

WISDOM FOR THE AGES FROM THE SAGES:

MANITOBA SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS OFFER ADVICE TO ASPIRANTS

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This paper discusses a portion of the findings of a mixed-methods study that examined the career patterns of senior educational administrators in public school divisions in Manitoba, Canada. Data based on the career paths of senior administrators from both a survey and interviews of senior administrators were analyzed and compared along three variables: (a) position; (b) context; and (c) sex. This paper reports the findings of one aspect of the study that asked senior administrators to provide advice to aspirants interested in becoming senior administrators. Findings suggest that in Manitoba context, sex, and position interact to create differences in career experiences. Overall, senior administrators enjoy their work, but encourage aspirants to seriously consider the personal and professional responsibilities and ramifications of moving in to a position of such public and political responsibility.

Discussions regarding sex/gender and the superintendency recognize the persistence of the disproportionately low representation of women in the superintendency (Brunner, 2004; Crippen & Wallin, 2008; Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000; Grogan, 2000; Reynolds, 2001; Skrla, 2003; Wallin, 2005a, 2005b; Wallin & Sackney, 2003). This finding is reflected noticeably in Manitoba, where only 6 of the 37 public school division chief superintendents in the 2006-2007 school year were women. However, the sex proportions of the assistant superintendency were more equitable; women represented half (26 out of 52) of the assistant superintendents in the province. Even though intuitively one would think that those who hire superintendents draw primarily from the pool of assistant superintendents, the major drop in representation from the

assistant superintendency to the superintendency illustrates that sex plays a role in senior-level career advancement, either systemically or individually. Coralie Bryant (2004), executive director of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, made three points that exacerbate this reality: (a) since 2001 at the University of Manitoba alone, 66% of the graduates with a Masters in Educational Administration were women; (b) 65% of the teaching staff in Manitoba are women; and (c) 45% of inschool administrators are women. Obviously, there is no lack of qualified females to warrant such a difference in representation in senior administrative appointments.

Context plays no less of a role in the career patterns of senior educational administrators in Manitoba. For example, if we define “urban” to include the one census metropolitan area (Winnipeg) and the three census agglomerations (Brandon, Portage la Prairie, and Thompson), we find that in 2006-2007 there were only 9 urban superintendents in the province and 28 rural superintendents. However, of the 54 assistant superintendent positions, exactly half existed in urban areas. Economies of population notwithstanding, this means that there are a number of rural school divisions without an assistant superintendent’s position, which nullifies the opportunity of using the position as a succession management “training ground” for career development purposes. Some significant trends also develop when sex and context are cross-tabulated. Women constituted 14% of the population of rural superintendents (4 out of 28) and 22% of the population of urban superintendents (2 out of 9). Paradoxically, however, males constituted almost 65% of the rural assistant superintendent population (17 out of 27), but females constituted 65% of the urban assistant superintendent population (17 out of 27), an exact opposite proportion. It would seem that females are advancing into the assistant superintendency, and in particular in urban assistant superintendencies. Males, on the other hand, appear to have

an advantage in gaining the superintendency and the rural assistant superintendency, but they are underrepresented in the urban assistant superintendency. Interestingly, none of this data is collected or distributed by Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, which emphasizes the “conspiracy of silence” of the failure to report explicit data by position and district (Shakeshaft, 1999; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

It is because of the curious contextual and sexed representative statistics of the senior administrative cadre in Manitoba that a study that examined the career paths, supports and challenges of senior educational administrators was undertaken during the 2007-2008 school year. Its purposes were fourfold: (a) to determine the career patterns of senior educational administrators (superintendents and assistant superintendents) in public school divisions; (b) to compare and contrast their career patterns on position (assistant superintendent versus superintendent), context (rural versus urban), and sex (male versus female); (c) to determine the level of career development supports and work challenges for senior educational administrators; and, (d) to develop implications for career development programs targeted for senior educational administrators. This paper focuses on a small section of the findings related to the background of senior educational administrators in Manitoba, the career development initiatives that may foster growth linked to position, context, and sex, and the advice senior administrators have for aspirants so that they can take some responsibility for their own growth as they move into senior administrative positions in the future.¹

Methodology

This study utilized a mixed methods design, incorporating both a survey with statistical analysis and interviews with a constant comparison method of analysis. This paper

¹ An account of this larger research project is contained in Wallin (2009).

reports only on the background demographic and career information from the survey, and a question in the interviews that asked respondents to provide advice to aspirants. However, to provide a description of the methods utilized in the entire study, a survey was sent to all superintendents and assistant superintendents in public school divisions in Manitoba, and was returned at a rate of 54% (49 of 91 surveys). The software program SPSS was used to conduct chi-square tests of the nominal demographic data, and independent t-tests and analysis of variance of the career support and work challenge items of the survey using the demographic variables of position, context, and sex, to determine where significant differences and/or possible interaction effects occurred. A p-level of .05 was utilized for all tests of significance. Spearman rank correlations, means, and variances were used to determine which career support and work challenge items were consistently ranked of highest importance, and to determine relationships between them. Visual models of the average positional placements (teachers, in-school administrators, senior administrators, and “other”) and career interruptions were created based on sex (male or female), position (assistant superintendent or superintendent), and context (rural or urban) in order to create career profiles.²

Interview questions were then developed to extend and enrich the survey findings related to career progression, career supports, and work challenges. Five superintendents and five assistant superintendents (representing an even proportion of male/female and six rural/four urban school divisions) were contacted to participate in interviews that focused on their career development progression, career development supports, and work challenges they faced as senior educational leaders. The qualitative data related to the career patterns of

² Data instruments or inquiries into the analysis and findings of the study can be accessed by contacting [Dr. Dawn C. Wallin](#).

respondents were input into a qualitative program, Atlas-ti, and were analyzed using a constant comparative method. Given the scope of the large study, this paper focuses only on the findings related to the background of those serving in positions, implications for career development related to position, context, and sex, and advice to those who aspire to becoming senior administrators in the future.

Who are the Senior Administrators in Manitoba

The table in the Appendix provides the background demographic and career information found in this section in tabular format. The vast majority of senior administrators in Manitoba have a spouse or partner (91.8%; N=45), and have children (81.6%; N=40). Sixty-one percent of the senior administrators (N=30) were over the age of 50, followed by 28.6% (N=14) between the ages of 41-50, while only three (6%) of the senior administrators were between the ages of 31-40.

The majority of senior administrators have Masters degrees (57.1%; N=28) or post-graduate degrees (24.5%; N=12), with a much smaller proportion having a bachelors' (12.2%; N=6) or a doctoral degree (6.1%; N=3). Most senior administrators have the non-mandatory Manitoba Level II Principals' certificates (59.2%; N=29), though a large proportion have no certification at all (20.4%; N=10). A smaller proportion have their Level I Administrator's certificate (12.2%; N=6) or some combination of certificates (8.2%; N=4) that included Level I, Level II, Special Educators', or Coordinators' certificates.

A majority of senior administrators (61.2%; N=30) had worked in their current position for less than 5 years. Just over a third (36.7%; N=18) had spent anywhere from 6-15 years in their current position, and one person (2%) had served in the current position for

over 20 years. A striking proportion of senior administrators had less than 10 years of total senior administrative experience (71.4%; N=35), with 10.2% (N=5) being in their first year, 36.7% (N=18) with 2-5 years of experience, and 24.5% (N=12) with 6-10 years of experience. Sixteen percent of the respondents (N=8) had between 11-15 years of senior administrative experience, with much smaller proportions of those with 16-20 years of service (4.1%; N=2), or more than 20 years of service (8.2%; N=4).

The situation is very different, however, when total administrative experience was taken into account. In this instance, 36.7% (N=18) of senior administrators had more than 20 years of experience, with equal proportions in the three categories of 16-20 years, 11-15 years, and 6-10 years (18.4%; N=8). Only one person was in the first year of administration, and three others (6.1%) had between 2-5 total years of administrative experience.

A Chi-Square analysis on the demographic variables found no significant differences by sex on any of the demographic variables. However, because assistant superintendents were significantly younger than superintendents ($p=.047$), it is not surprising to find that superintendents were likely to have significantly more senior administrative experience ($p = .020$) and total administrative experience ($p=.018$). Context was significantly related to educational background ($p=.020$), administrative experience in the current position ($.009$) and total senior administrative experience ($p=.042$). A closer examination of the data revealed that, although rural senior administrators' education levels represented all four categories (Bachelors, Post-Graduate work, Masters, and Doctorates), they were more apt than urban senior administrators to have obtained their position with a Bachelors' degree as their highest level of education. All of the urban senior administrators had between 2-10 years of experience in their current senior administrative position, but the pattern for rural senior administrators was very

different. Although the majority of these administrators had between 1-5 years of experience, there are some administrators who represented all other experiential level categories, from 6-20+ years of experience. In terms of total senior administrative experience, the largest category of urban administrators (42.1%) had between 6-10 years of senior administrative experience, followed by those who had 2-5 years of experience (26.3%). Senior administrators in rural areas were most likely to have between 2-5 years of experience (43.3%), but were represented more evenly across experiential categories.

Because this paper primarily reflects interview data from the 10 senior administrators, it is also appropriate to outline their career progression experiences that in fact suggest that they are a representative sample of the cadre of Manitoba senior administrators, as their careers tended to develop in a similar pattern to that listed above and include a diversity of experiences. All participants had begun their careers as teachers (though one in fact began as a substitute teacher for a year, after which she completed her Bachelor of Education degree to become a certified teacher). The second position for this group generally entailed another teaching position (four respondents), a specialized in-school role (two resource teachers and one counselor), or in-school administration (two vice principalships and one principalship). Overall, this group had served in three to seven positions before entering their first senior administrative appointment, with time served overall in these positions before the senior appointment between 10-28 years. Interestingly, all but one of the males in the group had spent more time in non-senior administrative appointments than the females in the group, with or without leaves. In addition, of the 10 respondents, one of the males had background as a Student Services administrator, another as a Director of Curriculum, and a third as a counselor/special educator. A fourth indicated that he had turned down the assistant superintendency twice because of family

commitments. Of the females in the sample, two had backgrounds as resource teachers and one as a consultant. All interviewees had some in-school administrative experience, though two females had not taken on a principalship, and one male's experience of the principalship was a year-long position in an alternative high school. Two of the respondents, one male and one female, had taken positions outside of education for a time, before returning to the education system as senior administrators. All but two participants, one rural male assistant superintendent and one rural male superintendent, had moved across divisions to obtain positions. Two others who now worked in urban superintendencies had moved across provinces to obtain positions.

Sage Words of Wisdom to the Ones Who Would Come After

These interviewees were asked about the factors that aspirants should consider before moving in to senior administrative roles, and also to provide aspirants with words of advice. The following section outlines the "sage words of wisdom" offered by these senior administrators.

Factors to Consider

When asked what factors aspirants need to consider before entering a senior administrative position, the responses of the senior administrators in this study related to the nature of the position, self-knowledge, and the realities of the work.

Nature of the position. First and foremost, respondents suggested that aspirants must consider the huge responsibility that a senior administrative position accords, and that this position is a tenuous one with little security. As one superintendent suggested, "there are many interesting parts to the job, but there is no glamour, and there is no prestige. Not anymore." Another superintendent suggested that aspirants must consider that the position is one of service,

and “you need to honestly understand that it becomes a little bit less about you, and more about others.” An assistant superintendent suggested that aspirants need to consider how important the role of human relations is in these positions, in terms of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, understanding change, and knowing how systems and groups work. Aspirants were also asked to consider that movement into a senior position is always overwhelming at first, because of the plethora of information with which new administrators are not equipped. An assistant superintendent offered the humorous insight that being successful as a new senior administrator entails learning the “duck philosophy,” whereby “you have to be calm on the top, meanwhile you’re paddling like hell underneath.” Senior administrators encouraged aspirants to recognize that the position is often highly conflictual. As one superintendent suggested:

Accept that you are often in a no-win situation—you have to make decisions. People won’t be happy with you and you have to be able to live with yourself and those people afterwards.... Hopefully they can understand why you did it, and you try to educate them and make them knowledgeable about why we made that decision. But at the end of the day, some decisions just come to “that’s the way it has to be.”

Others mentioned that litigation is increasing within school divisions, and aspirants need to consider whether they are prepared to work in this kind of environment which may necessitate the seeking of legal counsel. Finally, aspirants were encouraged to consider the fact that the position is highly public, and with that comes the need to recognize that the position will affect family and personal life. One superintendent talked about “stories of people banging on their door, throwing eggs at their windows, accosting them in the grocery store because of decisions.” Another spoke of recognizing that “you lose all balance in your life and there are very few moments that are my own.”

Self-knowledge. Two areas of consideration were mentioned by senior administrators for the second factor of self-knowledge: (a) knowing one’s own value system; and (b) the need to be

a lifelong learner. Interestingly, the first area was mentioned by women only. Aspirants were asked to consider what it was that truly motivated them in their jobs or lead to stress, and then to consider whether a senior administrative position would hold promise to affirm the motivation or minimize the stress. These women suggested that senior administrators needed to be energetic, enthusiastic, and act with integrity; they must know their own values and be aligned with the organization with which they work. If they do not align, senior administrators need to be able to stand firmly on issues, since “you don’t negotiate values and beliefs” and “you must maintain a focus on governance and the bottom line is education.” They also must know their own areas of strength and weakness, and be prepared to build their skills. This leads to the second factor to consider, which is the need to be a lifelong learner. Four senior administrators, two male and two female, made specific reference to this factor. Aspirants are asked to consider whether they are prepared to “learn as you go” and “be on the cutting edge as the educational leader to be cognizant of trends” in order to “model and facilitate a balance of autonomy and accountability.” One of the assistant superintendents suggested that movement into the position was “the biggest learning you’ll ever have in your life; you’ll have fantastic opportunities to work with fantastic people, get to be process oriented, and lead a system with others, but it is a huge responsibility.”

Realities of the work. The third factor mentioned by senior administrators that needs to be considered was the realities of the work environment. Six of the senior administrators spoke of the political nature of the position, particularly as it related to working with school boards. Senior administrators need to be able to find the balance between board governance, policy, and human relationships. Senior administrators “can’t be the yes person for the board or jump to individual trustees...they can’t get side-tracked on the political issues.” Rather, they must be diplomatic and maintain a focus on providing educational service with integrity. Another

superintendent suggested that “you have to really deeply believe in what you are doing to survive the politics of it; you have to be prepared to accept what you see in the black box, because when the board room door closes at times, it’s not pretty in there.” Senior administrators also need to be able to sustain the workings of the school division after school board elections when trustees change. In addition to working with boards, one of the assistant superintendents spoke of the political diplomacy needed in something as “small” as a written communication: “be planful, conscious of everything you do—you don’t just re-read a memo once; you re-read it three times. You think about potential ramifications. What words have you used? What words have you missed using? You have to be very careful.... You have to be field dependent and field independent all at the same time.” And finally, a superintendent suggested that aspirants need to consider that having the skills and credential alone do not guarantee that a person will successfully acquire a senior administrative position, because “there are a lot of other factors that are politically aligned that impact on who gets any particular job.”

The second most often cited area of this factor is that of recognizing the time commitments that accrue with a senior administrative position, as mentioned by six of the 10 interviewees. Respondents suggested that aspirants need to consider the serious time commitment required by the position, as “weekends are consumed with the job and the job is always with you.” Meetings, committee work and working with policy often occur outside of the “regular” work day, to include early mornings, late evenings, and weekends. A superintendent suggested that, “It won’t be true that you’ll have summers off and spare time. If you went to an hourly rate as a senior administrator you’d be far better off to stay as a classroom teacher; lots of evenings and weekends, even if the pace is different.”

The flexibility of a senior administrative position was also an area to consider. Respondents suggested that in many ways senior administrators had flexibility in designing their work days, and that those who were personally motivated could make great progress in their work. On the other hand, flexibility in personal schedules had to come second to the needs of schools or community issues that might come up unexpectedly. Senior administrators had to “expect the unexpected” and be flexible in their accommodation of others. A superintendent also suggested that “you may have more control over how things happen, but somewhat less as far as some of the directives that you are responsible for taking on.”

Finally, senior administrators suggested that aspirants needed to consider the isolation that often came with the position. As one assistant superintendent suggested, “the environment is more businesslike and completely different from a school.... It’s as quiet as a mortuary in there sometimes.” Another superintendent suggested that aspirants need to consider “whether they are prepared to do a job that is ultimately, totally alone, and whether they are prepared to pay that price.” For this reason aspirants were encouraged to be cognizant of the potential loneliness, professional isolation and lack of collegiality that can occur in these positions.

Discussion

Senior administrators offered much advice to those who aspire to senior administrative positions. All of them spoke of the rewards of the position and encouraged aspirants to carry on with their dreams of moving into a senior position, even if that meant moving to a different community or school division. Aspirants were encouraged to take on leadership roles and responsibilities that promoted their visibility, and to indicate to senior administration their career

ambitions. But before they decide to move into these roles, aspirants were encouraged to be very cognizant of the reasons why they want to move into them. As one superintendent suggested:

It's a rewarding experience; a very rewarding career. But it can't be about the pay, or about the position; it has to be for kids, schools, and the advancement of education.... Servant leadership struck home with me.... I think if you come in with another philosophy then you run the risk of being replaced in a short time. These are contract jobs. You no longer have a union, you no longer have the same level of protection. And that shouldn't be a scary thing. But if you think you need that, then you're probably coming at it the wrong way.

“Know thyself” was a common piece of advice from senior administrators. In addition, aspirants were encouraged to become knowledgeable about the particular roles into which they might move, by talking to previous incumbents or others who have been in senior administration, by visiting the division, and by getting to know the school board or community. It was also mentioned that there are many factors at play in senior administrative appointments, so not to be discouraged if one's personal career ambitions do not immediately align with what happens systemically. Finally, aspirants were encouraged to apply first for an assistant superintendency and to consider it as a training position from which to learn about the superintendency from those currently in the role.

Once in a senior administrative position, aspirants must realize “that you are incredibly vulnerable because of what you don't know and need to learn.” And because of this, they must be willing to be mentored, to be coached, and to accept help from others. Developing networks with communities, provincial organizations, school administrators and other senior administrators is very valuable, and will provide senior administrators with a larger knowledge base from which to draw support. They must be prepared to challenge others and be challenged themselves, and to “lead by example and by the power of persuasion, maintaining their sense of professionalism and leadership.” They are encouraged to work hard and efficiently, to listen to

multiple perspectives in order to inform their own decisions thoroughly, and to be open-minded to accepting alternate possibilities. Senior administrators suggested that leaders should continue to study to exemplify their sincerity to learn and to become a better visionary leader. In their view, good senior administrators focus on developing a team and constantly search for innovation and innovative people while developing the talent that currently exists. In terms of balancing family and home, senior administrators advised that people in these positions need to “set a standard of balance in your professional life; legitimize the opportunity for personal balance,” and to be intentional about making time for personal space and family commitments.

Perhaps the primary piece of advice for those aspiring to become senior administrators was not to lose sight of the educative purposes of the role. As one superintendent suggested, “think of the position as a vocation, not a job, a legacy commitment, soul-ful work, not administrative work. Think about your work from the perspective of the students, because ultimately you can make a difference in the lives of kids by the appointments you make, by the advice you give, a whole host of things.” A second superintendent suggested the following:

As a senior administrator we can make a difference for kids and their future—we provide hope.... There are kids in this community who, aside from us, have little hope for the future. And I really think that’s what we need to be reminded of—that’s what we do.... Just like Dr. DeBakey who said, “I’m a doctor--I fight death,” I’m an educator—I provide hope.

Ultimately, aspirants are encouraged to move into senior administrators to bring hope, innovation, and passion for developing the capacity of our school systems to provide the best possible service to students.

Conclusion

The average age of senior administrators suggests that many are close to retirement, though there is some indication that administrative turnover has begun. This is exemplified by the fact that current assistant superintendents are significantly younger than superintendents. It is also evidenced in the fact that the vast majority of senior administrators (71%), and in particular rural senior administrators, had less than 10 years of experience in senior administrative positions, and 61% had worked in their current position for less than 5 years. This finding suggests that there is a need for two areas of career support: retirement planning and induction efforts. In the past year, the Manitoba Association for School Superintendents (MASS) initiated a mentoring program for new members, and the feedback to date has been positive.

The sample also describes a well-educated and highly credentialed cadre of professionals, although rural senior administrators were less likely to be as highly educated as urban administrators. Some of this no doubt stems from access issues to centers of higher learning which are centered in the cities of Winnipeg and Brandon, and can be hours away from many of the rural communities in which these administrators work. It may also be due to the fact that collective bargaining for teachers and school-based administrators is done at the local divisional level in Manitoba. Collective agreements in urban areas tend to be more lucrative because of their economies of scale, and are more apt to encourage and provide some resource support (time, sabbaticals, and reimbursement) for professional development activities, including education. Urban school professionals are more likely to use this access and opportunity to gain educational credentials before entering senior administration, where contracts are negotiated individually. There was no difference in the educational and certification levels between assistant superintendents and superintendents (and in fact, the proportions of assistant superintendents

with Masters degrees and Level II Principals certificates were higher than superintendents). Given this fact, and that assistant superintendents were found to be significantly younger than superintendents, it may be argued that the “new” pool for the superintendency tends to be a younger and more highly qualified group than in the past.

Even though neither educational level beyond a bachelor’s degree nor certification is “required” by law in Manitoba, local school divisions are definitely prioritizing them in hiring procedures, and it appears that assistant superintendents are taking the initiative to increase their educational credentials. The implications for career development therefore stem from designing programs that “level the playing field” of access and opportunity for rural administrators. A program that was designed to minimize time, resource, and distance issues that are compounded for rural educators would help to increase the educational credentials available to them and would heighten the quality standards of hiring practices in rural areas. Such a program may include senior administrators, but it could also target those aspiring to administration, so that rural areas could build capacity in succession planning for the future. This may include the design of programs with some combination of online work, cohort programs offered onsite in rural communities, and summer/weekend initiatives. In addition, some discussion on and more education about collective bargaining and negotiating individual contracts to include opportunities for learning might be beneficial, so that those who have not accessed collective bargaining benefits before they move into senior administration are able to do so after they enter. Since senior administrative contracts are negotiated individually, more transparency in this process is warranted, particularly for new senior administrators unused to the process. The results suggest that it is imperative that those in charge of designing, implementing, and

evaluating career development programs remain flexible and sensitive to the fact that what may be appropriate for some subgroups will not suit the needs of others.

Besides external career development programs, individuals need also consider a number of factors before moving in to senior administrative positions in Manitoba. Those currently serving in these positions caution aspirants to consider the nature of the position, to develop and nurture their self-knowledge, and to become familiar with the realities of the work. These findings concur with literature previously conducted on the nature of administrative work (Mintzberg, 1973; Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). The nature of this very public position is one of high responsibility, little security, often highly conflictual, overwhelming at many times, and based on service to others through the use of strong human relations skills. In the area of self-knowledge, respondents suggested that aspirants need a deep understanding of their own value system and whether it aligns with the organization with which they wish to work. They also must be a lifelong learner willing to exemplify that in their own growth and how they lead that within their divisions. Integrity, enthusiasm, and a willingness to work hard to learn what one does not necessarily understand or cannot control is very important. The realities of the work environment related to the highly political nature of the position, which includes the need for diplomacy, the willingness to work with change, and an ability to work carefully with educational stakeholder groups, particularly the school board. Time management, the need for flexibility, and the recognition of the isolation of the position were also part of the nature of the position that affects senior administrators on a regular basis.

The advice of senior administrators centered on the consideration of the rewards of the position and encouragement of aspirants to take on leadership roles that increased their visibility as leaders. Such advice is found in many studies related to the superintendency (Crippen &

Wallin, 2008; Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000; Wallin, 2005). As they begin to consider applying for positions, aspirants were encouraged to talk to incumbents, and to find out what they can about the nature of the position, division and community in which they are interested, but not to be discouraged should they not obtain a position immediately. Using the assistant superintendency as training ground for the superintendency was also encouraged. Once they had obtained a position, aspirants should be willing to be mentored to learn from others, develop networks, be prepared to challenge self and others, work hard, lead by example, be open-minded, search for innovation, and maintain a balance between work and their personal lives. Most importantly, aspirants were encouraged to not lose sight of the educative purposes of their role, or of the tremendous responsibility they have as educational leaders to bring hope and to develop capacity within their school divisions.

A reconceptualization of the knowledge, skills, and role requirements of senior administrators in Manitoba should be lead by the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, with input from those groups that have an interest in ensuring that the senior administrative cadre in Manitoba is highly qualified and supported. Such groups may include Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, the four preparatory universities in the province, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the Council of School Leaders, and the Manitoba Teachers Society. Based on this reconceptualization, not unlike that advocated by Grogan (2000), a career development program that targets both aspiring and current incumbents within senior administrative positions should be designed that reflects the complex and interconnected relationships between position, context, and gender, and incorporates the sage advice of those who currently reside in these roles. But individuals also have some responsibility in ensuring that they are ready to move into a senior leadership position, and therefore are encouraged to consider

the factors listed above. The ideas presented in this paper offer a starting point for such a discussion, with the hope that senior administrators in Manitoba can feel supported in their roles as educational leaders of the public school system.

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Appendix

Table
Background Demographic and Career Information

Background Characteristic						
Spouse or Partner	Yes N=45 (91.8%)	No N=4 (8.2%)				
Children	Yes N=40 (81.6%)	No N=9 (18.4%)				
Age	31-40 N=3 (6%)	41-50 N=14 (28.6%)	> 50 N=30 (61%)			
Education Level	Bachelors N=6 (12.2%)	Post-Graduate N=12 (24.5%)	Masters N=28 (57.1%)	PhD N=3 (6.1%)		
Certifications	None N=10 (20.4%)	Level I N=6 (12.2%)	Level II N=29 (59.2%)	Combination or Other N=4 (8.2%)		
Number of Years in Current Position	< 5 N=30 (61.2%)	6-15 N=18 (36.7%)	> 20 N=1 (2%)			
Total Number of Years in Senior Administration	< 10 N=35 (71.4%)	11-15 N=8 (16%)	16-20 N=2 (4.1%)	> 20 N=4 (8.2%)		
Total Number of Years in Senior Administration for Those with Less than 10 Years of Experience	First Year N=5 (10.2%)	2-5 N=18 (36.7%)	6-10 N=12 (24.5%)			
Total Administrative Experience (Years)	First Year N=1 (2.1%)	2-5 N=3 (6.1%)	6-10 N=8 (18.4%)	11-15 N=8 (18.4%)	16-20 N=8 (18.4%)	> 20 N=18 (36.4%)