The Impact of Coaching on California Superintendents

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Table #8
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Join Our Round Robin Discussion

Dr. Harmeier will facilitate a discussion about the impact of coaching on superintendents.

Join her and others in a Round Robin discussion group to learn how professional coaching/mentoring supports new and veteran superintendents in one of the most challenging roles in K-12 education.

Or, join the discussion to share your own experiences with this powerful form of professional development and support!
Key Take Aways of the Discussion

• Why coaching is wanted and needed from the perspective of successful superintendents.

• How the blended model of coaching supports new and experienced superintendents in all aspects of their role using developmental strategies.

• The components of successful coaching programs: getting board support, finding the right coach, getting started, and how to work together.
Background of the Study

The role of public school superintendent is complex, challenging, political and sometimes volatile. A shortage of candidates has plagued California during the past 10 years due to high turnover rates resulting from the fallout of the NCLB punitive reform measures, increasing baby boomer retirements, and a reluctance of district leaders to step up to this demanding position. This top leadership role is unlike any other in K-12 education due to the responsibilities with outside constituents and the advisorial relationship with the school board. In her doctoral study, Dr. Harmeier conducted a qualitative study to document and explore the experiences of California public school superintendents who participated in leadership or executive coaching/mentoring as a form of professional development and support while serving in this position. Data were collected through personal interviews with superintendents who agreed to participate.

Those interviews were transcribed and coded through the lens of the eight AASA Professional Standards for the Superintendency. This study sought to determine the efficacy of coaching as a support tool for superintendents with respect to their ability to lead in their positions. The coded results of the interviews were focused on the eight standards that included: 1) Strategic Leadership and District Culture, 2) Policy and Governance, 3) Communications, 4) Leadership and Organizational Management and School Finance, 5) Curriculum Planning and Development, 6) Instructional Management, 7) Staff Evaluation and Personnel Management, 8) Values and Ethics. The qualitative components of the study were gathered through purposive sampling using email invitations to participate sent to targeted superintendents in seven counties in California.

Analysis of the data revealed that superintendents who participated in leadership or executive coaching/mentoring received a blended model of coaching which included mentoring and coaching strategies. All of the superintendents in this study received support in more than one of the eight areas of the AASA Professional Standards for the Superintendency. In total, coaching supported all of the eight standard areas. The study revealed that in every case the coaching received was a blended model, which included mentoring and cognitive coaching strategies. Retired superintendents provided all of the coaching support. Every superintendent had a positive experience with coaching support.

The following slides provide an overview of the doctoral study to provide background information to support the Round Robin Discussion. For the complete dissertation go to: http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/doc/1810181270.html?FMT=ABS
Agenda

- Overview of the Study
- Methodology
- Findings
- Implications and Conclusions
- Coaching Resources
- Discussion
Introduction of the Study

“The work portfolio of America’s superintendents is increasingly diverse, encompassing not only student achievement, but the diversification of student and staff populations, the explosion of technology, expanded expectations from the government, the school board and the community, and the globalization of society.”

-Kitty Porterfield, AASA 2010 Decennial Study
Rationale For Topic Selection

- Why is the job so challenging?
- Public education is the foundation for the future
- The superintendents impact student achievement and district culture
Rationale for the Topic

- Recent high turnover rates and shortage of candidates
- How can we increase retention?
- Job-embedded support needed
- Coaching is a form of professional development that works; little is documented about superintendent coaching
Dissertation Topic

The Impact of Coaching on the Leadership Practices of California Public School Superintendents
Impact of Coaching on Superintendents

Development of Research Study

History of the Superintendency:
The Evolving Role, Demographics, Challenges of the Position

Examining the High Turnover Rate and Shortage of Candidates

Superintendent Standards, Preparation, and Professional Support

Leadership Coaching vs. Mentoring as a Form of Support

Value of Coaching and Components of Programs

GAP: Coaching for Superintendents
LITERATURE REVIEW
Role of the Superintendent
History and Role of Superintendent

- Shift from secretary of board to overseer of all aspects of district management
- Most powerful position in districts until 1960’s political climate shift
- Visionary, communicator, collaborator, relationship builder, and politician
Characteristics

- AASA National Studies: 2010; 2015
- Mostly white men in mid-fifties (75%)
- Selection process: characteristics vs. experience
- Preparation programs
- Advance degrees
AASA Professional Standards

- Culmination of research-based skills and responsibilities - 1980’s reform era
- AASA Standards for the Superintendency (Hoyle, 2005)
- Preparation programs and evaluation tools
21st Century Challenges

- Diversity
- Poverty
- Technology
- Federal Reforms
- Privatization/Charter Movement
- Funding
Shortage and Turnover

- Fewer candidates: retirements, reluctance to advance, demands of the position, board dissatisfaction

- California turnover rate during last 10 years; 71% large districts & 45% small districts

- EdSource: 17/30 less than 3 years

- California: steady student population growth predicted with fewer educators in the pipeline
“The world is pulling for coaching. The numbers and geographic reach are impressive, but it is the underlying pull itself that has our attention. Change is a way of life and it is accelerating. Coaching is a methodology that allows us to work with change, on a personal level, on an organizational level, or on a relationship level.”

-Kimsey-House et al, 2011, p.x
Coaching Defined

Coaching is individualized structured, confidential process of providing deliberate support to another individual to help clarify or achieve goals.

It is not training, therapy or mentoring.
Support on the Job

- Conferences, peers, reading, and state associations
- Fragmented approach
- 20% receiving mentoring or coaching according to AASA Decennial study (2010)
- 6% actual coaching vs. mentoring
Value of Coaching

- Private sector ROI 600%
- All superintendents may benefit regardless of age or experience
- Longitudinal effects on student achievement when leaders improve, district results improve
- Increased retention and continuity of district goals
- Tool that works when district support continuous learning and development for all
Coaching is on the increase because it works, with the most gains in productivity, job satisfaction, higher retention rates, more skilled leadership.

- Pardini
Essential Components of Coaching

- Careful selection and pairing of coach and coachee
- Voluntary participation unless there is already a culture of coaching
- Clearly defining expectations for all parties
- Orientation before program begins
- Self-assessment
- Goal-setting
- Clear communication plan
- One year minimum
The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine, understand, and describe how coaching impacts superintendents’ ability to lead in their position as viewed through the lens of the AASA Professional Standards for the Superintendency.
The Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of superintendents who have been coached by certified coaches as viewed through the lens of the eight AASA Professional Standards for the Superintendency?
How did coaching support superintendents relative to the AASA Professional Standards for the Superintendency?

1. Strategic Leadership and District Culture
2. Understanding Public School Governance
3. Communications and Community Relations
4. Leadership and Organizational Management/Finance
5. Curriculum Planning and Development
6. Instructional Management
7. Staff Evaluation and Personnel Management
8. Values and Ethics of Leadership
Methodology

- Qualitative, phenomenological approach
- Demographic questionnaire
- One-on-one 45-60 minute in-depth interviews
- Expert panel input
- Sought their knowledge, meanings, opinions, perceptions, feelings of coaching experiences
Population/Sample

- 1022 California superintendents (CDE)
- 200-300 possible participants (20%)
- Direct email invitations to 240 using purchased email list
- Purposive and convenience sample of 13 participants
- Received coaching by a trained coach
Data Analysis

- Recorded and transcribed interviews
- Transcriptions uploaded into Nvivo as S1, S2, S3...
- All data was sorted into nodes/codes; themes emerged around coaching components and standard area
- Each of the 41 stories fit into more than one standard area
- Each story was designated in one primary standard area
Coaching Themes

- Reason for coaching
- Selection and background of coach
- Starting to work with the coach
- Communication
- Coaching strategies
- Need for coaching
AASA Standards Themes

- All standards supported in 41 stories
- Most support provided around:
  1. Strategic Leadership and District Culture
  2. Understanding Public School Governance
  4. Leadership and Organizational Management/Finance
  7. Staff Evaluation and Personnel Management
Findings

- Superintendents wanted coaching support and benefit from it
- Superintendent coaching involves a blended approach utilizing both coaching and mentoring components
- Superintendents benefit from a trusted, experienced, and confidential coach to succeed in this unique leadership role
Findings

- AASA standards currently reflect the job of the superintendency
- Coaching supports superintendents in all of the AASA standards
- Coaching was supported by boards; and coaching supports superintendents in managing relationships with board members
Findings

- Coaching supported female and male superintendents of different size and types of districts in similar ways
Implications for Action

- Coaching could be made available to all superintendents; each year of their career

- Improve preparation and embed coaching in an authorization process similar to other administrators
Conclusions

- Superintendents who participated in a coaching program benefited from the coaching experience

- The coaching programs used by the superintendents were blended models of coaching

- Superintendent coaching provides a unique type of individualized, confidential professional development and support unlike any other form of support provided to superintendents
Conclusions

- Board goals did not always align with the needs of the district so coaching helped to bridge the two

- AASA Professional Standards for the Superintendency describe the job of the superintendent and could be used to improve preparation programs superintendents

- Retired superintendents with a track record of success and skills in coaching should consider serving as coaches for new superintendents
Resources

**ACHIEVING SUCCESS**
for New and Aspiring SUPERINTENDENTS

MARY FRANCES CALLAN
WILLIAM LEVINSON

**BLENDED COACHING**
Skills and Strategies
to Support Principal Development

GARY BLOOM  CLAIRE CASTAGNA  ELLEN MOIR  BETSY WARREN
Resources

Impact of Coaching on Superintendents

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*CO-ACTIVE COACHING*

*CHANGING BUSINESS TRANSFORMING LIVES*

*The Book That Helped Define the Field of Professional Coaching*

*SECOND EDITION*

*Leadership Coaching for Educators*

*Bringing out the best in School Administrators*

*THIRD EDITION*

*HENRY KIMSEY-HOUSE, KAREN KIMSEY-HOUSE, PHILLIP SANDAHL and LAURA WHITWORTH*

*KARLA J. REISS*
Resources

- County Office of Education
- ACSA Mentor Program
- ACSA CLASS Training
- Cognitive Coaching Training
- International Coach Federation (ICF)
DISCUSSION