] develops over time as well because I can go back even as a young teacher and see how I have gotten better at it all the way through.” Another had a similar opinion: “I think that it develops over the years. You learn it. I learned in a situation that was of course 15 years ago, how important and I never forgotten that. So, you learn those little lessons along the way.”
Another attributed it to their mentors: “I have the skill set and tools that have been given to me by various people, to pull things out of executive cabinets or principals, that I didn’t have when I was a first or second year.” Reflections of their own leadership led to the following: “Right now, my emotional capacity is much more reflective and much more mature than it was when I first started. Even when I was principal.”

**Expectation of the leader.** Throughout the interviews, when questioned about how emotional intelligence helped them become better leaders, there were many interpretations about what they felt was expected of them as leaders as well as the perceptions of their behaviors from the various stakeholder groups (teachers, site leaders, union leaders, and school board). Some of the statements were the following:

“They want to have confidence in their leader and they want to know that no matter what happens, that they are safe”

“I think you have to understand that you also have to maintain your credibility, and so how you express your emotion becomes very important”

“Our job is to resolve situations, and many times that is just acknowledging and being okay with that”

“In this position, it’s really critical for your stakeholders . . . that’s your employees, your parents, your board members, your students, see someone who’s steady, who isn’t someone who’s going to be just off emotionally because that creates a system that is disconcerting.”

More phrases included, “It’s your job to make sure everyone is calm,” “to make them feel empowered,” and “being able to take on somebody else’s perspective.”


**Building relationships.** Twelve of the 16 respondents cited building relationships as part of the core effects that emotional intelligence has on leadership. One superintendent summarized this concept: “As a teacher, a kid, even as superintendent, when you can connect with people, you are going to be a more effective teacher. Everything is based on relationships, everything. And again, my entire leadership is based on relationships.” Another cited emotional intelligence as “at the core of what we do in leadership in terms of building relationships . . . just very instrumental and at the core of how we lead as a district.” One superintendent was very specific about “the relationship with your board members is really critical.” A final thought ties this idea of relationships to prior learning:

> It is sometimes necessary, but I think if you work hard on influencing people, building relationships with folks who have influence or people that have influence on those who have influence, and disrupting alliances that often develop to cloud the vision, mission, and drive of the organization

**Strategies.** Strung throughout the examples given by the superintendents, three strategies arose on how they managed their emotional intelligence. To simplify some of these ideals, they are listed here, but to read all of the comments, see Appendix G. The most common strategy was to create a response (either verbal or written) and have someone check it before being delivered. One participant stated, “A lot of times what I do is just write an e-mail and then give it to someone and say ‘should I send this?’ and the answer is no.” Another is self-talk or waiting to respond: “You know, going back it’s really important to hold your tongue, be calm, think about things, and take an opportunity to reflect before responding in that way” or “I sat on that for 48 hours before I did it. . . . I
needed to be thoughtful with this particular board member.” A final strategy is using people around oneself. An example of this is the following:

Knowing that about myself, it’s important for me to have a teammate that doesn’t do that. [If I don’t react] that will react. That will say, “We need to do this now” or “don’t you see this?” And more passion, more anger, more bravado is good because it helps me measure as to “are you overthinking this?” That really does help.

**Stress or health-related issues.** An outlier in the themes, this topic was only mentioned by one superintendent as a negative outcome of not being emotionally intelligent:

I wish I had them when I was a principal because I wouldn’t have been as stressed as I was. . . . [Becoming] so overwhelmingly emotional, that the stress of the job took a physical toll on me and put me into the hospital on a number of occasions for physical ailments like tightness of chest, shortness of breath. . . . When I was laying in the hospital room at Kaiser, with oxygen tubes going up my nose and an IV in my arm and looking up at the fluorescent lights thinking, “This is not worth it.”

**Comparison in Responses by Gender**

Although while doing a comparison between male and female participants there were very few differences in the themes generated by the interviews, there were some facts to note. Women brought up their gender, often in a way that indicated additional responsibility or expectations on their leadership, whereas male participants did not bring
it up at all. Finally, women spent more time during the remaining time to offer the researcher further dialogue, advice, and discourse than men.

**Male versus female responses.** In Figure 2, the comparisons between the male and female responses can be seen. Both male and female superintendents shared 16 of the 18 themes that arose in the data. As seen in the figure, there are only two outliers to the themes brought up. First, the theme of stress or health issues was only brought up by one male participant. Second, the theme building capacity was only referenced by females (which was later included in the coaching and mentoring overarching theme). Three separate female participants referenced building capacity as part of their job to build capacity in their employees (see the Coaching and Mentoring section).

**Gender-specific responses.** Only women brought up gender when discussing emotional intelligence, their leadership, and expectations of them. It is important to note that three of the four superintendents who mentioned gender included their perception that there was an additional expectation of them that was not present for men. That points out that despite the fact that none of the questions related to gender, 50% of the female respondents brought it up. The most compelling quote was as follows:

> I think being a female superintendent, you can’t show as much emotion as a male superintendent. If I get mad at something, then it’s viewed very, very differently than a male superintendent. I only know that, because I was the assistant superintendent in this district with a male superintendent, and I know how he could express anger. If I did exactly the same thing, it would be viewed very, very differently. I think for women superintendents, people expect emotion and
so anything you do that is seen as emotional or showing emotion gets exponentially blown up. I think that’s where I go to that idea, even keel.

Figure 2. Male versus female themes.
Another participant said,

I’ve always had to be aware you know? And I think that as women, we do. And even now I supervise principals, and I’ve experienced where they’re given feedback and their response is to cry. And I have to coach them to really not. . . . You can’t do that. There’s male, female. You just can’t. And you can express your disappointment, your frustration, whatever it is that you’re feeling, but we have to find another way to that emotion. And as a woman, if that happens in the hands of the wrong person, it could be detrimental to one’s career.

A different respondent was subtler:

So I’m an emotional leader anyway. I am a passionate leader. And I kind of say that I’m like a mom in my leadership. I care about all my kids. [In realizing I was weak with having difficult conversations], I realized at that moment that if I was going to have a big girl job, I needed to act like a big girl. And that meant dealing with men, people that were older than me, and my peers.

Later, she continued:

Some people say it is [more difficult] for women, though. There are two schools of thought that I have heard from different colleagues. So, I’ve had someone who will say no, you can’t let them see you sweat. You have to be tough all the time. You don’t develop any friendships. And they’re normally . . . excuse my language, but they’re known as bitches, right? That’s what . . . and we hear it.”

The last comment about expectations for females was about the perceptions of their emotional state:
I think it’s important to . . . from the beginning of my administrative career, understanding my emotional state because as women, we can sometimes be pegged as overemotional. . . . So, I have always had that check in my mind. . . .

I was a high school principal as well and very often in the room with only men. Especially when you go to the athletic director meetings, right? So, you’re the only woman in there and men speak very matter-of-fact. I’m just saying in my general experience . . . and what I find is women speak more from this-is-how-I’m perceiving it or this-is-how-I’m-seeing it, more from an intuitive way. To wrap it all in, I have always been aware of how I’ve been perceived and gotten poor feedback. What I’ve experienced what I would consider being a strong person and a strong emotional person and it being labeled as uptight, wound tight, type A which is just a nicer way of saying wound tight. . . . But if I were a man, then I would be considered a high achiever. I’d be a go-getter. I’d be out in front. I’d be a lead learner.

The only gender reference that did not fall into the above category was still made by a female participant, but she was referencing her site leaders: “Some of them need ‘attaboys.’ I mean my male principals, the most. They’ll tell me, ‘can’t you just every couple of weeks send me an attaboy?’ Absolutely! And I love it because they trust me.”

**Beyond the interview.** As mentioned in the beginning paragraph for this section, there is one more thing that the researcher discovered during the process of interviewing 16 superintendents. All but one female superintendent (seven) followed up the interview with additional questions for the researcher as well as taking the additional scheduled time to mentor. Three books were recommended, one additional resource was provided
as a professional mentor opportunity, and unsolicited professional advice was given freely. Although some of the male participants also provided mentorship, it was overwhelmingly evident with the females.

**Summary**

This chapter reviewed the data collected from the interviews of current superintendents in both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Each of the nine overarching themes was discussed, including citations given by the participants in the study. Frequency and source charts were presented to show the themes as well as the similarities in themes found in both male and female responses. Similarities and differences were presented from the data and interview process.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a discussion of the results, strengths and limitations of the study, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future studies. The researcher discusses major findings related to the research questions posed in the study, including unexpected findings, strengths and limitations of the study, and conclusions drawn from the data analysis. Finally, implications for research are discussed, as well as recommendations for future research and concluding remarks and reflections.

Review of Purpose and Research Questions

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the perceptions of current public school superintendents in Southern California regarding the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. An additional purpose of this study was to describe any differences between current male and female superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question: How do current superintendents describe the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership with respect to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management and what similarities and differences exist between male and female perspectives?
**Research Subquestions**

1. How do current male and female district superintendents describe the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in the following four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management?

2. What differences in perception exist between current male and female district superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership?

**Discussion of Results**

**Research Question 1**

*How do current male and female district superintendents describe the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership in the following four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management?*

**Major finding 1.** Overwhelmingly, the superintendents felt that emotional intelligence was the foundation of the leadership skills that make them successful. These attributes or skills are the nine themes discussed in Chapter IV: appropriate reactions to situations, the ability to be coached and mentored, communication, building relationships, meeting the expectations of those they lead, creating emotional safety, using strategies to overcome areas of growth in emotional intelligence, and identifying emotional intelligence in others.

Of the 16 interviews, not one responded to any of the questions by denying the domain (i.e., self-awareness) of emotional intelligence’s impact on their leadership. Every participant cited the skill as underlying another aspect of leadership, such as communication, appropriately responding to situations, and so forth. A comment frequently made when asked whether this (the domain of self-awareness) was of
particular importance in their leadership was “all the time,” before honing in on one particular instance that embodied that domain or skill. There was never hesitation at attributing emotional intelligence to the effectiveness of their leadership.

**Major finding 2.** Creating emotional safety was by far the most frequently mentioned outcome of having emotional intelligence in leadership and the most essential part of being a superintendent. This overarching theme included ensuring that the various stakeholders feel safe (primarily employees, parents, and students), having empathy for others, being able to separate the person from the performance, creating effective teams, and building trust.

In *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (Lencioni, 2002), the first dysfunction or the foundation of all effective team dynamics lies in trust. Lencioni (2002) stated that “team members who are not genuinely open with one another about their mistakes and weaknesses make it impossible to build a foundation for trust” (p. 188). This exemplifies what superintendents said is the most important part of leadership—to create emotional safety so that members of the organization will be willing to be open with one another to create that trust, which then leads to a stronger team.

**Research Question 2**

*What differences in perception exist between current male and female district superintendents on the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership?*

**Major finding 3.** The third major finding was that both male and female superintendents discussed the same effects of emotional intelligence on their leadership. As discussed in Chapter IV, both male and female superintendents shared 14 of the original 16 themes found in the data. The effects of emotional intelligence and the
examples of experience were similar across both genders, including examples of the board meetings, union leaders, employees, and other emergency or situations involving the media.

**Major finding 4.** Female superintendents were the only ones who brought up how gender plays a role in how emotional intelligence affects their leadership. Fifty percent of the female respondents (four of the eight) mentioned gender specifically. Three of them described in detail the disadvantage or additional skill set they had to develop or exhibit as a female leader. The fact that the females had been in multiple situations where the group was dominantly male was also referenced. Given that as of the beginning of the study, only 17 of the 58 superintendents in both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties were female, this would most likely be the case in most superintendent meetings. (During the study, one of the female superintendents became the county superintendent and was replaced by a male, thus reducing the number from 17 to 16 of the 58 superintendents).

**Strengths and Limitations**

**Strengths**

The demographic representation of the sample was a good cross section of the region. There was an even amount of representation from both male and female superintendents, equal representation from both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and a range of experience including under the average of 3 years to well over 3 years. The sample included new superintendents to seasoned ones with 9 years of experience in the position. That these all shared the same themes gave a cross section from this region.
Limitations

The study was limited to only two counties in Southern California. This limits the generalizability of the results to only those two counties represented.

Unexpected Findings

There were two unexpected findings in conducting this study. One was discovered by what happened after the interview and how the participant engaged with the researcher after the recording stopped; another was the similarities of the responses among the superintendents and the shared resources among them. Many shared how they mitigated the loneliness of the position through sharing these resources and knowledge base and how working together helped mitigate the loneliness to help them be successful.

Although Research Question 2 asked about the differences in responses about emotional intelligence’s effect on the leadership of superintendents, an unexpected finding was the amount of time spent with the researcher after the interview was over. Females tended to provide additional coaching and advice to the researcher in much more detail and amount of time spent elaborating and engaging with the researcher. The researcher, being female, may have been a contributing factor. Some specific questions about what future goals the researcher may have, such as being a superintendent and so forth, were asked and then followed up with advice varying from how to match leadership style to a district, to discussing the importance of moving from site leadership to district positions (to have more influence on systems and structures), to some book recommendations and people with whom the researcher would benefit from speaking.

Another unexpected finding was that there is a common coach and mentor who many of the superintendents use, as his name came up frequently; similar leadership
references and training included Steve Zuiback and Michael Fullan. In observing the
offices of these superintendents, many also shared similar reading material. Two of the
superintendents (both male) referred to the same quote about their leadership “being right
at the end of the meeting as opposed to being right at the beginning” (indicating the need
to listen to the team before providing direction). Another consistent message was the
power of having a network of support. Sharing the same coach, going through the same
trainings, and regularly meeting with colleagues was often mentioned to address the
loneliness of the position.

**Conclusions**

After analyzing the major findings from the data, the researcher drew conclusions
that addressed each research question as well as additional findings outside of the study.
The conclusions listed address the two research questions as well conclusions regarding
the unexpected findings.

**Conclusion 1**

This study supports the previous research that concluded that emotional
intelligence is a critical factor of effective leadership in education. Although emotional
intelligence has been deemed a critical component of transformational leadership
(Goleman, 2006a; Goleman et al., 2013; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), the gaps as to the
generalizability in the field of education has been noticed. This study confirmed the
importance of emotional intelligence as every single participant, male and female, from
Riverside or San Bernardino County agreed that it created leadership outcomes, such as
creating emotional safety and effectively communicating, and the remaining nine
overarching themes that arose from the data. In addition, they continually gave examples
of these skills in their day-to-day leadership as well as during emergency and conflict situations. This indicates that much of the foundational research can be applied to the educational field.

**Conclusion 2**

The effect of emotional intelligence on the superintendent’s leadership is the same in both genders. Based on the results of the interviews, both male and female respondents identified the same themes about how emotional intelligence has affected their leadership. Of the original 18 themes, they shared 16 of them, with only two outliers. One male mentioned stress and health-related issues, and three females mentioned building capacity in their organizations. Overall, however, there were no significant differences in their responses or perceptions of the importance of emotional intelligence.

**Conclusion 3**

Although gender does not change the perception about the effectiveness of emotional intelligence, there is a higher level of expectation felt by female superintendents to demonstrate emotional intelligence in their leadership. This was demonstrated by the comments made by the female participants about the double standard for women in the position.

**Conclusion 4**

The responses confirmed that emotional intelligence can be developed through experience but requires a desire by the person to learn the skills. Research shows that emotional intelligence can be learned and developed (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Mukhuty, 2013; Yuan & Hsu, 2012). This study resulted in an interesting mix of
statements. There were 24 statements overall acknowledging the ability to learn emotional intelligence, such as their own personal development and learning in the area. However, there were also 11 references to the ability being an innate skill or ability. When looking deeper at the data, the conflict usually resulted in whether a person was willing to acknowledge and improve or not. Most of the superintendents mentioned a personal or professional time that provided the learning opportunity to develop these skills but discussed how difficult it was to get someone who did not have that skill to change.

**Conclusion 5**

Female superintendents provided additional time to coach and/or mentor other females without being solicited to do so. Although this was not a part of the design of the study, it was one of the unexpected findings that also played into the implication for action regarding women in leadership and that this needs to be increased so that more women are represented at the higher levels of educational leadership.

**Implications for Action**

Based on the conclusions, there are several implications for action that will influence how we operate as leaders. The purpose of this study focused on adding to the body of research on emotional intelligence in education, reducing the turnover rate of superintendents in California, improving administration development programs, and exploring the disproportionality of gender representation of the superintendency. This study provides implications of the results for all four areas.
Adding to the Field of Knowledge

As discussed in this chapter, the study validated previous research that emotional intelligence is critical in effective leaders. Emotional intelligence was asserted as a component of effective leadership alongside other attributes that largely were considered the traits of transformational leadership in the early 1990s (Goleman, 2006a; Goleman et al., 2013; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and has been validated time and time again by more recent studies, although mostly focused in other industry sectors such as medical and business fields. This study increased the studies of emotional intelligence as a critical component of leadership in the educational field, which allows more generalizability of previous research to the educational field.

Increase the Average Tenure of California Superintendents

Superintendents in California have an average tenure of less than 3 years, according to an EdSource review (Freedburg, 2014). This study included a majority of superintendents who have had more than the average number of years of experience. Three of the participants had 9 years of experience, three had 7 years of experience, two had 5 years of experience, and four had 4 years of experience, for a total of 12 of the 16 (75%) superintendents interviewed having more than the average number of years of experience. This makes a strong case that the emotional intelligence skills that every participant agreed was a foundation of effective leadership skills can increase a superintendent’s longevity in that role. A superintendent’s longevity is positively correlated to student outcomes (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Knowing that the outcomes of this study represent long-term superintendents, the development of emotional intelligence on the leadership skills should be fostered in current superintendents to
increase their tenure and therefore their effectiveness in implementing change and increasing student achievement.

**Improve Administration Preparation Programs**

It would follow that the results of this study could be extended to a more long-range plan not only to foster current superintendents but also to imbed emotional intelligence—an awareness of and practice of the skills prior to holding an administrative position. The leadership training programs implemented should include the components that require emotional intelligence to be successful as cited in the interviews of seasoned superintendents. These pieces of successful leadership are the overarching themes discovered in the study and can better prepare future educational leaders to deal with the inconsistency and ambiguity that is a part of their environment. Overall, the results of this study can be used to improve the systems of training and retention of future leaders, building a stronger pipeline to the superintendency.

**Increase Coaching and Mentoring for Female Leaders**

Finally, the underrepresentation of women in superintendent roles was exemplified in this study having only 17 of the 58 superintendents’ being female. The results indicate that both male and female successful superintendents identify the same skills needed to be effective at their job; however, the indication that women feel the need for an additional level of awareness to have this skill suggests that we need additional coaching and mentoring for women in educational leadership. Having the awareness of gender expectations will help us develop training programs that serve the need of both genders to be proficient as a transformational leader with high emotional intelligence.
Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations were made for further research based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

- Examine whether race changes perceptions of the effect of emotional intelligence on the superintendents’ leadership.
- Extend the study to different regions in California to see whether the same themes hold true or if it is regional.
- Extend the study outside of California to see whether the same themes hold true or if it is regional.
- Examine models of emotional intelligence in administrative development programs and their effectiveness.
- Examine the comparison between self-reported responses in the effects of emotional intelligence on the superintendents’ leadership with those in their organization such as employees, board, and other stakeholders to see if there is a correlation between self-perception and outside perception.
- Explore willingness of female and male superintendents to mentor.
- Explore the effect of networking or coaching and mentoring to the effectiveness of a superintendent’s leadership.
- Explore how the degree to which a superintendent (principal, teacher, etc.) uses social media impact their use of EI in their job performance.
- Explore how the generation of a leader and/or employee affect the way EI is expressed.
Concluding Remarks and Reflections

This topic was close to my heart for a multitude of reasons. I had an opportunity to be in a professional learning situation that allowed me to reflect on my emotional self-awareness, which resulted in my desire to further research this topic. In working through my own emotional intelligence, I discovered how powerful the skills are in my current position as a female high school principal. The additional layer of gender was also personally relevant as I have historically been in male-dominated positions and fields that have given me a unique perspective. In looking at the highest level of leadership in education, not only did I learn about topics I felt passionate about, but I was also able to gain very insightful, meaningful advice, coaching, and mentoring that I will carry with me throughout my professional career in education.

In addition, this study helped explain part of the disproportionality between the gender representation of the education industry and its top-level leader. As a female high school principal, my experience has been similar to the female superintendents in that I have felt an additional responsibility to have a higher awareness of my emotional intelligence in most settings. Although I have had opportunities to work with many female leaders, there is still an underrepresentation of females in top-level leadership positions. This study validated for me that the leadership skills necessary to be successful are consistent between the genders. It also validated that networking and lifelong learning is important to being a successful leader.

I am uplifted in the amount of time that the superintendents sacrificed for my learning, and I feel obliged to pass it on as I grow professionally. I benefited most from the interviews after the questions had been asked and answered, being able to ask leaders
who have made it to the superintendent position other questions without being interrupted. Being site leaders, these leaders in my region offered many golden nuggets of advice, future reading material, and other aspects to be aware of such as politics of boards and communities during board election times.

Overall, this study validated the existing research and provided meaningful unintended outcomes that have allowed me to grow. The ability and willingness to grow is the point of education, and I found amazing examples of that willingness in the superintendents in this study.
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# APPENDIX A

## Literature Matrix

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<th>Source</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Emotional Intelligence</th>
<th>Female/ Women or Gender</th>
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<th>Principal</th>
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<th>History of EI</th>
<th>Learned</th>
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<td>Harrison, S.</td>
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APPENDIX B

Participation Request Letter

RESEARCH STUDY INVITATION LETTER
FOR MALE AND FEMALE CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CA, SAN BERNARDINO, CA, AND BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY

January 2017

Dear Prospective Study Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted in Southern California. The main investigator of this study is Antoinette Gutierrez, Doctoral Candidate in Brandman University’s Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program. You were chosen to participate in this study because you are or have served as a superintendent of a public school in Riverside County, California, San Bernardino, California, or a current or retired superintendent currently serving as a faculty member at Brandman University. A total of 10 current or former female superintendents and 10 current or former male superintendents will be enrolled in this study. Participation should require about one hour of your time and is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to describe the perceptions of current and former public school superintendents in Southern California regarding the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership of the current and former superintendents in four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management. An additional purpose of the study is to describe the application of emotional intelligence on their leadership in those four areas. Finally, the purpose of this study is to describe any differences and/or similarities between current and former male and current and former female superintendents on the impact and application of emotional intelligence on their leadership.

PROCEDURES: In participating in this research study, you agree to partake in an interview. The interview will take approximately 1 hour and will be audio-recorded. The interview will take place at a location of your choosing. During this interview, you will be asked a series of questions designed to allow you to share your perceptions about emotional intelligence while serving as a California public superintendent. Additionally, you will be asked three demographic questions that will capture your background information to assist in comparing data between male and female responses as well as ensuring there is an equal distribution between current and retired superintendents.
RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no known major risks or discomforts associated with this research. One concern which may arise might be anonymity, which is addressed below. The interview session will be held at a location of your choosing to minimize inconvenience. Some interview questions may cause you to reflect on your lived experience in the context of emotional intelligence in leadership.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participation, but a potential may be that you will have an opportunity to share your lived experiences as a public school superintendent. The information from this study is intended to inform educational leaders, researchers, policymakers, and educators of the perceptions of emotional intelligence and its effects and impacts of the leadership of superintendents.

ANONYMITY: Records of information that you provide for the research study and your responses will not contain any identifying link in the study. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study because no individual names will be used in any step of the research. You are encouraged to ask any questions, at any time that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. You may contact the investigator, Mrs. Gutierrez, by phone at (xx) xxx-xxxx or e-mail xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study or your rights as a study participant, you may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, and 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

Very Respectfully,

Antoinette Gutierrez
Principal Investigator
APPENDIX C

Informed Consent and Confidentiality Form

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on the Leadership of Public School Superintendents

Brandman University
16355 Laguna Canyon Road
Irvine, CA 92618

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Antoinette Fulcher Gutierrez, Student, Doctoral Candidate

TITLE OF CONSENT FORM: Research Participant’s Informed Consent Form

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to describe the perceptions of current and former public school superintendents in Southern California regarding the impact of emotional intelligence on their leadership of the current and former superintendents in four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management. An additional purpose of the study is to describe the application of emotional intelligence on their leadership in those four areas. Finally, the purpose of this study is to describe any differences and/or similarities between current and former male and current and former female superintendents on the impact and application of emotional intelligence on their leadership.

In participating in this research study, I agree to partake in an interview. The interview will take approximately 1 hour and will be audio-recorded. The interview will take place at a mutually agreed-upon location. During the interview, I understand I will be asked a series of questions designed to allow me to share my experience with the impact and application of emotional intelligence on my leadership while serving in the superintendency.

I understand that:

a. There are no known major risks or discomforts associated with this research. The session will be held at a location of my choosing to minimize inconvenience. Some interview questions may cause me to reflect on the factors promoting or limiting mental health seeking behaviors of LEOs via my lived experiences or personal observations of the LEO population.

b. There are no major benefits to me for participation, but a potential may be that I will have an opportunity to share my lived experiences as a mental health professional assisting LEOs. The information from this study is intended to
inform researchers, policymakers, and LEOs about the factors both promoting and limiting seeking mental health assistance.

c. I understand I will not receive money for my involvement in this study.

d. Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be addressed to Antoinette Gutierrez, Student, Brandman University Doctoral Candidate. I understand Mrs. Gutierrez can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or e-mail at xxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx.

e. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.

f. I understand that my interview will audio-recorded, and the recording will not be used beyond the scope of this study.

g. I understand the audio recordings will be used to transcribe the interview. Once the interview is transcribed, the audio, interview transcripts, and demographic questionnaire will be securely maintained by the principal investigator for a minimum of five years.

h. I also understand that none of my personal identifiable information will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, and 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Research Participant’s Bill of Rights.

I have read the above and understand it and hereby voluntarily consent to the procedures(s) set forth.

______________________________
Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

______________________________
Signature of Witness (if appropriate)

______________________________
Signature of Principal Investigator

Brandman University IRB August 2016
APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Script:

[Interviewer states:] I truly appreciate you taking the time to share your story with me. To review, the purpose of this study is to gather your perceptions of the impact that emotional intelligence has on superintendent’s leadership. The questions are written to elicit this information and are based on Bradberry and Greaves’ book emotional intelligence 2.0. Please feel free to share stories or experiences as you see fit throughout the interview. Additionally, I encourage you to be as honest and open as possible for purposes of research and since your identity will be remain anonymous.

As a review of our process leading up to this interview, you were invited to participate via e-mail and signed an informed consent form that outlined the interview process and the condition of complete anonymity for the purpose of this study. Please remember, this interview will be recorded and transcribed, and you will be provided with a copy of the complete transcripts to check for accuracy in content and meaning prior to me analyzing the data. Do you have any questions before we begin? [Begin to ask interview questions]

Demographics

a. How many years have you been/were you a superintendent?

b. Where have you served as a superintendent?

Self-Awareness

1. How has your ability to perceive and understand your own emotions helped you be an effective leader?

2. Is there a time that you remember when this was of particular importance to your leadership?

Self-Management
3. How has being able to act or not act on your emotional reactions helped you be an effective leader?

4. Is there a time that you remember when this was of particular importance to your leadership?

Social Awareness

5. How has being able to accurately pick up on emotions in other people helped you be an effective leader?

6. Is there a time that you remember when this was of particular importance to your leadership?

Relationship Management

7. How has using your awareness of your own emotions, and those of others to manage interactions helped you to be an effective leader?

8. Is there a time that you remember when this was of particular importance to your leadership?
APPENDIX E

Research Participants’ Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant’s Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.
APPENDIX F

NIH Clearance

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Antoinette Fulcher Gutierrez successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.
Date of completion: 07/08/2015
Certification Number: 1794687
APPENDIX G

Coding Summary by Themes

Emotional Intelligence of Superintendents

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Correct. Now, I went to two services this weekend because I go to every funeral I can possibly go to for employees. And in both of those services, I bawled my head off. Okay? That was a real reaction and there, I believe it’s appropriate to grieve with my school community.
I think the difference of showing that kind of respect, and the times when you don’t... I think the things that I really dislike is when you have a sense of bullying. When you have someone who’s bullying you and that certainly can happen at all levels, and I could have a city councilman act a little bit as a bully, and those types of things you... Sometimes you have to be a little bit quick on your feet. You know, how you disarm that person, and I’m not an angel because I would love to reveal their ugliness, but I don’t have to be the hammer.

And the only way to do that is you have to control your own emotions. You can’t just get angry and like, “You shouldn’t say that.” That doesn’t work. That just fuels the fire.

Knowing the stats helped but knowing that I’m emotional and that that was one of those touch things for me meant a lot of pre rehearsal before I spoke to families, before I spoke to the press, before I actually came out of my office. I wasn’t hiding away but with Cabot, I rehearsed what I was going to say so that I didn’t appear so emotional because that would have been a time when my level of sensitivity would have been touched.
Buying myself time to create the response, rather than the reaction. It comes down to understanding yourself and understanding your strengths and weaknesses and only then. I think that’s the part when I owned it, I was ready to lead from the top.

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Again, you can quickly shut people down if you’re not appearing to be open, and interested in what they have to say. Whether you agree or disagree, or like it or don’t, you really have to project that persona of listening and caring and trying hard to see their perspective.

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Disarming them by, when you pick up on those cues you really can disarm them by acknowledging and recognizing, “I know you’re frustrated, and I hear your frustration. I’m sorry about that. Tell me more. Explain to me more, because I don’t really understand why you’re frustrated.”

But what you can do is react in ways to get them to open up. To get them to be more calm. That kind of stuff. You have to know yourself, and you have to know how to not react and not let your buttons get pushed, and all that kind of stuff, so that you can concentrate on truly trying to hear what other people are trying to say, and read their emotions in the things they’re doing and the things they’re saying, so that you can react and really manage the situation. Manage the conversation.
When other people in the room know that those people are crazy, and they see that you’re not overreacting to them and you’re not letting them get to you, that just builds you up more in those other people’s eyes.

But I’ve always had to be aware, you know? And I think that as women we do. And even now I supervise principals and I’ve experienced where when they’re given feedback their response is to cry.

And I have to coach them to really just not ... You can’t do that. You just can’t Right? There’s male, female ... You just can’t. And you can express your disappointment, your frustration, whatever it is that you’re feeling, but we have to find another way to that emotion. And as women, if that happens in the hands of the wrong person, it could really be detrimental to ones’ career.

In every other setting, I absolutely filter what I say and how I say it. Because you have to know your audience.

Well for example today I was in a meeting and I wasn’t enjoying what I was hearing. But I keep a face that just kind of encouraging you to talk, but yet not expressing what I’m actually feeling. Because I don’t want to communicate frustration. I want to communicate acceptance of what it is that you’re saying. So I very much have learned to filter that. But I think that that’s appropriate filtering.
You might just be overwhelmed right now. And if I put one more thing on your plate right now. And if I put one more thing on my plate you’re going to explode. And if I can sense or know that something’s not right with you, then I’ve may back off a little bit. And I will push, push, push till the ends of the earth. First myself, then everybody else. But if I know I’m going to push you past your breaking point, I absolutely won’t do that. Because I don’t want people to break. And I think being in touch with where they’re at emotionally ... It’s critical.

I think you really have to know yourself, and know how to work with people, and know how to control your sense of pressure because you have to just accept all that and then help everybody else kind of build their capacity as we move along.

and I think it increases trust so that you can work with those who work with you and for you to build that capacity ... [crosstalk 00:02:52] and build your capacity as a leader.

and then go back and help that other person build that capacity and build that bridge so that it changes how they react the next time.

I’ve taken over projects that wouldn’t have been my work just so that that person coming back from leave can really get caught up, get themselves to where they’re feeling good about what they’re doing, which builds their capacity and ultimately makes me more effective because then I ... the answers that I need. It’s just telling somebody I want the answers and I’m going to do it.
I think it’s increased the level of trust that other have for me, working with me, that I will support them and help build their capacity.

Actually we’re all about doing the absolute best we can for kids so ... But it just helps us, it increases trust, I think it increases capacity, effectiveness, and I see the work product.

You might just be overwhelmed right now. And if I put one more thing on your plate right now. And if I put one more thing on my plate you’re going to explode. And if I can sense or know that something’s not right with you, then I’ve may back off a little bit. And I will push, push, push till the ends of the earth. First myself, then everybody else. But if I know I’m going to push you past your breaking point, I absolutely won’t do that. Because I don’t want people to break. And I think being in touch with where they’re at emotionally ... It’s critical.

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But, I try, and then because I have a safety net here, and when I say here, I’m gonna include all my principals. I’m going to include my cabinet and them. And I think it’s pretty rare that people connect at this level.

To really lead through others, to make them feel empowered.

Nodes\Building relationships

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I felt like I had really good relationships,

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Now, I’m a connector with people and that is probably the basis of my leadership, is probably why I’m successful. I know everybody individually. I know their families, I know this ... But when it comes to ... And I disclose a lot, because that’s how I build relationships
So constantly, whether it’s a parent, a staff member, a kid. I mean, as a teacher, a kid, even as a superintendent, when you can connect with people, you are going to be a more effective teacher. Everything is based on relationships, everything. And again, my entire leadership is based on relationships.

And it’s always about relationships, it’s always about connecting.

Cause we’re human. Yeah, so. Anytime that we have that, it’s all about connecting. And again, whether it’s a kid, a parent, or your teachers. You know, your cabinet, anyone. It’s about connecting and that they trust you.

And that’s something that I think is important in leadership too, is you can love somebody. I’ll be honest with you, I have released several principals over my tenure and several of them I loved.

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I really think it’s at the core of what we do in leadership in terms of building relationships and so I think that for me it really started as I entered into the principalship and I happened to work in a district where the emotional intelligence side and the relationship building was just very much instrumental and at the core of how we led as a district.

this notion of relationships and building capacity is really at the core of that, and so even now the work that I’m doing in my current district, it’s about, you know, you have to build the foundation prior to begin to doing the more technical or operational side of the business, if you will, and so I would say it’s instrumental in my daily work and just really trying to change the momentum and the direction of the district to become very student-centered and for it to be about student outcomes, but to do that you first have to build the capacity of people. I think so much of that revolves around relationships. I think to say it’s been isolated to one particular event or outcome, I don’t know that that’s possible. I really think that it really is part of everything that we do.

I’m always going to respond based on my emotion or my belief, if you will, but the way in which I do that and how is very calculated and strategic and so although I’m a very caring leader, I think I am very in tune with the relationship building and the emotional intelligence side of things

I think when people know that you’re not just using them to get work out of them, that you genuinely care for them as human beings, now you give purpose to work. It’s purpose, it’s a sense of connectedness, and so once again, although I could certainly isolate it down to one particular thing, for me it’s a way of being.

Once again, I really try to show people that I put my pants on one leg at a time just like you and so I think you make yourself approachable by allowing people to know you and taking the extra steps to know them.
You know, I don’t know if you’re coming across it in some of your interviews, but the relationship with your board members is really critical.

You must know your community. You have to really understand what it is that is going to ... Because you have to remember we’re in this for the long run, you know? I think that there’s a problem with educators who are in places for a very short amount of time because they aren’t committed and rooted in the community and really don’t have that ... They have a bad ... I think they’re, you know-

but it’s that when you open yourself up, and you have that kind of thing and that kind of openness, it just kind of helps the whole thing because I’m sure she’s had other level three, four experiences, but maybe she’s learned a little bit more with stuff.

What’s increased my effectiveness is I think people work very hard for me because of that relationship, which just makes me be able to do more and .
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Even if you have good relationships with your units, and your labor units and all that stuff, even if you have that, negotiations is a time that is very sensitive.

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I think that has to do with getting to know your staff. Once you get to know your staff, you can pick up on those emotions that they’re having. You see in them those days that are having bad days, and you can help to try to work with them to see what’s going on.

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I think that helped a lot because if you went to any of the schools I was principal in, even now as superintendent, they always think that I would know so much about them as employees, and their families, and things like that. People don’t react as harshly when you have to make a negative decision, if they feel like you already know about them and you care about them.

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Right. That goes, like if you’re having staff meetings and those things, I think understanding what people need to be able to move forward, how we treat them and how we interact with them, understanding that part of how to deal with people has been very important for me.
So for me that’s important because you need to be in touch with people.

But ultimately, I think being able to read and be in tune with people has helped me manage issues before they’ve happened.

And it was interesting because this person emotionally available, this person not emotionally available ... And all I am is people and emotion. I am, I think embody that more than I embody anything else. And so the relational piece is important to me. And if I can’t ... My experience is that I’ve been able to connect with people, honestly pretty quickly. You don’t have that as a wall.

So anyway, what’s been good about that is that I’ve learned how to connect. So I’ve learned to understand when there’s a wall.

Know what other styles are. For example, Harold Volkamer and I, Harold’s an expressive. He’s my deputy superintendent. I’m the superintendent, as a driver style. Driver just wants to get to the point. Just the facts Jack. An expressive style wants to talk about your day, and, “How’s things going? How’s the family?” When Harold comes to meet with me at a lunch meeting, he has his organized bullet list for me, because he knows I’m a driver. I ask him questions about his family, because I know that’s important for him.
I think people have built a relationship with me, or are willing to build a relationship with me, because they know that when I’m listening I’m listening because I actually care, and because I actually do want to be responsive.

It is sometimes necessary, but I think if you work hard on influencing people, building relationships with folks who have influence or people that have influence on those who have influence, and disrupting alliances that often develop to cloud the vision, mission, and drive of the organization.

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Because I’m really ... I’m a connector. I’m a relationship person. You know, it was very difficult. I have very good relationships with my unions. That doesn’t mean we agree, but at the time, being a newer assistant superintendent, it was very difficult for me when these really great relationships appeared like they were being soured. And then after it was over they were like, it’s just business

And being vulnerable enough to do that because I demonstrated it first for them, my love and care for them.

“Diane is direct, but you know what, she loves you. She’s gonna tell you she loves you. She may make you cry at times. But let me tell you, when push comes to shove, she has your back.” And I think that that has made me realize that I have a lot to learn about leadership.
But this subservient idea where you are trying to seek common ground and equal amount of power.

It’s a really, really good book. Yeah, when you’re not doing anything else. When you’re done, and you just want a good read, it’s a great book.
As an example is one of the things, I have a coach, who has been a superintendent for-

One of the things that he’s shared with me is that when you are in a group discussion, try to be one of the last people that talk, because if you’re

Very quickly in my superintendency did I reflect on the things that I was doing and went out and got a coach, so I had an executive coach who was kind of like my psychologist, that socioemotional conversation and guided me and was a near ... When you get to the superintendency, nobody really understands the job unless they’ve been in that seat before. Having the opportunity to hire and talk to an executive coach, really helped me get to the mental capacity and social awareness that I am right now and reflective.

Really, one of my superintendent mentors, in having these conversations because superintendents, we talk to each other a lot. Sometimes a two-minute conversation could last a lifetime in the world of superintendency.

Those conversations take place all the time and help us. The more we experience those, unfortunately, the better we get at dealing with them

Also, the conversations that I’ve had with my executive coach have really made me become a better coach to my administrators. A lot of times I’ll get, “Well, I don’t know, what do you think?” “What if you knew what you were going to do? What if you had a magic wand and you waved that magic wand? What would that decision be?” There’s a lot of techniques and a lot of strategies that have given to me, a lot of tools in my tool chest, to where I could sit here and when the conversation is stale, we can start pulling things out and start ...
It may not be where I hope it goes, it may not be where I think it’s going to go, but I have the skill set and the tools that have been given to me by various people, to pull things out of executive cabinet or principles, that I didn’t have when I was a first or second year superintendent.

I have received trainings on effective strategies and effective exercises to use to be able to get to a means to an end or whatever. A person that I’ve received some training is Steve Zuieback I don’t know if you’re ...

It’s funny because Dale in my career has been the one who has always been big on using these tools and whenever I interacted with him or in the past he’ll always, he’s given me books. A book full of tools for you

So I think that’s one of the best ways to do it is to not always count on your own interactions or strengths but to count on outside tools that can help you get to a means of what you need to happen.
I think another thing that has really, I believe, served me well is having lookouts, because just as other people’s perceptions maybe aren’t good when you’re in it, mine are limited as well, and so I’ve really loved to have lookouts to say, “Okay, here’s what I think I saw. What did you see?”

The superintendent job is just as lonely and if you don’t have the assistants around you operating at an equal level among themselves, all feeling that they’re pulling the same weight and supporting each other, than that emotional stability I think goes away.

So now it’s kind of ... I feel like I’ve been aware of myself. But now I have myself even more in check. And now I’m having to coach others in that. Because I want them to be successful and not be misperceived for having real emotions about-

So when you’re the superintendent, much like when you’re a principal, you have your (high school principal anyway) sister principals, your closest group. I have my cabinet and work close through. I’ve tried to model in that situation that we are who we are. And we don’t have to hold back.
To go back to training I had on social styles, you look at, there’s four social styles; Expressive, driver, analytical, amiable. In the training, I had this years ago, know yourself. So know what is your style, how do you tend to interact in social settings? Know yourself, control yourself, and the control yourself part I gave a lot of thought to is, “How am I perceived in social settings, given my style? How do I then need to be aware of my behaviors when I’m in a public or social setting, so that I’m more responsive and conscious of others?.” The training goes like that. It says, “Know yourself, control yourself, know others.”

I think that training that I’ve had in the past, thinking about the work with Steve Zybak, going back now probably in my first experience, 12 years ago maybe, and understanding and being conscious of people’s body language or posture, eye contact. Being able to scan a room and really weigh in on, how are people interrelating? That’s helped me to lead and to facilitate a group of people. Because I’m paying attention to the subtleties of their actions.

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It is, it’s this work of, I learned this in the reading of a book called The Art of War. It’s this idea of disrupting alliances. Really, the last thing you ever want to do as a leader is go to war. Some of them die.

So, as I grew, then I was really familiar with Daniel Goleman’s work. But like I say, we’re all two-year-olds in our own conflict. It’s so easy for me to navigate cabinet’s conflicts, principal’s conflicts, but your own, your really have to step back.

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Me on my own would’ve responded, but because of my self-awareness, I have coaches. And my coaches are Johnny on the spot, you know. What is the outcome you want? What are you looking for? What will your response get? And when we go and we have a message, what’s that targeted message gonna be?

I know where I’m safe. I know absolutely know when I’m at my max. And Gale, she’ll just come in and she’s like, “I’m just gonna give you a hug cause I know that” ... you know, and it’s-

Whatever I said it was, “She hates me. Diane hates me.” And then it came to [inaudible 00:13:17]. I called my coach, Dr. Beckler, and-

It’s like, and when you have a choice, like this isn’t a ten-year teacher. I don’t care, so he really helped me put some boundaries in place. And then he said, “Let me hear you, what you’re saying. Give it a few more days.” And then he worked with me to really really design what I wanted in the end.

Maybe even seek some counsel from somebody else that might not be as emotionally invested in something, and then come back.

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And I was going to have trouble ... And I was told actually by one of my five mentors that I needed to get a better poker face if I wanted to be a Superintendent because I was very much wearing everything on my sleeve.

Or even each other. So we’re doing Trust Matters. And -

You know, she always said, if it feels good, don’t send it. And it felt great. So I wrote it, she read it, she said, “You know, have you ever thought maybe that it didn’t work ‘cause of our email system.” We’ve had so much trouble. So I had our tech guy come down. It only delivered to three people. It never delivered to anybody else.
So over time, I think it’s really helped me to listen, to see what people are saying, or have those types of relationships with people who are gonna be honest with me, and who can see me in different forms, if you will, to say “Hey, you’re getting a little emotional”

Just listening to people and understanding that about myself, that yes I’m still myself but people are looking at me differently, helped me to kind of ... Change my delivery, if you will, or be more patient with where people were in accepting what I was doing

One of the things that he’s shared with me is that when you are in a group discussion, try to be one of the last people that talk, because if you’re one of the first people that talk, those followers won’t give out their opinion because they don’t want to go against you.

Cause if you’re right at the beginning of the conversation, then you haven’t listened to all the thoughts and opinions versus at the end of the conversation after you looked and listened to all of these things, you want to be right. For me, the self-management has just been about regulating myself and my opinions, and sometimes holding those things back after I’ve really been trying to be open to hearing different perspectives, then chiming in.

I’m typically really involved and engaged, and hey, this or that. It’s a big shift for me to do that, because it changes how I interact. For me that takes a lot of restraint to kind of pull myself back and just let it flow. So mentally am I losing, not control per say, but am I losing my voice? Or am I just allowing the process to happen because others are responsive? I don’t know, it’s just kind of weird but that’s a challenge in terms of managing myself to let the process happen.

I think for me I have to seek out people who are going to be honest with me based upon what they hear, what they see.
Mm-hmm (affirmative). Because it helps you connect and communicate with those people.

So when you can understand the person that you’re trying to connect or communicate with, then you’re going to be that much more effective.

So if it’s a one-on-one situation, I mean, you’re constantly trying to find that common ground so that you can move forward. Because most of

Yes. And I’ll be honest with you, in my seven ... I mean, I could probably count them. I mean, I don’t have to do that because I have such confident staff. But when I do, I have to find that common ground. So by picking up on, you know, I mean, everything from matching, their body language, to trying to find the common goal, commonalities that we share first, of course, makes you that much more effective in handling the situation.

You know but, we share this. And you don’t focus on what we’re in conflict about.
And as you get to know yourself and become more self-aware, but I think like, even ... I mean, I communicate a lot so I mean, I go out to my schools and I’m in front of my staff, I give and I go to every single school individually. Regular updates, type of a thing. And it’s always about everything going on in the district and just ... But my reason for going is not really to even share all that. My reason for going is that I’m standing right here with you. Anything about our district you want to ask, anything about me you want to ask, anything that’s on your mind, any rumors out there. I’m right here, you come to me. Okay, and so I go out there.

But the point is, as I’m preparing to go out there, I have to know the dynamics. I mean, I know I hear what’s going on in each individual school so I tweak my presentation just enough to know what that school needs to hear at that time. And you’ve got to know them first.

So it doesn’t matter if it’s one-on-one when you can find that common, it’s the same thing when you’re talking to a whole group, a whole staff. The more you know about what they’re feeling, their situation, and can be with them in that.

It’s communication. It’s everything.

I mentioned before I’m a discloser, and when I say, I mean I hope I’m not an inappropriate discloser, I always try and match that. If someone has disclosed something to me, then I’ll match something with them. And it’s personal. I’m not afraid to share and in our community, my husband’s a judge across the street. I’m here, I’ve raised five kids in this community and so a lot of people know us. I mean, I know everybody in all the local cities. And so I think people also have some perceptions about us, and maybe ... And a lot of this actually probably comes through my faith too, a little bit.

I’m not afraid to share our brokenness, things that have occurred in our life that have either ...
But and then the other piece of course that goes along with all of that, is whatever you are, however you are communicating this, that you’re honestly communicating.

So, when the rumors came up, I went out to every single school site and stood in front of every single school. Cause I give to one school, I give to them all. Tweaked it a little bit depending on the school, ‘cause I knew the school ... And said, this is rumor number one. This is a fact. This is rumor number two, I’ve heard this. This is the fact. And communicated, now, ask me anything you want to ask me. And that’s the Donna that they know.

And the way I would do that is, here is the rumor. Here is the correct information. Ask me anything you want, I’m an open book, guys. I’ve been doing this ... You’ve known me for 20 years. Ask me anything you want to ask me. Open book. And do it that way. And you let that person save faith.

I may already know the answer, but I’m just asking to see if you’re going to tell me the truth.” I may or may not. What that does is, it helps me calibrate their decision making process and so, I can see in body language, I can see in tone, I can see in how much stress is on their face, that either I’ll say, “Okay, you need to back off,” or if they’re sitting there quietly, constantly on their phone, give them their time and their space and then maybe keep them after a meeting or say, “You know what Mike, you’ve been sitting there quiet this whole meeting, is there anything you want to add to the conversation?” Sometimes I have to pull it out of them because you know what they’re walking in with, their side issues or family issues. That has helped me ...
This is why I sit right here in this because I can see everybody in the room. That has really helped me tremendously, is kind of getting a feel for people as they walk into the room and find out what’s on their shoulders, what’s weighing on their shoulders.

I think a lot of times it's about not just going and trusting on your own ability to interact with somebody but what’s the best tool to be able to use to be able to effectively get to the answer that I want. So I think that’s a good strategy to use as it is to, now it’s hard because if you’re living in the moment, you can live in the moment and try to trust on yourself and your own natural inclination to have a conversation.

It was through that awareness, if you will, that I really then, through my leadership just try to be very conscious of how I’m including others, how I frame conversations really focusing on the issue, not the person, what are ways to be collaborative, to give people the opportunity to give input, that whole notion of seeking to understand before being understood, so it really runs through every part of my leadership and now not only how I choose to carry myself, but really my expectations for those leaders that work around me as well.

They need to know that you’re an active listener.
You know what I’m saying, so you work to redirect. You’re reading the group and their emotional responses to whatever has just happened, but you’re also taking into consideration, what was the antecedent. Why did that happen, and then how can you redirect and model what it could be, I guess.

We’re constantly engaging in those kinds of conversations because I too need people to be able to provide me feedback just as I would provide them feedback.

The best way to disarm them was to show that they didn’t rile you. They didn’t impact you, and you treated them ... Even though they didn’t deserve it. This was really critical. Even though they didn’t deserve it you treat them with respect because when they’re treated with respect there is a disarming of just the bad behavior that occurs, and that happens in every situation.

By showing that respect, that’s that emotional intelligence I think too. Just in the way that you treat people ultimately because it helps to just ... Let’s get back to where we can get back to solve whatever the matter is. You can’t solve anything when there’s no respect going on.
No matter what your political beliefs would be in this like ... Both sides are just ... There’s an unwillingness to learn. There’s an unwillingness to listen. There’s an unwillingness to be gentler.

Exactly. Like we don’t need to give them any more ammunition, but at the same time we’re going to be transparent and honest about these kinds of things, so I really believe that that emotional intelligence of a leader has a lot to do with the health of an organization and in being able to achieve goals.

“I’m going to land on what’s right, and if you’re right, which our principals are 99 out of 100 times, you’re going to get support. You’re going to feel very supported 99 out of 100 times. That’s good, but it’s not because you’re the principal. It’s because you stood behind principles of what’s right and what’s wrong.” I think people appreciate that, you know?

I think that in my job, especially in a small school district, that I wear so many hats and the pressure to deal with so many different entities and people and talk during the deal,

But I think the constant talk about all the wonderful ... The programs we’ve done, the things we’ve ... The schools we’ve opened. I think all of that work is kind of a result of kind of that style of leadership and that everything we kind of we all want to do this together.
I think probably it’s helped me most in being able to listen. You’re pretty intuitive as a teacher and then you practice that as a teacher and you practice it as a junior administrator, as a principal and as you move up but I think seeking to understand them has really helped my ability to listen. To say, “Where are they coming from? What am I seeing?” And asking those questions and you really do pick up on their ... Not just their emotions but can they see that? Do they have a sensitivity?

You’re the one that talks to everybody, who calls everyone down, keeps the ship going and tries to stay out of the paper.

I think it helps a lot because you send off messages unintentionally through body language and the like.

If you can’t be aware of your own emotions and how you’re feeling about something when you’re having a conversation, all of that spews out in your body language, and you often, in my experience, send the wrong message. Knowing your emotions and knowing how to stay calm and continue to project an openness is powerful.
I wouldn’t say that I’ve mastered that. But what I do know is that, when you’re having a conversation and you begin to either get upset or frustrated or confused, if you’re not able to recognize that and pull that out, and stay focused on the other person, and try really hard to hear what that other person is saying, it will shut them down in an instant.

“Okay. I understand what you’re saying now,” and we could move that conversation forward.

But what you can do is react in ways to get them to open up. To get them to be more calm. That kind of stuff. You have to know yourself, and you have to know how to not react and not let your buttons get pushed, and all that kind of stuff, so that you can concentrate on truly trying to hear what other people are trying to say, and read their emotions in the things they’re doing and the things they’re saying, so that you can react and really manage the situation. Manage the conversation.

You are continually having those conversations.

A grievance to the contract, or whatever the case might be. When those things happen, you start with those conversations, and you try to disarm the other person, and try to hear them through all the emotion. Then try to get them to a place where, then it’s about the emotions on the side. Then it’s about solving the problem together.

To be able to articulate calmly what we’re trying to do is very important also.
It was an ugly situation, but I think understanding myself, how I had to react to all the situations, made the situation end much quicker than it could have. It could have kept progressing, and we were able to calm it down.

Well, I could tell you I can pick up on body language really well. That has allowed me to tell when people are lying to me, when they’re being deceptive, when they’re really trying to set something up politically. I tend to be ... I don’t play politics and I don’t get involved in that, so consequently I tend to pick up when other people are doing something and I think that’s helped me steer clear of hiring certain people, or promoting certain people, or even getting involved in the stories, or making sure I stay away. It’s also made sure that I’m a very strong communicator and that I let my own words speak for themselves, and I don’t let other people speak on my behalf. Yes, I think its made a very

I like to call that passion. And I like to call that expectation. And I like to call that communication

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And people ... If I’m really real, is she really going to be able to take it? So I have to model that. So in that room with that group of people, there is no level of measurement. I am who I am. I say what I say. I don’t fill. And it’s a safe place to bring me to sea.

Well for example today I was in a meeting and I wasn’t enjoying what I was hearing. But I keep a face that just kind of encouraging you to talk, but yet not expressing what I’m actually feeling. Because I don’t want to communicate frustration. I want to communicate acceptance of what it is that you’re saying. So I very much have learned to filter that. But I think that that’s appropriate filtering.

What is it, like 85% of our communication is nonverbal. So you can even pick that up over the phone on how people are receiving your information. The pauses. And face-to-face, absolutely. So how people are sitting, how they’re communicating with their eyes, what they’re doing with their hands, what they’re doing with their legs. All of those ...

I think it comes down to communication and expectations.

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I can tell sometimes if I’m in a group setting, by how someone’s acting, do they need ... It’s like when you came in.

In similar settings, paying attention to body language and paying attention to the context I think has helped me as a leader many times. It’s helped me to create what they call escape routes. When there’s a tough situation going on, you develop the skillset of, how do you listen well, listen deeply to what’s really underlying? The motivations underlying the conversation. The dialog.
I think there are times in the heat of a moment when, even most recently with the context of our nation right now having to make sense of that, and make a decision to insert myself as leader to say what needs to be said in that moment, that hopefully can kind of coalesce around a common vision, and remind people of our why, our vision, our mission, our values, our beliefs. When that becomes necessary, and you’re able to get people to think about the why that can sometimes cut through the personal and individualized agendas, if that makes sense.

I find myself in that position. Generally if I am in a large group setting, and maybe a leader says something that’s out of tune with our values, our beliefs, and I find that’s when I need to say something so that the whole group can learn in that moment about that experience. Or if I’m in a board meeting, and something is done or said that’s out of tune with the values or beliefs. There’s times you insert that conversation so that, I see myself as the keeper of our values, our beliefs, our mission, our vision. So having to constantly tune or listen for that. How are we out of tune? Where are we out of tune? Being able to have either an individual conversation or a group conversation.

Even the conversation I just had with the person in the room before you, it’s like, the conversation that we had today was able to be had because of all the foundational work we’ve laid before. With having open transparent, vulnerable, real conversations. It wasn’t just one time.

It’s helped me because I have some leaders within the community who might have a different agenda. Yet when they come and they experience a transparent, vulnerable conversation with Dale, it creates dissonance in their agenda, versus this kind of safe space if you will. It’s interesting.
And so, knowing that, I’m able to come here and I’m very self-aware, so I tell them, I come in and I go, “Today’s probably not the day for any more difficult, challenging issues or to feel the need to lead me up.” So we use the term “lead me up” in [inaudible 00:00:57] to mean I’m going to lead my boss up and let them know something they did wrong or something that I’d like to do better.

I really had to learn my body language. I had to learn to be very self-aware of what my button-pushers were gonna be in the board meeting.

But, I try, and then because I have a safety net here, and when I say here, I’m gonna include all my principals. I’m going to include my cabinet and them. And I think it’s pretty rare that people connect at this level.

So, they know, so they feel good like and you know they feel good too to know it’s okay. I want to see that there’s tension, and the same with me. The first year I did it, mine was all [inaudible 00:12:30]. By the second year, they were like, “We don’t like when you do this.” And then I go and I broadcast. “Here’s what I heard you say, and these are the three things I’m working on and you’re gonna hold me accountable.” And I make every cabinet member do it.

It’s interesting, I think it’s not only about my own self-awareness, it’s about picking up on other people’s body language, and the words they’re using, and maybe not having them act on a decision, which may be detrimental for them and for the district. I don’t know that I have any control over having somebody else manage their own emotions, but how can I work the communication between us, in such a way that we have an outcome that we’re able to own, and we might not have buyers remorse over, so to speak.
The first thing that comes to mind for me is this whole concept of crucial conversations. It’s high impact, in other words, lots of high stakes on both sides of the conversation. And how do we not only try and manage our own emotions, but guide through conversation, the emotions of others? I think it’s being sensitive about words.

Donald Trump has given us a great opportunity to reexamine the power of words. I think that to project a calmness is really important to depersonalize the conversation or the decision where possible, is also very helpful.

But I think because I had early experience and I was able to identify those key moments in conversation and interactions with one another, that I’ve probably become more aware of those things over time. I think being able to manage your own emotions, being able to ... I don’t want to say manipulate other people’s emotions, but I think that awareness in knowing what to say and how to guide the conversation, leads to better decisions.

Because most people I think are pretty reflective, and so they’re able to leave the conversation, leave the decision. And I’m thinking about particularly with respect to committees, councils, where there’s groups of people working together, certainly negotiations fit into this.

Because I think a lot of conversations go sideways, where there’s a real or perceived imbalance of power within the conversation. I think awareness around that, and by the way, I think in my role I have much greater responsibility to have that than other people that I’m speaking with. That’s everything I know.
But you can acknowledge a screaming parent, and understand their frustration, and be able to acknowledge that they feel discriminated against. Or whatever the claim might be. Without saying somebody’s right or wrong.

I think that that develops over time as well.

Because I can go back even as a young teacher and see how I have gotten better at that all the way through.

You just tell me. But I think and again, I think that develops over the years. You learn it. I learned in that situation, that was of course 15 years ago, how important and I never have forgotten that. So as you learn those little lessons along the way, you know to do that.
It’s evolved over the years, as a superintendent and I’d say, my perception of my emotional awareness now, is in a much better place than it was when I first started because, when I first started, like when I became a principle or even assistant principle, my charge was to be liked and to make everything better and over time, very quickly, realizing you’re not always going to be liked nor are you going to be able to solve everybody’s problems

Right now, my emotional capacity is much more reflective and much more mature than it was when I first started. Even when I was a principle.

It may not be where I hope it goes, it may not be where I think it’s going to go, but I have the skill set and the tools that have been given to me by various people, to pull things out of executive cabinet or principles, that I didn’t have when I was a first or second year superintendent.

This was seven years ago. It was kind of as we were making the transition from the top down to the servant leader, but I was at that younger end of the top down management, the [dictatorial 00:10:44] style, which is what I was trained under.

The research says you can train, but you have to have something special about you.
I have received trainings on effective strategies and effective exercises to use to be able to get to a means to an end or whatever. A person that I’ve received some training is Steve Zuieback I don’t know if you’re ...

but I also think that because of some very explicit opportunities I was given in a prior district it really brought about a level of awareness that I don’t know that I would otherwise have had.

I think learning how to temper that and make sure that you are ... Or, I am being as even as possible is really, really important.

because I’ve learned over time by not acting on those emotions I’ve had to try to work to maintain calm, which is a better place sometimes to lead from.
To go back to training I had on social styles, you look at, there’s four social styles; Expressive, driver, analytical, amiable. In the training, I had this years ago, know yourself. So know what is your style, how do you tend to interact in social settings? Know yourself, control yourself, and the control yourself part I gave a lot of thought to is, “How am I perceived in social settings, given my style? How do I then need to be aware of my behaviors when I’m in a public or social setting, so that I’m more responsive and conscious of others?.” The training goes like that. It says, “Know yourself, control yourself, know others.”

I think that training that I’ve had in the past, thinking about the work with Steve Zybak, going back now probably in my first experience, 12 years ago maybe, and understanding and being conscious of people’s body language or posture, eye contact. Being able to scan a room and really weigh in on, how are people interrelating? That’s helped me to lead and to facilitate a group of people. Because I’m paying attention to the subtleties of their actions.

So, I’m pretty self-aware when I’m not doing well. The learning, though, has to be, and that doesn’t mean I don’t always react.

Well, I’m a loyal person, you know. I grew up in San Bernardino. That didn’t really serve the type of person I was and the loyalty that I demonstrated, but I learned so much and I grew up. So

Yeah. Well seeing the maturity in myself, the growth in myself from year one ... And when I say year one, I’m kind of putting it together of my assistant superintendency, so this is my eleventh year in cabinet. And I think when I think of year one eleven years ago and now, that reflection has not only helped me stay out of it when things are going south, it’s helped me to see it in my cabinet members, you know.
There were times when I lashed out and then there were times when I took a back foot to it. But I think what I learned is my first response will be emotional.

“Diane is direct, but you know what, she loves you. She’s gonna tell you she loves you. She may make you cry at times. But let me tell you, when push comes to shove, she has your back.” And I think that that has made me realize that I have a lot to learn about leadership.

I’m still learning. I still am humble about it.

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When you’ve been doing it for a while, and where actually learned, I think a lot of this is when I was working in juvenile probation. Working with incarcerated youth who are very emotional, very-
So, what I attribute to my strengths are also my biggest weaknesses. I don’t have ... Now, I don’t have the trouble having the difficult conversations. It gets so much easier after you have them over and over again.

But in this particular case, the rules were broken. And there was no shade of gray. We hold the public trust. We ... You know, tax payer dollars. So I thought HR would take care of it. And for whatever reason, the Superintendent did not want HR to do it. They wanted, you know. He wanted me to do it.

If you miss those queues, then you don’t know where you need to go. In my opinion. And I think some people ... You can teach skill, but you can’t teach this ... Because it’s like a ... Well, that’s why they call it emotional. The EQ is so much harder to teach. And so I’m ... this book helps. But ... Through stories and illustrations and so on, but it’s still really hard.

Nodes\Expectation of their leader

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So I think that people want to see, they want to see a certain thing in their leader first of all. They want to have confidence in their leader and they want to know that no matter what happens out there, that they’re safe.

And even when they’re testing you, you have to rise above it because that’s, even the ones testing you and thinking they’re going to ... That’s what they want from you.
Because it’s like a child who’s asking to be disciplined. They want to know that they’re safe and they’re not safe when someone flies off the handle cause of anger, even if they’re feeling that. They’re not safe when they’re crying ... You know, and not able to make decisions even in an emergency situation or a very bad situation.

And I full trust ... We are such a team. Such a collaborative team, it’s just amazing. And very, very, very good friends. There is nothing that these ladies don’t know about me personally or whatever, but even with them, you know, when something happens, cause things happen all the time. Even with them, I try and not let that show unless we’re in it together. Like if something happens in one of their departments, because they want to know the same thing.

Cause they never ... If something goes wrong, it’s never cause someone did it on purpose.

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“Are you emotional or are expressing emotion?” I don’t know that those two things are one in the same, because I think you have to understand that you also have to maintain your credibility and so how you express that emotion becomes very important.

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They don’t have the ability to manage it in the way that many others. That’s why I tell people, I say, “Guess what? We’re paid for that. That is part of our job. Our job is not to be right. Our job is to resolve situations, and many times that is just acknowledging and being okay with that. That doesn’t mean that you’re not supporting staff. That doesn’t mean ... You know, we’re going to take a look at the right things and stuff.” I don’t know if that got to the point.

In this position it’s really critical that your stakeholders ... That’s your employees, your parents, your board members, your students, see someone who’s steady, who isn’t someone who’s going to be just off emotionally because that creates a system that is disconcerting.

I mean, it’s very difficult to kind of maneuver in that, and especially for us and education. We are many times the places in the six, seven hours of a kid’s day that needs to be the most steady, predictable, safe, positive place, and when the leader doesn’t show that and express that, that creates a lot of emotional turmoil.

I was always told that when you lead, your only job is to take care of everybody around you. It’s not to really do anything. It’s kind of true. The high school principalship and the superintendency are the same game.

It’s your job to make sure everybody else is calm. Unless you’re calm, unless you are there you can’t do it.

I think it’s just what we do all the time if you’re a good leader.
You get upset when people come in, and you’ve got to stay calm. You’ve got to be the voice of reason in the room. Sometimes they just want to be able to spew out and vent, and as the leader you have to be able to take a step back and listen to them; you don’t always have to give them an answer.

And you’ve got to be able to create an environment that can adapt to that. Whatever it is. It doesn’t have to be you, the leader. But it needs to be you, the leader, by exesion. Right? So with me with my cabinet, with my principals, with my other management people, someone’s got to be in touch with someone. Everyone’s got to have a friend so we know what’s happening with people. Because they’re all ... They’re going through divorce. They’re going through having children. They’re going through going back to school. Whatever it is. So if we’re in tune with it, we can create a system that’s in tune with it. Right? So that we’re honoring people’s experience and not just collecting it.
To really lead through others, to make them feel empowered.

My principals are super amazing and they need me to be there ... They need me to give them that oxygen of support.

I think for people in leadership positions, I think it’s perspective-taking, in other words, being able to take on somebody else’s perspective. And I also think the other piece that’s really critical is this idea of reducing my perceived power in the conversation. There’s a word for that, I can’t think of it right now, because I’ve been in cabinet all day long.

Because I think a lot of conversations go sideways, where there’s a real or perceived imbalance of power within the conversation. I think awareness around that, and by the way, I think in my role I have much greater responsibility to have that than other people that I’m speaking with. That’s everything I know.

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It’s a business. I still have to run a business. And the way I ... The thing that I learned was ... You know, we always say, oh, the decision was made for the greater good. Well, our greater good in Fontana was 42,000 kids. Here, it’s 9,000 kids, 10,000 kids. So, that helps me reconcile when I take away somebody’s livelihood. It’s a terrible thing. It’s a terrible feeling.

So, I realized at that moment, that if I was gonna have a big girl job, I needed to act like a big girl. And that meant dealing with men, people that were older than me, and my peers.

So, but you know that’s a ... So, that’s just kind of a roundabout example of how this piece affects your ... If you allow it to affect your leadership.

Nodes\Feeling safe

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Board member.

But it’s all about trust and so people again need to, and you know, you come from the classroom as well. Even kids, when a teacher is consistent, then we can trust them, okay? Even if they’re going to get angry or not like something, when they’re consistent, we trust them. When they fly off the handle and it’s unpredictable, same at home is of course when the behavior is unpredictable, then we don’t feel safe.

Well, leadership is all about trust and feeling safe. So I think that if you display any of those, you will lose the trust that you’ve built.
And I think they didn’t know what they got signed up for, because they didn’t know how much it was going to end up going personally against me. They’re my friends. Yeah, they’re my teachers. But at no point could I, first of all, let them see me sweat. Because the rest of everybody, everybody needs to know that they’re safe. No matter what happens. Even if this guy gets on the board, that they’re still going to be safe, because Donna’s still going to be the same.

I mean, it’s very difficult to kind of maneuver in that, and especially for us and education. We are many times the places in the six, seven hours of a kid’s day that needs to be the most steady, predictable, safe, positive place, and when the leader doesn’t show that and express that, that creates a lot of emotional turmoil. I think it causes difficulty ... If you take a look at the stakeholder groups and employee turn over. That’s a challenge because people want to be in a place where they’re feeling safe and secure, and you do your best work. You know, kids do their best work. Employees do their best work when they’re feeling safe and secure and respected.

You know, and when you land on treat people with dignity, respect, keep kids safe, we don’t need to be teaching them life lessons of accountability. They’re getting enough of it just waking up each day.
I mean, it seems like whenever I’m in meetings a lot of times it’s being able to create those zones where people will talk, because as superintendent you only know what people tell you and if they’ll tell me in the grocery store, or if they tell me through anonymous letters, I’d rather hear from my own team and know ... If they always feel like a person’s going to be emotional, or going to get angry, or going to beat them up, or do all these things, then they’re not going to tell you. It’s building that trust level to be able to [inaudible 00:07:27]

But, I try, and then because I have a safety net here, and when I say here, I’m gonna include all my principals. I’m going to include my cabinet and them. And I think it’s pretty rare that people connect at this level. I know where I’m safe. I know absolutely know when I’m at my max. And Gale, she’ll just come in and she’s like, “I’m just gonna give you a hug cause I know that” ... you know, and it’s-

Having empathy

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Okay. And of course, empathy is everything. When you can put yourself in another person’s shoes, oh my gosh. And not just one-on-one which always works, but ... And that’s something that I have gotten better at over the years, too. I think I’ve always been pretty empathetic. But you develop that, you get better at it.

But then, if you can empathize ... If you can first of all, empathize and hit it in a pro-active way, you’re going to connect and you’re going to definitely be more effective.

And it’s always about empathy.

And when you can empathize, when you can put yourself in their position, people tend to trust you.

So those are the kinds of things of pulling it all together but it’s always about ... But you also had to know where they stood, I thought some of them ... Again, that’s the empathy part. I didn’t attack ... I mean, the school that I knew was doing it.
So for me ... Again, I try to show compassion. Not try. I think I feel like I’m pretty good at showing compassion, empathy, sympathy, those kinds of things, but I don’t go on the other end of things of trying to ... I don’t emote overly like, “That’s fantastic,” or, “I’m really angry.” I just kind of foundational base.

I think that people need to know that you care.

People will work much more diligently for you if they have a sense that you care and you value the work that they do and that you care for them as people.

Respond to the hurt human being that is carrying their life circumstances whether they’re right or wrong. They got to that point because of stuff, and just acknowledge that and show grace, and that’s really an important thing I think especially for a school leader.

Yeah, but you have to realize this woman was bringing in tons and tons of life circumstances that were horrendous. How lucky am I? I had no idea about that level of pain and hurt. This woman lost two sons. This woman lost two sons to violence before she moved to this community, and when she’s perceiving that there’s some-
You know, and when you land on treat people with dignity, respect, keep kids safe, we don’t need to be teaching them life lessons of accountability. They’re getting enough of it just waking up each day.

There needs to be more grace, more care, so that was a long way around all that, but you just kind of ... You have to be centered in this kind of belief that that’s how I treat people. I’m going to treat people this way, and I think when you find leaders like that things go pretty well, but when someone has a core philosophy or belief that truly is different.

So you have to be able to ... How can I help you? How can I step in and do part of that?

But also that as a human being, I can understand the things that come up in life that at times cause you not to be at your highest level of performance. And then if people are honest with me about what those factors are, I can help them work through it.

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Most of our job as superintendents, and when I was a principal as well, most of our job is about making people feel like they’re valued, and that you hear what they’re trying to tell you from their perspective.

It is absolutely the human piece piece of it. That’s exactly right.

Being a caring person and showing them that you have an understanding about them. I think getting to know my staff.

Understanding how other people see that.

Knowing myself, controlling myself, where I may feel inside like, “I don’t really want to listen to this story right now.” I talk to myself and say, “No. It’s important to him that I listen to his story, and ask him how things are going.” To me that’s a part of that emotional intelligence, is being able to control yourself and give thought to that environment context.

I think it helps me to mirror or project the same level of intensity or emotion that others are feeling. Being able to fully understand the emotion of others helps me to internalize that, so that the emotion also becomes mine. When the emotion is mine, I can lead better, if I share that emotion with somebody. Trying to get to that kind of common ground on an emotional plain is helpful.
If someone is grieving over something, can I then grieve with them? If someone is excited about something, they’re passionate about it, can I also be excited and passionate about it with them? When I mirror that, I was meeting with a judge earlier today for lunch, and she’s getting ready to retire.

And being vulnerable enough to do that because I demonstrated it first for them, my love and care for them.

An example of that can even be working with parents. I have to imagine, being a high school principal, yourself a high school principal, we see things on a global scale. So where a parent comes in, they think they’re the only parent in the world who is dealing with a particular situation, when it’s really not that uncommon, but yet they’re feeling sensitive about their own ability as a parent sometimes. Maybe they have feelings of guilt and all this kind of stuff. Just trying to help bring those emotions down by saying, “You’re not alone. Let’s talk about this. We can conquer this together.” And, “You’re son or daughter is most likely going to turn out okay. This is not going to be devastated, devastating for them.”
The final piece I would say is the ability to take on another’s perspective on things. To see the world through their eyes, so to speak, I think is really critical.

I think for people in leadership positions, I think it’s perspective-taking, in other words, being able to take on somebody else’s perspective. And I also think the other piece that’s really critical is this idea of reducing my perceived power in the conversation. There’s a word for that, I can’t think of it right now, because I’ve been in cabinet all day long.

So, I’m an emotional leader anyway. And I am a passionate leader. And I kind of say that I’m like a mom in my leadership. I care about all of my kids.

Appeal to their emotional side by acknowledging their perception or their feelings, or whatever it might be.
That has been a key factor in ... It’s almost an innate ... I want to say, you almost have to have it because those people that don’t have it, you just shake your head and going, “Why did you say that? If you would have just said it this way.”

Anyway, from the time that I first became superintendent until now, it’s almost like ... I don’t want to say it’s a gift, but you either have it or you don’t. You have the emotional intelligence or you don’t. A good example is like, there are a lot of teachers out there that have their doctorates, a lot of professionals that have their doctorates.

The research says you can train, but you have to have something special about you.

I’m a pretty even keeled person, so I don’t emote or respond a lot. So what I’ve noticed an example is negotiations is I’m in there. People have a harder time reading me if I’m upset about something that was said or some offer that was done. So I pretty much try to keep myself even keel. Not try it. I just have it natural.

You’re just so even keeled all the time. Highs, lows, whatever” and so I think that for whatever reason it’s just a natural part of who I am. I don’t let the highs get to high and the lows get to low.
In reflecting back I really think a lot of, I think some of it is just instinctual in terms of who I am.

Yeah. It’s hard to explain, and I think some people have it, and some people don’t, you know? We’ve done some emotional intelligence training for our administrators, and we’ve tried to ... You know, you can really pick the ones that have it. They’re just masters of it because I think it comes naturally, and others where maybe it doesn’t as much. The awareness of, oh yeah this is a thing.

I think probably it’s helped me most in being able to listen. You’re pretty intuitive as a teacher and then you practice that as a teacher and you practice it as a junior administrator, as a principal and as you move up but I think seeking to understand them has really helped my ability to listen. To say, “Where are they coming from? What am I seeing?” And asking those questions and you really do pick up on their ... Not just their emotions but can they see that? Do they have a sensitivity?
Yeah. Sort of softer. Sort of intuitive. And they’ll speak more direct. More facts. And it can override and supersede if you don’t come back with your own opinion.

Oh, absolutely. So I call that intuition. I’m an extremely intuitive person.

If you miss those queues, then you don’t know where you need to go. In my opinion. And I think some people ... You can teach skill, but you can’t teach this ... Because it’s like a ... Well, that’s why they call it emotional. The EQ is so much harder to teach. And so I’m ... this book helps. But ... Through stories and illustrations and so on, but it’s still really hard.
I have to recognize where people perceive me. I think that throughout my experience, I’ve learned that whatever I’m thinking in my own head, is not necessarily how other people perceive me. I’ve had to find out where I am, because when I start to hear things about myself a long time ago, I’m like, “No, I’m not like that, I’m not like that.”

but it’s different being the superintendent because of the perception of me. It kind of took me a while to understand that my ... In theory, most of the time I’m very positive and charismatic and “Hey let’s go!,” and energetic and not everyone was that same way with me.

Your not the same, and your creating a disconnect vs. your [crosstalk 00:08:22] a part of, and so I dealt with a lot of ... how I interact, when I do, how I do that. It’s kind of learning that balance if you will, because it does impact others, every little thing. It’s interesting.

If I get mad about something, then it’s viewed very, very differently than a male superintendent. I only know that, because I was the assistant superintendent in this district with a male superintendent and I know how he could express anger. If I did exactly the same thing, it would be viewed very, very differently.
I think it’s important to ... from the beginning of my administrative career, understanding my emotional state because as women we can sometimes be pegged as overemotional.

My emotions. So you know I’ve always had that sort of, if you will, in check in my mind. I haven’t let it inhibit my passion or my expression, but I also understand that ... I was a high school principal as well and was very often in the room only with men. Especially when you go to athletic director meetings, right? So you’re the only woman in there.

And men speak very matter-of-fact. They speak in a fact way. I’m just saying in my general experience. I’m sure there’s research to back this up. I haven’t done it. I haven’t read it. But they speak in a matter-of-fact way and what I find is women speak more from a this-is-how-I’m-perceiving-it or this-is-how-I’m-seeing-it. More from an intuitive-

But to wrap it all in, I’ve always been aware of how I’ve been perceived and I’ve gotten poor feedback. And I’m going to say poor because I’ve experienced what I would consider being a strong person and a strong emotional person and it being labeled as uptight, wound-tight, type A which is just a nicer way of saying wound-tight.

And I don’t appreciate that kind of expression. Whereas if I were that kind of characterization. But if were a man then I would be high-achieving. I’d be a go-getter. I’d be out in front. I’d be lead learner.
I think that a lot of leadership is about how we’re perceived. How we control ourselves in social settings.

How we make sense of the group dynamics and social dynamics that are going on within a group, small or large. The political social context is important to pay attention to.

Some people say it is for women, though. There is a very ... There are two schools of thought that I have heard from different colleagues. So, I’ve had some who will say no, you can’t let them see you sweat. You have to be tough all the time. You don’t develop any friendships. And they’re normally ... Excuse my language, but they’re known as the bitches, right? That’s what ... And we hear it.
It’s helped because it’s given me the sanity and it’s allowed me to determine the things that are really, really important, the things that I have control over and the things that I don’t have control over.

Is three to five. Michael [inaudible 00:05:10] talks about, “You don’t want be right at the beginning of the meeting, you want to be right at the end of the meeting.” If you go in with a mentality of, “I know what’s best and I’m right and I’m going to make you understand and you guys might agree with me,” you’ll end up in the hospital bed. It took me a little bit to understand that and maneuver those waters to get to the point where I’m at right now. Not to the point where I don’t care.

You do care, but it’s like, all right, give me another one. Throw something else at me. It’s that thick skin, I guess, that everybody always talks about when you ...

Well, I think when you are able to put ... The job is going to be naturally difficult and challenging at many times, and it’s just critical to be able to realize that there’s moments in time where it’s 10 for you, but the real issue is maybe a three or four, and so kind of self talk your way through it. It’s like, “This is a tough week. I’m tired. In the big scheme of things this is not as big a deal as it seems right now.”
We’re a very low funded, socioeconomically disadvantaged district. We barely make 53% sometimes. I came from a totally different landscape, much like what you’re in now. And so here, there’s a weird balance of ... You know, I have ... I speak Spanish to my groups. And it was a weird balance coming here, because there’s some things that they’re not ready for yet.

And that’s something that I think is important in leadership too, is you can love somebody. I’ll be honest with you, I have released several principals over my tenure and several of them I loved. Honestly, all of them, I loved. But you know, a couple of them, oh my god. It broke my heart. But I have to separate that out. And the best thing that can happen is if you can develop that ability to let the person know, separate it out. I can’t continue this way because it’s not effective.
But still let that person know that you love and care for them, that’s where you want to get. I think that’s where you want to get. And that’s where I would say to separate it out.

think one thing that really helps me is keeping in mind when other people get upset and, I don’t know, emotional about a situation, trying to take it back to facts and data and make it about the work, not about the person, has really helped me kind of take it out of that personal space and make it about how can we improve the work and the skills to do the work. But it isn’t about them as they’re not a poor leader or they’re not a bad person, and just taking to rephrase it so that objective instead of subjective.

Being able to pick up on that, that it’s not arrogance; it’s lack of experience and it’s lack of understanding and then helping them through that, really I think has worked well for me.

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I think those are some very immediate opportunities for me to assess, I guess, and not take things personally.

An example of that can even be working with parents. I have to imagine, being a high school principal, yourself a high school principal, we see things on a global scale. So where a parent comes in, they think they’re the only parent in the world who is dealing with a particular situation, when it’s really not that uncommon, but yet they’re feeling sensitive about their own ability as a parent sometimes. Maybe they have feelings of guilt and all this kind of stuff. Just trying to help bring those emotions down by saying, “You’re not alone. Let’s talk about this. We can conquer this together.” And, “You’re son or daughter is most likely going to turn out okay. This is not going to be devastated, devastating for them.”

However, I know how much I care about people and even when I can’t stand them at work, I love them separately. And so, I knew I would have to figure out a way to separate things so that I didn’t overdo myself and I would remain in a way where I could make decisions that were balanced, but they were all about work.

It was so difficult. I think I cried for two weeks. At least I didn’t cry in the meeting.

Yeah. Commit theft. You know, and ... Rumors were out there, and that one was easier. It was completely black and white. You know, but, those were the two things that I had to say, if I’m gonna do this job and maybe even the next one, I need to get a turtle shell. So.
I’m just not as emotional. I don’t know if it’s about reacting. I’ve just learned to ... I’ve learned to have feelings ... I’ve learned to be a little more appropriate with my feelings. So ... That’s kind of a weird way to say it. So, I have figured out how to really like someone, support someone and coach someone. And then have ... Not carry the weight of having to have the hard conversation. I’ve learned how to not do that.

And so, I still go back to the compassion and the passionate part about, you know, sitting with him in the hospital, and having ... having that emotional tie where you want to build relationships. But if tomorrow ... Well, maybe not tomorrow, but.

A lot of times what I will do is just write an email, and then give it to somebody and say, “Should I send this?” And the answer is no. That kind of thing, so it’s not like I don’t react but I think you just kind of use filters when there’s people or the ability to just do something, to act out in some way that is filtered eventually. I think that’s one of the main reasons or one of the main ways that I do or don’t react is that people don’t even see it. It’s even very subtle in that is I don’t, it’s not like me to go over the top on things.
I thought that I was above that and they would tell me honestly because of who I was and I’m always honest and it isn’t that way. So I think that having learned my lesson the hard ways sometimes, you have to be able to learn okay you just can’t take everyone at face value. You do have to read and sometimes before I wouldn’t try to read I would just listen and now I truly do try to go okay what’s your angle and that kind of thing. It doesn’t always happen in the moment it happens after. Okay who does that person know and I work in a community where everybody is connected to everybody in some shape or form whether you like or dislike your relatives or family or whatever.

A lot of times you just listen and then after the fact you like who does this person know or who does that person know then you’re able to sympathize what the relationship is, what the angle is and if it’s truly altruistic or not.

Yeah sometimes it’s better to plan ahead and actually look at, okay here’s what I want my outcome to be, not the specific outcome of where I want to get to. What’s the best way to get to do that, well through planning and being able to look at yourself, your own strengths as well as what are the tools out there that can help you get there, those are ways that you can do it.

You just kind of self talk your way through it until you get some rest, and that’s a really critical thing.

You know, going back to my first response, it’s really important to hold your tongue, be calm, think about things, and take an opportunity to reflect before responding in that way.
We’ve had no concerns with that, but I sat on that for 48 hours before I did it, and you have to kind of think, and I needed to be thoughtful with this particular board member because sometimes they want to push you out into a direction that isn’t … It’s their interest.

Think one thing that really helps me is keeping in mind when other people get upset and, I don’t know, emotional about a situation, trying to take it back to facts and data and make it about the work, not about the person, has really helped me kind of take it out of that personal space and make it about how can we improve the work and the skills to do the work. But it isn’t about them as they’re not a poor leader or they’re not a bad person, and just taking to rephrase it so that objective instead of subjective.

I think again, it’s about building that team. For me, part of my emotional intelligence is I tend to sit back, tend to wait, tend to maybe overanalyze before I react. Knowing that about myself it’s important for me to have a teammate that doesn’t do that. That will react. That will say, “We need to do this,” or, “Don’t you see this,” and more passion, more anger, more bravado is good because it helps me measure as to, “Are you overthinking this? Are you going to slow?” That really does help.
Knowing the stats helped but knowing that I’m emotional and that that was one of those touch things for me meant a lot of pre rehearsal before I spoke to families, before I spoke to the press, before I actually came out of my office. I wasn’t hiding away but with Cabot, I rehearsed what I was going to say so that I didn’t appear so emotional because that would have been a time when my level of sensitivity would have been touched.

You can’t go to their level when you’re meeting with people.

I’d write notes about them that I could know about them, so I could ask them questions about it later on. I’d study them at night, and be able to stand out in the lunch area where everybody came in in the morning, and be able to talk to them about their kids or whatever their interests were.

But I would say 90 percent of the time, I’m pretty good at recognizing it and saying, you know, I’m gonna take a break, I’m gonna pull myself out of the situation, turn it over to a cabinet member, so that those things that might take me into an emotional arena I don’t want to go to don’t occur.

I have to write the text and don’t press send. I have to maybe pick up the phone and call and go, “You know what, who the hell does this person think they are.” Right? And then-
It’s interesting, there are times where I will shy away from making a decision if I feel like, for some reason, I’m too emotionally charged about a particular aspect of a conversation.

For me, it’s probably more not acting in certain instances. It was interesting, the first experience I had with this was had a superintendent, a couple of superintendents ago, here in [Belverde 00:03:52], who used to say, “I will never make an important decision before 9:30 A.M.” And actually I think there was a lot of self-management in that. Now I don’t have the same criteria for myself, in terms of time constraints, but I do think that choosing when to act and when not to act, and having a discernment around that, has been very helpful.

Obviously there’s times when you need to make decisions, but I think that for me not acting too quickly ... And I’m being really careful about this because I’m also aware, I’ve worked for people who could never get to a decision, and I don’t like that. I think that’s also very bad for the organization.

I think it’s not only being in control of my own emotions, it’s helping somebody else manage their emotions. Even sometimes saying, “Let’s take a break from the conversation.” I mean in negations these are pretty common tactics, where you step out for a little bit, catch your breathe, get a new environment, go outside, walk around a little bit, take some fresh air, suggest that the other person do that as well, and then come back.
Yeah. And I went back, and I checked them, you know? And I had done three of the staff meetings, so I was like, this is ridiculous. So I wrote this terrible email, ‘cause I was furious. And my HR ... Sherry came down, and I said, “Hey, read this. What do you think?”

- send those emails. And so ... You’ll laugh, because I got an email from an Assistant Principal today, and she said “I’m really irritated with a teacher, I wrote a really nasty email. And I didn’t send it. Lesson learned.”

As a matter of fact, it became so overwhelming emotionally, that the stress of the job took a physical toll on me and put me into the hospital on a number of occasions for physical ailments like, tightness of chest, shortness of breath.

Stress related. You know, here I am thinking abdominal pains and here I am thinking I got cancer or I’m having a stroke or I’m having some sort of anxiety attack or something like that and come to find out ... And there are three different times in my career, every time I went to the doctor, the results were always negative and it was always stress related.
When I was laying in the hospital room with the oxygen tubes going up my nose and an IV in my arm and looking up at the fluorescent lights thinking, this is not worth it.

I wish I had them when I was a principle because I wouldn’t have been as stressed as I was.

It was because it was stressful, because I’d get to work and I’d get a phone call from the superintendent saying, “How long are those weeds going to be under your bleachers?” I was in the corner, I was at [inaudible]
The strongest team I’ve ever worked with is the team I have right now. All of us have a different emotional cuing system and a different personality type. I’ve really come to rely on the fact that each of us will look at something a little bit different, differently, excuse me, and that each of us ... What will upset one of the four of us, doesn’t upset the three other, or two and two. I mean, or three people will be irate about something and one person will just be like, “What?” We’ve been able to create a really good nucleus that is ... That we’re very comfortable with each other to be able to have those kind of free conversations.

I guess my answer is that, I don’t see ... When I see it as my own road to follow, it’s a lot more lonely and a lot less successful, than when I’m working with a team of four people. I guess, I mean, and you I’m thinking might feel that same way as a principal with assistant principals. If you can get the team to work together, you’re much stronger when you play off of each other and support each other, than you ever are when you’re just by yourself.

The superintendent job is just as lonely and if you don’t have the assistants around you operating at an equal level among themselves, all feeling that they’re pulling the same weight and supporting each other, than that emotional stability I think goes away.

There’s a lot of inertness that has to go into keeping that team functioning at that level.
Because that’s what people need and want and so I think if you even one time or two times react and people see that, that would be problematic for you. You know, because people want trust. It’s all about trust, right? Leadership’s all about trust.

It’s always about trust.

And when you can empathize, when you can put yourself in their position, people tend to trust you.

And then so when you’re willing to do that with people, then they trust you too because you’ve shared-

You know, your cabinet, anyone. It’s about connecting and that they trust you.

And some were, oh my gosh, it was so good to catch up with you yesterday. And I’m so glad to hear ... You know, and that’s okay. But I’m not going to say something that I don’t mean, because as soon as you start doing that, people don’t trust you. Because guess what, they know.

But I do. Because everybody is watching how I handle it with those couple. And when they’re attacking me, if I attack back, I lose the trust of these people.
And that’s the Donna we love. And if Donna … ‘Cause I could shoot back and do that, you can’t. And this goes back to what you were saying before, you can’t afford to do that because you lose the trust of everyone watching.

The rest of them continue to trust you because they say, wow, you know, she handled that correctly. Cause everyone’s watching, so that’s how you put it all together. It’s the same in the classroom, though, no different for kids, right? It’s all the same.

Or trust with their colleagues. That has helped me, over time, I’ve been able to develop those little techniques and strategies that

And I think being able to do that that sets a sense of calm, and I think it increases trust so that you can work with those who work with you and for you to build that capacity … [crosstalk 00:02:52] and build your capacity as a leader.
I think it’s increased the level of trust that other have for me, working with me, that I will support them and help build their capacity.

So I think in terms of my leadership, that’s helped that trust on that part.

Actually we’re all about doing the absolute best we can for kids so ... But it just helps us, it increases trust, I think it increases capacity, effectiveness, and I see the work product.

I mean, it seems like whenever I’m in meetings a lot of times it’s being able to create those zones where people will talk, because as superintendent you only know what people tell you and if they’ll tell me in the grocery store, or if they tell me through anonymous letters, I’d rather hear from my own team and know ... If they always feel like a person’s going to be emotional, or going to get angry, or going to beat them up, or do all these things, then they’re not going to tell you. It’s building that trust level to be able to [inaudible 00:07:27]

It also has to do a lot with accountability with each other also, and you have to trust, because if you have one person in that executive group that’s going off and being an emotional ... Just losing their temper at people, it really detracts from the whole.

We can express. And that’s not easy for everybody to do because it requires trust.
Because of that sensitivity, it allows a greater level of vulnerability between me and others as I work with others. That vulnerability creates transparency, creates truth, creates trust, and you can’t do anything without a deep level of trust.

Some of them want a lot of attention. Some of them need “attaboys,” I mean, my male principals, the most. They’ll tell me, “Can you just couple weeks send me an ‘attaboy’?” Absolutely. And I love it because they trust me to say, “If you do that, I don’t care if you beat me up for an hour, just tell me I’m good.” I’m like hey I’ll lie, I’m not a liar, but I’ll go, “Hey, you’re so awesome and amazing.”

So we’re doing Trust Matters. And
And sharing enough emotion to build the trust, that they know enough about me to know where I’m coming from and what my expectations are. And so ... Just a stupid example, we got a new email system. It’s terrible.

**Nodes\Withholding emotions**

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People have always told me that you’re so calm, but inside that’s not what’s happening. So my awareness now when things come up, is that I have to be aware that other people are looking at me in terms of how I respond.

| 2 | AFG | 2/22/2017 8:11 AM |

If I’m getting ... if my facial expressions, if my hands, if my body language is kind of getting riled up, other people they get this like alert system, and so I have to just ... have to stay kinda calm and cool and collective, and I think this more about social?

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But when it comes to actually, you know, managing emotions and so forth like that, you know that you can’t do that if it makes anybody feel, they need to feel safe and everything.

| 2 | AFG | 2/18/2017 4:16 PM |
So whether you’re angry and it’s going in your head, you’re like, “oh my god I cannot believe this is happening to me right now.” You know what, well I have to think about that. Or if you’re super, super sad, or especially if you’re super, super concerned, which happens, okay? All of a sudden you’ve got an emergency situation and you need to manage your emotions and I’ll give you a story with that.

They all went to my school. They had three kids at my school and it burnt down in the middle of the night. And my PTA president lost her husband and three children. And I remember going out there in the middle of the night ... This is Placentia-Yorba Linda school district and going out there. I mean, it was chaos. And I just remember at that time, Placentia was a much bigger district than mine and we have somebody that works on the media and how you’re going to react and all those things. It’s right, they’re telling me every step of the way [inaudible 02:24]. You know, press and everything else. And even when I went into every single classroom with the kids and all she kept saying is remember what you ... Don’t cry.

No matter what you’re feeling, don’t yell this, you have to be in control. Because when you are in control, everyone will feel safe, Donna. And everyone will remember. I always remember, those are the kind of lessons you have along the way and you learn from them. And so even if you ... Sometimes you say things but you never do it out of anger, you never do it out of ... Or out of concern. You’re thoughtful in how you do it.

There are times where sometimes showing anger never gets you what you need. People want to know that no matter what they do, how they act or whatever, that you are stable. And that you are consistent. And that you are in control of yourself and in control of the district.

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Okay, here’s the nasty stuff. We just went through a very nasty board election. And some division in staff, we had some teachers turn against their union. There’s lots of different things going on with that. And again, through all of that, I tried to rise above it all.

Never let them see me sweat, okay.

You know. So in that case, I had to rise above everything but at the same time, their rumors, and lies, and so forth, this is what they do. They have nothing.

So and this goes back to the faith, okay. So it’s kind of also, no matter what you’ve said or done, cause some of it was pretty bad. Very personal. Attacked me very personally. And I had to rise above that because I’m the leader. They don’t.

but I’m human and sometimes I get angry and sometimes I slip up. Very early in my superintendency, I felt like I had to be right at the beginning of the meeting and there was a lot of collateral damage with that because I felt like, it was that old top down type of mentality and style that, now that I’m the superintendent, I have to command respect and I have to command knowledge and leadership.

You know, going back to my first response, it’s really important to hold your tongue, be calm, think about things, and take an opportunity to reflect before responding in that way.
In this position you’re constantly pushed to ... You know, I really believe there are people that want to bait you however it may take place, and that can be a board member, that can be a parent, that could be a member of the staff, and I think that’s really very important to be able to kind of know that and calmly just suppress, and I get comments like that quite a bit that, “My gosh, Pat. You’re so calm. I was getting so angry.

I’m like, “Oh, it was bubbling inside.” You know, and I know that about myself. It’s my natural inclinations are ... They’re not super, you know? I think I have an awareness of that. I kind of know what’s happening, and there’s a time where you ... I think you get to this position because you get a little bit of an instinct. You know, you have good judgment. You have good judgment, a sense of timing, a sense of instinct, a sense of when where to do things, and in most cases suppression of that emotion is a good thing both ways.

Gather yourself, reflect the whole situation in a more articulate and not emotionally charged, but a balance of emotion intellect. You know, have it and make sure that the two blend nicely and match.

That experience is critical, so I’ll use an example of just dealing with union leaders over the years. I have dealt with some of the best most wonderful most professional, and I’ve dealt with there other side as well. People who had very little interest in kids and kids learning ultimately, but could bluster like nobody, and it was that baiting kind of thing. They’d want to get into this escalating thing, and it was tremendously ... It took a lot of energy. I think that was the thing that I learned the most about. To suppress and not say what’s on your mind is ... That takes work. That takes work, and that takes energy.
There was an exchange between John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams was just the kind of guy who wore his emotions on his sleeve and was always out in front saying, “I think things should by like this, and this is what I believe, and that’s it.” He had a very, very difficult time as the constitution was being developed for the nation, getting people on his side, and Benjamin Franklin pulls up aside, and John Adams is like, “Don’t you think that you should always just tell people what you’re thinking and what you’re believing?” Benjamin Franklin says, “Oh, my gosh. No.”

“It’s really important that you don’t.” I think there’s a lot of wisdom to that, and I think that’s where you don’t act on that pure emotion all the time. That you think about when, where, how, leads to the types of things.

I think the difference of showing that kind of respect, and the times when you don’t ... I think the things that I really dislike is when you have a sense of bullying. When you have someone who’s bullying you and that certainly can happen at all levels, and I could have a city councilman act a little bit as a bully, and those types of things you ... Sometimes you have to be a little bit quick on your feet. You know, how you disarm that person, and I’m not an angel because I would love to reveal their ugliness, but I don’t have to be the hammer

I think it’s really important to know your triggers in terms of controlling your ... not your anger, but just not getting stressed and upset by what it is you have to deal with. I think that’s really important.

throwing me under the bus, you have to keep your cool and understand the situation and tell yourself, “This is why this is happening,”
I think again, it’s about building that team. For me, part of my emotional intelligence is I tend to sit back, tend to wait, tend to maybe overanalyze before I react. Knowing that about myself it’s important for me to have a teammate that doesn’t do that. That will react. That will say, “We need to do this,” or, “Don’t you see this,” and more passion, more anger, more bravado is good because it helps me measure as to, “Are you overthinking this? Are you going to slow?” That really does help.

But that, trying to keep that to come through, and trying to stay on top of things. Really knowing how to control yourself, and how to project that positiveness the whole time is powerful.

When people come in hostile has been one of my strong points because I learned very early that you can’t react.
I think the nonaction has been the most important part of it because we all can think of things that we deal with and we act on it, but it’s the nonacting when things are happening, that are ... It’s difficult at a board meeting, when parents are in there blasting the district about something going on that they don’t agree with, just to keep the poker face.

You want to spout out to them that they’re wrong, they don’t have all the information, but you have to be the one not to because that’s not your place at a board meeting. You set it up to have them come in and talk to you later. I think the way of nonacting has been more important than the way of acting.

To not react to them was very difficult. Even as the whole cabinet did not react was tough because some of the people that had done the investigation were on the dais, and that was tough.

Well, I think being a female superintendent, you can’t show as much emotion as if you’re a male superintendent. If I get mad about something, then it’s viewed very, very differently than a male superintendent. I only know that, because I was the assistant superintendent in this district with a male superintendent and I know how he could express anger. If I did exactly the same thing, it would be viewed very, very differently. I think for women superintendents people expect emotion and so anything you do that is seen as emotional or showing emotion gets exponentially blown up. I think that’s where I go to that idea, even-keel.

because I’ve learned over time by not acting on those emotions I’ve had to try to work to maintain calm, which is a better place sometimes to lead from.

If I’m not being emotional, or not being frustrated, then I think ... Or, showing emotion, even if it’s excitement. I think that allows everybody to stay kind of in a neutral spot and then we’re working to solve problems, or [celebrate 00:03:51] problems, or come up with solutions.
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But I would say 90 percent of the time, I’m pretty good at recognizing it and saying, you know, I’m gonna take a break, I’m gonna pull myself out of the situation, turn it over to a cabinet member, so that those things that might take me into an emotional arena I don’t want to go to don’t occur.

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where I will shy away from making a decision if I feel like, for some reason, I’m too emotionally charged about a particular aspect of a conversation. I’ll back away from it for a little bit, and then come back.
Some people say it is for women, though. There is a very ... There are two schools of thought that I have heard from different colleagues. So, I’ve had some who will say no, you can’t let them see you sweat. You have to be tough all the time. You don’t develop any friendships. And they’re normally ... Excuse my language, but they’re known as the bitches, right? That’s what ... And we hear it.