

## The Influence of One School District's Policies, Practices, and Ethos in Hiring Women as Principals

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### Abstract

This paper explores the influence of the policies, practices, and ethos in one particular Canadian school district, as they relate to hiring women as school principals. In seeking to explain the inequitable gender representation of principals in this school district, the study at hand identified power and privilege as the pivotal factors that influenced the school district's acceptance of differing approaches to leadership as well as its support in the areas of recruiting and training, mentoring and hiring, and balancing work and family life. This paper provides a model of supports, as well as a list of recommendations, that may enable this school district to achieve equitable gender representation among its school principals. This study may be of interest to other school districts to help identify similar types of barriers and supports that exist within their districts and similarly influence women's decisions to enter into school administration.

### Introduction

Women continue to strive for equitable representation in school leadership, within schools and school districts in Canada, as men continue to hold the majority of principal and vice-principal positions. Within Canadian schools, 26 percent of all elementary and secondary teachers are men, but men still hold 44 percent of all principal positions (Statistics Canada, 2011). Though some schools and school districts within Canada have been able to achieve an equitable gender balance at the principal level, women continue to be largely underrepresented when national demographics are considered.

In this article, I discuss the findings of a recent study that investigated the policies, practices, and ethos of one Canadian school district, Haddow School District (HSD)<sup>i</sup>, where a disproportionate number of men hold positions as principals. More specifically, within this particular school district, 2010 data revealed that 16 percent of its school principals were women while 84 percent were men. The HSD is a largely rural district with approximately 1,000 employees and serves a population of fewer than 10,000 students who come from a variety of cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. The purpose of the study was to examine both constraining and enabling policies, practices, and ethos<sup>ii</sup> related to equitable gender hiring policies in the HSD. The results of this research helped to explain the state of the gendered culture in the district.

## Literature Review

In order to gain an understanding of some of the challenges and successes that women have encountered when pursuing positions as school principals, I undertook a review of current literature in this area. I identified four areas as significant in affecting women's decisions to enter into principal positions. These areas include: (a) men's power and privilege, (b) the role of mentorship and networking, (c) the acceptance of differing approaches to leadership, and (d) the ability of women to balance work and family life.

### *Men's Power and Privilege*

For the purposes of this article, I define men's power and privilege as referring to men's control over others and the unearned advantages that they are awarded (as a result of their gender). Power and privilege allow men greater access to opportunities, such as employment. This serves to limit opportunities for women who do not have membership in this social identity group. Sherman (2005) asserted that men's power and privilege negatively affects women's opportunities to obtain principal positions:

Normative practices surrounding leadership preparation are deeply entrenched with issues of maintaining power and preserving the status quo for traditionalists. Practices in leadership development have existed under the rules of power. Such an oppressive social structure makes it difficult for women to break out of the cycle of their subjectification. (p. 734)

Many researchers point out the inequitable treatment of women compared to men within educational institutions (Connell, 1993; Luttrell, 1989; Weiler, 1988). This has resulted in a disparity between the proportional representation of women and men in educational administration positions (Shakeshaft, 1987; Statistics Canada, 2011). Some other barriers women have encountered, and that relate to men's power and privilege, include overt discrimination (Coleman, 2007), a lack of mentorship (Sherman, 2005), and a lack of networking opportunities (Jacobs, 2002; Shakeshaft, 1987).

### *The Role of Mentorship and Networking*

Research shows that women who have been mentored prior to, during, and after becoming school administrators have greater longevity as vice-principals and principals (Sherman, 2005). Women who aspire to become educational leaders and develop effective mentorship relationships have more opportunities to advance into positions of power and authority (Samier, 2000). In addition to the influence of mentors' networking opportunities within school districts is also a factor that affects the hiring of women into educational leadership positions. Adams & Hambright (2004), Sherman (2005), Sperandio (2009), and Young & McLeod (2001) identified the influence school district-based leadership programs can have on the selection of its educational leaders. They identify concerns about the structure of some school district-based leadership programs, which could limit opportunities for prospective leaders. They also identify a variety of measures that could positively affect the way school district-based leadership programs operate.

### *The Acceptance of Differing Approaches to Leadership*

Many women have also been challenged by the lack of acceptance of differing approaches to leadership within educational institutions (Shakeshaft, 1987). This, in effect, may negatively impact women's potential for advancement as Rosener (1990) found that more often women employ a transformational rather than a transactional approach to leadership (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). A leader who uses a transformational approach is more frequently concerned with team building and collaboration within an organization, while a leader who uses a transactional approach more often acts as a manager within an organization (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Sanchez and Thornton (2010) stated that society should be open to accepting a variety of leadership styles. Therefore, a successful school administration would benefit from women being offered more training opportunities in leadership with the realization that a combination of leadership approaches is necessary and valuable in school administration (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Thompson & Thornton, 2000).

### *The Ability of Women to Balance Work and Family Life*

School principals who are women find it challenging to balance work and family life (Coleman, 2007; Loder, 2005; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Sherman, 2005). School district support systems and policy statements provide women (and men) with limited opportunities to balance their professional and personal lives (Loder, 2005). A variety of factors contribute to the inequitable gender representation of school principals; however, these four areas, (a) men's power and privilege, (b) the role of mentorship and networking, (c) the acceptance of differing approaches to leadership, and (d) the ability of women to balance work and family life, appear to be the most significant in providing a context for understanding the research question posed in this study.

### Methodology

A case study design was employed to address the research question: How do the policies, practices, and ethos of a school district influence the appointment of women to school principal positions? The use of a case study allowed me to conduct an in-depth analysis of a bounded system (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995). Merriam (2009) indicated that a bounded system can designate a defined space and place where research is conducted. The use of a bounded system allowed me to examine a specific time, location, and individuals within a setting, which was a present day examination of four women educational administrators in one school district.

Furthermore, case study methodology provided the framework necessary to examine specifically the policies, practices, and ethos of a single school district. The epistemological perspective that informed this qualitative research was constructivism. I was positioned to interact with the research participants and make interpretations about a phenomenon through this interaction. One of the goals in using a constructivist perspective was to understand the historical and cultural settings of the research participants (Creswell, 2003) by studying them in the social context in which they lived and worked. A constructivist perspective allowed me to understand the experiences of educational leaders in the HSD from the perspective of women who had held or were holding positions in these roles.

### *Data Collection*

The data was derived from interviews and document analysis. The use of interviews allowed me to understand deeply the experiences of four women leaders in the HSD. Interviews allowed for the collection of qualitative descriptions of the participants' lives and positioned me to interpret their meanings (Kvale, 1996). The documents I examined enabled me to understand the HSD's policies and ethos related to equitable hiring practices. Together, the use of interview and document data allowed for a comparison of how district and provincial policy was practiced in the school district.

### Interviews

Participant data was collected through the use of semi-structured, open-ended, individual, face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 2005; Flick, 1998; Merriam, 2009) with administrators from the HSD. The research participants included four women from the district: (a) Karen, a former principal on a short-term leave, (b) Lydia, a current principal, (c) Frances, a current principal (and former vice-principal), and (d) Melissa, a current vice-principal. Through purposeful selection, participants were selected because they were women who all had held or were holding an educational leadership position in the HSD. Each hour-long interview, which were transcribed, focused on questions regarding learning about the participants' motivations and influences to become leaders, leadership approaches, and leadership challenges. Once interviews were completed, participants were invited to meet a second time in order to confirm findings and ratify my conclusions through the use of member checks.

The interview format I employed allowed me to guide the participants through pre-set, semi-structured questions to address key themes, yet it was still flexible enough to allow for openness to change the sequencing of the questions (Kvale, 1996). This created a comfortable and conversational environment for the participants. By approaching the

data collection in this manner, I was able to probe research participants' experiences in such a way that they provided a great deal of detailed personal information (Creswell, 2005).

### Documents

The use of documents was important for this research study, because they provided a deeper understanding of the institutional factors revealed in school district policies and practices, which both constrained and enabled women to become school principals. At the onset of the study I identified several documents as appropriate, which were obtained from the HSD, the provincial teachers' union, and the provincial department of education<sup>iii</sup>. Sections of policy documents from the HSD, the provincial teachers' union, and the provincial department of education that pertained to affirmative action and the equitable representation of minorities were of particular significance. It was through the careful reading of the documents that I further understood the HSD's ethos relating to equitable hiring practices.

### *Data Analysis*

Interviews and documents in this study were thematically coded and analyzed using a very similar approach. I began an analysis of the interviews as the interviews were being conducted. Creswell (2005) as well as Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggested identifying key ideas by coding them using a few words to assign meaning, such as naming the sub and central themes in the text; this approach was employed throughout the analysis of data. As I analyzed the data central ideas emerged; I categorized these codes into themes. Following this categorization, themes were linked to previous literature and supported with the research participants' direct quotes. These themes included: (a) valuing differing approaches to leadership; (b) supports in recruiting, training, and mentoring; (c) supports in hiring; and (d) supports for women to balance work and family life. The analysis of the documents mirrored many aspects of my approach to analyzing interviews. That is, I first analyzed the documents for central ideas. Following this, documents were identified and highlighted, and I analyzed the coded content for themes and sub-themes. I supported these with direct quotes from the HSD, teachers' union, and provincial department of education policy documents.

### *Credibility and Consistency*

In order to ensure credibility and consistency in the analyses of the data, I employed various strategies throughout the research process. Triangulation, member checks, peer review, and reflexivity were used to ensure credibility of the findings (Merriam, 2009). The use of multiple strategies reduced the possibility of drawing unsubstantiated conclusions. Consistency was another concern, and I employed strategies that demonstrated the conclusions drawn from the data "made sense—they [were] consistent and dependable" (Merriam, 2009, p. 221).

Triangulation allowed the utilization of a "combination of appropriate research perspectives and methods that are suitable for taking into account as many different aspects of a problem as possible" (Flick, 1998, p. 50). By employing the practice of triangulation, I appropriately positioned myself to synthesize the data into coherent themes (Creswell, 2003). The information collected from interviews and from documents (e.g., school district collective agreements and hiring policies) provided a cross-check of data.

Member checks were employed, which were essential and provided me with accurate representations of the ideas of the individuals interviewed (Creswell, 2003). Member checks also allowed for "some fine-tuning to better capture their perspectives" (Merriam, 2009, p. 217). After interviews were transcribed the interviews were analyzed individually and follow-up meetings/interviews were conducted with the research participants. These member checks enabled the participants the opportunity to read their results, so they could address and alter any of their ideas and statements that I might have unintentionally misinterpreted. This provided a more accurate portrayal of each research participant's intended message.

The use of peer review also allowed me an opportunity to reflect on the plausibility of the data and emerging findings. A colleague, familiar with my research, was selected and able to offer constructive feedback throughout the study. An essential strategy employed to ensure credibility of the findings was through the use of reflexivity.

Prior to beginning the study I made clear my biases and assumptions related to women obtaining positions as school principals. I stated that as a woman, who might have aspirations to become a school principal in this school district, I was aware of the unwelcoming environment for women in leadership positions in the HSD. In using reflexivity, I recognized that knowledge is socially constructed. I also have an understanding that my values, interests, and experiences have shaped this research study.

## Results and Discussion

A thorough examination and integration of the interview and document data appear to indicate that power and privilege are pivotal factors that influence the hiring of women as school principals. These factors are embedded in the HSD's hiring policies, practices, and ethos. Issues of men's power and privilege may influence the district's acceptance of differing approaches to leading, the supports it provides to recruit, train, mentor, and hire school principals, and the assistance it provides for principals to balance work and family life. These ideas emerged from the data as the central themes and aided in explaining and understanding why many women might be deterred from becoming school principals.

### *Valuing Differing Approaches to Leadership*

Within the HSD, principals employ both transactional and transformational leadership approaches (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). However, the HSD appears to encourage women principals to use transactional leadership approaches, which is a more managerial method (Coleman, 2007). Both Karen and Lydia indicated that in the past, they had to change their leadership style and adopt a more managerial approach. Karen said, "Young women are raised to not be engaged in conflict, where young men by virtue of the sports... conflict is something to engage in". Karen further added, "I am a conflict avoider... I was a peace keeper... I had to definitely take that on". As a principal, Karen stated she had to change who she was.

Lydia purported that a significant component of the principal position stressed a management approach, and the HSD undervalued principals building relationships with students:

I have a couple of friends who used to be principals in this [district] and have left that job, and both of them have become counsellors, and I think that they just felt like the expectations for principals excluded their ability to really develop relationships with the kids.

Karen also stated, "I think our system [the HSD] forces people to be more managers". Frances, too, felt she had to change her approach to leadership practice. She indicated that she valued collaborative practices and believed that teamwork was important, but she also employed a managerial approach.

The HSD does not appear to value differing approaches to leadership. Most of the participants (Karen, Lydia, and Melissa) indicated a preference for the use of transformational approaches, which have been associated with the way female principals lead (Rosener, 1990). When reflecting on her collaborative efforts, Lydia stated, "We kind of work all together... I definitely mean the teachers and I as a team". In line with the literature (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Thompson & Thornton, 2000), Frances indicated that no one approach is ideal, but rather a combination of approaches is valuable and necessary in school leadership commenting, "It's a combination of leadership... also a bit of being in charge and making the school be the school that you think it can be, or that it should be, and creating the best possible effective environment for kids".

### *Supports in Recruiting, Training, and Mentoring*

The findings of this research study reveal that no formal recruiting, training, or mentoring programs have been established by the HSD, which encourage women to become school principals. Lydia stated, "I don't know the last time when our district put out any kind of an 'all call' for anybody interested in taking the leadership module". The absence of a leadership recruiting, training, and mentorship program may unwittingly discourage women from

entering educational administration. A formalized recruiting and training program, along with ongoing long-term mentorship practices, might possibly provide the necessary supports to encourage and retain women in positions as school principals (Adams & Hambright, 2004; Sherman, 2005).

The research participants indicated they chose to become principals without support, encouragement, or guidance from the HSD and found support in informal networks. Karen said, “You kind of established your own support system”. Karen indicated that her interest in leadership emerged from her dissatisfaction with many of the leadership practices she witnessed and wanted to employ practices as a principal that would be supportive and allow teachers to be more effective educators. Additionally, both Lydia and Melissa did not identify anyone in the HSD who directed them to consider becoming principals. When asked if anyone raised the possibility that she might become a principal after she attained a vice-principal position, Melissa simply replied “No”. Melissa also suggested that the HSD could have provided supports: “The school [district] could hire people to come after school, or on weekends or an evening, and have someone come and talk to people about what it’s like to be a leader and what you need to do”. Without the HSD’s implementation of a formal recruiting, training, and mentorship program, opportunities for women to become principals will remain limited. Sherman (2005) asserted that a school district or district-based leadership program can offer individuals the necessary skills, attitudes, and knowledge to be successful administrators in their school districts.

Mentors are also needed as Lydia stated, “I think that there has to be some role models of women who started in administration and spend their career there while life continues...the lack of role models in our district discourages women from becoming principals”. This study’s findings are congruent with research conducted by Young and McLeod (2001) who found two significant factors that serve to encourage women to enter into educational administration: (a) the presence of role models, and (b) support and endorsement throughout the process. As Karen stated, “There’s those female administrators who are out there [in the HSD], have had to blaze their own trails, and that sounds dumb, considering it’s 2011. I should be saying this is 1960, right?” Her statement speaks to the lack of supports provided for women aspiring to become principals within the HSD. All of the research participants, with experience as principals, stated that a formal mentoring program (that taught them about a principal’s role and duties) would have benefitted them prior to becoming principals. Despite the lack of a formal mentorship program in the HSD, the research participants informally selected their own mentors and indicated that mentors played a significant role in their lives, which allowed them to navigate their way through some of the challenges they encountered before becoming and acting as school principals. Melissa’s statement indicates that mentors can provide support to challenge the status quo, “she [her mentor] very much encouraged me to apply for the job because she felt that there was a lack of female representation in administration and she was trying to encourage females to apply for those positions”. By seeking out their own mentors and drawing support from them, the participants were better positioned to challenge the men’s power and privilege they referred to as the “old boys’ club” and obtain educational leadership positions.

### *Supports in Hiring*

Women are able to obtain positions as school principals in the HSD, but they are inequitably represented. The hiring policies and practices in the HSD do not ensure that women are effectively supported to obtain principal positions. The HSD hiring document and equity policy identify that women are an underrepresented group and require greater support so that they may obtain educational leadership positions in the HSD. The HSD equity policy appears to support equitable hiring practices, however, despite this and other HSD policies, as well as documents produced by the provincial department of education, there has been little action to transform the representation of women in educational leadership in the HSD.

A variety of factors account for this disparity, but men’s power and privilege appear to affect most strongly the HSD’s hiring of women. Melissa stated:

I think it’s because some men in positions of power have gotten their jobs because they are good buddies, not because they are good administrators...I think there is something that is sort of clouding, or preventing women to go for administrative positions.

Karen also commented, “There are still the telephone calls that happen and there are still the people that are encouraged to apply, and there are still situations where people are discouraged, you know, from applying”. The research participants often referred to this male power and privilege as the “old boys’ club”. All of the research participants remarked they had, at least one time, felt intimidated or challenged during the hiring process to become school administrators. When Karen first applied to become a principal, she filed a grievance against the HSD for its unfair hiring practice and won. Lydia and Frances also described encountering a number of difficulties in the hiring process to become a principal and indicated that her confidence was challenged by these experiences. Additionally, Melissa spoke of her experience in the hiring process, and remarked that she had felt intimidated by the male-only interview panel, she stated, “I’m the only woman in the room...it’s just intimidating”. When the research participants were asked to specifically address challenges they faced as they went through the hiring process and acted as administrators in the HSD, three of the research participants referenced the “old boys’ club” (Jacobs, 2002; Shakeshaft, 1987). Frances stated:

There is a block there. The [district] is willing to bring them [women] on up to a certain position [vice-principal positions]... there is no way that all these female VPs [vice-principals] can mess up interviews this badly over and over again, to not become principals so something is going on.

Whether or not the “old boys’ club” exists, the notion that a group of men strongly influenced and affected women from applying to become school principals is evident.

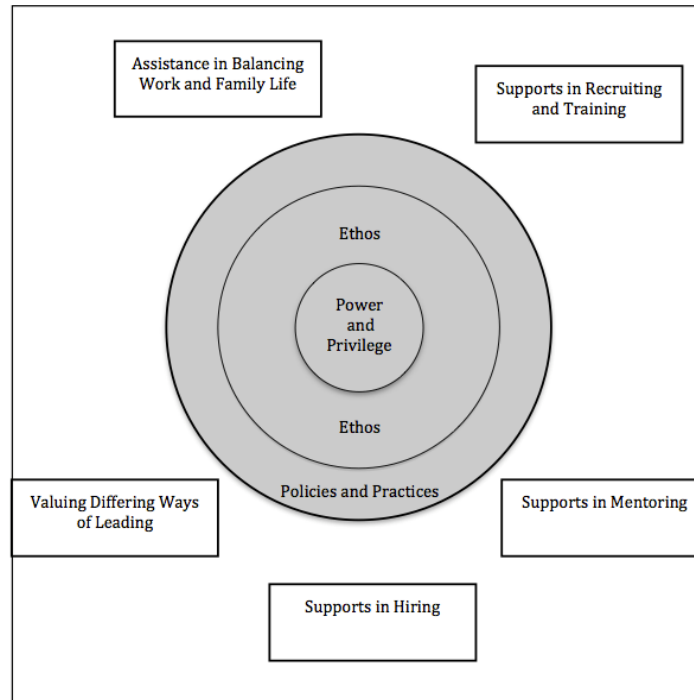
#### *Supports for Women to Balance Work and Family Life*

The research participants in this study stated that they believe a great deal of time is required to be a successful and effective principal. Karen, Lydia, and Melissa identified the difficulty in balancing their work and family life and indicated that the HSD is not supportive and understanding of these challenges. The time required to manage a school effectively can be especially challenging for women principals who have to balance both work and family life (Coleman, 2007; Loder, 2005; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). With this in mind, the inability to negotiate a healthy balance between work and home has dissuaded or delayed some women from becoming school principals. When Lydia first became a principal she perceived that the HSD did not believe women (unlike men) valued their careers as principals. Lydia herself did not become a principal in the HSD until her children had graduated from high school and left home to attend university. Lydia reported that a senior level HSD employee said to her, “This is a great time for you to be in administration, now that your kids are all grown up, now that you have more time and everything. This is when women should get in administration”.

After Karen had children she did not return to her position, because the HSD asked her if she would step down from her role as principal to take on an alternate position. Karen indicated she believed she was demoted as a result of having a child. Melissa, a vice-principal, indicated that being a principal required too great a commitment of time. She had made a decision to not become a school principal based on her perceptions of the job requirements. It is perhaps this perception, and the ethos of the HSD, that has served to dissuade women from considering and becoming school principals in the HSD. If the issue of how to support women so they can find balance in their lives, both personally and professionally, is not addressed few women will consider becoming or remaining school principals.

Women have opted out of leadership roles in order to balance their work and family lives. In the absence of good mentorship, women are left to navigate the work and family balance on their own. Women can benefit from the wisdom of other women regarding how to manage these challenges, perhaps through the use of mentors and formal networks. In the absence of school district support, women leaders remain isolated or choose to take on this responsibility themselves. Without explicit provisions, which support and encourage women with families to work as school principals, it appears few women will consider this career path.

Figure 1. Relationship of power and privilege to policies, practices, and ethos.



The model presented in Figure 1 represents the current relationship and effect of power and privilege on the HSD's policies, practices, and ethos as they relate to the hiring of women as principals. This model expresses the idea that power and privilege influence every aspect of leadership and so lie at the centre of the circle. The district's support structures, which do not encourage and value different ways of leading, are labeled on this model and are located outside of the power circle. These represent the HSD's inability to effectively embrace and support differing approaches to leading. Without explicitly acknowledging that a variety in approaches to leadership is acceptable, the HSD fails to effectively implement practices that are supportive of recruiting, training, mentoring, and hiring women as principals. In the model these supports are also represented outside the circle. Furthermore, until the school district validates the concept that differing approaches to leadership can exist, no measures will be created that can legitimately provide assistance to school principals who attempt to achieve balance between their work and family life. Again, in the model, assistance for balancing work and family life is placed outside the circle. Power and privilege are so embedded in the policies, practices, and ethos of the HSD's hiring practices that they greatly diminish the possibility and opportunity for equitable gender representation among school principals.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Women and men alike can be positioned to be successful in obtaining positions as school principals when school districts provide support structures to recruit, train, hire, and retain them. However, when inequitable gender representation exist at the administrative level, alternative measures need to be employed in order to resolve the imbalance. Should the HSD wish to achieve equitable gender representation among school principals, several modifications are suggested.

- Accept the practice of diversity in leadership approaches and implement leadership training programs that encourage the use of a variety of leadership approaches.
- Make available a clear list of a principal's responsibilities for the use of individuals seeking information about the skills and knowledge expected of a principal.
- Provide a formal leadership mentorship program for prospective, in-training, and acting women principals.



- Provide formal networking opportunities strictly for women principals to collaborate.
- Ensure that gender parity exists on all interview panels.
- Declare its dedication to equity and educate all staff about equity.
- Reassess the procedures used to evaluate principal candidates' portfolios and interviews and employ practices such that the female gender is given special consideration.
- Recruit and train women with children to become school principals.
- Provide women with children supports such as flexible scheduling and employer supported childcare so that they can effectively balance their work and family lives.
- Employ and encourage the use of distributed leadership practices.

The evidence from both the interviews and documents indicates that few mechanisms have been in place to support women in their roles as school principals in the HSD. The school district needs to become aware of and address the ways in which male power and privilege affect its policies, practices, and ethos as it relates to the hiring of women as school principals. Women will be better positioned to meet the challenges and consider the possibility of becoming principals if differing approaches to leadership are valued, supports are in place for recruiting, training, mentoring, and hiring, and provisions are made allowing for women to balance their work and family lives. The HSD should reconsider and revise its current policies and practices to eliminate the pervasiveness of male power and privilege so that equitable gender representation among school principals can be achieved.

Figure 2. Idealized school district supports to provide equitable gender representation among school principals.

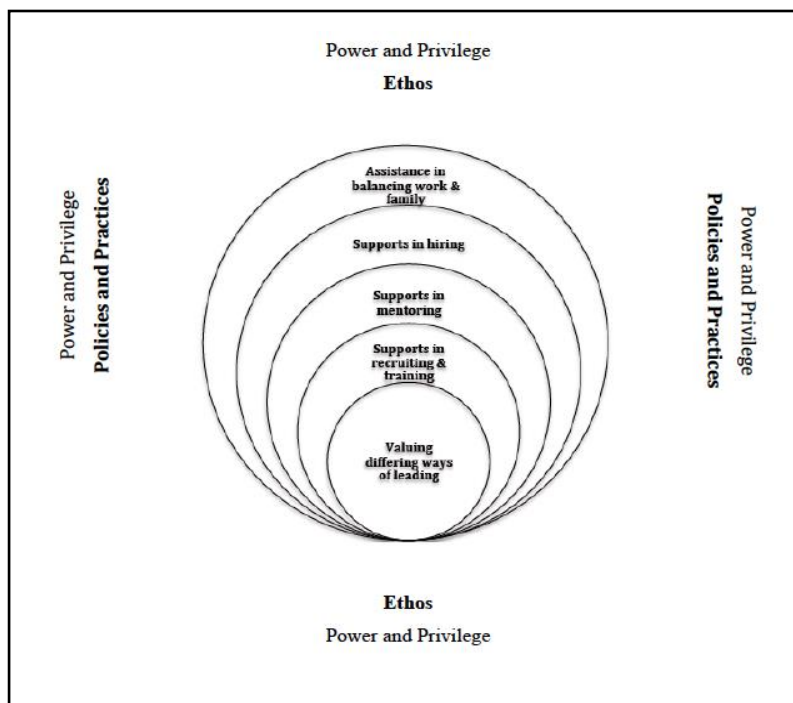


Figure 2 presents an alternate model that the HSD could utilize, which places importance on valuing differing approaches to leading, providing supports in recruiting and training, mentoring, and hiring, and providing assistance to principals balancing work and family life. If the recommendations in this study are implemented, this model could represent the district's approach to promoting equitable gender representation among school principals. The model represents the recognition that, in the past, power and privilege have played a role in the HSD's ethos, policies, and practices as they relate to gender equitable hiring practices. However, by placing *valuing differing approaches to leadership* at the centre of the model, followed by *providing supports* in recruiting, training,

mentoring, and hiring, and then locating *assistance for women to balance work and family life* on the outer circle, these factors could effectively counter male power and privilege.

This model suggests that the most significant factor affecting the HSD's hiring practices, outside of power and privilege, is the promotion and acceptance of different ways of leading. Acknowledging the importance of this factor can impact positively on the supports that the district provides in recruiting and training, mentoring, and hiring of female principals. In valuing diverse leadership approaches, the HSD would be able to provide assistance to women, and men, to more successfully balance their work and family lives. This model emphasizes how these factors could affect one another and could create an ethos within the HSD that would push aside the adverse effects of power and privilege on the district's policies and practices.

#### Educational Significance

This research study could be useful for other school districts in identifying similar types of barriers and supports that exist within their districts and similarly influence women's decisions to enter into school administration. This would then provide school districts with opportunities to learn and develop differing approaches and supports to the hiring of its employees. I hope that the results of this research will contribute to the development of a future in which more women will be recruited, hired, and retained as school principals within Canadian schools. Future research could include collaboration between the university and the HSD to further investigate the conditions that have led to the inequitable gender representation of its school principals. Perhaps this collaboration could potentially reform policies and practices in the HSD that could effect change.

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#### Notes

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<sup>i</sup> In order to protect the anonymity of the school district and the research participants, pseudonyms have been used.

<sup>ii</sup> Within this paper I define ethos to mean the basic character and culture of the HSD and its underlying beliefs and practices.

<sup>iii</sup> In order to protect the anonymity of the research participants these documents are not named and do not appear in the reference list as they identify the school district and its province.