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Connections between New Hampshire superintendents' leadership orientations and their perceptions of selected issues associated with politics in education

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CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NEW HAMPSHIRE

SUPERINTENDENTS'LEADERSHIP ORIENTATIONS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS

OF SELECTED ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH POLITICS IN EDUCATION

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Doctor of Philosophy

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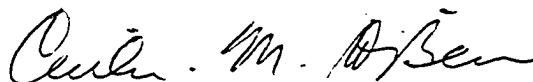
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April 29, 2003

DEDICATION

To my mother, Martha Liz and in memory of my father, Arthur

For modeling the way.

To my husband, Larry

For love, patience, and being respectful of my endeavors.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I've never run a marathon and possibly the dissertation process may be the closest that I'll get to that experience. The analogy of marathon to dissertation seems fitting. Maybe it's due to the upcoming Boston Marathon or maybe it's the early morning hour that I am reflecting on the entire dissertation process. My first thoughts turn to family, friends, and faculty, who served as coaches, trainers, and cheerleaders all along the route. Their words of encouragement, inquiries about the process, and caring thoughts guided and sustained me in all conditions. I am immensely grateful and deeply indebted to this exceptional support network.
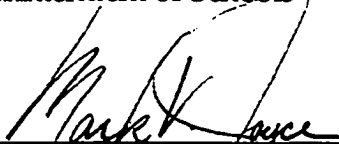
My committee members deserve special recognition and my sincerest appreciation for the time that they spent with my project and with me. Barbara Krysiak, my advisor, knew when to encourage a faster pace and when to settle into a rhythm for reading, writing and reflection. Todd DeMitchell inspired new directions and pushed for best performance. Mike Middleton was brilliant at charting the course – his ability to visually represent ideas got me through many tough spots. I appreciated Cecilia DiBella's and Mark Joyce's counsel and perspective from the superintendency.

In addition to my dissertation committee, I extend gratitude to UNH professors, Barbara Houston, Ann Diller, Tom Schram, Casey Cobb, and Mike Andrew for getting me into shape for the dissertation process.

In undertaking any endeavor, commitment factors into achievement. New Hampshire superintendents have my respect and appreciation for the contributions they made to this study and for their continuous commitment to work in the best interests of children.

Everyone needs a running partner like my study companion, Rosemary Zurawel. Rosemary, an inspiration for all involved in teaching and learning, could have convinced me to jump any hurdle!

I am grateful for the generous and continuous support from my friends and colleagues at Barrington Elementary. I thank them for their thoughtful, caring work with children that gave added meaning to this experience. Special friends and talented educators, Margaret Kelley and Cathy Daenz understood how much this undertaking meant to me and seemed to always know when to lend advice and when to listen.

And finally, I extend my love and gratitude to my husband Larry for believing that I can reach and reach...

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LEADERSHIP ORIENTATIONS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED ISSUES

ASSOCIATED WITH POLITICS IN EDUCATION

by

Althea Sheaff

University of New Hampshire, May, 2003

Many Americans, including educational professionals, eschew politics in classrooms, administrative offices, or any interaction with the educational system. The apolitical myth has it roots in the struggle for public schooling by common school crusaders like Horace Mann and Henry Barnard and continuing in the twentieth century with adoption of Frederick Taylor's scientific management principles. Despite commonly held notions of the separateness and distance between politics *and* education, this study concludes that politics *in* education is inevitable.

The purpose of the study is to uncover connections between superintendents' leadership orientations and their political behaviors and beliefs using a multiple perspectives approach. Bolman and Deal's (1984, 1992, 1997) typology of leadership theories postulated into four frames or ways of seeing (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) serves as the conceptual framework. Frames as cognitive lenses open superintendents to viewing a broader range of potential and influential actions. Research establishing multiple perspectives recognizes the desirability for developing cognitive complexity (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989). Developing superintendents' cognitive complexity, the ability to move within frames, support challenges of change, uncertainty, and ambiguity inherent in the superintendency.

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This inquiry into the politics of education seeks the perspective of one of the major actors, the school superintendent. Using survey methodology, school superintendents in New Hampshire identify their leadership orientations and their perceptions of the political resources and actions used to influence outcomes in their school districts.

This study concludes that New Hampshire superintendents are not unlike superintendents nationally in identifying the human resource frame as their dominant frame. Patterns of leadership orientations categorize into those focused on two frames and those distributed over three frames. Unlike findings from many studies, sixty - one percent of New Hampshire superintendents' leadership orientations are distributed over three frames. Despite lower orientation rates for a political frame perspective, New Hampshire superintendents actively engage in politics.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> Just as the sun was coming up, Stuart saw a man seated in thought by the
> side of the road. Stuart steered his car alongside, stopped, and put his head
> out.
> "You're worried about something, aren't you?" asked Stuart.
> "Yes, I am," said the man, who was tall and mild.
> "Can I help you in any way?" asked Stuart in a friendly voice.
> The man shook his head. "It's impossible situation, I guess," he replied.
> "You see, I'm the Superintendent of Schools in this town."
> "That's not an impossible situation," said Stuart. "It's bad, but it's not
> impossible."
>
> E. B. White, 1945

Larry Cuban introduced his 1976 study of three urban superintendents, *Urban
Chiefs Under Fire*, with the above epigraph and it is used again here to introduce an inquiry
into seeing beyond a single perspective. Cuban's intensive observations depict the
inadequacies of heroic and "follow-me" leadership in meeting the internal and external
demands of the superintendency. He writes of a shift in his beliefs of what is possible for
one person alone to achieve, "While it would seem in order to hold more modest, perhaps
even humble, views of what big-city superintendents can achieve as a leader of a school
system, the chances are slim that this attitude will become popular . . . Both the public and
profession seem to need heroic leaders" (p. 171). Nearly thirty years later, headlines in the
New York Times and *New York Times Magazine* dramatize the complexities of the
superintendency and our continued attempts to find heroes and heroines to fill these top
positions in education. A February 17, 2002 headline ran, "Taking the super out of the
superintendent: Top administrators are leaving in increasing numbers, yet fewer applicants
want the stressful job." "Taking the super out of the superintendent" suggests that current
thought holds onto notions of a great man / woman theory despite numerous studies that
find no currency in accounting for a single set of personality traits to define the essence of

leaders (Burns, 1978; Gardner, 1990; Heller, 1982). Second, the headline forecasts an impending crisis in the administration of our nation's schools. Both themes are reiterated in an August 4, 2002 *New York Times Magazine* feature story, "The Super Bowl: Superintendents must be leaders, teachers, managers, punching bags. Nice job, if you can keep it." In the feature story, author Sol Hurwitz presents real world experiences of four urban superintendents that highlight the pressures on educational professionals as they pursue efforts to educate all students within their districts.

In a recent Public Agenda survey (Johnson, 2002) of school administrators, eighty-one percent of superintendents opine that politics and bureaucracy are the main reasons that their colleagues leave the superintendency. A related finding of Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000) in *The 2000 Study of the American Superintendency* reveals school financing to be the most inhibiting factor for superintendents' effectiveness. Taken together, these findings highlight a professional dilemma for superintendents especially for those reluctant to engage in actions deemed to be political. The notion that a dilemma exists can be explained in this way. The Public Agenda finding implies that politics imposes stress upon superintendents that may be problematic, distasteful, or both, placing politics in a pejorative frame. The finding from the second cited study emphasizes public education's reliance upon the public for its primary source of funding. The process for garnering financial support for school programs and personnel involves the influence, cooperation, and loyalty of interest groups within and outside the school community. Deborah Stone (1997) refers to influence, cooperation, and loyalty as potent forces of the polis. Kimbrough (1964) points to the de-emphasis on politics and educators' lack of political knowledge as factors in limiting superintendents' success in acquiring financial support for schools. Kimbrough reasons,

> About the only way the school superintendent can avoid political leadership is to take no action on his own to influence educational policy. However, since such a role is improbable and, professionally speaking, unthinkable, one must suspect that public education is by its very nature political and those involved in its management are politicians any time they seek a decision by the political process (p. 274).

Thus politics *in* education seems inevitable despite commonly held notions of the separateness and distance between politics *and* education.

Many Americans, including educational professionals, eschew politics in classrooms, administrative offices, or any interaction within the educational system. The superintendent, from this viewpoint, maintains the dignity of the office by being above politics concentrating on management of the school system and being an educational leader. Yet, numerous studies, journal articles, newspapers, and professional discussions advise superintendents of the insufficiency of this perspective. Susan Moore Johnson (1996) offers that a superintendent's avoidance of politics or inaction allows "someone else's politics to prevail"(p.157). Or as Bailey, Frost, Marsh, and Wood (1962) in their study of superintendencies in the Northeast observe, "invisible politics is rarely good politics" (p. x).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to uncover connections between New Hampshire school superintendents' leadership orientations and their perceptions of politics in education using a multiple perspectives approach. Research establishing multiple perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 1992, 1997) recognizes the desirability for developing superintendents' cognitive complexity (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989) that supports challenges of change, uncertainty, and ambiguity. These authors reason, " More complex leaders may have the flexibility to understand situations through the use of different and competing scenarios and to act in ways that enable them to attend simultaneously to various organizational needs" (Bensimon, et al., 1989. p. 65).

This study draws on Bolman and Deal's (1984, 1992, 1997) organization of leadership theories into frames or categories. Frames, as cognitive lenses (Bensimon, et al., 1989), open superintendents to viewing a broader range of potential and influencing actions. It is prudent to pursue research that may give superintendents the benefit of a wide range of tools to support their educational efforts on behalf of children in diversely

populated school systems with varying interests and ideologies. The educational institution as an open system must involve, in some degree, its citizenry. Is avoiding politics in education even an option for superintendents in the twenty-first century? Susan Moore Johnson (1996) voices this concern, " Curiously those intent on educating the public's children often hope to do so without touching or being touched by politics" (p. 153). Should we alter our conception of the superintendency, our view of politics, or both?

In articulating a dilemma in the superintendency in regard to politics in education, this study explores how superintendents navigate the political terrain to advance education for all students. The study seeks to enhance understanding of the political role of superintendents by obtaining superintendents' perceptions of themselves as leaders, their abilities, performances, as well as their views on the constructive and obstructive outcomes of political actions within their school districts. As an educational leader, the superintendent is positioned to affect the direction of educational experiences for current and future populations. The study gathers superintendents' self-appraisals as leaders and their beliefs about politics in education. The primary context for this inquiry addresses superintendents' perceptions of governance at the local school district level. However, it recognizes that state and federal including legislative and judicial mandates have considerable influence and cannot be conveniently separated from local governance.

<u>Research Questions</u>

The following questions direct the inquiry into the impact of politics on the practice of New Hampshire superintendents. The five questions center the study on relationships among superintendents' leadership orientations, perceived use of political skills and strategies, and impact of politics on educational issues within their school districts.

1. How does a superintendent's political perspective compare with the structural, human resource, and symbolic perspectives?

2. What political skills and strategies do New Hampshire school superintendents prefer?

3. Is there a relationship between political frame perspective and preference of political skills and strategies?

4. What are New Hampshire superintendents' perceptions of the constructive and obstructive impacts of politics on selected educational issues within their school districts?

5. Is there a relationship between the superintendents' political frame perspective and the perceived impact of politics on selected educational issues within their school districts?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses generation open opportunities to predict possible outcomes, build a body of knowledge about politics in educational practice, and offer in-depth inspection of the variables and implications of the research questions

1. It is anticipated that New Hampshire superintendents will identify stronger orientations toward structural, human resource, and symbolic perspectives than towards a political perspective.

2. New Hampshire school superintendents will identify a comfortable level with all selected political skills and strategies.

3. There is no relationship between New Hampshire superintendents' political perspective and preference for political skills and strategies.

4. New Hampshire superintendents will acknowledge the pervasiveness of politics in education by a positive or negative response to all selected educational issues.

5. There is no relationship between New Hampshire superintendents' political frame perspective and the perceived political impact on selected educational issues.

Assumptions

This study entertains three assumptions at the outset of this inquiry into politics of education:

1. Politics in education is inevitable;

2. Schools represent open systems; and

3. Individuals and groups have vested interests in schools that are diverse.

Chapter Two, Review of the Literature takes up the bases for these assumptions.

New Hampshire: The Political Context

New Hampshire and New Hampshire's 78 school superintendents provide the context and population for this study. As chief officers of school districts, superintendents are privy to front line experiences important to the purposes of this study. Reflections on their beliefs and perceptions of their behaviors make available valuable data in building and guiding our understanding of politics in education.

New Hampshire, steeped in New England traditions, dominated by conservative party politics, and proud of its tradition for the first in the nation Presidential primary, boasts of its steadfast hold to local autonomy. The size of its state legislature reflects the popularity of local autonomy. Historically, with one of the largest legislatures, 424 members, this governing body seems more successful at prevention than with passage of legislation. Studying state government bodies, Fistek and Egbert (1997) summarize the New Hampshire legislature in this way, " Few people seem to know or care what any individual legislator among its 424 members does, so many votes are cast based on friendship, as personal favors, or for capricious reasons" (p. 207).

Iannaccone (1967) introduces a framework for analysis of a state's relationship with local governing agencies. His typology presents four levels or types of organizational patterns: Type I – Locally-based disparate; Type II – Statewide monolithic; Type III – Statewide fragmented; and Type IV – Statewide syndical. Drawing from the work of Stephen Bailey, et. al. (1962), Iannaccone determines New Hampshire to be a Type I, a locally disparate type. Iannaccone identifies the essence of localism in Type I linkages as, "connoting an attitude of provincialism, jealousy, and fierce defense of one's home district, especially against central government" (p. 48).

Mary Ann Mellor Hansen (1983) uses New Hampshire as the example of a Type I structure in a comparative study of political culture and state politics of education. Hansen concludes that New Hampshire fits the profile that makes,

> the work of schoolmen more difficult . . . those with strong traditions of localism, lopsided political parties, heavily rural and relatively stable populations, tax-minded businessmen with the help of a conservative press, weak and uncommitted executive and legislative leadership, inadequately staffed and divided state boards and state departments of educations, and rigid and unviable state revenue systems (p. 105).

Like the majority of states, tensions arise in New Hampshire over financing of education. The funding crisis in New Hampshire raises issues of an adequate education, ability of the community to pay, the inequalities inherent in a local property tax structure for support of schools, and the wide variance in property rich and property poor towns. Bailey, et.al. (1962) project, "any attempt to determine whether state aid to education is "enough" or a "fair share of the total" is a question so complex in its value assumptions as to defy meaningful statistical analysis" (p. 17). Grappling with concerns for self-sufficiency and mutual dependency (Cunningham, 1990) continue to be major concerns for superintendents, legislators, and the citizens of the state.

New Hampshire superintendents guide their districts in comprehending and implementing directives from state and federal agencies. In recent years, the New Hampshire Educational and Assessment Program established by RSA 193 – C presents school districts with curriculum frameworks and statewide testing for grades three, six, and ten. In 2003, New Hampshire superintendents face the No Child Left Behind legislation and related issues of federal funding for legislative mandates.

It is the leadership of our school superintendents that prepares the constituencies to meet these changes and serve the interests of students. It is of interest to aspiring administrators, university educators, other educational professionals, and hopefully, experienced superintendents to understand the basis for superintendents' beliefs about politics in education and the possibilities for expanding skills and strategies to confront the myriad of current and future issues for schooling and education.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to our understanding of politics in education through an inquiry of superintendents' perceptions of their political role. The conflictual nature of the superintendency is well documented. Conflict results as interest groups seek to represent their values and ideologies in the educational system. Joel Spring (1988) identifies these groups broadly as major government actors, special interest groups, and the knowledge industry. According to Spring's analyses, all groups share a vested interest in education and need to be accounted for in political analysis. A view from the superintendency gathers information on administrators' use of potential skills and strategies to resolve, initiate, or avoid conflicts and to pursue their own interests and those of the school district. Further, the study situates the political frame perspective in relationship to other means to attain school district goals and ultimately to serve in the best interests of students.

This study garners evidence of New Hampshire superintendents' use of multiple frames to meet short and long-term demands that are complex, fraught with ambiguity, and subject to ever-changing circumstances. Findings from this study hold significance for further research and offer recommendations and implications for the practice of experienced and aspiring superintendents.

Another significance of this study, gathered indirectly, seeks to clarify needed alternatives for preparation programs for educational administrators. The composition of programs of study is a contested terrain. Arguments persist over the existence of a knowledge base for educational administrators. The perceptions of superintendents gathered from this study seek to increase understanding of the expectations and demands of politics within educational systems.

Limitations of the Study

In attending to any research question, the researcher is obliged to narrow the focus of the study and to clearly state the boundaries within which the inquiry is undertaken. Three factors limit this study methodologically; namely, the subjects of the inquiry, the

location, and the data-gathering instrument. The following describes how awareness of these potentially limiting factors are addressed throughout the study as well as contribute to the study's findings.

The study attends to the beliefs and perceptions of school superintendents toward politics in their school districts and their political activities. The superintendent is only one of the many actors in the political dynamic of any educational system. Investigations into superintendents' beliefs and perceptions offer indication to the extent to which superintendents utilize strategies and skills to influence decision-making.
The accuracy of these perceptions lies in superintendents' reporting of their awareness of potential strategies and accuracy in reporting use of skills and strategies. Self-reporting is a noted limitation for respondents may provide what they take to be an ideal rather than what is actually practiced. For example, in their research studies, Bolman and Granell (1999) caution that managers inflated ratings on desirable characteristics.

This study samples the beliefs and perceptions of school superintendents from a single state in the Northeast, New Hampshire. The choice of New Hampshire as the focus is foremost one of convenience and accessibility. Its unique features pose interesting elements for examination of politics in education. The selection of a single state as the object of study presents advantages as well as limitations. Whereas the Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution places responsibility for education on the states, the political context of state education may vary along with the political pressures upon school superintendents. Consequently, generalizability beyond New Hampshire must be approached with caution. The advantage of studying New Hampshire superintendents provides a statewide view of the politics of superintendents' leadership that can be used for comparison in follow-up studies.

Use of a survey instrument for investigative study acknowledges at the outset a limitation to the study. Responses are limited by the demands of the questions presented in the survey and limit the ability to delve deeper to capture features of practice that might

surface in direct encounters with school superintendents. Second, participants, although encouraged to address any concerns about the survey to the researcher, may have misinterpreted directions or made inferences about the meaning of terms, which carries potential for affecting validity of some responses.

Definition of Key Terms

Cognitive complexity – Quinn's (1988) description of cognitive complexity as the process and degree of differentiation and integration involved in thinking about a domain or problem is brought into this study.

Frame – Bolman and Deal (1984, 1997) synthesize organizational theories into four broad categories or traditions – structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. These categories refer to as frames and represent a perspective, a way of seeing.

Interest groups – For the study, an interest group is any group of individuals seeking to gain attention and / or resources for their values and ideologies.

Leadership – Joseph Rost's (1991) definition of leadership is used in this study. "Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102).

Leadership orientation – This term carries two meanings in this study. It is used generally to refer to a perspective or way of seeing. Conceptually based on the work of Bolman and Deal (1984, 1997), perspectives are postulated into four frames – structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames. The second meaning, denoted by capitalization of both words, refers to Bolman and Deal's (1988) survey instrument.

Politics – In this study, politics is defined as the set of interactions that influence and shape the authoritative allocation of values and resources. In these interactions, individuals and groups openly express needs and interests and reconcile differences.

Political activities – For this inquiry, political activities are synonymous with political skills and strategies.

Reframing – A term coined by Bolman and Deal (1992, 1997) refers to the ability to shift one's perspective to another way of seeing a given situation.

SAU (School Administrative Unit) – New Hampshire school districts are organized into 79 units with a superintendent as the chief executive officer. (There are 78 superintendents with one superintendent heading two school administrative units.) New Hampshire legislation of 1899 established this organizational structure that may coordinate school programs cross town lines.

Schooling – A distinction is presented throughout the study between education and schooling. Schooling is part of education representing the official and institutional aspects of teaching and learning (Mann, 1977).

Senate Bill 2 – Some New Hampshire towns passed an alternative to the traditional town meeting format known as the Official Ballot Law. Townspeople go to the polls in March to consider warrant articles for town and school governance. Deliberative sessions held prior to voting day offer opportunities for citizens to become informed and question proposed warrants and budgets.

Superintendent – The title, superintendent, derives from the Latin words *super* meaning "over" and *intendo* meaning "direct." In 1893 New Hampshire law gave towns the ability to hire superintendents as the chief executive officers of all schools within an administrative unit (SAU). New Hampshire does not have a State Superintendent; rather, a Commissioner of Education presides over the State Department of Education.

<u>Nature and Order of Presentation</u>

This introductory chapter outlines the purpose, definition of key terms, development of research questions and hypotheses, the context, the significance, and limitations of the study. Four succeeding chapters develop each of these components to present a view of leadership and politics in education as perceived by New Hampshire school superintendents.

Chapter Two grounds the current study in relation to past research and writings on leadership and organizational theories and behaviors. The review of the literature establishes the conceptual framework that guides the study and offers insight into the complex, challenging, and often-turbulent world of the school superintendent.

Chapter Three identifies the research methodology, targeted population, and sketches the development of the survey instrument used to gather information from this group of school administrators. Included in the chapter is identification and justification of political skills and strategies and listing of outputs selected for the questionnaire.

The research questions and hypotheses shape the reporting of the research findings presented in Chapter Four. Analyses of the data include descriptive analysis of the participants' responses to the questionnaire items and correlational analyses of the derived data.

Chapter Five summarizes the study, its findings, implications, and recommendations for further research and practice. The discussion centers on conclusions drawn from analyses of the quantitative data and supporting qualitative data supplied by the research participants.

Appendices offer space for the researcher-developed questionnaire, letters to potential research participants, correspondence between the researcher and Professor Lee Bolman granting permission for use of the *Leadership Orientations* (1988), New Hampshire superintendents' Section IV comments, Institutional Review Board documents and some of the quantitative data and analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of the literature incorporates studies from multiple disciplines to develop the background and build a guiding conceptual framework for this inquiry into politics in education. The following headings demonstrate the connections to existing studies and structure the presentation:

Politics: Building an Apolitical Myth

This section explores the myriad of reasons surrounding the negative images of politics in education. Understanding the building over time of these images and related pejorative attitudes towards politics is a necessary first step in examining the role that superintendents choose to take regarding politics in their school districts.

Politics in Education: Building a Field of Study

This section identifies the context and content for early political studies and the growing concern for emphasis on politics despite efforts of many constituents to downplay the significance of politics within the educational system.

Schools as Open Systems

This section addresses the interdependence between the internal and external environments and school systems.

Interest Groups

This section details the influence of state and federal governments on the work of school superintendents. Localism alone does not determine the boundaries of pressure and influence exerted on school districts. This section explores this broader perspective by a brief look at recent legislative mandates affecting New Hampshire school districts.

Role of the Superintendent

This section presents the varied roles of the school superintendent with particular attention to the political dimensions of the position.

Establishing a Conceptual Framework

This section briefly sketches organizational and leadership theories and their limiting characteristics. Reasons for a multiple perspective approach that guides this study is presented.

Multiple Perspectives

The conceptual basis for this study draws from the work of Bolman and Deal (1991, 1997). This section argues the benefits of a multiple frame approach to organizational and leadership theories.

The Political Frame

This section highlights the political frame perspective. Included in this discussion are identification of needed political skills and strategies and their value to superintendents in responding to politics in education.

Framing and Reframing

Integral to the study of superintendents' responses to the uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity inherent in their position as chief executive officers of their school systems, is the ability to view a situation, its setting, and possible actions in a given situation from different vantage points. This section explores the advantages to building the cognitive complexity of school leaders.

Summary of Research

The chapter concludes with a summary of the research that directs this study of superintendents' leadership orientations and politics in education.

Politics: Building an Apolitical Myth

Deeply embedded in American culture is a view of politics as a less than honorable pursuit. Peter Block (1987) focuses the dim regard of politics on its association with

manipulation. He summarizes the sense of political actions that frame the pejorative view of politics:

1. Manipulating situations and, at times people;
2. Managing information and plans carefully to our own advantage;
3. Invoking the names of high-level people when seeking support for our projects;
4. Becoming calculating in the way we manage relationships;
5. Paying great attention to what the people above us want from us;
6. Living the belief that in order to get ahead, we must be cautious in telling the truth (p. 9).

Politics in education, for some, engenders similar negative images of behind the scenes maneuverings, of working for self-interests, and all associated images far removed from learning and the welfare of students. It was little wonder then that Kimbrough (1964) in his study of superintendents surmises that superintendents feel guilty about acting politically.

The apolitical myth in education has it roots in the struggle for public schooling by common school crusaders. Universal school advocates, like Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, espouse the promise and belief of public schooling as an egalitarian measure creating common ground for all children and in the collective interest of all Americans. Under the guise of egalitarianism and nationalism, conflict during this formation period is regarded as "abnormal and undesirable" (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p. 10). Little space is afforded for competing values, interests, and ideologies. The promise of excellence dominates as the public value (Stout, Tallerico, & Scribner, 1995). The myth of a unitary community took root (Wirt & Kirst, 1972). Concomitant to this notion of community, is the highlighting of the narrowness of partisan politics as the ensuing factors demonstrate.

Another factor fostering the apolitical myth is the acceptance of Frederick Taylor's 1911 scientific management theory. Espousing qualities of efficiency, expertise, and equity, of the one best system (Campbell, Fleming, Newell, & Bennon, 1987), along with reform efforts to remove partisan politics operating in many urban environments, Taylor's management principles easily gain ground in school systems during this time period. Of

particular importance, is the prominence of the superintendent. The superintendent is

looked upon to function above big city office politics.

Shattering the Myth

Historical revisionists, with the benefit of distance and a broader lens for analysis,

like Blumberg (1985), conceive of an early political role for superintendents despite efforts

to downplay the necessity and / or actual practice of politics. "It is a reconception that has

not been easy for those superintendents to accept who thought *politics* was a dirty word,

beneath the dignity of the office, and preferred to think of themselves as educational

experts" (Blumberg, 1982, p. 31). Iannaccone (1967) cautions that arguments for

distancing politics and education could bring about serious repercussions. Referring to

perpetuating the myth of politics as dirty politics, Iannaccone reasons, " the myth implies

that the educational profession has come to reject the two-party system and the mainstream

of American political life as too corrupt, and too unchangeably corrupt, to let education

thrive in it" (p. 7). Kimbrough (1964), like Iannaccone, harshly criticizes that a

perpetuation of the myth is a straw man argument and in essence, an argument

demonstrating that educational professions are out of touch with reality.

The movement to depoliticize the educational system by endorsing scientific

management is just another form of politics (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). One of the most

widely cited works and one of the first educational revisionists texts on this era of scientific

management is Raymond Callahan's *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (1962).

Callahan's thesis provides the often-debated term, "the vulnerable superintendent." Instead

of the superintendent as all powerful, Callahan postulates that superintendents are

susceptible to undue influence from business interests, at the mercy of school boards due to

the nature of the board/superintendent relationship, and thirdly, the accountability of the

superintendent for past and present actions takes on a cumulative effect resulting in job

insecurity. The vulnerability thesis rests on these assumptions: (1) the nature of the

positions opens the door to vulnerability; (2) vulnerability increases over time; and (3) vulnerability leads to rapid turnover in the superintendency (Eaton, 1990).

Many researchers hypothesize that educators perpetuate the myth of a separation between education and politics (Browder, 1970; Scribner & Englert, 1977). Turn of the twentieth century conditions present reasons for co-existing with the myth: educators did not want to be associated with the graft and corruptions evident in many large cities; politics narrowly conceived as partisan would mean aligning with one political party; and for many, intellectual pursuits were removed from politics. Further, engagement in politics was antithetical to goals of social responsibility and high principles (Scribner & Englert, 1977).

Despite acknowledgement of the evidence of politics within the educational system, Browder (1970) contends that perpetuating the apolitical myth is of benefit to the administrator. Arguments for this stance include the risk involved in acting politically and the benefits derived from maintaining the separation. Specifically, Wirt and Kirst (1997) explain that the benefits of "more legitimacy and money [resulted] if they preserved the image of public school as a uniquely nonpolitical function of government" (p. 28).

The possibilities abound, however, for disrupting politics in its pejorative sense; there are alternatives to politics so narrowly conceived. Peter Block (1987) echoes this sentiment and for a positive outlook for politics. He believes that, "we empower ourselves by discovering a positive way of being political" (p. xvii). Further, the project of deconstructing the negative images associated with politics requires changes in the meaning making of politics.

<div align="center">Politics in Education: Building a Field of Study</div>

Political scientist, Thomas Eliot is attributed with drawing attention to politics in education with a much-cited essay, "Toward an Understanding of Public School Politics" appearing in a 1959 *American Political Science Review*. In this essay, Eliot argues, "Surely it is high time to stop being frightened by a word. Politics includes the making of governmental decisions and the effort or struggle to gain or keep the power to make those

decisions. Public schools are part of government. They are political entities" (quoted in Ziegler & Jennings, 1974, p. 4). Further, Morgan (1986) offers argument that politics and political activities reflect the essence of organizations, " in its original meaning, the idea of politics stems from the view that, where interests are divergent, society should provide a means of allowing individuals to reconcile their differences through consultation and negotiation" (p. 142).

Early political studies examine the community power structure to grasp an understanding of issues related to the variability in decision-making processes. McCarty and Ramsey's study (1971) indicates the necessity of superintendents to understand four types of community power structures: dominated, factional, pluralistic, and inert. Findings demonstrate that superintendents do not adapt their leadership strategies to align with the community power structure. Authors, in this area of study, passionately express the necessity for superintendents to develop strategies to understand the community context. In a related study to McCarty and Ramsey's, Bjork and Lindle (2001) offer three explanations for superintendents' "seemingly politically suicidal leadership strategies . . . (a) professional culture, (b) inadequate preparation, and (c) limitations on methods used to ascertain superintendents' roles in their work with [school] boards" (p. 86).

Defining what politics entails is argued across disciplines and from different perspectives within fields of study. Divergency is evident in the definitions and in corresponding studies with little effort to create a connection among theories. A major deterrent is the lack of agreement of what characterizes political activity (Wirt & Kirst, 1972). Blumberg's (1985) interviews with superintendents identify four central facets of political activity for this group of political actors:

1. The politics of local decision making;
2. The politics of being a nonelected executive of a local public enterprise;
3. The politics of survival and
4. The politics of power and decision-making beyond immediate community, in both state and federal legislative and bureaucratic establishments (pp. 46 & 47).

Carlson (1996) examines the underlying causes of political behaviors. Using zero-sum conditions, he explains the inevitability of politics in education: (1) the need to share limited resources; (2) the limited number of layers to the organization creates the "politics of getting ahead;" and (3) the existence of multiple value systems.

<center>Schools as Open Systems</center>

A discussion of politics in education implies a relationship between the educational system and society as a whole. Helpful to understanding this relationship is elaboration of a general systems theory. Although an in-depth discussion of general systems theory is not indicated for this study, it is prudent to share Daniel Griffiths' (1964) adaptation of systems theory to educational administration:

1. Open systems exchange energy and information with their environment; i.e. they have inputs and outputs.
2. Open systems tend to maintain themselves in steady states.
3. Open systems display equifinality; i.e., identical results can be obtained from different initial conditions.
4. Open systems are self-regulating.
5. Open systems maintain their steady states, in part, through the dynamic interplay of subsystems operating as functional processes.
6. Open systems can maintain their steady states through feedback processes.
7. Open systems display progress segregation. This occurs when an open system divides into a hierarchical order of subordinate systems which gain a certain independence of each other (pp. 116-117).

Iannaccone (1967), and Wirt and Kirst (1997) apply systems theory in understanding the organization of schools and to counter notions of schools as being nonresponsive to outside influences. Schools as closed systems are embedded in the myth of apolitical schools (Wirt & Kirst, 1997). This way of looking at schools maintains status quo and focus of control within the educational organization. The shattering of the apolitical myth and emergence of studies on politics in education prompt more attention to the affects of external factors and the interpendent relationship of school and environment.

Iannaccone (1967) creates typologies of state governments to study the interactions between environments and school systems. Wirt and Kirst (1997) use micropolitics to understand school governance and demands of the internal and external environments.

Bolman and Deal (1991), in their analysis of systems theories, advance the argument for schools as open systems in this manner, " Human organizations are appropriately viewed as open systems. Their boundaries are permeable, and they are continually engaged in importing, transforming, and exporting matter, information, and people" (p. 317).

In accepting the assumption that schools are open systems and therefore, affected by and responsive to their environment, the following section discusses the relationship between schools and society, in terms of the views, interests, and pressures of state and federal government on local school districts.

<center>Interest Groups</center>

Spring (1988) maintains that the school's environment and the goals of education concomitant with the pressure from internal and external interest groups create a "complex web of political conflict." He writes, "the pursuit of both self-interest and educational ideals by elected politicians, educational politicians, interest groups, and the knowledge industry – combined with political conflict over language, religion, culture, political ideas, economic goals, and school funding – creates constant tension in the educational system" (p. 45). Wirt and Kirst (1997) describe the fundamental tension as being between the community's need for capable and trusted leadership and at the same time carrying out the will of the community.

Interest groups function to draw people of like convictions together, delineate issues, and provide a process for compromise and consensus (Thompson, 1976). Interest groups, according to David Cohen (1978), should not be underestimated. Textbook publishers and testing agencies increasingly influence local school decisions about what is taught and what is assessed. As a result, he forewarns, "political accountability is diminishing and the political influence of democratically unaccountable groups is growing" (p. 444).

Federal Government

Although designers of the United States Constitution grant education to the states, the impact from federal government actions extends to the smallest school districts in New Hampshire. First, the limitations of the federal government's influence on education and supplying seven percent of the funding for education need to be recognized. The limits of the federal government's impact are defined by the lack of authority to educate, the inability to monitor implementation of legislation, and research that attributes educational improvements to the local level (Meier, 2002). Yet, with these restrictions of influence, the federal government plays an integral role in setting the agenda for political action, and thus, its impact. The 1960s mark a dramatic change in the federal government's role in education. What triggered the surge of interest and scrutiny? Scribner and Englert (1977) maintain that the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision opened public education to scrutiny. "This decision opened the schoolhouse door to judicial scrutiny and at the same time provoked a seemingly endless stream of controversies that could leave no doubt that conflict (and therefore politics) was an essential part of the educational scene" (p. 9). Increased involvement in education reflects concern for local and state levels' ability to provide equal treatment and opportunities for students (Radin & Hawley, 1988). Legislation, like the Elementary and Secondary Act enacted in 1965 responds to increased scrutiny and criticism of the educational system.

Two recent pieces of legislation promote national attention to education issues and generated concern for state and local agencies. The 1994 passage of Goals 2000: Educate America Act sought to reform education through establishment of eight broad goals. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a 1200 page document, currently being sorted out at the state and local levels, pushes for district accountability and rigorous standards for educating America's young. The legislation fuels debate in school district across New Hampshire – as well as districts throughout the United States. For educational professionals, there is

concern for interpretation of adequate yearly progress, equity involved in implementation, and adequate funding of the legislation.

Both pieces of legislation bring the debate over decentralization to the forefront. In particular, the most recent legislation allows for vouchers for families in low-performing school. Legislation reminds us of the common experience argument – that there is a body of knowledge, shared values, and experience important to the maintenance of our democratic society – put forth by Horace Mann and Henry Barnard.

While this study does not focus on federal legislation or explore governance, the agenda set forth by the federal government impacts superintendents and their districts in varying ways depending upon the context, organization, leadership orientation, and personal interests. Wirt and Kirst (1997) suggest six modes through which higher levels of government can affect local schools:

1. Provide general aid – furnish aid on which no restrictions are places to states and localities or general support for teachers' salaries and for construction...
2. Stimulate through differential funding – earmark categories of aid, provide financial incentives, fund demonstration projects, purchase specific services...
3. Regulate – legally specify behavior, impose standards, certify and license, enforce accountability procedures...
4. Discover and make available knowledge – have research done, gather and make available statistical and other data.
5. Provide services – furnish technical assistance and consultants in specialized subjects or areas.
6. Exert moral suasion – develop vision and question education assumptions through publications, speeches by top officials, and so forth... (pp. 148-149)

It is crucial to stress that superintendents have the potential to determine what the school boards and their districts notice.

State Government

"Education is a state function locally administered" is a common adage that typifies debates over who controls and governs schooling. Typically states define the program scope, set minimum standards, adopt a standard course of study, adopt textbooks, certify teachers, and manage accountability and assessment programs. A primary issue for the

majority of states is financial support for schools. Wirt and Kirst (1972) cite the dynamic range of state support for schools – 8.5 percent in New Hampshire to 87 percent in Hawaii. 1996 figures demonstrate a similar configuration of support – 11 percent in New Hampshire and 92 percent in Hawaii (Wirt & Kirst, 1997).

Recent research reviewed by Mazzoni (1995) suggest three changes in state government's approach and involvement in education: (1) governors demonstrate a greater interest in education; (2) big business contributions to the educational dialogue; and (3) national organizations' ability to influence decision-making. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 account for much of the impetus in state government's increased involvement (Wirt & Kirst, 1997) especially states' administration of federal grants (like Title I) and dispersal of state and federal funds to local school districts.

<u>Role of the Superintendent</u>

The superintendency is arguably the most challenging position within the educational system. In the Foreword of the 1965 <u>Educational Commission Policies Report</u>, the authors assert that the superintendency "has become a virtually inhabitable position" (p. iv). At the turn of the twenty-first century, Chapman (1997) summarizes the experiences of twelve beginning superintendents, "the harsh realities of the superintendency, including politics, ethics, and immorality, are land mines waiting to explode under wary feet" (p. 217). Pressure emerges from all levels. State and federal agencies and local school boards exert top-down pressures. Within the organization, superintendents feel the tug from teachers' unions, other employee unions, and interests of individuals and groups. Outside the organization, values and ideologies of parents, business, and a broad range of community interests vie for attention. External conditions of the social, political, and economic environments are not to be overlooked for they expose a myriad of considerations and potential conflicts for administrators. Yet, despite this bleak view of the superintendency, the majority of superintendents find satisfaction in

their jobs and would undertake to do it all again (Glass, Bjork, and Brunner, 2000; Johnson, 2002).

The superintendency has undergone numerous shifts in emphasis since its origins in the 1830s and continues to evolve (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Grogan, 2000; Johnson, 1996; Pajak, 1993; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). The superintendency is wrought with ambiguity (Blumberg, 1985; Grogan & Andrews, 2002) and subject to intense criticism and dissatisfaction from interest groups (Feuerstein, 2002; Spring, 1988) resulting in brief stays in any one school district. (Latest survey results reported in *The 2000 Study of the American School Superintendency*, estimate the average tenure of superintendents to be between five and six years.) Recent literature suggests a re-investigation of the superintendent as an educational leader and nurturer of leaders at all levels of the organization (Pajak, 1993; Tichy, 1997). Margaret Grogan (2000) summarizes this view as she advances a reconception of the superintendency that requires superintendents to "be comfortable with contradiction, work through others, appreciate dissent, develop a critical awareness of how children are being served, and adopt an ethic of care" (p. 213).

Several education researchers acknowledge the importance of multiple perspectives in superintendents' practice. In his research of urban superintendents, Larry Cuban (1976) suggests four leadership conceptions to account for similarities in superintendents' responses to pressures outside the organization or to sources they deem to be legitimate. His analysis emerging from theoretical models of socioeconomic, political bargaining, organizational decision-making, and individual leadership draws conceptions of superintendents as teacher-scholar, negotiator-statesman, corporate administrator, and rational school chief. Cuban emphasizes that superintendents do not operate exclusively within one role. Context, situation, time, and personal style influence the leadership orientation.

Mann (1977) identifies three roles or ways of viewing these roles for superintendents in attending to issues of representation of their school districts and their personal and professional values – trustee, delegate, and politico. The trustee's decision-making reflects individual values of the superintendent that might be incongruous with community values. The delegate represents community values even when the values were in conflict with the superintendent's personal and professional values. The politico modulates between these two ends of the continuum based upon a rational analysis of the circumstances. It is interesting to note that 61% of school administrators in Mann's study identify with the trustee classification.

Susan Moore Johnson (1996) in her research on educational leadership relates the leadership practices of Frank Spaulding, a Massachusetts superintendent of schools in 1895. Her description offers an historical comparison of the environments as the superintendency develops over time. Johnson writes, "school districts during Spaulding's time were comparatively simple organizations, subject to top-down control and close supervision by the superintendent. Successful leadership, as it was understood in that context, depended primarily on the careful and just exercise of formal authority within a relatively predictable and orderly environment" (p. 4). Spaulding's superintendency is distinct from the twelve superintendents in Johnson's study and Johnson's conclusion that educational leaders need to operate from three positions: educational leadership, political leadership, and managerial leadership. Superintendents take on each of these positions dependent upon the time, locale, and nature of the organization in which they practice.

Clearly, what emerges from these studies is a dynamic view of the superintendency. Campbell (1966) responds to the question he poses in his *Phi Delta Kappan* article, " Is the school superintendent obsolete?" "The superintendent is obsolete if he cannot accept the role of education purposer, organizational designer, resource politician..." (p. 58). The dynamism in the superintendency is also a delicate balance. Blumberg (1985) describes the superintendency, "if it is to be an effective office, [it] must

be conceived of in political terms, if by that we mean the ability of the incumbent to work with a wide array of conflicting forces so as to maintain the delicate balance upon which the validity of school life depends" (p. 30).

The following section provides the conceptual framework to address the dynamic qualities of the superintendency.

Establishing a Conceptual Framework

Why should we be concerned with establishing a conceptual framework? A theoretical or conceptual schema encompasses three vital functions, which are taxonomic, explanatory, and heuristic (Getzels, Lipham, & Campbell, 1968). To further explain, a conceptual framework establishes a structure for collecting data, creates the ability to explain or predict, and provides continuity among theory, research, and practice. Numerous research studies and best-selling authors offer a plethora of advice on leadership theory and practice. A challenge for many within educational administration and related disciplines studying leadership theories is finding means to organize and /or synthesize the theories. Foster (1986) uses psychological, political, and critical models. Fairholm (1986) categorizes theories into a seemingly simplistic form: who the leaders are; what the leader does; and where leadership takes place. Leithwood and Duke (1999) arrive at six approaches to leadership by the frequency of models or concepts mentioned in contemporary leadership articles.

Many (Carlson, 1996; Rost, 1991) assign a rough timeline to the development and popularity of theories. Carlson, for instance, categorizes theories into four eras: 1900-1930, classical organizational theory; 1930-1950, human relations movement; 1950-1975, the organizational behavior movement; and 1975-present, the socio-cultural period. This is not to suggest that the theories are bound solely to a given time period nor to suggest that theories are mutually exclusive of one another. The following provides a brief sketch of frequently mentioned organizational and leadership theories:

Great Man / Trait Theories

Dismissed as inadequate, the great man theory of leadership, one of the earliest

leadership theories, attempts to define leadership based on personality traits (Burns, 1978;

Gardner, 1990; Heller, 1982). The difficulty inherent in this approach to leadership is the

unsuccessful venture to separate the leader from any context. Trait theories could not

account for a single set of traits to define the essence of leaders. However, these theories

still have currency and influence contemporary leadership theories. For example, Kouzes

and Posner (1995), from years of research surveys, compile a listing of the most admired

characteristics of leadership. Regan and Brooks (1995) create a double helix to represent

feminine and masculine characteristics.

Situational / Contingency Theories

Situational and contingency theories expand the focus beyond the leaders to explain

leadership. Leadership, within these theories, functions as a two-way dynamic between

the task and the people (Bolman & Deal). Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) Managerial Grid

plot these two dimensions into four leadership styles. Situational theories emphasize

factors within the organizations where contingency theories place more emphasis on

external factors (Bensimon, et. al. 1989). Criticism suggests that situational and

contingency theories fail to think beyond the task and the particular situation, and do not

distinguish between leadership and management.

Power and Influence Theories

In his seminal work, Burns (1978) presents two perspectives of relational

leadership; one, he identifies as transactional and the other, transformational. Transactional

leadership is displayed as contingent reinforcement – you do something for me in exchange

for what I can do for you. Transformational leadership, is described by Burns as the

"enmeshing of goal and values [wherein] both leaders and followers are raised to more

principled levels of judgment" (p. 16). Burns' leadership theory is significant for its way

of seeing from a political perspective (Rost, 1991). Dominant narratives of leadership

theory of this time period often ignore a worldview outside the social psychology paradigm.

Symbolic and Cultural Theories

Symbolic and cultural approaches create a paradigm shift from rational, linear thought to a view of organizations as socially constructed, dynamic, and uncertain. Schein (1992) advocates that attending to culture determines criteria for leadership and is of paramount importance in building the capacity to lead. He defines culture as, "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 12). Cohen and March (1986) argue for management of meaning and symbols and emphasize the importance of this perspective of organizations and leadership,

> If we want to identify one single way in which administrators can affect organizations, it is through their effect on the world views that surround organizational life; those effects are managed through attention to the ritual and symbolic characteristics of organizations and administrations. Whether we wish to sustain the system or change it, management is a way of making a symbolic statement (p. 288).

Bolman and Deal (1997) offer this criticism of the taking any one of the theories as a prescribed, set way of looking and acting. "Each tradition claims a scientific foundation. But theories easily become theologies, preaching a single, parochial scripture. Each theory offers its own version of reality and its own vision of the future. Each also offers a range of techniques for reaching the promised land" (p. 10). The next section outlines an approach to organizational thinking that transcends a single theoretical perspective to address the challenges, ambiguity, and uncertainties that twenty-first leaders face.

Multiple Perspectives

Bolman and Deal's (1997) typology of organization theory categorizes theories into frames or ways of seeing encapsulating many of the perspectives mentioned above. Frames, as a way of organizing, is similar to Morgan's (1986) use of metaphor. Metaphor's use, according to Morgan, goes beyond its function as a literary device. Morgan expands on his beliefs, "the use of metaphor implies *a way of thinking* and *a way of seeing* that pervade how we understand our world generally" (p. 12). By way of example, he shares the notion of organizations as machine and the related way of thinking about organizations in mechanistic ways.

Schon (1983) sees frames as ways of setting the context and attending to problems. In Bolman and Deal's (1991) words, "frames are both windows on the world and lenses that bring the world into focus. Frames filter out some things while allowing others to pass through easily. Frames help us to order experience and decide what action to take" (p. 11).

In contrast to the single aspect focus, a multiple perspectives approach is a both/ and approach (Bensimon, et. al. 1989) incorporating many aspects. Bolman and Deal organize theories into four frames – structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. A brief sketch of each of the frames follows:

Structural

Based on the works of Frederick Taylor and Max Weber, the structural frame emphasizes hierarchical structures and specialized roles to accomplish specified goals and objectives of the organization. Rationality, linearity, specialization, and a rules-orientation increase efficiency and effectiveness. Authority lies in the top levels of the organization.

Human Resource

Mary Parker Follett (1924/1940), noted by many as the first theorist to present a human relations point of view (Getzels, Lipham, & Campbell, 1968), argues for building and maintaining human relations through cooperation and coordination. Human resource theorists stress the relationship between people and organization.

Political

Bolman and Deal (1997) present five propositions of the political frame:

1. Organizations are *coalitions* of various individuals and interest groups.
2. There are enduring differences among coalition members in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality.
3. Most important decisions involve the allocation of scarce resources – who gets what.
4. Scarce resources and enduring differences give conflict a central role in organizational dynamics and make power the most important resource.
5. Goals and decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position among different stakeholders (p. 163).

Symbolic

Complexity and ambiguity are mediated by meaning-making functions and the abilities of leaders in the organization. In contrast with the other frames, the symbolic frame embraces notions of life as fluid, uncertain, and complex. Multiple meanings are possible. The culture of the organization is important and is emphasized in rituals, stories, myths, and ceremonies.

The Political Frame

This section expands upon the political perspective of organizations and leadership, not to establish its priority among the four frames; rather, the objective is to substantiate relevance of the political frame to the work of school superintendents and to further understanding of what this perspective entails. Bolman and Deal (1991) present dramatic reasons for directing more attention to the political perspective than researchers and practitioners have done historically:

In all four of our samples, the political frame is a better predictor of both managerial and leadership effectiveness than is the human resource frame. Conceptually, this is not surprising, but the idea of politics as a good thing runs counter to the beliefs of many human resource and management development professionals. This negative view of politics is embodied in one widely used management-style instrument that tells managers that an effective profile includes a *low* score on politics. Our data suggest the opposite – that people who are more adept in understanding and using the political frame are perceived by their colleagues, superiors, and subordinates as better managers and leaders, regardless of sector, culture, or nationality (p. 526).

Superintendents, in facing the challenges of conflict, uncertainty, ambiguity and the goals of the district, need to develop political skills through practice, past learned experiences, reflection, and/or some form of direct coaching or professional development. Researchers in related disciplines of organization theory, educational administration, and political science offer what they take to be essential political skills. In the addition to the five propositions describing the political frame, Bolman and Deal (1997) categorize political skills into four major areas: agenda setting, mapping the political terrain, networking and forming coalitions, bargaining and negotiating.

Agenda Setting

In its common usage, agenda setting is a scheduling of meetings and events to maximize attainment of goals and objectives. Agenda setting, seen as an exercise of power (Pfeffer, 1981), controls what the district will and will not attend to. Kotter (1988) in his study of effective leadership in organizations delineates four components of agenda setting: (1) There is a vision of what is necessary and what is possible; (2) The vision accounts for long-term interests of the organization; (3) A strategy for implementation accompanies the vision; and (4) The strategy accounts for the multiple and varied significant constituencies and environments.

Similarly, Tichy (1997), in espousing teaching as a critical component of leadership, advances the essential tasks of getting others to comprehend situations and determining necessary actions to move the organization forward. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) summarize the value of agenda setting in terms of vision, "Leaders must frame the vision in order to help organizational members make sense of the vision, see its relevance to their

responsibilities, feel others' enthusiasm for it, see the fit to established programs and practices, and see the next steps in implementing the vision" (p. 78).

Mapping the Political Terrain

Early political studies (Iannaccone, 1967; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971) acknowledge the importance of the educational setting and investigate means for determining influential people and community power structures in school districts. Recent studies bring attention back to developing and understanding the context of the superintendent's position. Lutz and Merz (1992) advocate for superintendents' continuous analysis of the community and school factions. They suggest that a necessary duty of the superintendent is undertaking, and managing," knowledge about the changing coalitions, value differences, subcultures, and factions in the community..." (p. 63).

Other researchers advance the thesis that superintendents' actions correspond to the local political context (Moore Johnson, 1996) or the community school board typology (Bjork & Lindle, 2001). Bjork and Lindle, consistent with the findings and recommendations of McCarty and Ramsey (1971), advise superintendents to attend to community power structures and develop "political savvy" in working with school boards and local interest groups.

Moore Johnson (1996) reiterates the need for political savvy in assessing and understanding the varied political contexts in which superintendents find themselves. Further, she describes three strains of politics at work in varying degrees in the twelve communities she studied: partisan politics, participatory politics, and patronage politics. Partisan politics prevails in districts where the balance of power has stabilized over time. Corresponding actions of the superintendent include, "effectively representing the interests of the partisan majority, lobbying to secure the needed votes when support is not routinely assured, and serving as mediator in reconciling differences between competing groups" (p. 162).

Participatory politics prevails in districts where interests groups and influentials unite in correspondence to issues rather than prior alliances. Building consensus and the capacity to see and acknowledge multiple perspectives are the necessary skills for superintendents in these contexts.

Patronage politics, as its name suggests, prevails where recognition of past alliances, networks, and other personal connections dominate. In these settings, effectives superintendents use patronage politics to their advantage in pursuing goals and projects in the best interest of students.

Networking and Forming Coalitions

Ziegler and Jennings (1974) propose that superintendents' greatest potential resource is their reputation for expertise. Being able to see the "total picture" places superintendents at an advantage for forming relationships as coalitions to build a base of support for current and future projects. Bases of support are nurtured through adroit public relations with special interest groups and local influentials.

Fundamental to understanding the need for networking and forming coalitions is to see that schools, as organizations, engage in interpendent activities. Interdependency, interpreted by Pfeffer (1981), "means that in order for one subunit to accomplish something, it requires the efforts and cooperation of other subunits" (p. 154). Internal and external alliances form to reach mutual goals. By way of brief example, this might mean the formation of alliances to pass school bonds or teacher contracts.

Bargaining and Negotiating

Bolman and Deal (1997) offer a six-point summary of the bargaining and negotiating process:

1. Bargaining is a mixed-motive game. Both parties want an agreement but have different interests and preferences.
2. Bargaining is a process of interdependent decisions...
3. The more player A can control player B's level of uncertainty, the more powerful A is.
4. Bargaining involves the judicious use of threats rather than sanctions...
5. Making threats credible is crucial. A threat is effective only if your opponent believes it...

6. Calculation of the appropriate level of threat is also critical. If I "underthreaten, "I may weaken my own position. If I "overthreaten," you may not believe me, may break off the negotiations, or may escalate your own threats (p. 190).

Theories about organizational politics according to Bacharach and Lawler (1998) must include an analysis of power for "politics is embedded in a power framework" (p. 69). Our conceptions of power hold importance in shaping and limiting our experiences and relationships with others (Kriesburg, 1992). In an analysis of power it is important to emphasize that power is not an exclusive topic of a political perspective. The following describes how power fits into discussions of the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames.

Power

"Power," writes James MacGregor Burns (1978), "is ubiquitous; it permeates human relationships. It exists whether or not it is quested for. It is the glory and the burden of most of humanity" (p. 15). Like politics, power conjures up similar negative images of coercive, authoritative actions taken to promote self-interests. Traditional notions of power, as power over, are described by Robert Dahl (1957) in this manner, "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that he would not otherwise do" (pp. 202-203). Dahl's definition is in the tradition of the behaviorist perspective in which persons relate to one another. In a similar manner Gardner (1986) defines power as the capacity to bring about intended consequences in the behavior of others. Structural functionalists' interest in influence and authority (Fennell, 1999) support notions of power as a stabilizing factor for the organization (Mumby, 1994). In other words, those in power act to maintain the hierarchical structure of the organization.

Mary Parker Follett (1924/1940), one of the earliest writers on business management, dislodges the taken-for-granted assumptions of a vertical system of authority. Her essays make a distinction between power as coercive and power as coactive in framing her descriptions as power over and power with. Her notion of power *with* comes from integration of needs and values. According to Follett, power is best understood as capacity

and cannot be conferred upon another. In her words, "we can confer authority; but power or capacity, no man can give or take. The manager cannot share his power with division superintendent or foreman or workmen, but he can give them opportunities for developing the power" (pp. 112-113).

Follett's conception of power as relational is seen in studies to take place decades later. James MacGregor Burns (1978), for example, sees leadership and power as relationships among persons. "To define power not as property or entity or possession but as a relationship in which two or more persons tap motivational bases in one another and bring varying resources to bear in the process is to perceive power as drawing a vast range of human behavior into its orbit" (p. 15).

Dunlap and Goldman (1991) offer the notion of power as a system of facilitation. Facilitative power involves enabling, negotiation and empowerment. It is manifested on the basis of trust and reciprocity. Distinct from participative power, facilitative power does not preclude "authoritative, vertically oriented power" (Dunlap & Goldman, p. 26).

Theorists within the political frame show concern for the de-emphasis of politics in organizational theory (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980). For these theorists, power is a key element. French and Raven (1959) base power in five categories: coercion, rewards, expertise, legitimacy, and referent power. In discussion about power, confusion surfaces over bases of power and sources of power (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980; Ziegler & Jennings, 1974). To reduce confusion over terms, Bacharach and Lawler (1980) suggest, "In dealing with the bases of power we are interested in what parties control that enables them to manipulate the behaviors of others; in referring to the source of power we are speaking of how parties come to control the power bases" (p. 34). Therefore, the authors, in conjunction with the efforts of French and Raven (1959), complete a picture of power with four bases – coercive, remunerative, normative, and knowledge – and with four power sources – office or structural position, personal characteristics, expertise, and opportunity.

Bolman and Deal (1997) revise and expand the forms of power to include: position power, information and expertise, control of rewards, coercive power, alliances and networks, access and control of agendas, framing: control of meaning and symbols, and personal power. These authors make connections between power sources and political skills and strategies. "The political frame emphasizes that no strategy will work without a power base" (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 210). Table 2.1 depicts the potential skills and strategies derived from the bases of support. Such a listing of political skills and strategies is not exhaustive nor are the skills and strategies derived from a single form of power. The representation in Table 2.1 of bases of power and potential skills and strategies suggests the importance to superintendents in understanding bases of power and at the same time recognizing and developing their skills and strategies.

In summary, individual theories of organizations and leadership focus on "one best way" to describe best practices and organizational effectiveness. Bolman and Deal argue that conceptually, individual theories offer a partial perspective. Their conceptual frame, a multiple frame perspective, encapsulates theories into four frames – structural, human resource, political, and symbolic perspectives - opening a broader range of potential and influencing actions. Bolman and Deal's research points to needed probes into the political frame perspective. Here, discussion centered on development of potential skills and strategies and related issues of power within the political frame as well as in other frames. What follows is further examination of Bolman and Deal's and other theorists' multiple frame perspectives and relatedly, how leaders and managers go about using multiple frames in their practice.

Table 2.1

Suggested Relationship between Forms of Power and Potential Skills and Strategies

Form of Power	Potential Skills and Strategies
Information and Expertise	Disperse information and knowledge Share information with constituents Demonstrate conflict mediation Negotiate differences Identify power structure Identify major stakeholders Consensus building
Control of Rewards	Recognize contributions and rewards Support others for leadership
Alliances and Networks	Meet School Board members outside meetings Enlist support from employee unions Meet with local political leaders Meet with business leaders
Personal Power	Charismatic qualities Campaign for policy support Use persuasion in speeches Use persuasion in writings
Control of Meaning and Symbols	Communicate vision Plan celebrations Create meaning for everyone Emphasize shared values
Position Power	Use authority of position Clarify organizational goals Assess risks and opportunities
Access and Control	Determine agendas for meetings Create public forums Solicit feedback on policy issues Involve others in decision-making
Coercive Power	Deny promotion and benefits Force concessions

Integrating, Framing, and Reframing

The only true voyage of discovery consists not of visiting new places, but seeing with new eyes.

Voltaire

Bolman and Deal's multiple frames are captured in Rosabeth Moss Kanter's updated look at organizations in *When Giants Learn to Dance* (1989). The dance she envisions considers alternatives and integrates rather that advocates for a single perspective. "We must juggle contradictions, we must make tradeoffs between contrasting goals, and we must steer a course that does not go too far in any one direction lest events require an

about-face" (p. 13). Kanter speaks of the importance of politics as being able to "juggle constituencies rather than control subordinates" (p. 152). In this look at organizations, Kanter discusses the development of synergy in responding to the complexity and diversity in organizations. Her understanding of synergy is similar to Bolman and Deal's symbolic frame. She describes synergy as involving "championing the cause from the top, providing forums to help managers identify opportunities outside their own areas, offering incentives and rewards, promoting relationships and communication to help people get to know one another and offer a sense of shared fate" (p. 346). In emphasizing the political and synergism (symbolic), she is careful not to downplay the importance of other ways of thinking about organizations. She promotes equal regard to increasing human capital and other references to the human resource frames as well as continuing a focus on process and implementation plans (the structural frame).

Susan Moore Johnson (1996) advocates a balanced leadership triangle of educational, political, and managerial expertise. She delineates what is involved in each of the dimensions and stresses the interdependency of each dimension upon the others. Educational leadership involves vision, values, and purposes of teaching and learning. Political leadership involves building coalitions and pursuing, securing and distributing resources necessary to operate schools and advance educational goals. Managerial leadership involves capacities to foster communication and engagement, efficient allocation of resources, provide vision, supervision, and support, and sustain efforts for accountability. Again, Moore Johnson like Bolman and Deal, emphasizes that her position is not an either/or stance on leading school districts. Rather, she notes from her research that "a superintendent who exercises leadership with his or her school board – providing valid and timely information, promoting independent thinking, valuing individual differences, encouraging group responsibility, and taking a stand on important issues – is as much a good educator as a good politician" (p. 175).

Morgan (1986) builds his conceptual framework on metaphorical thinking. He presents metaphors for organizations as machines relating to work of bureaucracies. As organisms, organizations attend to needs of varying environments. Use of a brain metaphor depicts the demands for organizations to recognize the importance of information processing. A cultural metaphor emphasizes values, beliefs, and patterns of the organization. The political metaphor examines diverse interests, conflict, and power within organizations. He goes on with other metaphors and to assume that there are many more that may be envisioned. The conceptualization of the organization through a metaphorical lens stresses a way of thinking that considers possibilities rather than a prescribed analytical approach to organizations and leadership.

Carlson (1996) agrees with Morgan and organizes theories from four perspectives: cultural, political, brain, and theatrical. He borrows the term, requisite variety, from general systems theory to advocate "breaking with past assumptions and dominant paradigms that no longer serve the purposes of organizations and result in a poor match with new, emerging conditions" (p. 4).

Robert Quinn (1988) in *Beyond Rational Management* takes on the project of effective management. Like Bolman and Deal (1991, 1997), Quinn sees multiple perspectives as presenting more alternatives for those within organizations, a point of view that Quinn maintains, "transcends oversimplified concepts that serve to both facilitate and limit our understanding" (p. xv). His conceptual framework comprises four models: (1) rational goal model; (2) internal process model; (3) open systems; and (4) human relations model. Quinn's conceptual framework emphasizes the dynamic and contradictory nature of organizations that he refers to as a competing values framework. Visually, Quinn places his framework on four quadrants with competing values at the ends of the each axis and within quadrants. For example, one-endpoint purports operating towards an inventive, risk-taking style while operating from the opposite quadrant is a conservative, cautious

style. Bolman and Deal (1991) correlate their four-frame perspective with Quinn's competitive values framework in this way:

> An axis running between the symbolic and structural frames two different forms of cognition: artistic /expressive/metaphoric vs. rational/linear/sequential. As second human resource/political axis represents competing orientations toward the social environment: caring/trusting/ collaborative vs. realistic/skeptical/competitive (p. 513).

Frames, as a way of thinking, open administrators to alternatives to entrain awareness of dilemmas (Schon, 1983). The ability to use multiple frames involves the capacity to balance priorities (Quinn, 1988). Integrating, framing, and reframing begin with understanding the strengths leaders bring to each perspective. Bolman and Deal (1997) describe these strengths:

Structural leaders:

1. Do their homework;

2. Rethink the relationship of structure, strategy, and environment;

3. Focus on implementation;

4. Experiment, evaluate, and adapt.

Human Resource leaders:

1. Believe in people and communicate their belief;

2. Are visible and accessible;

3. Empower others.

Political leaders:

1. Clarify what they want and what they can get;

2. Assess the distribution of power and interests;

3. Build linkages to key stakeholders;

4. Persuade first, negotiate second, and use coercion only if necessary.

Symbolic leaders:

1. Use symbols to capture attention;

2. Frame experience;

3. Discover and communicate a vision;

4. Tell stories (pp. 306-316).

Kouzes and Posner (2002) in updating their book, *Leadership the Challenge*, stress the changing context in which leadership must be practiced. The changing context accounts for differences in the increased uncertainty, people as a priority, advancements in technology, the emphasis on social capital, the need to think globally, the fast pace of everyday life, the changing workforce, and the intense search for meaning. Emerging conditions in today's environment present more challenges of ambiguity and complexity than Susan Moore Johnson (1996)'s description of Frank Spaulding's superintendency in the late nineteenth century. The uncertain environment of the superintendency demands cognitive complexity (Bensimon, et. al. 1989; Bolman & Granell, 1999). Robert Quinn (1988) describes cognitive complexity:

> Cognitive complexity has to do with how people think about a domain or problem. The process of differentiation and integration are crucial. Differentiation has to do with the bipolar scales such as short and tall, integration with the relationships among various dimensions. Complexity is the degree to which a domain is differentiated and integrated. The more dimensions and relationships that are used, the more cognitively complex a person is (p. 5).

The versatility in moving among frames and seeing a given situation in new ways are aspects of reframing. William Foster (1986) speaks of the value of moving between potential theories in this way,

> administrators who have more ways of seeing – more theories – accessible to them also have more available options and choices for practical action. By providing alternative theories we provide alternative perspectives and ways of seeing. In doing this, we provide the possibility of a more reflective practice, one that combines theoretical insights with practical action" (p. 12).

Morgan (1986) maintains that a fixed standpoint or perspective limits effective analysis of the situation, the ability to problem solve comprehensively, and the possibilities for formulating action plans. Carlson (1996) forecasts positive outcomes professionally and personally in developing cognitive complexity, "...we may grow to appreciate multiple perspectives, the value of reframing, and the contradictions and paradoxes that often exist

in organizations. In the process, we may discover an antidote to perceptual self-entrapment and habits of mind that lock us in and minimize our creative, flexible, and adaptive abilities" (p. 115).

Bolman and Deal (1997) propose four questions and corresponding actions to aid in determining appropriate frames to fit the situation and its circumstances. These questions include " Are individual commitment and motivation essential to success? Is the technical quality of the decision important? Are there high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty? Are conflict and scarce resources significant? And, are you working from the bottom up" (p. 271)? Posing the four questions is thoughtful and purposeful action without any assurances that the selection of a frame will bring about the solution. The authors advise:

> In some cases, the analysis might lead you to a familiar frame. If the old frame shows signs of inadequacy, it may still be appropriate to reframe. You may discover an exciting and creative new lens for deciphering the situation. Then you will face another problem: how to communicate your discovery to others who still see a different reality (p. 274).

Precedence for This Study

In the forty years of study of politics in education much attention is paid to relationships between the superintendent and school board (Ziegler & Jennings, 1974); community power structures (Bjork & Lindle, 2001; Iannaccone, 1967; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Moore-Johnson, 1996); who should govern (Dahl, 1957; Lutz, 1977; Mann, 1977); and most recently policy analysis (Wirt & Kirst, 1972, 1997; Thompson, 1976). Norman Drachler (1977) expresses a central concern for the dearth of research connecting political beliefs and behaviors, "if practitioners have a theoretical basis for their political behavior, or for an assessment of their political experiences, they have not revealed it" (p. 189). Bjork and Lindle (2001) add, "the political action focused on superintendents as a nexus of political interaction remains underreported and underpublished" (p. 79). Cuban's 1976 analysis of the behavior of three urban superintendents in Chicago, Washington, DC, and San Francisco formulates the possible connection between beliefs and behaviors by juxtaposing his observations and interviews with superintendents

concerning their daily practice with evidence from the superintendents' personal and professional writing. Of this methodology Cuban states, "By tracing out the intellectual terrains of beliefs on organizational conflict, decision-making, equality and the like common to a particular leadership role, and then linking the configuration to each superintendent's beliefs and behavior, a richer, far more complex picture emerges" (p. 164).

The ability to use multiple frames responds to real world conditions of ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty. Bolman and Deal's (1992) research samples represent corporate managers from 15 nations, higher education administrators from the United States, school principals from the US, and school administrators from Singapore. Findings from Bolman and Deal's research relevant to this inquiry into a study of superintendents and politics in education include:

1. The human resource frame is the dominant frame of administrators.

2. The ability to use multiple frames is critical to administrators' effectiveness as managers and leaders (Bolman & Deal, 1992 p. 328).

3. In qualitative studies, respondents rarely used more than one or two frames.

4. Political and symbolic orientations are keys to effective leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 525) although professional development programs rarely attend to the skills involved in these orientations.

5. Different situations require different patterns of thinking (Bolman and Deal, 1992, p. 519).

In research studies, using Bolman and Deal's conceptual framework, similar findings are produced. Harlow (1994) and Durocher (1996), studying school superintendents, find the human resource frame to predominate. In her interviews with superintendents, Harlow (1994) asked superintendents to describe leadership and critical incidents. In describing leadership, the political frame is the least commonly used. Whereas, in describing critical incidents, the political frame is the most commonly used.

Harlow concurs with Bolman and Deal (1991) that superintendents understand the necessity of the political frame in their work but show reluctance in assigning value to politics in their definitions of leadership.

Additionally, in her analysis, rarely did the superintendents use more than two frames. Interestingly, Durocher (1996), in her study of effective school administrators, finds almost half of her participants use three or more frames. Durocher interprets her findings as relating to factors of effectiveness.

Bolman and Deal's findings, along with findings from related studies, serve as a basis of comparison for this current investigation of leadership and politics in education. Comparisons from the aforementioned studies will be drawn with New Hampshire superintendents' perceptions of leadership orientations and analyses of frame use. These comparisons and further analyses are outlined in Chapter Four.

Summary of the Research

To work successfully in uncertain and often turbulent political environments, superintendents must be adept at analyzing the political dynamics of communities and boards of education and proficient in a wide variety of leadership styles appropriate to changing circumstances (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000, p. 27).

This chapter reviews the research and literature that form the basis of this inquiry of superintendents' perceptions of leadership orientations, political behaviors, and politics in education. A glimpse of the apolitical myth that permeates much of the educational environment sets up discussion of the role of superintendents and their outlook on politics in education. Understanding schools as open systems invites discussion of the major interest groups competing for scarce resources and values. Here the discussion focuses on the interests of state and federal governments in education.

Bolman and Deal's postulation of leadership and organizational theories into four frames – structural, human resource, political, and symbolic - functions as the guiding conceptual framework. A multiple frame perspective assumes the need for cognitive

complexity to confront the ambiguity, uncertainty, and challenges emerging in organizations.

This research study locates two related problems within politics of education and the superintendency. First, the research of Bolman and Deal (1991, 1992, 1997) suggests the importance of the political frame perspective and the work of school administrators; yet few administrators, historically, admit to engaging in political activity. Second, few research studies question the connections between superintendents' leadership orientations and behaviors.

The following chapter details the methodology used in this inquiry into the superintendency and politics in education.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the generation of hypotheses from the research questions, the population sample, data analysis, benefits derived from the pilot study, and development of the survey instrument, including supporting research for the questionnaire items.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to uncover connections between New Hampshire school superintendents' leadership orientations and their perceptions of politics in education using a multiple perspectives approach. The study seeks to enhance understanding of the political role of superintendents by obtaining superintendents' perceptions of themselves as leaders, their abilities, performances, as well as their views on the constructive and obstructive outcomes of political actions within their school districts.

Conceptual Framework

Lee Bolman and Terrance Deal's (1984, 1991, 1997) conceptualization of organizational and leadership theories postulates into four frames or ways of seeing. The four frames, structural, human resource, political, and symbolic, offer perspectives for naming, setting, and responding to issues and/or events. Bolman and Deal's conceptual framework emphasizing a multiple perspectives approach recognizes the desirability of developing cognitive complexity. Developing cognitive complexity, the ability to move within frames, supports challenges of change, uncertainty, and ambiguity inherent in the superintendency.

Research Questions

The following research questions direct this inquiry into politics and educational leadership:

1. How does a superintendent's political perspective compare with the structural, human resource, and symbolic perspectives?

2. What political skills and strategies do New Hampshire school superintendents prefer?

3. Is there a relationship between New Hampshire superintendents' political frame perspective and preference for political skills and strategies?

4. What are New Hampshire superintendents' perceptions of the constructive and obstructive impacts of politics on selected educational issues within their school districts?

5. Is there a relationship between the superintendents' political frame perspective and the perceived impact of politics on selected educational issues within their school districts?

<u>Hypotheses</u>

The research questions present opportunity for generation of the following hypotheses statements:

1. It is anticipated that superintendents will identify stronger orientations toward structural, human resource, and symbolic perspectives than towards a political perspective.

2. Superintendents will identify a comfortable level with all political skills and strategies.

3. There is no relationship between New Hampshire superintendents' political frame perspective and preference for political skills and strategies.

4. Superintendents will acknowledge the pervasiveness of politics in education by a positive or negative response to all selected educational issues.

5. There is no relationship between New Hampshire superintendents' political frame perspective and the perceived political impact on selected educational issues.

Sources of the Data

A single survey instrument, a mailed questionnaire (Appendix A), gathers data from New Hampshire school superintendents to address the six research questions. In choosing survey methodology Alreck and Settle (1995) maintain the researcher seeks, "(1) What the individual *knows* or *believes* about the topic; (2) how the person *feels* about the topic and how it is *valued*, and (3) the likelihood that the individual will take *action* based on the attitude" (p. 11). The decision to direct the research toward the superintendency falls from consideration of each of these aspects in relation to the nature of the inquiry. As chief executive officers and chief political bargainers (Wirt & Kirst, 1972) of their school systems, superintendents present as excellent resources for investigating politics and political leadership in education. Since relatively few studies focus on the superintendency, the voices of superintendents are rarely heard (Bjork & Lindle, 2001). The questionnaire seeks superintendents' beliefs and perceptions of their leadership orientations and behaviors. Section II of the questionnaire satisfies the condition for addressing the potential for action. Two sections of the questionnaire get at superintendents' feelings and value judgments of politics in education through their sense of the impact of politics upon selected educational issues and consideration of the ways in which politics advances and frustrates the attainment of educational goals.

Study Population

Invitations to participate in this research study of politics in education are extended to all 78 superintendents in New Hampshire. This study relies upon the data from the New Hampshire Association of School Superintendents for identification of New Hampshire school superintendents and their School Administrative Units, although similar information is available from a number of sources. The decision to include all superintendents increases the likelihood of representing diversity of opinions and variability within and among school districts and their surrounding communities.

Potential for counter indications of superintendents' perceptions exist. These could easily be advanced by a similar inquiry of other stakeholders within the superintendents' school districts; however, this study limits itself to the stated singular perspective. This is not to indicate that the participants in this study offer a singular view, but the lens from which to view the political role and terrain comes from a similar position within the school system.

Survey Design

Quantitative research methods gather superintendents' leadership perspectives, self-reporting of skills and strategies, and perceptions of the impact of politics on their practice. Based on the work of Bolman and Deal (1984, 1991, 1997), this study assembles a portion of these authors' current survey instrument in conjunction with researcher-designed sections exposing superintendents' political perspective and behaviors.

The demographic section gathers information on New Hampshire superintendents and the status of the school districts they supervise. The items, considered as a group, present classification traits for personal data (age, race, and gender), experience within the superintendency, related educational experiences, and information about their school districts. Profiles of New Hampshire superintendents compare with national surveys of school superintendents, like that gathered by Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000). Comparisons of state and national demographic profiles are presented in the ensuing chapter. Additionally, demographic items, separated into sub samples (years of experience, for example), determine effects of demographic status with other sections of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Section I

Bolman and Deal's Leadership Frameworks (1988), a six- question measure requiring respondents to rank order characteristics of their leadership, forms Section I of the questionnaire and addresses Research Question One: How does a superintendent's

political perspective compare with the structural, human resource, and symbolic perspectives?

In its most updated form, Leadership Orientations (Bolman & Deal, 1991) contains 32 items with the six questions from the earlier version forming their Section II. The high internal reliabilities of .91 and .93 (Bolman & Granell, 1999) and the ability to identify the predominant leadership orientations of the respondents satisfy the primary reasons in determining a research measure for this study.

According to Bolman and Deal's multiple frame perspective, organizational theories are postulated into four frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. The ability to frame and reframe, the ability to move within frames, involves cognitive complexity. Superintendents' ways of seeing and thinking reveal what is noticed and what actions are taken. In the process of reframing or in Schon's (1983) like-minded process of reflection-in-action, there are values and dispositions that each superintendent brings to the process. Schon refers to these as constants and describes them in this manner:

1. The media, language and repertoires that practitioners use to describe reality and conduct experiments;
2. The appreciative systems they bring to problem setting, to the evaluation of inquiry, and to reflective conversation;
3. The overarching theories by which they make sense of phenomena;
4. The role frames within which they set their tasks and through which they bound their institutional settings (p. 270).

Table 3.1 highlights the important aspects and what is held of value, the constants that Schon referred to, within each of the frames. Bolman and Deal's extensive research (1991, 1997) testing the validity and reliability of the survey measure account for the factors within each cell. They report the following internal consistency data: Split-half correlation of .708; Spearman-Brown coefficient of .829; and Gutman (Rulon) coefficient of .824 (Recorded in Bolman & Granell, 1999).

Table 3.1

Factors within Leadership Frameworks

	Structural Factors	Human Resource Factors	Political Factors	Symbolic Factors
1. Strongest skills	Analytic skills	Interpersonal skills	Political skills	Flair for drama
2. Self-description	Technical expert	Good listener	Skilled negotiator	Inspirational leader
3. Account for success	Make good decisions	Coach and develop people	Build strong alliances and a power base	Inspire and excite others
4. Most notable aspect	Attention to detail	Concern for people	Ability to succeed in the face of conflict and oppression	Charisma
5. Prominent leadership trait	Clear, logical thinking	Caring and support for others	Toughness and aggressiveness	Imagination and creativity
6. Best description	An analyst	A humanist	A politician	A visionary

The forced ranking scale in this section requires the respondents to consider the relationship of the items to one another and present an ordering of their preferences. Greer and Dunlap (1997) describe the strength of the ipsative scale thus, "an ipsative scale reflects the hierarchical nature of values and, furthermore, can reduce inflation of scores resulting from social desirability of the responses" (p. 201). The downside or limitation of a forced choice scale produces an inability to measure the absolute distance or interval between and among the items (Alreck & Settle, 1995).

Questionnaire Section II

Section II of the questionnaire is designed to respond directly to Research Question Two: What political skills and strategies do New Hampshire school superintendents prefer?

Attending to this research question necessitates two important first steps. A definition of politics provides guidance for the general inquiry and serves to clearly frame meaning for the participants in the study. Set off in bold print, the survey carries the study's definition of politics in this manner:

Definition: For the purposes of this survey, **politics** is defined as: The set of interactions that influence and shape the authoritative allocation of values and resources. In these interactions, individuals and groups openly express needs and interests and reconcile differences.

Second, determination of skills and strategies considered to be political activities is given due scrutiny. Table 3.2 represents the mining of potential resources, skills, and strategies from the work of six prominent researchers in educational administration, leadership theory, and organizational theory. This listing of thirty skills and strategies does not claim to be an exhaustive listing, but, rather, to point to the vast range of activities that are deemed or labeled to be political by leading researchers and authors.

Requiring superintendents to respond to a list of thirty items is a potential deterrent to completing the survey and quite possibly diminishing the percentage of returned surveys. Additionally, in a real sense, such a lengthy list is not respectful of the many demands on superintendents' time and workloads. Justifications for the resulting reduced list in Section II of the questionnaire (Appendix A and noted by italics in Table 3.2) are based on the following criteria:

1. The resulting list encompasses a broad range of skills and strategies to account for the diversity in superintendents' preferences and political contexts.

2. An attempt is made to include the most frequently cited items among the researchers.

Table 3.2

Political Skills and Strategies in Related Studies of Politics in Education

	Ziegler, et.al 1974	Moore-Johnson 1996	Kim-brough 1964	Cuban 1976	Bolman Deal 1997	Blumberg 1985
Ascertain values of others		*	*	*	*	*
Assess risks and opportunities				*	*	
Campaign for policy support			*	*	*	
Use charisma	*	*			*	*
Clarify goals	*			*		
Communicate vision	*			*	*	*
Create meaning		*			*	*
Hold public forums			*			*
Demonstrate conflict mediation	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrate consensus building	*	*	*	*	*	*
Deny promotion and benefits		*			*	*
Determine agendas	*	*		*	*	
Disperse information and knowledge	*	*	*	*	*	*
Emphasize shared values		*			*	
Enlist union support		*	*	*		*
Force concessions		*		*	*	*
Identify major stockholders	*	*	*	*	*	*
Identify power structure	*	*	*	*	*	*
Involve others in decision making		*	*	*		*
Keep press informed	*			*		*
Meet Sch. Bd members outside mtgs.				*		
Meet business leaders	*	*	*	*		*
Meet local political leaders	*	*	*	*		*
Negotiate differences		*	*	*	*	*
Plan celebrations					*	
Recognize contributions					*	
Share information	*	*	*	*	*	*
Solicit feedback	*	*		*		*
Use position authority	*	*	*	*	*	*
Use persuasion in speeches	*	*		*		
Use persuasion in writing	*			*		

3. For the purposes of this survey, like items are combined to accomplish the task of reducing the number of items. For example, the item, share information with constituents combines with disperses information and knowledge. Meet with business leaders, and local political leaders are taken as part of the broader item, campaign for policy support. Of course, it recognizes that such combinations can be debated, but preference is given to the need to reduce the task required of participants over a more precise list of skills and strategies.

4. The reduced list acknowledges four decades of research. Care is taken to represent an historical compilation of skills and strategies in order to be respectful of ranges in age, experiences, and personal preferences of the respondents.

5. Ultimately, the listing needs to demonstrate what superintendents take to be political skills and strategies. The pilot study conducted with five New England superintendents confirms the validity of the listing. Each respondent was able to rank each of the items. Further, in the pilot study, the absence of any comments about the list provides additional confirmation of validity.

In its final form, Section II of the questionnaire presents eighteen political skills and strategies for respondents' consideration. Using the Likert scale shown below, superintendents indicate the extent of their preferences for engaging in this condensed list of political activities:

1	2	3	4	5
Avoid	Only if directed	Use, if necessary	Comfortable	Preferred, fits my style

The intent of this section is to identify the nature and range of political skills commonly used by New Hampshire superintendents. A necessary caution in creating such a list must be addressed. Each item is considered a *potential* resource for the relevance and use of the resource, skill, and strategy is dependent upon individual preferences and to contextual considerations (Ziegler & Jennings, 1974).

Questionnaire Section III

In Section III respondents, using a Likert scale, determine the extent to which

politics impacts their practice. First, this section gathers a general sense of the

respondent's perceptions of negative and positive impacts and addresses Research Question

Four: What are New Hampshire school superintendents' perceptions of the constructive

and obstructive impacts of politics on selected educational issues within their districts?

Second, it seeks to ascertain the relationship between leadership orientations and

perceptions of the constructive and obstructive impacts of politics and addresses Research

Question Five: Is there a relationship between the superintendents' political frame

perspective and the perceived impact of politics on educational issues within their school

districts?

The determination of what constitutes political activity/action may be associated

with beliefs held about the impact of politics on educational goals. Thus, items in this

section need to be sufficiently broad to encompass the range of what superintendents might

determine to be the result of political actions. The fifteen items selected for scrutiny by

respondents reflect both internal and external issues. Kirst (1970) accounts for both

internal and external issues as being influenced by the political process of school systems.

Wirt and Kirst (1972), influenced by Easton's systems analysis framework, explain how

education acted as a political system. Inputs of demands and support from subsystems

outside and within the educational environment are converted into outputs. Commonly,

we think of outputs as curriculum, facilities, budget, and personnel policy. This listing,

however, limits our thinking. Wirt and Kirst (1972) explain the need for broadening the

notion of outputs –

> *So school systems must act politically because they must choose*
> *which demands to favor and which not.* The result of this choice is an *output*,
> for example, a state or federal law, a school board resolution, or a
> superintendents' program. An output could even be a principal' s memo to
> the faculty on how the library budget will be allocated between the science and
> social studies departments (pp. 57, 58).

The Likert scale for Section III provide respondents with five degrees of impact described in this manner:

SP = Strong Positive Impact
PI = Positive Impact
NO = No Impact
NI = Negative Impact
SN = Strong Negative Impact

Questionnaire Section IV

Section IV gathers information from superintendents about their perceptions of politics in education and advice to aspiring superintendents. Three open-ended questions present opportunity for survey participants to express concerns, opinions, and responses about politics in education without constraints of a predetermined list of items.

Pilot Study

With approval from the University of New Hampshire's Institutional Review Board (Appendix B), a pilot study was conducted with these intended aims:

1. To gather general feedback on the survey instrument;

2. To ascertain superintendents' ease with completing the questionnaire including clarity of directions, use of vocabulary, reduction of ambiguity, and time to complete the task;

3. To determine if the measure contains items that are relevant to superintendents' understandings and beliefs about politics; and

4. To determine if the measure produces the necessary data (Black, 1999).

Five New England superintendents volunteered to complete and offer feedback on the proposed questionnaire.

Data Collection

Permission to use Leadership Orientations (1988), an early version of Bolman and Deal's survey measure, is requested from and granted by the authors (Appendix C). A letter (Appendix D) explaining the purpose of the research study and assurances for anonymity accompany the mailed questionnaire to the New Hampshire superintendents on

December 16, 2002. In addition, the survey-mailing packet includes a letter endorsing the research study from the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Superintendents' Association, Dr. Mark Joyce (Appendix E) and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for ease of return to the researcher.

Prior to mailing, all questionnaires receive a tracking number for identifying returns. A follow-up letter (Appendix F) sent on January 10, 2003, remind superintendents of the opportunity to contribute to the body of knowledge on politics in education by completing the questionnaire.

For additional assurances of anonymity, every returned survey receives a case number. Case numbers organize the keying of information to the data files and later, ease sorting of the data under analyses.

Data Analysis

This study gathers both quantitative and space for superintendents' comments from the mailed questionnaire. The survey examines the relationships between leadership orientations and political behaviors as determined by their perceived comfort levels and preferences for political skills and strategies within their school districts. Enmeshed within a multiple perspectives framework, this study examines the possibilities of New Hampshire superintendents responding or engaging in more than one way of seeing or leadership orientation. Schon (1986) describes the relationship in this way, "Their frames determine their strategies of attention and thereby set the directions in which they will try to change the situation, the values which will shape their practice" (p. 309).

Treatment of the Quantitative Data

Responses from all sections of the questionnaire are recorded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Demographic data undergo descriptive analysis, are tabulated by sub samples, and are used for comparisons with national profiles of superintendents and other survey data.

Section I of the questionnaire, *Bolman and Deal's Leadership Orientations, Section II*, collects superintendents' self-reporting of leadership behaviors. Tabulations yield leadership orientation scores for each of the four frames – structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Each of the factors, descriptors identifying leadership orientations, for each of the six items are ranked from one to four, least to best. Thus, possible scores for each frame range from 6 to 24. Descriptive analyses for this section report predominate frame use of New Hampshire superintendents.

Since respondents rank items from a forced-choice or ipsative scale, the nonparametric variables are correlated using Spearman rank correlations (Alreck & Settle, 995). Correlation analysis explores the relationship among the four frames.

To determine the number of frames used by superintendents, the analysis entails tabulating and trichotomizing the frequency of possible scores from 6 to 24. Values of 1, 2, and 3 are associated with the resulting divisions or cut-points and designate low, moderate, and strong use, respectively, of a frame. Each respondent's orientation scores convert to possible values of 1, 2, and 3. Stated simply, each of the scores for the four frames becomes a value based on the above general criteria. Next, sorting according to similar patterns occurs. Analysis continues to determine emerging patterns. See Appendix G for the criteria for determining the three cut-points, sorting of individual scores, and emerging patterns.

Descriptive analysis reveals superintendents' comfort level with using each of the identified political skills and strategies. Simple correlation analysis explores possible relationships between the relative strength of each frame perspective and use of each political skill and strategy.

In Section III, respondents identify the impact of politics on selected educational issues. Descriptive analysis determines mean scores for each of the issues. Correlation coefficients identify the size and statistical significance of the relationship between the educational issues being tested and each of the frame perspectives.

<u>Treatment of Superintendents' Comments</u>

Three open-ended questions present an opportunity for survey participants to offer their felt experiences with politics in education.

1. How do you use politics to further educational goals?

2. In what ways does politics frustrate your pursuit of educational goals?

3. What advice would you offer to those entering the superintendency about politics in educational leadership?

Superintendents' comments lend support and further clarification of the quantitative data. Frequency of responses give evidence to the commonalities among superintendents' experiences and beliefs and at the same time, give voice to differing opinions and lived experiences. These comments are included in Appendix I, unanalyzed data.

<div align="center"><u>Summary</u></div>

Using survey methodology, this study explores the perceptions of New Hampshire school superintendents of their leadership orientations, the resources and actions used to influence outcomes in their districts, and the overall impact of politics on selected educational issues within their districts. Survey methodology allows for broad participation, range of opinion, and examination of shared commonalities and differences within the state's boundaries. This chapter outlines the development of a researcher - designed questionnaire based on Bolman and Deal's conceptual framework and use of a portion of their survey instrument, *Leadership Orientations*, Section II. Treatment of the quantitative includes frequency of response, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and scrutiny for possible patterns. Chapter Four details the findings of this inquiry.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter details the research findings based on analysis of quantitative data from a survey of New Hampshire school superintendents. The survey, a mailed questionnaire, gathers superintendents' perceptions of their leadership orientations, political behaviors, impact on educational goals, and overall beliefs about politics in education. The following research questions present a guideline for pursuing the inquiry, developing the survey instrument, and analyzing the data:

1. How does a superintendent's political perspective compare with the structural, human resource, and symbolic perspectives?

2. What political skills and strategies do New Hampshire school superintendents prefer?

3. Is there a relationship between political frame perspective and preference of political skills and strategies?

4. What are New Hampshire superintendents' perceptions of the constructive and obstructive impacts of politics on selected educational issues within their school districts?

5. Is there a relationship between the superintendents' political frame perspective and the perceived impact of politics on selected issues within their school districts?

Questionnaires were sent to all 78 New Hampshire school superintendents. A letter from the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Association of School Superintendents, Dr. Mark Joyce (Appendix E) accompanied the questionnaire in the mailing packet. Returns were immediate. In all, 61 superintendents or 78% completed and returned the

survey. Seven respondents misapplied directions to Section I (Bolman and Deal's *Leadership Orientations*, 1988) and their responses are not considered in any analysis of the quantitative data. However, these same seven respondents provide written responses to the three open-ended questions in Section IV and their comments are included in Appendix I, unanalyzed data.

This chapter presents the research findings in two sections. Demographic information introduces the New Hampshire superintendents participating in the survey and the status of the school districts they serve. The remainder of the chapter identifies findings from descriptive and correlation analyses of the quantitative data.

<u>Analysis of the Demographic Information</u>

The National Education Association's Department of Superintendence and now the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) conducts surveys at regular intervals to gather information on the status, opinions, and best practices of America's school superintendents. Commonly referred to as the "Ten-Year Studies," they portray the current status of the profession as well as provide an historical perspective. This section examines the profiles of New Hampshire superintendents' participating in this study in relation to the national profiles sketched in <u>The 2000 Study</u> (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). With these comparisons in mind, the findings from the five research questions may be weighed for their significance and may serve to guide further research studies.

<u>General Description</u>

Many characteristics of the New Hampshire school superintendent parallels the national profile reported in *The 2000 Study* (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). White males dominate this top- level education administration position in New Hampshire as they do nationally. Nationally, 86.8 % are male and 94.9 % white. The under representation of minorities in the superintendency prevails in New Hampshire, where 100% of the superintendents responding to this demographic report their race as Caucasian (one respondent supplied no data).

Only five women, 9.3 % compared with 13.2% nationally, contribute to this study and therefore, form too small a sub sample for further analyses. Additionally, any analysis with so small a group threatens the anonymity promised to all participants at the outset of the study.

Age of Superintendents

The average age of the respondents in this survey of New Hampshire superintendents is 55.5 years with a range of 41 to 67 years of age. Table 4. 1 compares the New Hampshire profile with that of superintendents across the nation. Practicing superintendents in New Hampshire in 2002-2003 cluster in one age bracket, the 56-60, above that of the national profile that clusters in the 51 to 55 age bracket. New Hampshire profiles are in line with historical trends toward a greying of American superintendents. The 2000 Study of the American School Superintendency (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000) reports an overall increase in the average age of superintendents since the AASA began their studies of the superintendency in the 1920s - the median age reported in 1923 was 43.

Table 4.1

Age Comparisons
(N = 54)

Age Ranges	National Profile		New Hampshire Superintendents	
	No.	%	No.	%
30 – 35	17	0.8	--	--
36 – 40	40	1.8	--	--
41 – 45	151	6.8	4	7.2
46 – 50	564	25.3	3	5.4
51 – 55	822	36.9	14	25.4
56 – 60	453	20.4	24	43.7
61 – 65	157	7.1	6	10.9
66+	21	0.9	2	3.6
No Info.	--	--	2	3.6

It may be significant to consider that 13 of the 78 New Hampshire superintendents do not intend to return to their current positions for the 2003 – 2004 school year. Data on

the number of non-returning superintendents participating in this study, reasons for leaving, or whether they intend to seek another superintendency were not sought in the demographic section of the questionnaire.

Educational Experiences

New Hampshire superintendents responding to this inquiry have on average 8.5 years of experience, held 1.56 positions as chief executive officer of a school system, and have been in their current position for approximately 4.92 years. New Hampshire profiles are in line with national averages of 8.75 years of experiences, holding 1.75 positions, and approximately 5 years in their current positions.

All New Hampshire respondents have prior educational experiences: 92% were teachers; 94% were principals and 75% held central office positions. The career path of New Hampshire superintendents – teacher to principal to superintendency- follows the national trend for superintendents in rural and suburban school districts (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

Superintendents' comments on the questionnaires lead to a caution for the validity of the percentage having served in central office positions other than the superintendency. The questionnaire did not make it clear what to consider as central office experience thus, some included years in the superintendency as central office experience.

The reporting of one more demographic may contribute to understanding the complexity of the superintendency for New Hampshire superintendents.

School Districts

Nationally, 96.8 % of superintendents report serving only one school district. Of the 3.2% serving more than one district, 50% serve two districts. Table 4.2 displays one aspect of governing structures for New Hampshire superintendents. Here, information centers on the number of school boards in a School Administrative Unit (SAU) and may not align with the national demographic for the number of school districts. Put differently, serving a school district may not mean that the district maintains a separate governing body.

The same statistic is true in New Hampshire SAUs. It is possible that school districts send representatives to a cooperative school board for the SAU rather than individual boards.

Approximately half of New Hampshire respondents (48.1%) work with one school board in comparison to the 96.8% for the national profile. This assumes that one school district relates to one school board. Interestingly then, 28 of the 54 respondents in New Hampshire engage with two or more governing bodies in their school administrative units. The question arises about the extent of the association between the political context and superintendents' use of political skills and strategies as well as overall political beliefs. This data will be considered in conjunction with other findings in the next chapter.

Table 4. 2

School Boards in SAU

No. School Boards	Superintendents	Percentage
1	26	48.1
2	5	9.3
3	11	20.4
4	5	9.3
6	2	3.7
7	3	5.6
9	1	1.9
11	1	1.9

Analysis of the Quantitative Data

This section presents descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and scrutiny for emerging patterns conducted on the quantitative data. The five research questions organize the reporting of the data analyses.

Research Question One: How does a superintendent's political perspective compare with the structural, human resource, and symbolic perspectives?

Section I of the questionnaire gathers superintendents' self-appraisal of their leadership orientations based on Bolman and Deal's (1991, 1992, 1997) conceptual framework postulating leadership theories into four perspectives or frames – structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Using a forced-choice rating scale, respondents

provide ratings from 1 (least) to 4 (best) for six items describing them as managers and leaders. Thus, scores in this section for each of the four frames or leadership orientations range from a minimum score of 6 to a maximum score of 24.

Forced-choice or ipsative scales present two qualities pertinent to the approach to analyses. The first of these qualities arises in Table 4.3. Instead of average scores represented by the mean, Table 4.3 displays the median scores for each of the frames. Since the items in Section I require a rank ordering, the distance between the ratings may not be evenly distributed. For example, distance between a rank of 2 (good) and 3 (fair) may not equal the distance between a rank of 3 (fair) and 4 (least). The number, then, that represents the point that is half above and half below, the median, becomes appropriate for analysis (Black, 1999).

Descriptive statistics (Table 4.3) reveal that New Hampshire superintendents identify most often with the human resource frame. This finding is consistent with Bolman and Deal's finding, and other researchers (Bolman and Granell, 1999; Durocher, 1996; Harlow, 1994). Generally, the first hypothesis anticipating stronger orientations toward the structural, human resource, and symbolic frames is satisfied. As Table 4.3 indicates, New Hampshire superintendents, consistent with Bolman and Deal' findings, rate the structural frame as their second leadership orientation with the political and symbolic, third and fourth respectively. The political frame perspective's preference rates higher or stronger than only the symbolic frame perspective with New Hampshire superintendents.

Table 4. 3

Preferred Leadership Orientations
(N = 54)

	structural	human resource	political	symbolic
Median	15.50	19.00	14.00	12.00
Minimum	7.00	6.00	7.00	7.00
Maximum	24.00	24.00	21.00	23.00

Another quality of forced-choice or ipsative scales presents in correlation coefficients. Simply, when applying rank correlations, negative or inverse relationships result. Reasoning for an inverse relationship runs thus, as the respondents place emphasis on one factor, another becomes deemphasized. For example, if being a good listener rates a 4, then all other factors for this item must rate lower than 4. Table 4.4 shows this relationship for each of the paired frame perspectives.

Analysis seeks determination of possible associations among the four leadership orientations. Spearman rank correlations (Table 4.4), pairing two frame perspectives, find a significant negative correlation (-.356) between the political and human resource perspectives. This finding indicates that superintendents' high scores on the political frame tend to associate with lower scores on the human resource frame. And conversely, superintendents reporting high human resource perspectives tend to have lower scores on the political frame.

Table 4.4

Spearman Rank Correlations Coefficients between Leadership Orientations
(N = 54)

	STRUCTURAL	HUMAN RESOURCE	POLITICAL	SYMBOLIC
STRUCTURAL	1.000	-.354*	-.198	-.596*
HUMAN RESOURCE	-.354*	1.000	-.356*	-.124
POLITICAL	-.198	-.356*	1.000	-.218
SYMBOLIC	-.596*	-.124	-.218	1.000

* R < .05, 1-tailed

Two other relationships between leadership orientations emerge from the analysis. A similar relationship, like that between the political and human resource frames, appears between the structural and human resource frames (-.354). Whereas the correlations presented thus far hold moderately weak strength, the symbolic and structural pairing presents a moderately strong correlation (-.569). It is interesting to note Bolman and

Deal's (1992) similar finding with respect to the inverse relationship between the symbolic and structural perspective. Although beyond the scope of this study, Bolman and Deal's treatment of the data for effectiveness as a manager and a leader, find the structural frame to be a better predictor of managerial effectiveness and the symbolic frame a predictor of effectiveness of a leader. These findings give rise to several questions that could be addressed in further inquiry. For example, inquiry might consider perceptions of effectiveness as leaders and managers as seen in New Hampshire superintendents' self-appraisals and the perceptions of a broad base of constituents.

Years of Experience

A post hoc analysis addresses questions arising during analysis of superintendents' political behaviors and perceptions of the impact of politics on educational issues. The question seeks whether experience in the superintendency affects the strength of the political frame perspective. Correlation analysis of the two variables indicates that experience in the superintendency (number of years in the superintendency) does not affect ratings for the political frame perspective (leadership orientation).

Table 4.5 shows statistically significant correlations for years in the superintendency with structural and symbolic perspectives. Superintendents reporting higher scores for the structural perspective associate with more years of experience (.241). In contrast, those reporting higher scores for the symbolic perspective tend to have fewer years of experience (-.245). Certainly, this finding, although displaying a moderately weak correlation, generates questions for further study. For instance, does a New Hampshire superintendent tend to become more structural with more years of experience or is this finding a feature of those responding to the questionnaire and related demographics (e.g. age)

Table 4. 5

Leadership Orientation and Years as a Superintendent
Spearman Rho Correlation Coefficients

(N = 54)

structural	human resource	political	symbolic
.241*	-.025	-.067	-.245*

R < .05 level, 1 -tailed

Political Descriptors

As previously mentioned, Section I of the questionnaire is a segment of Bolman and Deal's survey instrument, Leadership Orientations. Appendix H presents the choices for each item in Section I and the response percentages. Table 4.6 draws out the political factors and superintendents' responses from Appendix H to attend to the concern for the political frame perspective. Overall, New Hampshire superintendents consistently rate the political factors in the fair or least favored descriptor range (50 % to 79.7% of superintendents for each factor) with the exception of one factor. This factor, ability to succeed in the face of conflict and oppression, rates in the best descriptor category with 40.7% of superintendents. Here, again, a reminder flags the strengths and weaknesses associated with ipsative measures. There is strength in forcing superintendents to make choices between the four categories. However, the distance between least and fair may not be equal for all respondents or for one respondent in ranking all the items. The reporting of the results follows with these cautions in mind.

Table 4.6 displays New Hampshire superintendents' responses to the political factors. Half of the respondents feel that building strong alliances and establishing a power base is the least favored factor in accounting for their success as managers and leaders. Only when combining the least and fair percentages of the symbolic frame factor, inspire and excite others, does another frame factor account for the least determinant of superintendents' success. Although this is a single finding, there is an indication that New Hampshire superintendents may limit their perceptions of the influence and strength of their

political activity. Further research undertaken with multiple constituents may present a

different accounting for superintendents' success. Bolman and Deal (1991) suggest from

their research "political and symbolic orientations are keys to effective leadership" (p. 525).

Curiously, as noted above, one political factor, people will notice my ability to

succeed in face of conflict and oppression, receives a high percentage in the best descriptor

category. When compared with the other political factors in Section I, this factor clearly out

rates the others - receiving from 3.7 % to 18.5 %. In comparison to other frame factors,

this descriptor shares the same percentages as the human resource factor, concern for

people (40.7 %).

Table 4.6
Superintendents' Self-Evaluation of Political Factors
(N = 54)

Political factors	Percentages of superintendents' responses			
	Least	Fair	Good	Best
1c. My strongest skills are political skills	1.9	55.6	35.2	7.4
2c. The best way to describe me is skilled negotiator	13	37	31.5	18.5
3c. Build strong alliances and a power base	50	11.1	25.9	13.0
4c. People will notice my ability to succeed in face of conflict and oppression	9.3	24.1	25.9	40.7
5c. My leadership trait is toughness and aggressiveness	63	16.7	14.8	5.6
6c. I'm best described as a politician	46.3	33.3	16.7	3.7

Identification of this factor suggests that superintendents place great emphasis on

their resiliency or the appearance of resiliency. At the same time, superintendents (63%)

identify toughness and aggressiveness as their least important leadership trait. In response

to being identified as a politician, only 3.7% feel that this best describes them – a rating

well below all other frame percentages. New Hampshire superintendents report being a

humanist, the human resource factor (44.4%), a visionary, the symbolic factor (27.8%), and an analyst, the structural factor (24.1%) as better descriptors than a politician. Further discussion of superintendents' self-appraisal occurs in the next chapter.

Use of Multiple Frames

Further examination of Section I using descriptive analysis yields information on the number of frames used by New Hampshire superintendents. To review, participants in this section of the questionnaire respond to a forced-choice ranking (1 to 4 points depict preferences least to best) or ipsative scale to each of the six items. As a result, possible individual scores for each of the four frames - structural, human resource, political, and symbolic - range from 6 to 24 points and must indicate a combined score of 60.

Appendix G delineates the steps taken in determining multiple frame use. As a result of this analysis procedure, two categories of frame use emerge for New Hampshire superintendents. One is **focused** on two frames; the other is **distributed** over three frames. Thirty of 54 superintendents, or 61% fall into the distributed category. Twenty-one superintendents, or 39% emerge as focused on two frames. These findings indicate that New Hampshire superintendents show more use of multiple frame perspectives than Bolman and Deal's (1992) managers and leaders and Harlow's (1994) superintendents. Both of these studies, using qualitative methodology, find that leaders and managers rarely use more than two frames. In a quantitative investigation of effective superintendents' frame use, Durocher (1996) finds that 45.3 % of her participants used three or more frames.

Examination of the leadership orientation patterns of New Hampshire superintendents reveals that the political perspective is not a strong frame in either the focused or distributed categories. Only, 13% of respondents, combining both categories, hold a strong political perspective. However, comparing the patterns within both categories (Table 4.7), superintendents within the distributed category are more likely to have stronger political frame perspectives than those within the focused category. Superintendents in the

distributed category report a moderate use of the political frame 23 times whereas, those in the focused category report moderate use once. Superintendents in the focused on two frames category tend to rate their political frame perspective lower than those in the · distributed over three frames category.

Table 4.7

Political Frame Strengths within Focused and Distributed Categories
(N = 54

Category	Pattern	Political Frame Perspective	
	3 = strong, 2 = moderate 1 = light	Value of PL	Frequency
Focused	3 – 2- 1 – 1	3 2 1	0 times 1 10 times
Focused	3 – 3 - 1 –1	3 1	3 times 7 times
Distributed	3 – 2 – 2 –1	3 2 1	2 times 20 times 4 times
Distributed	3 – 3 – 2 – 1	3 2 1	2 times 2 times 0 times
Distributed	2 – 2 - 2 – 1	2 1	1 time 2 times

Combining patterns in both categories (focused and distributed), the percentage of the strength of the political frame is 13 % strong, 44.4 % moderate, and 42.6 % light. These findings generate questions about the political frame perspective's relationship with the other frames in the focused and distributed categories. Further inspection shows that the political perspective is paired with another frame with a light strength 17 times, with a moderate strength 22 times, and with a strong rating 5 times. Table 4.8 displays the configurations of the frames with respect to the strength of the political frame. Examination

considers possible patterns with respect to the pairings. When the political frame carries a value of 1, it combines with the structural frame 6 times and the symbolic frame 11 times. The symbolic frame association with the political frame at this strength may indicate the overall low rating for both frames, a similar pattern found by Bolman and Deal (1991, 1992), Bolman and Granell (1999), and Harlow (1994). The finding also points to the less emphasis placed on these two frames historically (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

Table 4.8

Strengths of Other Frames with Respect to Political Frame Strength
N = 54

Pattern	Configuration of Frames		
	PL = 3	PL = 2	PL = 1
3 – 2 –1 – 1 (Focused)	- - - -	HR PL ST SY (1)	HR SY PL ST (3) HR ST PL SY (4) ST HR PL SY (3)
3 – 3 – 1 - 1	PL HR ST SY (2) PL ST HR SY (1)	- - - -	HR ST PL SY (4) HR SY PL ST (w)
3 – 2 – 2 –1 (Distributed)	PL HR ST SY (1) PL ST SY HR (1)	HR PL ST SY (9) HR PL SY ST (6) ST PL HR SY (3) SY PL HR ST (2)	HR ST SY PL (2) ST HR SY PL (2)
3 – 3 –2 – 1	PL SY HR SY (1) PL ST SY HR (1)	ST HR PL SY (2)	- - - -
2 – 2 – 2 – 1	- - - -	HR PL ST SY (1)	HR ST SY PL (2)

Key: PL = political; HR = human resource; ST = structural; SY= symbolic

Consideration of the moderate strength pairings (3 – 2 – 2 – 1 and 2 –2 –2 1 patterns) indicates a shift in pairings from the symbolic to the structural. The political pairs with the structural ten times, with the symbolic six times, and the human resource five times. As the majority of the pairings fall within the distributed category, a possible hypothesis arises. Tentatively, this hypothesis suggests as superintendents expand frame use, they tend to see through human resource, structural, and political lenses. The

symbolic remains the most underused frame perspective. In the five pairings with a like

frame of the strongest rating, no patterns emerge – human resource twice, structural twice,

and symbolic once. Studies of multiple frame use need to continue with larger and more

divergent populations.

<u>Research Question Two: What political skills and strategies do New Hampshire</u>

<u>superintendents prefer?</u>

Descriptive statistics provide insight into New Hampshire superintendents'

preferences for selected political skills and strategies. Superintendents respond to the

preferences for political skills and strategies by selecting a degree of comfort with each of

eighteen selected activities. The one to five rating scale present these options: 1 = avoid; 2

= only if directed; 3 = use, if necessary; 4 = comfortable; and 5 = preferred, fits my style.

Thus, in this section, the minimum rating is one and the maximum is 5 for each item.

Table 4.9 indicates the number of participants responding to each item, minimal and

maximum ratings, and the arithmetic average with an accompanying standard deviation and

skewness for the selected political skills and strategies. Table 4.9 arranges eighteen political

skills in strategies in order of superintendents' preference by mean scores.

On average, New Hampshire superintendents rate eight strategies solidly within

their comfort zone (represented by an average rating of 4 or more). The political skills with

the highest ratings, using this standard are communicate vision (4.5000), consensus

building (4.444), information and knowledge (4.3704), create meaning (4.3269), setting

agendas for meetings (4.1574), negotiating differences (4.0741), identifying the major

stakeholders (4.0374), and conflict mediation (4.000).

These eight skills and strategies undergo further scrutiny to present possible

explanations for superintendents' preferences. Table 3.2 lists a range of skills and

strategies suggested as political activities by leading researchers and authors. Seven of the

eight skills rated within superintendents' comfort zone are recognized by four or more of

the authors suggesting the possibility that superintendents' familiarity with texts and journal articles may contribute to their awareness and perceived use and comfort.

Another possible connecting factor involves inspection of the suggested power sources for these skills and strategies. Table 2.1 displays power sources and possible skills and strategies deriving from the power sources. The eight skills and strategies derive from three possible power sources – information and expertise, control of meaning and symbols, and access and control. These connections invite further inquiry.

Continuing with the investigation of this question, the analysis looks at political skills and strategies lying outside this described comfort zone. Minimum and maximum ratings in Table 4.9 indicate the range of responses for each item. No superintendent places forcing concessions and using the authority of the position in their preferred style. Further, these two skills, and only these two skills, display an average below 3 – forcing concessions averages 2.0556 and using authority of position averages 2.5370. Explication for these ratings generates from two considerations. The first involves superintendents' responses to skills and strategies that might indicate "socially desirable effects" (Bolman & Granell, 1999). In this instance, forcing concessions and using authority may present less desirable skills to the respondents. Related to the desirability effect is consideration of the source of power for these skills and strategies. As displayed in Table 2.1, forcing concessions may generate from coercive power and using authority of position from position power; both sources may indicate a relationship to desirability effects.

Further analysis (Table 4.10) ascertains the number of political skills and strategies within superintendents' preferred and comfort levels. This analysis involves determination of the number and percentage of superintendents reporting a rating of 4 or above (comfort and preferred levels). The analysis also determines the percentage of total skills and strategies within this comfort and preferred range.

Table 4.9

Preference for Selected Political Skills and Strategies of NH Superintendents
(N = 54)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Communicate vision	3.00	5.00	4.500	.5408	-.372
Consensus building	3.00	5.00	4.4444	.5379	-.149
Information & knowledge	3.00	5.00	4.3704	.6233	-.455
Create meaning	3.00	5.00	4.3269	.6780	-.511
Agenda for meetings	2.00	5.00	4.1574	.6717	-.558
Negotiate differences	2.00	5.00	4.0741	.6688	-.478
Identify major stakeholders	2.00	5.00	4.0370	.7514	-.338
Conflict mediation	2.00	5.00	4.0000	.7268	-.306
Create forums for public	3.00	5.00	3.9259	.7230	.113
Written communication	1.00	5.00	3.8704	.8020	-1.125
Persuasion through speeches	2.00	5.00	3.787	.7990	-.298
Power structure of community	2.00	5.00	3.7778	.7931	-.047
Ascertain values of interest groups	1.00	5.00	3.6981	.7742	-.444
Use charisma	1.00	5.00	3.6481	.9935	-.788
Campaign for policy support	2.00	5.00	3.4259	.8378	.043
Meet school board member outside mtgs.	1.00	5.00	3.1019	1.0342	-.456
Authority of position	1.00	4.00	2.5370	1.0040	-.570
Force concessions	1.00	4.00	2.0556	.9599	.152

One respondent demonstrates at least a comfortable level with all eighteen selected political skills and strategies. Approximately one-third of New Hampshire superintendents report a comfort level with nearly 80% of the political skills. The majority of

superintendents (93%) are comfortable with only nine of the political skills and strategies selected for this inquiry. The current status of perceived use of political skills indicates areas for possible professional development for New Hampshire superintendents.

Table 4.10

Percentage of Preferred and Comfortable Political Skills
(N = 54)

# Preferred and Comfortable	% of Skills	% Superintendents	% Superintendents
18	100%	1	1.9
16 or more	89%	4	7.4
14 or more	78%	18	33%
12 or more	67%	33	61%
9 or more	50%	50	93%
8 or fewer	<44%	4	7.4%

Research Question Three: Is there a relationship between political frame perspective and preference of political skills and strategies?

Spearman rank correlations coefficients test for relationships between leadership orientations and political skills and strategies. Table 4.11 shows that for each of the leadership frames there are significant correlations with two political skills and strategies. Superintendents with higher political frame perspectives tend to rate greater comfort with identifying the community's power structure (.292) and major stakeholders (.294). This finding, although a moderately weak correlation, seems to point to the importance of context for these superintendents.

Although not indicated in the research question, it is interesting to take a look at the associations between political skills and strategies and the other three leadership orientations. New Hampshire superintendents, who report high structural frame perspectives, tend to be comfortable with forcing concessions (.429) whereas, using charisma (-.240) reveals a significant negative correlation. A preference for the human

resource perspective correlates negatively with identifying the community's power structure (-.242) and using charisma (-.297). Superintendents with a strong symbolic frame reveal stronger comfort levels with using charisma (.412). Within this same preference, using the authority of their position (-.242) presents as a negative correlation.

Table 4.11

Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficients for Leadership Orientations and
Political Skills and Strategies
(N = 54)

	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
Persuade by writing	.016	-.053	-.100	.062
Disperse information and knowledge	.149	.104	-.033	-.154
Set agendas	.071	-.163	.186	-.044
Conflict mediation	.059	.039	.084	-.162
Identify major stakeholders	-.041	-.123	.294*	-.084
Persuade by speeches	-.101	.026	.142	-.044
Identify community's power structure	-.050	-.242*	.292*	-.014
Meet Board members outside mtgs.	.026	-.214	.229	.027
Ascertain values of interest groups	.131	-.084	.046	-.061
Force concessions	.429**	-.168	-.041	-.061
Negotiate differences	-.171	.150	.027	.025
Create public forums	-.220	-.002	.039	.087
Campaign for policy support	-.025	-.208	.186	-.035
Create meaning for everyone	.112	-.034	-.082	-.016
Communicate vision	-.059	-.182	-.044	.260
Consensus building	-.074	.038	-.084	.135
Use charisma	-.240*	-.297*	.105	.412**
Use authority of position	.225	-.026	.095	-.242*

* R < .05
* * R < .01

These findings suggest some indication of an association between skills and leadership orientations based on features indicative of that frame. For instance, Bolman and Deal (1997) discuss the charismatic qualities of leaders within the symbolic frame, "as with other processes, leaders' power is less a matter of action than one of appearance. When leaders do make a difference, it is by enriching and updating the drama —

constructing new myths that alter beliefs and generate faith" (p. 248). Conversely the human resource perspective downplays charisma and emphasizes empowerment. Again, this aspect suggests a partial reasoning since the correlation coefficients are of moderately weak strength. This reasoning may not hold for all significant correlations but it is worthy of further study.

Research Question Four: What are superintendents' perceptions of the constructive and obstructive impacts of politics on selected educational issues within their districts?

To address this question, New Hampshire superintendents rate the perceived degree that politics impacts each of 15 selected educational issues in Table 4.12. The Likert scale offers respondents ratings from strong positive impact to strong negative impact. In the analysis, the positive and strong positive ratings combine for one score and the strong negative and negative scores combine for another column score. Considering the constructive and obstructive impact suggests that New Hampshire superintendents acknowledge the pervasiveness of politics within their districts. The no impact category, as the name indicates, suggests that the issue is not affected by politics.

In general, superintendents report the positive impact of politics upon educational issues. Respondents ascribe the highest rating of positive impact to passing school budgets (83%), affecting relationships with constituents (81%), and determining mutual purposes (80.8%). Only one issue, changing community values, receives a positive rating from less than 50% of superintendents.

Table 4.12

Percentages of Perceived Impact on Selected Educational Issues
(N = 54)

Selected Educational Issues	Percentage of Positive Impact	Percentage of No Impact	Percentage of Negative Impact
What is taught in classrooms	55.5	37.0	7.4
Achieve goals	79.6	9.3	11.1
Allocate resources	68.5	7.4	24.1
Affect relationships with constituents	81.5	13.0	5.6
Serve needs of students	79.7	11.1	9.3
Understand interest groups' perspectives	79.6	20.4	—
Interest group active in change effort	56.6	26.4	17.0
Affect relationship with School Board	68.0	28.3	3.8
Affecting a shared vision	79.3	18.9	1.9
Getting construction bonds	71.2	15.4	13.5
Interpret/report district actions	72.3	22.2	5.6
Pass budgets	83.0	3.8	13.3
Affect guiding principles	57.4	35.2	7.4
Affect change in community values	35.2	59.3	5.6
Determine mutual purposes	80.8	11.5	7.7

Whereas, all selected educational issues receive a rating of strong positive impact, only four issues – allocating resources (5.5%), relationships with constituents (1.8%), relationship with School Board (1.8%), and getting school construction bonds (1.8%) receive strong negative ratings. Interestingly, these four items hold the greater percentages of strong positive impact (except passing school budgets). Well beyond other selected

educational issues, 24.1% of superintendents rate allocating resources as the most negatively affected by politics. This negative association with allocating resources may be indicative of the political landscape in the school districts. Conditions may suggest a struggle for superintendents to get scarce resources to address school needs.

A low number of superintendents (3.8 %) rate politics as negatively affecting their relationship with School Boards even though The 2000 Study (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner) reveals conflict with School Board members as the second most cited reason for leaving the superintendency.

Research Question Five: Is there a relationship between the superintendents' political frame perspective and the impact of politics?

This question seeks to determine the strength of the association between superintendent's political frame perspective and the impact of politics. Correlation coefficients from Spearman rho, a nonparametric correlation analysis, test the significance of the relationship. The results (Table 4.13) show no statistically significant correlations with respect to the political perspective. There is no indication that any orientation toward a political perspective relates to the perceived impact of politics on educational issues. Superintendents perceive the impact of politics on a broad range of educational issues irrespective of their leadership orientation.

Table 4.13

Correlation between Frame Perspective and Impact on Educational Issues
(N = 54)

Selected Educational Issues	ST	HR	PL	SY
What is taught in classrooms	-.145	.188	.148	-.113
Achieve goals	-.141	-.071	.150	.081
Allocate resources	-.068	-.011	.043	-.054
Affect relationships with constituents	-.060	-.019	-.071	.048
Serve needs of students	-.151	.189	-.018	-.003
Understand interest groups' perspectives	-.111	-.125	.091	.080
Interest group active in change effort	-.035	-.214	.068	.098
Affect relationship with School Board	-.160	.170	.037	-.094
Affecting a shared vision	-.069	.094	-.016	.061
Getting construction bonds	-.152	-.001	-.016	.044
Interpret/report district actions	-.184*	-.062	.077	.146
Pass budgets	-.129	.208	-.023	-.072
Affect guiding principles	-.244*	-.041	-.071	.256*
Affect change in community values	-.184	.115	.024	.174
Determine mutual purposes	-.135	.080	-.069	.025

* R< .05

Summary

Findings from the research study suggest that the majority of New Hampshire superintendents are well aware of politics and their political role in education. Although New Hampshire superintendents identify more strongly with the human resource and structural orientations, their understanding of the political realities and their use of political skills and strategies emerge from the quantitative and superintendents' comments.

An interesting finding emerging from the study suggests the propensity for New Hampshire superintendents to use multiple frames. One possible reason for multiple frame use generates from the complexities surrounding governing structures. Issues associated with New Hampshire's governing structures surface as possible factors in building superintendents' capacity for broader lenses. Any generation of reasons, at this point, is speculative. Research with larger and differing populations and governing structures need to test hypotheses of this nature.

Data analysis indicates that New Hampshire superintendents' leadership orientations sort into two categories – focused on two frames or distributed over three frames. Further, superintendents in the distributed category tend to rate themselves higher on the political frame perspective.

Surprising, is New Hampshire superintendents' perception of the positive impact of politics on a broad range of educational issues. Their comments (Appendix I) reflect ways that politics works for them and also raise their voices to the ways in which politics, as many point out, leads them off course. Being comfortable with the both / and aspects of politics seems to be part of the superintendents' professional lives.

In sum, superintendents seem to be aware of politics and to act politically yet, do not make a political frame perspective a priority when identifying their leadership orientations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the review of the literature, research methodology, results of the data analysis, presents six conclusions drawn from the research study, and generates implications for practice and recommendations for further study. The study uncovers connections between New Hampshire superintendents' perceptions of their leadership orientations and their perceptions of their political behaviors, beliefs about politics in education, and perceived impact of politics on selected educational issues within their districts. The following research questions guide the inquiry:

1. How does a superintendent's political perspective compare with the structural, human resource, and symbolic perspectives?

2. What political skills and strategies do New Hampshire school superintendents prefer?

3. Is there a relationship between a political frame perspective and preference of political skills and strategies?

4. What are New Hampshire superintendents' perceptions of the constructive and obstructive impacts of politics on selected educational issues within their school districts?

5. Is there a relationship between the superintendents' political frame perspective and the perceived impact of politics on selected educational issues within their school districts?

Overview of the Study

Conceptually, a multiple frame perspective, specifically Bolman and Deal's theoretical framework (1984, 1992, 1997), establishes a structure for collecting data, the

ability to explain or predict, and provides continuity among theory, research, and practice. Bolman and Deal's conceptual framework postulates organizational and leadership theories into four frames – structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Frames as cognitive lenses open superintendents to viewing a broader range of potential and influential actions. Superintendents' propensity for cognitive complexity, the ability to move within frames, becomes an intriguing aspect of the inquiry.

Uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity facing today's superintendents increase the need for varying ways to perceive the multiple facets of issues as well as broadening the scope of possible alternative actions. Today's superintendents deal with political, social, economic, and technological concerns unheard of in the superintendency' s infancy. This study takes up one of these concerns, aspects of politics in the superintendency. Immediately, the study deals with the pejorative aspects of politics in education that surface. Many Americans, including education professionals, eschew politics in education. Do superintendents acknowledge their political role? How does having a political frame perspective affect superintendents' behaviors and practice?

Using survey methodology, a mailed questionnaire asks New Hampshire superintendents for their perceptions of their leadership orientations, their use of selected political skills and strategies, and impact of politics of selected educational issues. In addition, three open-ended questions provide opportunity for superintendents to voice their opinions on politics in education. The survey instrument uses one section of Bolman and Deal's *Leadership Orientations*, (1990). Three additional sections reflect the researcher's use of related research and literature to design a measure for gathering information relevant to the research questions from New Hampshire superintendents.

Summary of Findings

Descriptive analysis, including frequency distributions, reporting of means and medians, provide rich information about the respondents and their perceptions. Correlation

analysis test the strength of the relationships identified in the research questions. The following highlights the study's major findings:

- New Hampshire superintendents identify most often with the human resource frame perspective.

- There is no indication that the strength of the political frame perspective is affected by the number of years in the superintendency.

- 52% of the New Hampshire superintendents in this study engage with two or more school boards in their school administrative districts.

- Only 3.7% of New Hampshire superintendents feel that politician is an apt descriptor of their leadership style.

- Two categories of New Hampshire superintendents' frame use emerge from this study – **focused** on two frames and **distributed** over three frames.

- 61% of the New Hampshire superintendents in this study display leadership orientations distributed over three frames.

- The political frame perspective is stronger for New Hampshire superintendents in the **distributed** category.

- Approximately one third of New Hampshire superintendents report comfort levels with 80% of the selected political skills and strategies.

- New Hampshire superintendents perceive politics as positively impacting the majority of educational issues selected for this study.

- The strength of New Hampshire superintendents' political frame perspective bears no relationship to the superintendents' perception of the impact of politics on selected educational issues.

Discussion of Findings and Conclusions

The findings, identified above, taken in conjunction with other research data and the review of the literature, lead to the following conclusions.

Superintendents' Political Frame Perspective

Conclusion One: New Hampshire superintendents are not unlike superintendents nationally in their self-appraisals of their leadership orientations.

It is not surprising that the dominant frame of New Hampshire school superintendents is the human resource frame. First, it is consistent with findings of other researchers (Bolman & Granell, 1999; Durocher, 1996; Harlow, 1994) using Bolman and Deal's survey methodology. Second, the preference for this frame reflects the academic emphasis on human resource theories in addition to theories and practices related to the structural frame in their administrative training programs. Bolman and Deal (1992) offer their concern for limiting frame perspectives, "Little attention is given to the political and symbolic dimensions that are critical to success. Prevailing educational models oversimplify and overlook the multiframe complexity embedded in the everyday world of school leadership" (p. 325).

Third, the typical career path of New Hampshire superintendents is teacher – principal – superintendency, a journey that embraces relationships between position holder and constituencies, significantly representative of the human resource frame. Fourth, superintendents may be reluctant to report political orientations due to prevailing pejorative sentiments about politics in education. Referring to this as the halo effect, Bolman and Deal (1991) indicate that it is difficult to ascertain the degree to which this factor affects respondents' responses.

Conclusion Two: New Hampshire superintendents identify with multiple frame perspectives. Sixty-one percent of New Hampshire superintendents distribute their leadership orientations over three frames.

This conclusion suggests that New Hampshire superintendents see themselves through broad lenses and extends the importance of all four frames – structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. A majority of New Hampshire superintendents, unlike administrators in other research studies (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Harlow, 1994) that focus on one or two frames, describe their leadership style and effectiveness as features of multiple frames.

Reporting results of their qualitative studies, Bolman and Deal (1992) find that frame use rarely exceeded two frames - "less than a quarter of the administrators used more than two frames, and 1 in 20 used all four" (p. 316). What accounts for the difference in findings? There are many possibilities. One possibility suggests a methodological difference. Bolman and Deal's (1997) and Harlow's (1994) qualitative studies entail administrators' reflections on their behaviors during critical incidents in their practice. In this quantitative study, administrators rank descriptors of their leadership orientations. Argyris and Schon (1978)'s distinction between espoused theories and theories-in-use provide some clarity for the differences in methodological procedures,

> When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer he usually gives is his espoused theory of action for that situation. This is the theory of action to which he gives allegiance and which, upon request, he communicates to others. However, the theory that actually governs his actions is his theory-in-use, which may or may not be compatible with his espoused theory, furthermore, the individual may or may not be aware of the incompatibility of the two theories (p. 11).

Clearly, New Hampshire superintendents' perceptions of their leadership orientations, of seeing themselves within multiple frames encourage further investigation into cognitive complexity and possible reasons for their propensity for seeing beyond two frames. These findings may indicate a partial perspective. Bolman and Deal agree, "perceptual measures of how leaders behave provide only indirect evidence of how they frame experience," (p. 514). Understanding the many facets of espoused and actual multiple frame use by both researchers and practitioners in educational administration is

urgent and compelling. The challenges facing superintendents nationwide require fresh ideas, different ways of seeing and thinking, and flexibility in actions.

<div align="center">Political Skills and Strategies</div>

Conclusion Three: New Hampshire superintendents maintain comfort levels with political skills and strategies but more superintendents could work towards attainment of a broader range of skills.

A repertoire of political skills and strategies increases superintendents' capacity to lead their school districts. Jeffrey Pfeffer (1981) writes, "the power of organizational actors is fundamentally determined by two things, the importance of what they do in the organization and their skill in doing it" (p. 98). He generates a partial list of necessary skills – information control, articulateness, diagnosing power, understanding the decision making process, and advocating self –interest. A New Hampshire superintendent offers this advice to aspiring superintendents, "perfect those skills and approaches that encourage the open exchange of ideas and incorporate those ideas into action planning focused on district improvement."

This study's findings suggest a tendency for superintendents' frame perspective to associate with comfort in using specific political skills and strategies. For example, superintendents with stronger political orientations report comfort with identifying the community's power structures and major stakeholders. Ways of seeing and thinking about situations from a political perspective seem to indicate that superintendents with this orientation prefer to use these skills. Whereas, findings indicate that superintendents with strong human resource orientations tend not to be comfortable with identifying the community's power structure.

Thus, with these correlations in mind, it is prudent to extend efforts simultaneously for broadening comfort level and expertise for political skills and strategies with efforts to increase cognitive complexity. As superintendents increase the capacity for seeing and thinking about situations beyond a single perspective, they may increase the capacity for

alternative actions – which may require increases in comfort levels for alternative political strategies. The emphasis sets up a both / and perspective for professional development rather than focusing on one area (e.g. cognitive complexity) without consideration of the other (e.g. political skills and strategies).

<u>Impact of Politics</u>

Conclusion Four: New Hampshire superintendents break with the apolitical myth prevalent in education. New Hampshire superintendents report the positive impacts of politics on a broad range of educational issues within their districts.

The distance between education *and* politics builds from deeply rooted sentiments associated with collective interests over individual or group interests, images of a unitary community over multiple value systems, educational expertise over any political expertise. Numerous research studies (Blumberg, 1982; Cuban, 1976; Kimbrough, 1964; Iannaccone, 1967) dramatize the limitations to the apolitical substance of many of these and like sentiments and create a foundation for politics *in* education.

Beyond the finding that New Hampshire superintendents find politics to be pervasive, New Hampshire superintendents testify to the broad range of educational issues being positively impacted by politics. Fourteen of fifteen educational issues selected for respondents' scrutiny receive a positive impact rating by more than 50% of New Hampshire superintendents. Findings indicate that the power of the political frame perspective does not relate to seeing the positive impact of politics on a broad range of educational issues. Put differently, New Hampshire superintendents, irrespective of leadership orientation, place value on the role of politics in their districts.

<u>Politics and Superintendents' Practice</u>

Conclusion Five: Despite lower consideration for a political frame perspective, New Hampshire superintendents actively engage in politics.

In the overall rating of their leadership orientations, New Hampshire superintendents rate the political frame perspective lower than those of human resource and

structural perspectives. Further, only 3.7% of superintendents feel that politician is an apt descriptor of their leadership style. These findings seem not to deter superintendents from developing comfort with political skills and strategies and viewing politics as positively impacting educational issues. New Hampshire superintendents recognize the dark side of politics, as one superintendent writes, " I am frustrated at times by politics because the motives underlying an issue are usually driven by a personal agenda and not for the greater good." Others emphasize the possibilities of politics, " I am not frustrated by politics. I am challenged to create strategies that will allow me to successfully work with others so that education goals can be achieved." Attitudes of this sort reflect the work of Peter Block (1987), who advances " being political in the best sense of the word... as an act of service, contribution, and creation" (p. 9).

To engage in politics without identifying a strong political perspective involves several complexities and possible explanations. The possibility exists that the findings result from desirability or halo effects. Another explanation rests with Quinn's (1988) competing values model. In this model, managers and leaders transcend style by, "getting free of his or her preferred way of seeing and behaving. In fact, it often means seeing the world in a way that is opposite of the way he or she prefers to see it" (p. 90). A third possible explanation emphasizes New Hampshire superintendents' ability to engage multiple frames. The questionnaire simply presents a context for superintendents to engage and / or highlight their political frame perspectives. Most likely, none of these explanations are sufficient to account for the findings and conclusion. Pursuing the question, however, provides much for practitioners and researchers to debate and investigate.

Conclusion Six: New Hampshire superintendents learn about politics from practical experience.

Grogan and Andrews (2002), after analyzing preparation programs for principals and superintendents, conclude, " we are virtually inventing the notion of superintendent preparation as we speak" (p. 249). Carolyn Hughes Chapman (1997), reporting on the

Beginning Superintendents Study, identifies political issues as one of five major areas that beginning superintendents consider lacking in their preparation programs. The 2000 Study (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000) presents mixed reviews from superintendents about the value of their administrative training programs.

Consideration focuses on particular factors influencing the formation of this conclusion. Superintendents' comments (Appendix I) identify a comfort level with a number of political skills and strategies such as communicating vision, consensus building, dispersing information and knowledge, creating meaning for everyone, setting agendas, negotiating, identifying the major stakeholders, and conflict mediation. Their comments reveal engagement in political activities and an understanding of political processes. Their experiences must influence their understandings and concerns for politics.

There is a complexity of governing structures that may effect superintendents' engagement in politics. Demographics reveal that over 50% of New Hampshire superintendents engage with two or more school boards. Within the SAUs, some superintendents deal with different types of governing structures. For example, some report a traditional government structure, an SB 2 structure, and a cooperative structure within their SAU. The extent of governing structures association or influence upon superintendents' political perspectives and behaviors is an area for further study.

Economic conditions within the state along with the long battle to determine funding formulas for education may influence the political context and superintendents' engagement in politics. It is of interest to inquire how the intensity of these struggles and the struggle for scare resources shape superintendents' view of politics.

<u>Implications and Recommendations for Practice</u>

Education administrators need to understand the ambiguity and complexity associated with their political role. New Hampshire superintendents advise aspiring superintendents to understand the nature and scope of politics in education; yet, relatively few superintendents see themselves as politicians. Recognizing the political role tends to

be a covert activity – superintendents downplay their political role while at the same time report the pervasiveness of politics in their practice.

Superintendents need to develop a comfort level with a broad range of political skills and strategies for the complex contexts in which they serve. The process for developing skills goes beyond understanding skills and strategies. Just as knowing how to add and subtract are not sufficient to solving mathematical problems, knowing how to identify power structures is not enough. Bjork and Lindle (2001) conclude in their study of superintendents and interest groups that superintendents "repeated report adopting strategies ill suited to addressing political pressures" (p. 86). Understanding how to negotiate the relationship between context and identification of a specific political strategy that fits the context may not be a simple task, but it is one that must be undertaken.

This study concurs with other researchers (Bensimon, et.al, 1989; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Carlson, 1996) in the importance of developing cognitive complexity. There is no how- to manual to provide simple solutions; however, becoming familiar with a question framework to determine appropriateness of a frame to a given context like those posed by Bolman and Deal (1997) and Quinn (1988) presents a starting point for deliberation of serious challenges.

Preparation programs for educational administrators need to reflect research findings supporting multiple perspectives of leadership and organizations. Collaborative efforts between university and school settings and among professional organizations, schools and universities are good beginnings. Maintaining respectful and continuous dialogue increases the likelihood of advancing this goal. As an example, the comments of practicing superintendents, like those presented in Appendix I need to be heard in educational administration programs.

The responsibility for building professional capacity of superintendents lies with many stakeholders. Discussions at formal and informal meetings of superintendents and other educational administrators should involve the strengths of multiple frames and critical

incidents in practice. Similarly, administrative journals should provide space for practitioners and researchers to reflect on critical incidents. Not as a counter / counterpoint forum rather, to express the possible ways of seeing and thinking about issues related to real world experiences.

<p style="text-align: center;">Recommendations for Further Research</p>

This study provides significant findings supporting a multiple frame perspective of educational leadership and politics in education. The review of the literature, research methodology, and findings raise additional questions to be addressed in replication of this study and in new research designs. The following concerns require the attention of researchers interested in educational administration, politics in education, social psychology, and organizational theory.

A study with multiple constituents, (e.g. School Board members, teachers, parents) should be undertaken to explore the similarities and differences between New Hampshire superintendents' perceptions and constituents' perceptions of superintendents' leadership orientations. In addition, parallel comparisons would indicate constituents' views of politics in education and their understanding of the importance and necessity of working from a political perspective.

Replication of this study should be undertaken with superintendents from other states. Comparisons of findings could determine possible factors due to political context, governing structures, local politics, and examination of other variables. The governing structures may influence the superintendents' response to their constituencies and possible relationships to frame perspectives and use of frames.

Further study is warranted to develop our understanding of the nature and practice of cognitive complexity. Possible means for research include ethnographic studies focusing on the daily practices of superintendents and other qualitative means to collect information on superintendents' reflections on the critical incidents and their responses to

them. This approach encourages collaboration and dialogue between researcher and subject.

Replication of this study should be undertaken with a diverse population including women and other minorities. Bolman and Deal (1992) find gender differences with respect to expectations but few differences related to preferences for frame perspectives. The New Hampshire study, unfortunately, could not explore an analysis of women's responses to the political frame perspective and their views of politics in education.

Studies linking superintendents' self- appraisal of leadership orientations and their actual behaviors may be helpful to practicing superintendents as well as those aspiring to the superintendency. Such studies combine quantitative information from survey methods, like <u>Leadership Orientations</u> (1991) with qualitative methods to get at what is happening in a particular setting. Investigations of this sort allow for deeper, more complex understanding of the integration of beliefs and behaviors and of research and practice.

<div align="center">

<u>Final Comments</u>

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This inquiry provides a view of leadership and politics in education from the superintendency, a point of view that Bjork and Lindle (2001) consider "underreported and underpublished." This study offers a brief glimpse of New Hampshire superintendents – their leadership orientations, political behaviors, and beliefs about politics in education. Findings and conclusions drawn from the study extend an invitation for further research and implications for practice.

In sum, the three suggestions that follow point to superintendents - Who they are, what they must do, and what they might become. Prevailing conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity require much more from our leaders and managers than in the early years of the superintendency. This study focuses on development of superintendents' cognitive complexity to see beyond single perspectives, to open our eyes to more ways of seeing, to broaden possibilities for action, and to increase the likelihood of attaining educational goals. Attaining cognitive complexity is not easy for many filter what is seen

through narrow lenses. The project of attaining cognitive complexity is a both / and proposition requiring commitment to dialogue from researchers and practitioners.

Clearly, a majority of New Hampshire superintendents acknowledge the pervasiveness of politics in education. However, they practice in diverse contexts in which many constituents eschew the notion of politics in education. The dilemma for superintendents, as many New Hampshire respondents indicate, is engaging political skills and strategies without enraging constituents.

Although this study focuses on the political frame perspective, being a politician is not sufficient to confront the many demands and change efforts necessary to lead school districts. Educational leadership must make use of all frame perspectives. New Hampshire superintendents are moving in a positive direction. Their perceived ways of seeing encompass multiple frames. Perhaps, with on-going discussions and professional development they will continue to build upon the capacity to understand their tacit frames and create space for alternative ways of seeing and acting that works in the best interests of students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Participant Letter

Dear Participant,

This survey is being conducted to contribute to our understanding of the role of politics in the superintendency. For all questions reflect upon your experiences and conditions within your current SAU and surrounding community. Please be assured that all responses will be treated confidentially and in anonymity. The survey should take about 15 to 20 minutes of your time.

Please supply the following information about yourself and your SAU:

Gender _____ Year of birth _____ Race _____ Years as superintendent ___

Number of years in current position ____ Number of positions held as superintendent ___

Past educational positions (check all that apply): Teacher __ Principal __ Central Office __

None __ Other (specify) _____

Governing structure (check one): Traditional __ City govt. __ SB 2 __ Cooperative ___

# of schools within SAU ___ # of towns represented ___ # of school boards ___

Section I: This section asks you to describe yourself as a manager and leader. For each item, give the number "4" to the phrase that best describes you, "3" to the item that is next best, and on down to "1" for the item that is least like you.

1. My strongest skills are:

   _____a. Analytic skills
   _____b. Interpersonal skills
   _____c. Political skills
   _____d. Flair for drama

2. The best way to describe me is:

   _____a. Technical expert
   _____b. Good listener
   _____c. Skilled negotiator
   _____d. Inspirational leader

3. What has helped me the most to be successful is my ability to:

   _____a. Make good decisions
   _____b. Coach and develop people
   _____c. Build strong alliances and a power base
   _____d. Inspire and excite others

4. What people are most likely to notice about me is my:

   _____a. Attention to detail
   _____b. Concern for people
   _____c. Ability to succeed in the face of conflict and oppression
   _____d. Charisma

5. My most important leadership trait is:

_____a. Clear, logical thinking
_____b. Caring and support for others
_____c. Toughness and aggressiveness
_____d. Imagination and creativity

6. I am best described as:

_____a. An analyst
_____b. A humanist
_____c. A politician
_____d. A visionary

> **Definition:** For the purposes of this survey, **politics** is being defined as:
> The set of interactions that influence and shape the authoritative allocation of values and resources. In these interactions, individuals and groups openly express needs and interests and reconcile differences.

Section II: Listed below are political skills and strategies used by superintendents. For each item indicate your preference for engaging in these skills and strategies using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Avoid	Only if directed	Use, if necessary	Comfortable	Preferred, fits my style

___ Use persuasion through written communication
___ Disperse information and knowledge
___ Determine agendas for meetings
___ Demonstrate conflict mediation
___ Identify major stakeholders in community
___ Use persuasion through speeches
___ Identify power structure of community building
___ Meet School Bd. members outside scheduled mtgs.
___ Ascertain values of interest groups

___ Force concessions
___ Negotiate differences
___ Create forums for public
___ Campaign for policy support
___ Create meaning for everyone
___ Communicate vision
___ Demonstrate consensus building
___ Use charismatic qualities
___ Use authority of position

Section III: Indicate your perception of the impact of politics on the following issues in your SAU using the following rating scale:

SP = strong positive impact PI = positive impact
NO = no impact NI = negative impact SN = strong negative impact

What is taught in classrooms	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Achieving school goals	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Allocating resources	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Building relationship with constituencies	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Serving needs of students	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Your understanding of interest groups' perspectives and goals	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Interest groups active in change effort	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN

Affecting your relationship with School Board	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Affecting a shared vision	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Getting construction bonds	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Interpreting and reporting district actions	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Passing school budgets	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Affecting your guiding principles	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Creating change in community values	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN
Determining mutual purposes	SP	PI	NO	NI	SN

Section IV. This section gives you an opportunity to freely express your beliefs and opinions about politics in education. You are encouraged to respond as fully as possible to the following open-ended questions.

1. How do you use politics to further educational goals?

2. In what ways does politics frustrate your pursuit of educational goals?

3. What advice would you offer to those entering the superintendency about politics in educational leadership?

Thank you for responding to this questionnaire. Your perceptions concerning politics in education are valuable in determining needed professional development and preparation programs for aspiring educational administrators.

Section I used with permission from Leadership Frameworks.

Appendix B

IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Office of Sponsored Research
Service Building
51 College Road
Durham, New Hampshire 03824-3585
(603) 862-3564 FAX

LAST NAME	*Sheaff*	**FIRST NAME**	*Althea*
DEPT	*Education Department, Morrill Hall*	**APP'L DATE**	*11/25/2002*
OFF-CAMPUS	*3 Aspen Ct.*	**IRB #**	*2836*
ADDRESS	*Barrington, NH 03825*	**REVIEW LEVEL**	*EXE*
(if applicable)		**DATE OF NOTICE**	*11/25/2002*

PROJECT   *Coming to Understand Superintendents' Political Behaviors: A Study of New Hampshire Superintendents'*
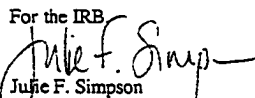TITLE   *Beliefs About Politics in Education*

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study as Exempt as described in Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46, Subsection 101 (b), category 2 with the following contingencies. Once you have responded to the stated contengencies to the IRB's satisfaction, you may begin involving human subjects in your study.

- In the cover letter, the investigator needs to add a statement that participation is voluntary and that the subject may refuse to answer any question(s). In addition, the investigator needs to add the following statement, "If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Julie Simpson in the UNH Office of Sponsored Research at 603-862-2003 or julie.simpson@unh.edu to discuss them."
- The investigator needs to submit to the IRB a letter from the faculty advisor in support of the research before starting the study.
- The investigator should be cautious about reporting demographic characteristics that might uniquely identify certain superintendents in districts.

Approval is granted to conduct the study as described in your protocol once you have fulfilled the contingencies. **Prior to implementing any changes in your protocol, you must submit them to the IRB for review, and receive written, unconditional approval.** If you experience any unusual or unanticipated results with regard to the participation of human subjects, report such events to this office within one working day of occurrence. Upon completion of your study, please complete the enclosed pink Exempt Study Final Report form and return it to this office, along with a report of your findings.

The protection of human subjects in your study is an ongoing process for which you hold primary responsibility. In receiving IRB approval for your protocol, you agree to conduct the study in accordance with the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects in research, as described in the following three reports: Belmont Report; Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46; and UNH's Federalwide Assurance of Protection of Human Subjects. The full text of these documents is available on the Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) website at http://www.unh.edu/osr/compliance/Regulatory_Compliance.html and by request from OSR.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 862-2003. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,

Julie F. Simpson

Julie F. Simpson
Regulatory Compliance Manager
cc: File
         Barbara Krysiak, Education

Appendix C

Permission Letter

ALTHEA SHEAFF

3 Aspen Court, Barrington, NH 03825 ⚫ *(603) 664 - 5697* ⚫ *asheaff@metrocast.com*

Lee Bolman, Ph. D.
5100 Rockhill Rd.
Kansas City, MO 64110

November 19, 2002

Dear Professor Bolman,

This is a follow-up to my initial inquiry by email concerning use of your survey instrument. I am requesting permission to use your Leadership Orientations (1990) in my doctoral study of politics in educational leadership. I intend to use your measure as Section I of a five- section questionnaire surveying New Hampshire superintendents' leadership orientations and use of political skills and strategies.

I understand that in using the Leadership Orientations instrument, I agree to provide you with any reports, publications, papers, or theses resulting from the research and also to provide, if requested, a copy of the data file from the research.

For your convenience, I am including a self-addressed stamped envelope for your return correspondence.

I deeply appreciate your assistance with my research study.

Sincerely,

Ph D Candidate
University of New Hampshire

UM KC

HENRY W. BLOCH SCHOOL
—— OF BUSINESS AND ——
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Lee G. Bolman
Marion H. Bloch Missouri
Chair in Leadership

November 18, 2002

Ms. Althea Sheaff
3 Aspen Court
Barrington, NH 03825

Dear Ms. Sheaff:

I am writing to confirm that you have the authors' permission to use the Bolman and Deal Leadership Orientations instrument in your doctoral study of politics in education in accordance with the terms specified in your letter of November 15, 2002. You have agreed to provide us a copy of any reports, publications or theses resulting from the research, and also to provide, if requested, a copy of the data file from your research..

Best wishes in your work.

Sincerely,

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY

5100 Rockhill Road • Kansas City, Missouri 64110-2499 • 816 235-5407 • Fax 816 235-6529
Location: 5110 Cherry Street • www.bsbpa.umkc.edu • bolmanl@umkc.edu
an equal opportunity institution

Appendix D

Letter to Superintendents

December 16, 2002

Superintendent
SAU

Dear Superintendent,

I am an educational administrator and Ph. D. Candidate in Educational Administration and Supervision at the University of New Hampshire. My research study centers on politics in educational leadership as practiced by school superintendents. I am asking for your support and that of all New Hampshire superintendents by responding to the enclosed questionnaire. By expressing your opinions and perceptions, you will be contributing to an enriched understanding of the difficulty and importance of the superintendency. Information from the study seeks to inform daily practices of experienced superintendents and programs for aspiring superintendents.

Understanding the availability of your time at any point in the year, the questionnaire takes only 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and you may choose to not answer all the questions. To support you in your reflections upon your political experiences, I attach a coupon for your favorite hot beverage. Please be assured that your responses will be held completely confidential. The number appearing on the first page of the survey is for record keeping purposes only. The University's Institutional Review Board has approved all aspects of the study.

I encourage the completion and return of the questionnaire in the enclosed, stamped, self-addressed envelope by January 6, 2003. Should you have any questions or concerns about the survey measure, please reach me by e-mail: asheaff@aol.com. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Julie Simpson in the UNH Office of Sponsored Research at (603) 862 – 2003 or julie.simpson@unh.edu to discuss them. A copy of the results of this study will be available by request.

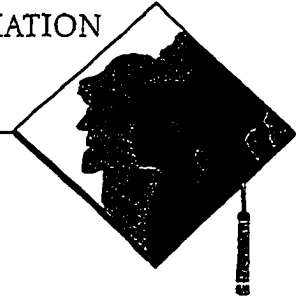I deeply appreciate your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Ph.D. Candidate
University of New Hampshire

Appendix E

Letter from the Executive Director of the
New Hampshire School Administrators Association

NEW HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

December 2002

Dear Superintendent,

I am writing to introduce to you a new doctoral research topic and encourage you to take a few moments from your very busy schedule to complete and return the enclosed survey.
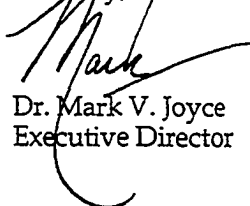
Althea Sheaff, a Ph. D. candidate at the University of New Hampshire, is conducting a research study, which will contribute significantly to our understanding of politics in educational leadership. I serve on Althea's dissertation committee and feel this study explores a little investigated area in organizational leadership. Focusing attention on the superintendency, this study underscores the complexities and challenges that we face in our daily practice.

Althea's study of politics focuses on the everyday interactions that affect our educational goals. Thus, it is important that you do not consider politics as partisan politics in your reactions and responses to this study. It is about our responses to the conflicts over values and ideologies, the struggle for scarce resources, and as Laswell pointed out so succinctly, determining "who gets what, when, and how".

In brief, I encourage your participation for, I believe that, collectively and individually, we have much to offer to the discussion of politics in educational leadership. Possibilities exist, from your responses, to inform current professional development and educational programs for those seeking advancement to district leadership positions. We have the opportunity to provide critical insights into the practical application of politics in educational leadership. Gather your thoughts and seriously consider how you, as educational leaders, respond to politics in your setting.

On behalf of Althea and the many educational leaders interested in this topic, I thank you for your attention to this project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark V. Joyce
Executive Director

SUMMER STREET SCHOOL, 12 CROSS STREET • PENACOOK, NH 03303
TEL: (603) 753-4479 • FAX: (603) 753-4611

Appendix F

Follow-up Letter to Superintendents

Althea Sheaff

 3 Aspen Court Barrington, NH 03825 603/664-5697 asheaff@metrocast.net

January 10, 2003

Superintendent
SAU

Dear Superintendent,

Approximately three weeks ago, you should have received a letter from me requesting your participation in a research study I am conducting on politics in educational leadership. The study focuses on the opinions and perceptions of New Hampshire superintendents. As of today, I do not have your response. I am eager to include your thoughts, perceptions, and experiences in my study.

If you have already responded to the questionnaire, thank you for your participation and kindly excuse this reminder. Let me assure you that your responses will be treated confidentially and in anonymity. Should you have any questions or concerns about the survey measure, please reach me by e-mail: asheaff@metrocast.net. Questions about your rights as a research subject can be directed to Julie Simpson in the UNH Office of Sponsored Research at 862 – 2003.

In the event that you did not receive the questionnaire or may have misplaced it, I enclose another copy along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for an easy return.

Thank you for your time and support of research in this field of study.

Sincerely,

Ph. D. Candidate
University of New Hampshire

.

Appendix G

Determining Use of Frames

Step 1: Frequency of each frame score (6 to 24) is tallied and trichotomized resulting in three cut-points:

Point Range	Frequency of Score	Strength	Assigned Value
6 to 12	76 times	Light	1
13 to 17	76 times	Moderate	2
18 to 24	64 times	Strong	3

Step 2: Each superintendent's scores are converted to assigned values. Consider the following profile of one superintendent's scores:

- Structural score of 9 converts to 1
- Human resource score of 20 converts to 3
- Political score of 15 converts to 2
- Symbolic score of 16 converts to 2

Step 3: Without consideration of specific frames, at this point, all scores are sorted into like patterns. Using the above example, the ordering fits a 3 – 2 – 2 -1 pattern. In other words, a pattern with one strong frame, two moderate frames, and one light frame. In all, five patterns emerge from analysis of the 54 participating superintendents' scores:

Pattern	Number of Superintendents
3 – 2 – 2 – 1	26
3 – 2 – 1 – 1	11
3 – 3 – 1 – 1	10
3 – 3 – 2 – 1	4
2 – 2 – 2 – 1	3

Step 4: This step must consider what it means to use a frame in terms of the quantitative data. The term use of frame indicates superintendents' self- appraisal of their leadership orientations. It is an indicator of how they see and think about their interactions with constituents, situations, and the organization. Their schema or mental maps conjure up elements of these leadership orientations and make associations with their perceived behaviors. Determination of using a frame or being consistent with a leadership orientation with the quantitative data is set out in the following:

a. Obviously, an assigned value of 3 indicates consistency with a leadership orientation. The range of scores from 18 to 24 indicates that respondents find the frame factors to be good or best descriptors in their self-appraisal.

b. Using the scoring in Section I and the established cut-points, the possibility of a value of 3 for all frames does not exist. Therefore, other options need to be considered.

c. An evenly distributed point configuration is 15 points for each of the frames.

d. A value of 2 reflects scores with the 13 to 17 point range with 15 as the midpoint of scores.

e. Generally, it is assumed that with respect to the moderate range (13-17points), respondents find the factors to be good descriptors. It is recognized that the configuration of the forced-choice rankings for any frame may show a broad continuum (least to best).

f. Thus, considering the above information about the quantitative data, a value of 2 or moderate strength is determined to be using a frame.

g. A value of 1 reflects scores within the 6 to 12 range. Respondents feel the factors within the frame to be the least favorable descriptors. Therefore, values of 1 are not considered as using a frame.

Step 5: Using the criteria above, the five patterns sort into two categories labeled as focused and distributed. The arrangement looks thus:

Focused on two frames

3 – 2 – 1 – 1   (11 supts.)
3 – 3 – 1 – 1   (10 supts.)

Distributed over three frames

3 – 2 – 2- 1   (26 supts.)
3 – 3 – 2 –1   (4 supts.)
2 – 2 – 2 –1   (3 supts.)

Step 6: Returning to research question one, this step looks at the strength of the political frame in each of the patterns. Individual patterns are examined for the value of the political frame and overall, the frequency of that value for each of the patterns.

Category	Pattern	Political Frame Perspective	
	3 = strong, 2 = moderate 1 = light	Value	Frequency
Focused	3 – 2 – 1 – 1	3	0 times
		2	1 time
		1	10 times
Focused	3 – 3 – 1 – 1	3	3 times
		1	7 times
Distributed	3 – 2 – 2 – 1	3	2 times
		2	20 times
		1	4 times
Distributed	3 – 3 – 2 – 1	3	2 times
		2	2 times
		1	0 times
Distributed	2 – 2 – 2 – 1	2	1 time
		1	2 times

Step 7: The strength of the political frame perspective weighs with the strength of the other frames to determine any associations or patterns of distribution.

Pattern	Configuration of frames		
	PL = 3	*PL = 2*	*PL = 1*
3 – 2 –1 – 1	- - - -	HR PL ST SY (1)	HR SY PL ST (3) HR ST PL SY (4) ST HR PL SY (3)
3 – 3 – 1 - 1	PL HR ST SY (2) PL ST HR SY (1)	- - - -	HR ST PL SY (4) HR SY PL ST (3)
3 – 2 – 2 –1	PL HR ST SY (1) PL ST SY HR (1)	HR PL ST SY (9) HR PL SY ST (6) ST PL HR SY (3) SY PL HR ST (2)	HR ST SY PL (2) ST HR SY PL (2)
3 – 3 –2 – 1	PL SY HR SY (1) PL ST SY HR (1)	ST HR PL SY (2)	- - - -
2 – 2 – 2 – 1	- - - -	HR PL ST SY (1)	HR ST SY PL (2)

PL = political
HR = human resource
ST = structural
SY = symbolic

Appendix H

Response Percentages from Questionnaire, Section I

1. Strongest Skill

	Choices	1 least	2	3	4 best
structural	a. analytic	7.4 %	20.4 %	38.9%	33.3 %
human resource	b. interpersonal	3.7	16.7	24.1	55.6
political	c. political	1.9	55.6	35.2	7.4
symbolic	d. flair for drama	87.0	5.6	3.7	3.7

2. Self-Description

	Choices	1 least	2	3	4 best
structural	a. technical expert	64.8	14.8	14.8	5.6
human resource	b. good listener	5.5	24.1	24.1	46.3
political	c. skilled negotiator	13.0	37.0	31.5	18.5
symbolic	d. inspirational leader	16.7	24.1	29.6	29.6

3. Account for Success

	Choices	1 least	2	3	4 best
structural	a. make good decisions	9.3	27.8	29.6	33.3
human resource	b. coach and develop people	13.0	22.2	25.9	38.9
political	c. build strong alliances and bases	50.0	11.1	25.9	13.0
symbolic	d. inspire and excite others	27.8	38.9	18.5	14.8

4. Most Notable

	Choices	1 least	2	3	4 best
structural	a. attention to detail	33.3	35.2	18.5	13.0
human resource	b. concern for people	7.4	16.7	35.2	40.7
political	c. ability to succeed in the face of conflict and oppression	9.3	24.1	25.9	40.7
symbolic	d. charisma	50.0	22.2	22.2	5.6

5. Leadership Trait

	Choices	1 least	2	3	4 best
structural	a. clear logical thinking	7.4	24.1	22.2	46.3
human resource	b. caring and support for others	3.7	24.1	42.6	29.6
political	2- toughness and aggressiveness	63.0	16.7	14.8	5.6
symbolic	2- imagination and creativity	25.9	35.2	20.4	18.5

6. Best Description

	Choices	1 least	2	3	4 best
structural	a. analyst	33.3	22.2	20.4	24.1
human resource	b. humanist	3.7	18.5	31.5	44.4
political	c. politician	46.3	33.3	16.7	3.7
symbolic	d. visionary	16.7	24.1	31.5	27.8

Appendix I

Unanalyzed Data

Question 1: How do you use politics to further educational goals?

To provide the best possible teaching and learning environment for students.

By working closely with the community to identify goals. Utilize community engagement process.

Communicating a commitment to the district's vision.

Through communicating and education of local stakeholders. Always focus on students.

Knowing the players the situation can help by pulling them into the process. This really needs to be done one on one or in small groups

I get to know my civic group i.e. over 55 club, PTA, etc. I look for ways to reach out to them and to include them in dialogue around educational issues. I also spend time talking to town officials about common issues. This builds credibility for a later time and need.

Involving as many people as possible has assisted us in passing budgets and bonds. Continual building of respect and regard solidifies support.

By informing those in district of the spectrum of potential impacts of issues, etc. (primarily the board). But being consistent in message of what district beliefs (established) are and how issue is consistent or detrimental to. By being engaged with folks.

Use of superintendent remarks or annual report, very important.

Decisions must be made in the context of the political arena.

To obtain improved resources be they human or material. To obtain consensus around key organizational and instructional reforms.

Because most of the influential individuals in the community are strong supporters of education, we only need to present logical proposals in order to gain support.

By establishing respectful relationships where information is shared openly with all regardless of an individuals or a groups' political, philosophical position. Additionally, knowing who to speak with and when is essential. And knowing who to bring together for exchange of ideas is important.

Establish coalitions around fact-based, well-articulated proposals for increasing and enhancing opportunities for children.

Determine the common interests of the parties and achieve consensus on the methods and time frame required to meet the goals.

Set clear mission statement and goals with Boards and frequently revisit.

By allowing an open door policy for community members, parents, staff, and students.

Educate the public in what is needed and what are district strengths. We use a community outreach committee to help pass our bond (political action committee). We are SB 2 town so we actively seek public support for budgets, etc. We use educ. TV effectively to communicate with public, understand community issues. We are very forthright.

Share data on school, student, and district performance to develop understanding and trust.

As you have defined politics, the allocation of values and resources from interactions define what can happen. I am growing in my understanding of how to be more political in the interest of students.

To get people to see that we value (in most cases the same thing) are our values translate into quality education.

Vehicle to generate understanding and support.

In several SAUs such as mine, politics are much different than in larger units. Here knowledge is power and the superintendent can achieve his/her goals to the extent to which he/she is viewed as expert and knowledgeable. Primary political activities include avoiding surprises, keeping Board active and informed and keeping ahead of the crowd with information

Trying to communicate with the stakeholders – Clarify needs –Providing vision – communication.

Community and school focus groups.

To get resources for schools.

Influence and politic anyone you have to in order to provide the best possible education for our students.

By building relationships with all the various constituencies needed to make decisions – teachers, support staff, board members, and community –

Politics should not be used to determine, or shape goals, but as a vehicle to support shared values.

I am learning how to do this – when, where, and why.

Attempt to avoid decision-making and actions based on politics.

Individuals and groups with special interests that dovetail with district strategic plan can be an important community voice of support.

Politics as defined in this survey play an important role in the development and achievement of educational goals.

Getting to know key people from various constituencies leading to discussion and providing information. I actually see my role as a teacher of adults (School Board members, Budget Committee, Town Officials – even staff members).

This has not been a political community.

By attempting to "get the word out." Talking to community leaders. Unfortunately, some of the selectmen talk out of both sides of their mouths and are not supportive.

Politics is the peaceful allocation of scarce resources. Show me a country that does not have "politics" and I will show you oppression. We are political beings. Political ideals, such as democratic governance, rule of law, minority rights are the bedrock of the "good society."

By sensing when the community has developed the political will to advance the agenda, and then take advantage through forums, TV, Board meetings, etc.

By using my leadership skills to create a common language; by facilitating the shaping of a meaningful school-district culture.

On the local level, I encourage Board members to seek public input on issues of importance in our district so as to gain understanding and support of school's goals.

Involve stakeholders in developing and carrying out vision and goals for school district – give lots of info out to keep all informed.

Influencing good teaching practices that help students to learn the prescribed curriculum.

Building consensus leads to smoother change and less turmoil. While reducing conflict is not an ultimate goal for me, I find that our Board and staff have more time to work on what is good for students if the political obstacles have been addressed.

Inform the community about goals and progress towards them.

By meeting with elected officials and sharing information. Speak in their language avoid jargon – and misdirection.

Invest major stakeholders

I avoid politics.

I used politics to create support to pass budgets, bonds, and Teacher contracts. I establish a network of support, particularly with parents of school-age children.

I attempt to involve all the stakeholders in important decisions.

I seek to not only know local politics, but to help shape local politics. This results in a more trusting and collaborative relationship between the school district and community.

Develop strong working relationships with school board, budget committees, selectmen, and influential people in town.

To use those in power to believe in your goals for schools.

Question 2: In what ways does politics frustrate your pursuit of educational goals?

Special interest groups are always sniping and undermining your efforts.

Small interest groups attempting to influence decision-making for entire district

That can only be an issue if you ignore the reality of politics in education.

When people do not see the big picture and get hung up on small issues or special interests.

Far too often, a small group who are politically motivated and empowered can move us in the incorrect direction. They may be wrong but they are powerful and this moves us in the wrong way.

The. lack of understanding concerning NH State Assessment Test and the negative backlash when all students are not performing at Proficient. It is hard to move a bigger agenda when the National and State focus is on accountability "one size fits all" thinking.

Too many special interest groups certainly slow the overall progress.

The predominance of self-interest of individuals within and outside the organization that directly counters our mission to promote learning in school. The politics of respect and understanding is welcomed. The politics of personal or organizational gain is unwelcome.

NCLB moves the focus away from student learning.

Too frequently what is good for kids gets lost in the political process.

Politics not personal agendas. Moving people to appreciate the "bigger picture" is often impossible when the personal agenda cannot be accommodated.

Getting the officials in three diverse communities talking to each other so they will come together to support schools.

Within the SB2 structures, it is extremely difficult to communicate with thousands of residences, taxpayers. A post card with misinformation or outright misrepresentation of the truth can destroy months of work and public relation efforts.

Strongly entrenched politics of pursuing the status quo.

Sometimes politics affects the allocation of resources and slows the process of achieving goals.

Current situation regarding secondary education – lack of facility.

Hidden agendas are the biggest frustration. Many times you are part way through a process before the realization hits a person, a group is being disingenuous.

We need a 2/3 vote to change the articles of agreement to institute a kindergarten. We got a majority- but in a SB2 district is difficult. Countering misinformation is sometimes difficult. Convincing educators that we work in a political arena and teachers
Need to become politically active to pass budgets, warrant articles for salaries, etc.

Fiscal agenda becomes dominant force and need of children become secondary to tax impact on senior citizens.

There are such diverse and often polarized groups in my district that often conflict and make consensus or majority difficult.

Individual, selfish, narrow agendas

Self-centered, multiple agendas – by individuals for various reasons.

Small town politics being what they are, many small agendas often conspire to derail the best-laid plans of superintendents and school districts. Thus a town manager who fails to get a new office building can from a coalition to build a new school – especially if he/she perceives that the school board was less than enthusiastic about the office.

Inability to change or want change.

Strong voice of minority groups.

Lack of resources for schools.

You can't let it frustrate you. Politics in the education business for an administrator is omnipresent and a vital part of the "game". Anyone who thinks otherwise and is reluctant to play the game should not be a participant.

There are some people with whom it is almost impossible to reach – there can be a lot of wasted energy if the goals are so foreign to the community that they will never be accepted.

Political pressure tends to be very strong in short periods of time but can take you off course if you don't stay focused on long-term goals. Politics can take you off course if you don't look at the big picture.

Personal agendas fronted by individuals can stall or derail work for children

Others try hard to outline and push actions based on politics.

Occasionally individuals, particularly board members, may follow an agenda that benefits their child, but not all children. In our district, this rarely happens but it has occurred.

I am not frustrated by politics. I am challenged to create strategies that will allow me to successfully work with others so that educational goals can be achieved.

Politics is part of almost everything I do – I would not use the word frustrating as much as I would see politics as "time consuming". Patience is absolutely key- most educational goals are attainable – They just take time!

It can slow down the process.

Politics hasn't. Resources may.

Small town politics, in this case somewhat "crooked" makes it difficult. Historically, this town in general places little value on education.

Politics does not frustrate my pursuit of goals. Politics is the "art of possible" sometimes I am politically effective- sometimes I am not.

When politics create a mood of limited school spending and important initiatives need to be delayed.

When "politics" is practiced as a "dirty word," rather than shaping "the allocation of values and resources."

At the state and federal level support of our educational programming is limited financially, thus placing a greater burden on local governments to support and sustain our efforts.

Sometimes there is disagreement within groups (e.g. School Board with Teacher Assn.) - This requires us to work hard (overtime) to find consensus – negotiate differences.

Each teacher, administrator, student and parent has a personal set of values. This is strength and a weakness of a democratic model. It takes more time to initiate change but it works better because people make it happen.

The political posturing of some is little more than an annoyance. In general, people in our community listen to the rhetoric, then move on to do as much as we can afford for our children. I have been lucky in this.

Many in community who wish to participate in the politics of school have a very narrow perception of how schools operate; they do not understand (or ever see) the complexities.

The politics involved with the funding of education is the most frustrating.
Individual agendas not connected to district goals.

I avoid politics.

I like the challenge of beating the naysayers, who are always a major challenge. I do not like the false rumors.

I am frustrated at times by the politics because the motives underlying an issue are usually driven by a personal agenda and not for the greater good.

Because we are an SB 2 school district and a non-SB2 town politics of governance and allocation of resources is often contentious.

Tax groups creating negative perceptions of schools and working against schools.

Enter in finance and micromanagement.

Question 3: What advice would you offer to those entering the superintendency about politics in educational leadership?

Become good at what you do and understand how the politics of the community work.

Know it; use it. Superintendent is a politician both inside and outside of school operations.

Develop a positive working relationship with the School Board; collaborate don't dictate; develop a shared vision with your community; develop Board policies – strength of the system depends on this activity (update regularly)

Know your stakeholders; Listen and learn about community; Build base of support; Be honest, upfront, and caring; Develop a vision based on your beliefs with the community

Always keep it in mind!

Take the time to know the community. The values, culture, and the influential people. Good ideas go nowhere without a partnership. You have to be political.

Be open, fair, honest, and diligent in your goal to continually raise the expectations.

Read of the "way" of storming, passionate and righteous politicians.

Focus on student achievement, limited time, and energy that are truly a diversion.

Learn how to work within the political process.

Listen, observe, and learn who are the "shakers and movers" Understand why they are and inventorying that for future reference.

Get to know who the "real" influential leaders in the community are – don't assume they are the people who hold elective office.

The superintendent must be perceived an apolitical and has children and quality of teaching/learning as motives for behavior and decisions. This does not mean that one does not recognize political realities or engage in appropriate level of "behind the scenes" information sharing and encouraging others to behave for the benefit of children and education. Low-key nondefensive sharing of knowledge and impact of proposals can be very powerful and positive.

An unfortunate necessity.

Read and reflect on the message of the Grand Inquisitor.

Know the community.

Politics is prevalent in the majority of situations and rather than fight it, try to mitigate the politics to your cause.

1 – Understand that superintendents work in the political arena and it is an important part of the job
2- Communicate clearly and accurately and in a timely manner
3- Do not be afraid to stand up for what is right for children
4- Know which battles to fight
5- Timing of new initiative may be as important as the initiative itself.
6- Build relationships/trust with key community members
7- Work from what is right with the district – Capitalize on and communicate strengths while working to improve weaknesses.

Stay your course with your philosophical beliefs, values, and vision, but listen, interpret, and be flexible. Assess any and all alternatives to keep your system moving the desired direction.

It is hard to ignore the power of politics. I am not sure that most superintendents or doctoral students receive any or enough training in the political maneuverings and understanding of politics.

1. It's all about people.
2. Be smart, don't take it personally or yourself seriously
3. Stand up and do what is right for kids.

Stay informed- true to your values. Be careful!

Less is more.

Watch your back! It's no different anywhere else.

Build a strong foundation of community leaders through involvement in school issues. Visit and talk to civic groups. Keep your door open.

Support all, be nice to all, listen and have a vision for all children learning well.

As stated – It is part of the game. Don't take things personal – Don't be vindictive. It is a necessary evil. Consider the sources. Keep your sense of humor. It helps when you win most of the contests.

Go slowly – do a lot of observation. Listen to others talk and let them give their points of view before you jump in with yours. Build credibility before initiating sweeping change.

You must be skilled at using politics to promote the core mission and values of your schools but not to determine the core mission and values.

Learn your community, its values, and its stakeholders. Listen, Listen, Listen

They are real and unavoidable.

While you do not have to totally compromise your guiding principles, there are times that they might be secondary to political reality/experience. Remember, you do not need to win every battle to win the war.

To perfect those skills and approaches that encourage the open exchange of ideas and to incorporate those ideas into action planning focused on district improvement.

The climate and culture – along with the history - of each community is relatively unique. 1) Learn the history. 2) Understand the climate/culture. 3) Do not say anything bad about anyone – because everyone is related in some way. 4) Spend time talking with staff. 5) Be visible and comfortable with the public. 6) Do your homework.

It is a key component in communication but don't use it to attempt to manipulate a situation.

Politics are overrated as a manipulative tool in most school communities.

Learn as much about politics at the local level as you can. It plays a much role than anyone would like.

Study politics deeply. Read our founding documents and the classics – both Western (Hobbes, Locke, Jefferson, Madison, Rousseau) and Eastern (the Art of War, Lao-Tse, Zen). Follow examples of constructive politics: Civil rights movement, women's movement, solidarity in Poland, the Velvet Revolution, ANC in S. Africa, the Progressive Era in US). Recognize that as superintendent you are truly blessed to have an opportunity to participate in the "building of the kingdom"... the beloved community.

Be political- but not a politician. Prepare your board members with the right information and let them do the talking and the politicking. Always tell the truth and always admit your mistakes (in the rare event that you make one).

Quickly learn about the "invisible allegiances" and the "amorphous power types' in your district (Tracy, '97).

Be true to your principles and, if you feel that they are at odds with the prevailing political position in your school district, prepare to move on.

Learn who is who and what their interests/values are – Keep constituency well informed and involved.

Be prepared to hold, conduct, and direct meeting that have substance, involvement, and action. Always do follow-up.

Politics isn't a bad word. Learn to deal with it and pay attention. If you get good at it, your students will benefit.

All politics are local.

One needs to be aware of the political landscape but one does not need to be involved. Listen, Learn, and Nurture – Stay true to your values and make it clear what those values are from the outset.

Learn how to achieve goals through the political process.

I avoid politics.

Read *The Prince.*

Be aware it is there, identify power bases, and exploit your power bases. Take nothing for granted. Outwork and outfox your opponents.

Thirty years ago politics and education didn't mesh together. Today, the Superintendent needs to use politics to his advantage.

Know the key leaders and decision-makers and influence and inform them about the vision of the school district.

Go slowly – learn the lay of the land – be open and polite to all. Keep your vision and hold strong to your values and goals.

Know it! Don't duck it and use it to help kids.