

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS REPORT: A CASE STUDY
ANALYSIS OF A HIGH ACHIEVING
SCHOOL DISTRICT'S CULTURE

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CHAPTER 1: INDIVIDUAL'S ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT FOCUS

The Process

Many people have stated that the best part of completing a long journey is remembering the process of the lessons learned along the way instead of focusing on the finished product itself. This is the best way I can describe my experiences along the path of completing this capstone project and the accompanying dissertation paper en route to completing the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from Saint Louis University.

This entire project was unlike anything I have ever accomplished in my life, and my growth definitely occurred during the process with the hopes that the finished paper will reflect the best of what I've learned.

Prior to entering the doctoral program at SLU, my only exposure to the work associated with such a degree was through my wife, Jennifer, who completed this program a few years prior. I was aware of the Saturdays that she was absent from home, as well as the work she put in with her project group. I also knew how happy she was at the hooding ceremony in St. Louis upon completion of her degree. Other than that, I didn't have direct knowledge of what she was actually doing all those hours she was gone.

Several years ago, I was in a position where I needed to make a career decision. I earned my master's degree, but I had no hours beyond that. At that point in my teaching career, I was a couple of years away from bottoming out on the master's column of my school district's salary scale. In order to save myself from losing money in the short and long term, I needed to add hours to my resume. Therefore, I had two choices: take classes for the sole purpose of moving over on the salary scale, or earn something more substantial, like a specialist or doctoral degree.

My immediate thought was that another degree was a much better option in the event I had career aspirations involving administration or higher education later. If I took hours just to move over, I would essentially be ending those options in my career. After program shopping, I decided to take on the same challenge that my wife encountered and enrolled at Saint Louis University.

My background is in physical education and health, and I have worked as a teacher in those disciplines in the middle and high school settings. Also, I have successfully coached interscholastic girls' basketball and volleyball for a number of years. Suffice it to say, there aren't very many physical education teachers and coaches on a path to receive a doctorate! However, I've always felt I was unique in the cerebral way I approached my jobs. To me, it seemed natural to bridge these two seemingly mismatched worlds in my life.

Leading Up To Leadership

Others have seen leadership qualities in me. At the start of my teaching career, a former principal immediately thought I should follow the administrative path, so I began to attend functions, symposiums, and conferences with other area administrators. My name started to circulate as an aspiring administrator. However, as the speed of fast track increased, I felt like I needed to establish myself as a teacher and coach in order to be a more effective administrator. So, I put the brakes on that piece of my life and chose to become a head coach and to continue teaching.

Looking back, that was a milestone moment in my life. I don't think there was much doubt with the connections I was making and administrative experience I was gaining, it would have been a matter of time before I landed an entry-level position. However, I reflect on that

time and my life and believe that I would have not had the impact I could have now that I have many more experiences to draw upon.

I do believe, however, that I gained valuable leadership experience, even though I have never carried the official title of an administrator. Through my teaching and coaching career, I have served on committees such as site based council, instructional leadership team, and building leadership team. I have assumed coordinator positions with regards to ACT Prep in my building, the advisory program and with our literacy project. I have been an adjunct professor at a nearby university for a master's course. Finally, I was the president of our local, and eventually, our state volleyball coaches association which required great organization and coordination of many individuals across Missouri.

So, after nearly a decade of all that, I felt much better prepared to tackle the mantle of school leadership and to pursue the doctoral degree. Of course, now that I believe I'm ready, administrative positions are at a premium versus when I could have had one easier ten years ago! Regardless, I have no regrets and believe that this was the most effective path for me.

Saint Louis University

Therefore, I enrolled at Saint Louis University and throughout the coursework, I knew that this moment dealing with the project was coming. However, it never seemed real to me. As I was focused only on working within the scope of my coursework, this idea of the capstone project was amorphous at best. For the longest time, it was this big nebulous idea that never was tangible until I actually had to understand it and face it. That moment was at Gateway in the summer of 2010.

The best part of the program at Gateway was the closing sessions where program graduates would present their projects, but more importantly, what it took to complete their projects. It was then, that I gained a full appreciation of what was in front of myself and my partner.

Speaking of my partner, Todd Schuetz, he was terrific to work with. The thing about Saint Louis University that was appealing is the emphasis on collaboration. That is what will occur in the real world, so why not incorporate that into aspects of the coursework and the degree itself? And, in what I've witnessed, whoever makes the project group assignments usually nails it right on the nose. Very few groups have been destroyed due to total dysfunction. That's not to say there aren't hurdles to overcome—it just takes a great deal of trust and communication. Those traits are critical to success in positions of leadership in our educational world today.

Originally, we were to have been a group of three, however the third person was unable to continue the program and so, Todd and I were left as a twosome. Todd's background was much more administrative than me. The last time he was a classroom teacher was nearly a decade ago. He has served as a building principal and an assistant superintendent in several different districts since then. Upon our assignment together, he was in the Rolla cohort and moving to the Kansas City area from the Springfield area, so we never officially met until he began working as the assistant superintendent of human resources in the Smithville School District.

So, he brought a very different perspective to the partnership. He had tangible experience in administration, whereas, I had a number of ideas and theories about leadership at that level. Fortunately, we shared most everything else: the same sense of humor type, the same life stage,

the perspective of being a father and husband, the same motivation and desire to learn and grow, and the same interests in sports and family.

We got off to a late start with regards to selecting a topic because we never actually met face-to-face until the fall of 2009. Many other groups had already established themselves and created problem statements at this point, but since Todd was in transit from Springfield to Kansas City, we hadn't even met. This, of course, created challenges right from the beginning in order to maintain an appropriate timeline to finish our project and graduate by the spring of 2011.

So, our norms were created in the fall and winter of 2009 (Appendix B), and at this point, we were just beginning to understand our strengths and weaknesses and to apply the teamwork principles of Larson and LaFasto (1989) along with the project management skills from Lewis (2002). This process will be covered in depth in the next section.

The Project

Finding the true topic of the project ended up being the largest and most time-consuming aspect of the experience. Right off the bat, Todd and I liked the area of leadership styles. Since the end-all, be-all of No Child Left Behind was associated with student achievement, we thought that there may be a link between those two ideas. However, the area of leadership styles in general was a pretty broad topic. We then chose to focus on the leadership style of the person at the top, the superintendent.

From the beginning, in our research, we knew that there wasn't a great deal of literature out there that created a direct link between superintendent-level leadership and student achievement. There are many levels and rinse cycles that need to happen before any initiative

developed at central office reaches the classroom, of course. However, was there any definitive path for school districts to take with regards to making student achievement easier or more effective from the office of the superintendent?

The more we jumped into our research, the more excited we got about the prospects of turning this concept into our project. In December 2009, we attempted to contact our advisor, Dr. Ronald Rebores, about his thoughts regarding our potential topic. Of course, we didn't fully realize that he had multiple advisees with the same amount of vigor and passion towards their projects as well, and we weren't able to connect with him for several months.

As an amusing aside, Todd and I initially thought that our advisor was Dr. William Rebores, instead of Dr. Ronald Rebores. We had actually made first contact with William and he had emailed us a worksheet to fill out concerning the initial stages of choosing a topic. It wasn't until I was organizing some paperwork where I came across the letter from the university with the name of our advisor: Dr. Ronald Rebores. Immediately, I contacted Todd and we quickly rectified the situation with all parties, but we hoped that lack of attention to detail wasn't going to permeate throughout our project!

Meanwhile, back to our potential topics, we continued down the path in the best way we could by reading already-published dissertations and articles on the topic and looking for measurement tools that related leadership styles to achievement in school districts.

When we were able to speak with Dr. Rebores, his initial response was that the link between leadership and achievement was too broad and that we should look at culture as a possible bridge between those two concepts.

Of course, we didn't like that idea, because that would create a new dimension to the project that would create more work! So, we set aside Dr. Rebores's comments and continued to

read on the topics we wanted to expand upon. This error would cost us later, in terms of time, but the process we were about to undertake would teach us a great deal as well.

At this point, we were determined to make our topic work. In April 2010, Dr. Rebore wanted to see a problem statement. So, we created one and submitted it (Appendix D). It wouldn't be until Gateway in June before we were able to discuss it face-to-face. Going into that meeting, Todd and I were very confident that Dr. Rebore would see what kind of research we had done and that our original topic was the way to go. In the interim months between submitting the problem statement and our meeting at Gateway, we had decided we were going to use a measurement instrument concerning superintendent leadership styles and use that data and somehow link it to data from DESE with regards to student achievement in a selected number of school district statewide. We were writing the I.R.B. at this point and were about ready to seek permission from the author of the measurement instrument to utilize it. We were all set and all Dr. Rebore had to do was to rubber stamp our plan at our Gateway meeting. We were so excited!

However, Dr. Rebore grounded the plane before we were even cleared for take-off. Through all the literature and planning we had presented him, he was unconvinced that there was a direct link between superintendent leadership style and student achievement. His main issues dealt with three areas: was this project relevant, doable, and creative. In his estimation, it was a relevant topic, it was somewhat creative, but definitely not doable.

So, with our tail between our legs, we tried to regroup. Later that summer, we talked more with Dr. Rebore, and he thought we should look at taking our topic down a more qualitative path. To this point, we thought it would be more significant if we were able to statistically analyze measures of superintendent leadership style and student achievement for

basis of comparison and to be able to draw relevant educational conclusions. However, Dr. Rebore, who still thought we should explore the culture piece, thought that strictly numbers would not tell the entire story with this topic.

So, he wanted us to send him our bibliography thus far, which at this point had totaled over 75 references. After that, he wanted us to write our literature review and send that to him.

So, it was at this point, we needed to start cataloging our reading and creating an efficient way to amass the notes we have taken thus far in order to create a cohesive literature review. At Gateway, there were program graduates from several groups that presented about their experiences with regards to the team project. Many of these groups utilized team websites from Google that assisted them greatly. So, we decided to start a website of our own in July 2010 to begin the process of compiling our information in a more organized fashion.

This was the most important decision we made to maximize the efficiency of our group. So, we were able to catalog and organize the notes from our reading we amassed thus far and we were able to begin writing our literature review on the website itself. One of the best features was the ability to co-edit the same document at the same time. Todd was the primary author. I took on the responsibility to edit and format. So, when Todd was done with a section and would begin another part of the chapter, I could get a visual and edit the previous part of the same document as he was writing the subsequent part of that chapter. This was the writing process that organically emerged and was incredibly beneficial for our styles as time went on.

Through this process, we were able to complete the literature review with a few months and sent it to Dr. Rebore. At this point we were approaching December 2010. In a short period of time, Dr. Rebore went back and referred us to the discussion about taking a qualitative or quantitative approach to our project. We then recalled our previous discussions with Dr. Rebore

and thought it best to succumb to the idea that a qualitative approach was necessary to make the link between leadership style and achievement (Appendix E). Shortly after Christmas, Dr. Rebore, finally put his foot down and said that we were not going to get anywhere the longer we held on to the idea there was a direct link between our two topic areas.

So, we had to refocus. We held on to the qualitative methodology and abandoned our original idea of studying superintendent leadership style. We then focused our attention to school district culture, in general, and how that related to student achievement (Appendix F). It was a bittersweet moment, because we really wanted to center our study around what a superintendent can do directly to influence student achievement. However, we reluctantly realized that nothing a superintendent does happens in a vacuum. Some of our own research even said as much. There are many, many other factors that come into play and it was much more relevant and doable to address the entire culture surrounding a school district with regards to improving student achievement.

Of course, now we had a much larger project on our hands. And we only had a review of literature that only focused on the superintendent piece. In essence, we were back at square one again.

So, Dr. Rebore suggested that we look at various subsets of qualitative research methodology. After sifting through several ideas, we all thought it best to focus on a high achieving school district and what makes them tick via a case study methodology. Dr. Rebore seemed to think that this plan of attack was doable, relevant, and creative.

The value of this project is to study the idea that cumulative factors that may have impact on the student achievement of a school district. We discovered a number of singular factors that contribute to success, but there wasn't as much research in existence that cited combinations of

observed, research-based factors that formulated a comprehensive plan for a school district to model to maximize achievement. We ended up taking our project down that path. It was mentioned that we should have listened to Dr. Rebore more carefully in the beginning. It was this path that he suggested in the first place. At this point, we did acknowledge the fact that our passion for the original project combined with our stubbornness about changing our topic focus added time on to our project. However, in retrospect, we probably learned more from that birdwalk and the more circuitous route we navigated to get to the same conclusion that Dr. Rebore had from the beginning. We may have gotten done with our project faster had we made different choices many months ago, but we may not have learned as much!

So, we had a new blueprint. The only problem was that we had to fix and remodel what we had already accomplished in order to fit what the future paper was supposed to look like. The beginning of this was expanding and changing the literature review. We had to again search for more reading material that now focused on culture instead of leadership style. What ended up happening was that we had to overhaul nearly two-thirds of our 25 page review of literature. That was not an easy process that took several months that led us into 2011 and precariously on the edge of not being able to finish our project by the end of this school year.

However, we were able to concurrently rewrite what we have done to this point and plan on how we were going to fulfill the tenets of a qualitative case study methodology. In addition, we needed to rework our I.R.B. application to reflect the protocol changes in our research as well to the case study methodology.

The new piece that we needed to decide upon was what district or districts we were going to study. We started with all 525 districts in the state and wanted to approach the case study with the hopes of analyzing an already high-performing district and figuring out what makes them

high performing along with comparing that to what the research has stated about the same topic. The hope would be to see how much of the theory matches the actual practice.

To define “high performing,” we arbitrarily chose to use the top 3% of all school districts in the state as our pool to choose from. We weren’t sure how large our pool would be, but we thought that would be a good starting point. The state tests all school districts in 17 grade levels and subject areas, so we thought a good measure of performance would begin with how many districts would fall within the top 3% of each of these tests.

When we started to analyze the data, it was daunting at first, but thanks to computer spreadsheets, we were able to ascertain that seven school districts separated themselves from the rest of the state. We thought that was a pretty good number of schools to choose from. But we needed additional criteria. Part of our logic in studying school district culture was longevity. So, this is where our affection for superintendent leadership came back into play. Our next criterion was how many of those seven districts had a superintendent that had served at least ten years in that position?

The list was then shortened to three high performing districts: Clayton, Park Hill, and Nixa. Both of our spouses work in the Park Hill School District, so we eliminated that district from consideration because of fears of not being impartial and thereby, undermining the credibility of our study.

When it came to Clayton and Nixa, we then analyzed all aspects of the districts to see which high performing district would be more intriguing to research. At the end of a long weekend of researching school districts and settling on a location for our study, we decided that Nixa would be more interesting due to the much higher free and reduced lunch rate in the district and lower amount of money spent per pupil that still yielded strong student performance, as

opposed to Clayton with much more in student expenditures and a higher socioeconomic status. The added advantage to selecting Nixa was that Todd has served the district previously as a teacher and principal seven years prior. There were a number of individuals, including the superintendent, who remained in the district from his time there that would allow us trust and access than in a district where we were unknown.

So, we rewrote our I.R.B. with Nixa in mind. Using Robert Yin's (1994) model of case study methodology, we forged ahead and created research based questions to ask the principal individuals in the district (Appendix H). We decided to personally interview central office personnel and head building administrators, survey teachers and other directors at the central office and building levels, and to attend a number of meetings and observe in schools to gain an understanding of how this district's students were achieving at such a high level. In order to create these research based questions, we employed a number of different authors, noted in the dissertation, and their conclusions of what makes a school district high performing on paper.

So, by the end of January, we were set with our plan. We just needed to make sure the Nixa Public Schools and Dr. Rebore were all on the same page (Appendix G). During February, we continued to converse with Dr. Rebore about the elements of the I.R.B. and was able to officially submit the application in mid-February. In the meantime, we were in contact with the Nixa superintendent and he approved our intended plans as well. We were also able to begin lining up our interviews, pending final I.R.B. approval.

It was at this point where we consulted with Dr. Rebore and determined with a heavy heart that it was unrealistic for us to be able to complete the project in time to go through this year's commencement ceremonies. This was a big blow to our psyches, but in the end, we realized that the process is more important than the product. It was more important to create a

quality project that was well-reasoned and thought out instead of slapping one together sloppily in order to fulfill a calendar timeline. This was the major lesson I learned in the project that I alluded to at the beginning of this individual reflection paper. The process is much more important than the product itself. I needed to experience the period of mourning of not being able to get done “on time” in order to concentrate on the finer points of the project that would make it creative, doable, and relevant—like Dr. Rebores wanted in the first place.

So, after the period of mourning, we were able to refocus and find time to write our introduction chapter as well as our methodology chapter with more clarity and quality. So, we were ready to assimilate data with our preliminary writing behind us.

On the evening of March 8, 2011, our I.R.B. was officially approved, so we wasted no time in getting started collecting data. We had already created a Zoomerang survey online for teachers to take with the research based questions we had chosen earlier. With the help of the communications director in Nixa, we were able to immediately set up our plan to deploy our open-ended survey to have teachers, along with selected others, take. Also, the very next day, we traveled to Nixa to introduce ourselves to many members of the school district and were introduced at that evening’s school board meeting. This was a critical move so that we could express our intentions to the entire district and community and set the stage from cooperation at all levels. We found that first day in the district to be extremely helpful as we informally met many central and building administrators, along with being able to tour most of the district’s buildings to begin our data compilation process.

When we got back from the first day in Nixa, we were able to finalize the computer survey and have that officially deployed with the hopes that we could have some hard data before beginning the interview process when our schedules allowed in about five weeks. The

way the interview and meeting schedule was shaping up, we were going to have to take six days off work in April to be able to compile the necessary data. This was not exactly desirable to my administrator considering that our Missouri Assessment Program testing was coming up soon.

Fortunately, we were able to schedule everything in order to accommodate everyone and soon we were on our way to have a great deal of qualitative data beginning to pile up. We were prepared, however, thanks to Peterson, as we utilized forms (Appendix I) that exemplified and categorized data and observations into his five key points. Yin was extremely helpful as well, as we were able to assimilate all the comments and data in spreadsheet form. While going through each of the data points, we were able witness trends organically emerge from the commentary. This was one way that Yin recommended to categorize the myriad of data that has amassed over time. We found it best to accomplish this on a spreadsheet, and it worked out very well.

Over the course of six long days spent in Nixa over parts of three weeks, we were able to conduct all of our interviews and attend all of our meetings. Upon returning from Nixa, all data from surveys, interviews, and meetings was uploaded into the spreadsheet. The total number of data points added up to be over 2,200 bits of information we needed to sort through and categorize.

Next up was the painstaking task of going through all those data points and tagging them by trend. It took all weekend, but we were able to come up with 14 categories that we could put the data into in order to quantify the trends we were seeing. We were then able to sort the data points into trends and it was much more apparent to visualize what was significant about what makes the Nixa Public Schools tick and what it was about their culture that led to student achievement (Appendix J).

Because we now were into early June 2011, and we completed the process of assimilating the data, Todd and I were ready to jump head first into a writing frenzy. Using the Google website we had created earlier, we jumped back in the saddle and wrote, edited, formatted together. Todd did most of the writing, and I did most of the editing and formatting to APA and SLU guidelines. I took what we had written and put it into Word format, complete with a bibliography, table of contents, vita auctoris, and an abstract. We went over the entire document one more time for readability and to fix minor issues. Then, with a great deal of pleasure, on June 26, 2011, we submitted the rough draft to Dr. Rebore.

CHAPTER 2: INDIVIDUAL'S ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT PROCEDURES AND OUTCOMES

Contributions

In reflection, I can't help but come back to an obvious statement: this project involved a great deal of work! How Todd and I did all that work is still something that I can't fully understand, comprehend, or explain. I would imagine that writing a non-fiction book would involve much of the same processes that we encountered, especially if it was one that involved a great deal of research and narrative on educational topics.

Regardless, this assignment was unlike any assignment I've ever taken on in my life. The process of writing a dissertation paper involved many, many stages—all in the hopes of creating the perfect paper. In the past, when I've been assigned a paper to write, I would write the paper by the due date, turn it in, get the appropriate grade, and move on. In this instance, however, the process is the most critical aspect, not the finished product. The idea is that the product will be exemplary. The trick is to try and jump enough hurdles and learn enough about the process in order to get to that point as efficiently as possible.

When I look back upon our timeline of events (Appendix A), I can't believe how many obstacles we overcame when it came to the completion of this project. I really do feel like Todd and I have accomplished something significant and worthy of earning the title of Doctor of Education, and that we have added something meaningful to the body of knowledge to move education in a positive direction.

I can honestly say that the workload was as close to even as possible, and that our work really highlighted our overall strengths in terms of what we brought to the team. Some of the

decision making process in this regard was determined by one of us choosing to take on a specific task for the sake of moving forward, but some of it organically emerged as each of us took a particular aspect of the project as ours. The ownership and autonomy we showed each other really ended up being one of our strengths as we were able to trust each other to do our parts. When we put the parts together to create the whole project, the assimilation was near-seamless. The end product displayed how like-minded each of us was with regards to the project, in specific, as well as our overall approach to project management, in general.

How we broke down the work was as follows: I created the Google website for us to use as our primary communication and creation platform. Once that was established, we were able to start cataloging the reading and notetaking we had been doing. The neat thing about the Google website was that we were both able to enter and edit information simultaneously to the same document. That proved to be very useful later on.

So, our reading phase was quite extensive as we continued to add to what we called our bibliography notes document. Having the information in this format was beneficial in two ways. First, we had catalogued our notes alphabetically by author in proper APA bibliography form. This made it much easier to assimilate the proper bibliography that Dr. Rebores requested initially as well as to transfer those entries into our actual paper towards the end of the project. Second, being able to cite sources during the writing process was simplified as well. When a quote or source was used in the body of the paper, we would turn the color of the text in the bibliography notes document a different color. This would ensure that we wouldn't have any repeated information or overlap that would inhibit the flow of the paper.

The actual writing phase began with Dr. Rebores requesting our review of literature chapter be written first. Todd elected to be the primary author, whereas I would take care of the

minutia of the APA and SLU style and formatting along with editing responsibilities. While Todd wrote, I became very familiar with the style books and other documentation that would assist us greatly later on. In addition, as Todd wrote, I would add to the body of knowledge in our bibliography as I came across other sources of information that would prove to be useful in the paper. Writing the literature review turned out to be a major job for Todd, so I needed to assume a greater quantity of tasks.

We decided to have a primary communicator position with Dr. Rebore, and it was decided that I would assume that responsibility. Every phone call or email communication would go through me. That way, Dr. Rebore wouldn't be bombarded with double the questions and the communication would be streamlined in one direction as well from Dr. Rebore to us. Also, Dr. Rebore and I would hopefully establish a singular report that would be helpful as the project continued.

One of the aspects of the foundation of this project was the understanding the basis of qualitative case study methodology. As Todd continued to write the review of literature, I also took on the research of how to conduct a case study. That way, we could seamlessly enter into action steps as soon as we were able to get the literature review approved by Dr. Rebore.

So, as Todd's writing continued, I would edit and format as we went along. I believe that step saved us an inordinate amount of time. As I read Todd's style of writing, we learned that we had pretty similar approaches. So, as time went on, we wrote concurrently. As Todd would finish the literature review, I would go on to write the introduction chapter. We would discover that it took very little time to coalesce our separate pieces into one cohesive piece of writing.

It was shortly after this point, Dr. Rebore changed our focus from superintendent leadership style to school district culture and the effect on student achievement. So, Todd had to rework a large portion of the literature review to reflect that change in focus.

When it came time to actually begin the research phase where we were conducting surveys and interviews, I set up the Zoomerang account for us to gather data electronically, because I had prior experience with that method of data compilation. Todd, on the other hand, made phone calls to Nixa to set up interviews and meetings since he had familiarity with people there to expedite that process.

We decided that Todd would be the lead researcher and conduct all the interviews, for consistency in questioning as well as for the familiarity factor previously mentioned. My primary responsibility would be to take notes in each meeting, interview, and observational setting and compile all of that data in a meaningful spreadsheet method.

Upon completing the data compilation and the creation of the master spreadsheet, we were easily able to identify the most prevalent cultural factors that had influence in the school district on student achievement. We worked on that aspect together.

When it came to the final two chapters regarding findings and conclusions, we were also able to wholly collaborate on writing and polishing up the paper. We would spend a great deal of time discussing what would be in those chapters. However, again, Todd was the primary author, and I would fill in where necessary. It was a great formula thus far, and it worked very well for us.

After completing the writing phase, we read the entire paper in its entirety for purposes of flow and readability. We made a few small changes, but we were extremely satisfied with the final version and sent it in.

The Saint Louis University Experience

With regards to the entire program, I believe that the five dimensions on the Saint Louis University experience (Appendix K) and the Educational Leadership and Higher Education departmental objectives (Appendix L) were met. As with any long and difficult journey, there were many high points and low points, but without a doubt, I believe that I grew professionally and personally as a result of this program. In specific to the five dimensions, examples are as follows.

When it comes to scholarship and knowledge, the coursework, in reflection, was a very good foundation for future educational positions and to exemplify characteristics associated with lifelong learning. I am not currently in an administrative role, so having a doctorate in educational leadership will definitely set me apart from my peers. In addition, being able to teach and work in the classroom setting will allow me to view teacher-related issues with an administrator's lens. I hope this will assist me and my colleagues in understanding administration decision-making as well as gaining an appreciation for the big picture of education.

Through this process, when it comes to intellectual inquiry and communication, I have definitely gained an appreciation for research, in particular, the case study qualitative variety. Of course, this program doesn't have a dissertation as its end goal. The skills of communication, critical thinking, problem solving, inquiry and the ability to engage in effective discourse were traits I was able to build and work on to help me in future situations.

The concept of community building is prevalent throughout the coursework and project at SLU. Being able to work with others in the classroom on various assignments required a great deal of improvisation and communication skills in order to accomplish the given objective.

Dealing with other human beings can be a messy proposition, so the idea that the department values collaboration is one that brings very valuable lessons, also exemplified in the fourth departmental objective. In education today, it is critical to be able to work with others in order to accomplish tasks related to helping children succeed. Being able to not only work together, but being able to respect one another, understand your strengths and weaknesses, and to focus on a goal are skills that are paramount to success in the world we live in. This program certainly helped my skill set in that regard.

In leading and providing service, I understand that the paper we authored will not work in a vacuum. The purpose of this paper is to add to the body of knowledge that exists in the world in order to promote and further educational ideals. In that regard, we are definitely serving as leaders in our topic area as well as providing a service to the educational domain as a whole. Even though the completion of this degree is a goal, it is not the end-product. Many opportunities remain to take the knowledge and conclusions created in this project to other levels or to encourage others to do so as well. The second departmental objective addresses these thoughts as well.

Lastly, this experience has had a great deal of impact on my spirituality and value system. When I speak of spirituality, I don't believe I'm talking about it from a Biblical perspective, because I still have a great deal of work to do in that sense overall, much less trying to interpret what my time at SLU means to that area of my life. I am actually speaking more about my ability to be reflective and to be able to better articulate what type of leader I want to be and how I define my values and morals in a larger sense. This also applies to the first departmental objective.

With regards to the four habits that the department wishes to instill in students, I believe that the habits of service, self-examination and reflection, leadership, and inquiry and research are very evident in the project as outlined in the upcoming section concerning fulfilling the ISLLC standards.

I know that even though I have focused on myself the last three years with the end-product being a doctoral degree, but I also know that my set of values understands that much more is now possible to help children learn because of my experiences.

Fulfilling the ISLLC Standards

The idea of school district culture is one that, on the surface, seems like a easy topic to tackle. If a school district has a number of positive and effective programs, good communication and the ability to put children first, then it seems obvious that district will be high-achieving. Well, what we learned was that it's not easy to implement these ideals district-wide for a number of reasons along with the fact that there is a great deal of behind-the-scenes legwork that needs to occur before rolling out such ideals publicly. These ideals are very evident in the six ISLLC standards (Appendix M) that not only measure our project, but also represent the ideals that school administrators are to continuously promote.

First, we realized that without a vision, none of the high-achievement we witnessed would not be possible. Someone had to get the ball rolling with regards to understanding what that vision of learning was going to be. Once the initial ideas were pitched, people started latching on to those ideals. Before long, the skeptics were swept up as well after seeing such tactics were successful. The superintendent was the one who started that process. It's one thing to see a standard written on paper, but quite another to see the resultant actions and conclusions

based upon those standards like we did in our case study model school district. I learned that big things are possible with this over-riding vision, even if people think you're crazy. All it takes are people to jump on board and the ability to use leadership skills to the best of your ability.

The second ISLLC standard places an emphasis on professional development. It was evident in the Nixa Public Schools that continuous learning and growth was something that is valuable to all members of the community. In order for that to happen, educational leaders must model those ideals as well. Growth and development isn't something that just isn't dictated from above, it must be something that permeates that culture of the district from top to bottom. For me, I believe that in order to lead, you must read as well as research and continuously get better at what you're trying to accomplish. Staying stagnant does nobody any good.

The next ideal of organizational management is something that I have always believed in. In order to have an efficient and effective learning environment, you have to be organized and have the infrastructure in place in order to accomplish the varied and many tasks required in an average school. The operation of a school district is a much more extensive proposition with many more tentacles and issues. In order to achieve sustained success, as Nixa has at that level, organization is critical. I have learned that in order to succeed, it is very important to implement programs and create a mindset that only address the goals, mission, and vision of the district and to completely concentrate on a small number of items instead of trying to cover everything. Proper organization is central to accomplishing that task.

The fourth standard involves making sure that the community is involved in the efforts ongoing in the school district. In Nixa, the word is definitely out as to the district's effectiveness. Many individuals we spoke with promoted the district to outsiders so well, that a number of families have moved to Nixa for the sole purpose of getting a better education versus

where they may currently live. That fact that occurs is an indication that not only is the community talking positively about the schools within the city, but also talking about the district's positive impact outside of the area as well. I have learned that you could have the greatest initiatives in the world, but without support of people not directly involved in your school (like parents or political leaders) you will be sunk. Schools can be the central focus for a community and it's important they feel like they are a part of the process to take pride in a district's successes.

I believe that the next standard should be self-explanatory, but not everyone is as clear-cut about it as I am. Integrity, fairness and ethical behavior should be givens in our profession, but with ongoing events such as cheating on standardized tests or inappropriate behavior between teachers and students have shown, this is a topic that needs to be revisited on a consistent basis. I would like to think that my values and morals growing up would help me a great deal when it comes to making ethical decisions, but pressures are squeezing educators from all directions in today's world. I am confident that I have learned either from my parents or from this program that there are no shortcuts when it comes to saying and doing the right things.

Finally, the average teacher only sees what's going on within his or her four walls. They probably don't have time to do anything else! But the reality is that those educators are really missing the big picture concerning the total educational landscape. There are all kinds of political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts that exist and have an influence on what takes place in the classroom. Being able to acknowledge their existence is a good first step into understanding this domain. After that, paying attention to educational journals and to individuals in the know are critical to gain a deeper understanding of what's occurring. Then, once you grasp those concepts, then the ability to influence such domains is the ultimate step to take. I

believe that I am on the edge of deep understanding and influence. My role is different that most educators pursuing their doctorates. I am still in the classroom, therefore, I can implement ideas at that level directly instead of delegating that to occur. Whether or not that turns out for the best remains to be seen, but I definitely believe with a big picture mentality, my skills as a teacher will definitely benefit children in my school as a whole.

Teamwork

“Team leadership enhances the possibility that different styles of leadership—and different skills—can be brought to bear simultaneously” (Gardner, 1993, p. 150). This quote proved to be accurate. Even though Todd and I have similar personalities, we placed different priorities on different aspects of the project. Given the fact that we had a team of two instead of three or four, the dynamics of our team were quite different from others. There was no majority to a vote, we had consensus, or we did not. The level of trust we had to develop with each other was understood, but not fully realized at the beginning of the project.

As we began to work with each other, we went through the stages of team development that were consistent with what Lewis terms as “forming, storming, norming, and performing” (Lewis, 2007, p. 134). The initial meetings had involved our discussions around what our topic should be. We began the process with varying interests and ideas about what we wanted to pursue. In the beginning, we were very enthusiastic about getting started, but our trust in each other was not established.

“Trust allows team members to stay problem-focused” (Larson, 1989, p. 88). We were both very excited to start our project and we “stormed” ahead to begin reading as much as we

could on our topic. Over time, our relationship grew and we developed a level of trust in each other that we would work toward the goals of the team as opposed to the goals of an individual.

I have a wife, who is a SLU doctoral graduate and is a central office administrator, and a nine-year old son who is very active with practices and school events that I needed to work around. Todd was also working long hours combined with his family obligations (with a wife and four children) during the week. What we learned through the process was that each of us would have to make concessions in our priorities and schedules for the team to be more effective and to reach our agreed upon goals.

The utilization of weekends was paramount to our success. Neither of us thought it was feasible to meet for short times in the evening during the week. We were used to having day-long classes on Saturdays, so we continued that trend and consequently, got a great deal done during those Saturday and sometimes Sunday sessions.

As we evolved and trust grew, our focus was clearly placed on the milestones necessary to complete our project on time, which was our clear, elevating goal. It was at this point our team entered the “norming” stage of development. We understood each other and had a level of expectation for each other’s contributions to the progress necessary for staying on track. The management of the project plan was essential to our development (Appendix C).

For the most part, our plan went very well, except on finally settling on the final topic of our problem statement. As previously stated, we resisted on taking on the topic of culture with respect to student achievement because we wanted to focus on strictly the aspects related to superintendents and leadership style. So, in the end that cost us time and probably the ability to complete the project in order to graduate on time.

As we continued forming, the development of team chemistry enhanced the definition of our roles and responsibilities. Our communication began to increase in frequency and length as the project developed.

One of the fortunate aspects of our partnership was the fact that we lived only 15 minutes apart. Meeting face to face really helped. Each of us had certain strengths that allowed us to divide responsibilities in a way that served the team and the individual interests within the team. From there, we were able to develop the project management plan and to establish the work breakdown structure (WBS). “The idea behind the WBS is simple: You can subdivide a complicated task into smaller tasks, until you reach a level that cannot be further subdivided” (Lewis, 2007, p. 26).

Our skill sets and interests complimented themselves perfectly during the writing phase. Even though one of us would be responsible for the writing and developing of a section, the other team member would always review and edit the work of the other person so we had agreement and consistency throughout the paper. This approach to the project allowed us to capitalize on each other’s strengths and to provide additional motivation to meeting our agreed upon deadlines for meeting our primary goal.

As the project proceeded, progress was not always easy. “This shifting of priorities occurs so frequently and is such a powerful predictor of decreased team effectiveness...” (Larson, 1989, p. 34). Because the project is so complicated and long in duration, each team member would have conflicts ranging from family commitments to work issues. The reality of the situation was that working on this project was not the only responsibility either of us had. Fortunately, it seemed that our levels of enthusiasm ebbed and flowed at the same time. We never had a situation where one of working diligently while the other was falling behind or

missing deadlines. Therefore, there was never a sense of stress or a time of where one person had to call out the other on an issue.

“Each member’s relationship to the team must be defined in terms of the role to be assumed and the results the role is to produce” (Larson, 1989, p. 55). Both of us actually assumed this role from time to time. We both had the desire and passion to complete the project, so we always knew where the other person stood and what needed to be produced to get to the next stage of the project.

“Unified commitment is a very amorphous property of successful teams” (Larson, 1989, p. 77). As we progressed through the project, the goal became clearer and more viable as a motivator. The stress of the project caused us to give each other support and recognition to aid in the motivation for the project’s completion. Even though our plans did not always coincide with our results, the team was able to agree on updates to the project plan so changes were accounted for and managed in a way that found synergy in the WBS to keep us on track.

“Our project strongly indicates the right person in a leadership role can add tremendous value to any collective effort, even to the point of sparking the outcome with an intangible kind of magic” (Larson, 1989, p. 118). The best attribute of having a two-person team is that each of us could ascend to the team leader at any time and push the progress of the project forward. Our team realized a shared leadership that rotated back and forth depending on the stage and tasks of the project at any given time.

“The tasks of the leader with respect to motivation are many and varied” (Gardner, 1993, p. 184). Sometimes one of us would have to push and challenge the other to stay focused and meet the deadlines as assigned within the work breakdown schedule (WBS). Other times, we would serve as an understanding teammate who would reinforce and empathize with the

struggles of working on such a long and complicated project. In the end, the teamwork component of the project was a strength and contributing factor in our completion of the project. However, the overriding factor in our success was the effective management and completion of the project plan.

Now that I have seen the successful completion of the problem based learning project, I will take with me some important lessons that I will use as an educational leader. The first is not to minimize the importance of being established and agreed upon norms established at the outset. In my position, it is imperative that I involve stakeholders in the process of the project and get their buy in on the direction. With a voice, participants in the project are more likely to support the work necessary to complete the project and bring it to implementation successfully.

Project Management

The team was resolute in managing our progress through project management principles. We established our team's mission as the successful completion of the doctoral project in a time that allowed us to graduate in May 2011. However, as our topic was unclear until early 2011, time was at a premium. Our entire focus was to be completed by a certain date where we potentially would sacrifice the quality of such a project. In the end, when we realized we would not be completed on time, that took a great deal of stress off of our shoulders and, in the end, made for a much better project.

“The people who must implement a plan should participate in preparing it” (Lewis, 2007, p.41). For this reason, we worked collaboratively to define our goals. The phases of the project were defined as: identifying potential school districts in Missouri for participation in the project, creating research-based questions to identify what about their culture makes high-

performing school districts high-performing, and assembling the data in such a way that it makes sense to draw conclusions and suggest options for future study.

The use of technology was also a huge help in our WBS. For instance, the use of Zoomerang to deploy surveys and to collect open-ended responses electronically was a major assist to my main job of data assimilation. As previously stated, Todd was our main author, although I wrote some of the sections of two chapters. Where Todd excelled in the area of writing, my expertise was in the data. I was able to use Microsoft Excel to put all of our data in one place and be able to sort and categorize all of it to use it to draw our conclusions.

In addition, the writing and research pieces were accomplished via an application called Google Docs. This online software product allowed team members to make updates to the work in real time and for each of us to see the other's work at any time since it was accessible via the Internet. This process was extremely effective and allowed the team to better manage versions and updates throughout the project. This component of our project exemplified the collaborative nature in which we worked as a team. "It is about getting people to perform work that must be done to meet the objectives of the project" (Lewis, 2007, p. 26). In addition, the Google Docs software was the tool we needed to allow each team member to work within the parameters of his availability.

The final stage of the project was our evaluation of the project paper we created. This stage involved each team member reading it in its entirety and looking for any changes that may need to occur to better articulate the team's findings. One of the struggles was that it is hard to look at the same paper repeatedly and find improvements. In the end, we were satisfied with our continual edits and were validated when Dr. Rebores was convinced we were ready for our oral defense after only submitting the first draft.

Conclusions

This doctoral program and project has been the most comprehensive venture of which I have ever been a part. The depth of the experience cannot be understated. However, the growth I experienced and realized encompasses my understating not just of the topic in our project, but more importantly the skills necessary to complete a task with all of the components necessary to influence the field of education. My growth and development includes areas such as: communication skills, leadership, teamwork, project management, and analysis of data.

The development of my communication skills as a result of this program and project is probably the most significant piece of my growth. To be successful, I had to communicate effectively with numerous stakeholders from varying backgrounds and interest in the project. Depending on the stakeholder with whom I was working, I would change the way in which I approached people. When my teammate and I worked together, I had to vacillate between leader and worker. The entirety of my success can be summarized as situational. My communication style had to change along with the situation and person I was working with that the time.

For instance, being trusted with the responsibility to be the single communicator with our advisor, Dr. Rebores, was something that I cherished. I was the go-between for our group and the individual that would help us evaluate our success and help us move forward. I believe that I accomplished this admirably, because it is important to be able to speak properly to our advisor in order to express our progress, thoughts, desires, wishes, and needs. This skill of being able to communicate with a wide variety of individuals will be vital to serving as an educational leader. I see educational leadership as servant leadership. When working with the public, there are as many different perspectives and opinions on how to do things as there are people. By being

cognizant of my approach to different people, I will improve the likelihood of my success in communicating effectively with all types of people. This skill, more than any other, will be the innovation to be successful in other areas.

The next quality I developed was my leadership. The best component of completing this problem based learning project was aligning the work performed by my partner in a timeframe that allowed for the systematic completion of tasks. There is no way that our project would have been accomplished as efficiently and with the same amount of quality had I worked on this alone. The essence of learning came from the interaction in completing the project.

This unique aspect of the Saint Louis University program is probably its strength and best selling point. Although each of us had fewer tasks since we were sharing the workload, the time it took to coordinate our work and agree upon decisions added to the complexity of the project. This mimics real life situations very well. I was able to find techniques for motivating my team member as well as those who were contributing to the project through other means.

More importantly, to my experience as a leader, was the experience of serving as a leader with my teammate. Given that he is also an educational leader, it was important that we were able to both serve as a leader, which required that each of us be led by the other at different times. Sometimes it was important to back down so that each of us could benefit from serving as the leader at different points in the process. The acknowledgement of the need to change leadership responsibilities midstream was at the heart of our teamwork.

Working within a team allowed for numerous learning opportunities. The number one thing was being able to learn that a team is more productive when it has a clear goal to achieve. There were often times hurdles for the team to clear, but having an agreed upon goal provided direction and motivation to keep the team on track. Another thing I learned was that teams

experience various stages throughout their lifespan. After the team established its goal and decided on the direction, we each experienced the realization that this was going to be a long process. Our productivity dipped and the excitement that we felt just days before quickly eroded with the amount of work it was going to take to be successful. It was at this time that we had to focus on the project management of the project to take things one-step at a time.

A famous saying about how you eat an elephant, “one bite at a time”, exemplifies project management. I am continually fascinated with how a large project like this takes shape, comes to fruition, and then is realized. I liken it to my years spent as a coach where you have a group of youngsters in your midst and then you have to take all those individuals with differing personalities, characteristics and traits and create a successful team by the end of the season in a small timeframe. This project reminds me of that because it’s a large task every year to move a group of people on a team forward individually and as a group. Likewise, to create a project and then a paper that accurately reflects what occurred is a pretty monumental task that comes to exist only after many, many small steps.

Analyzing data via a qualitative process was a new skill I acquired in this project. I was really looking forward to a project that involved some number crunching and analysis and comparison of scores. However, as we progressed into areas away from strict numbers, I found it to be just as telling because we were able to put stories and ideas with the numbers. Through statistics, it was still evident where the trends were coming from with regards to what makes up a successful school district culture, but the question of “why” was also being answered simultaneously. That was extremely gratifying and helpful as we were able to draw our final conclusions.

Throughout this whole experience at Saint Louis University, there were moments of greatness and ecstasy. There were also moments where I wasn't sure where I was going and considered whether or not this program was for me. I was frustrated with various aspects of communication between the university and students, but I was also intrigued during the moments of one-on-one interactions with professors. So, it's safe to say that I encountered a wide variety of emotions during the program as well as during the final project.

The lasting impression of completing a doctorate is the fact that this, really, is just the beginning. I believe that this degree is merely a gateway towards greater advancement of educational knowledge via theory and performance. I view this doctorate as an obligation to further research and practice for the betterment of the field. I look forward to the day that I am an administrator because then I can be in a better position (not that I can't as a teacher) to encourage others to walk the path of continuous improvement and lifelong learning. My example and modeling of these behaviors is what I want my lasting legacy to be as an educator.

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**APPENDIX A: SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
CAPSTONE PROJECT – KEN CORUM AND TODD SCHUETZ (KC-10 COHORT)**

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Location	Attendance	Items Accomplished	Items To Do
11/28/09	11:00 am-1:00 pm	Todd's house	Both	Initial meeting – set norms	Contact Dr. Rebore
12/17/09	3:00-5:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Discussed topic areas of interest, ordered Marzano book	Begin researching superintendent leadership styles and student achievement, look for articles, bring 2 articles to next meeting, contact Dr. Rebore
1/9/10	9:00 am-Noon	Smithville CO	Both	Investigate SLU library system, read 2 articles, bring 2 more articles to share, divvy up Marzano book	Continue to contact Dr. Rebore, look up previous dissertations on related topic areas
2/6/10	11:00 am-3:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Researched and downloaded previous dissertations and articles to go over, narrowed our focus to finding measurement instruments for superintendent leadership styles in relation to student achievement	Continue to contact Dr. Rebore, look up previous dissertations on related topic areas
2/15/10	9:00-11:00 am	Smithville CO	Both	Looked over more dissertations to research measurement instruments, establish gameplan for discussion with Dr. Rebore	See which direction Dr. Rebore takes us with regard to our initial proposal
3/6/10	7:30-8:00 am	Longview CC classroom	Both + Dr. Rebore	Shared our ideas for topic areas with Dr. Rebore, he guided us more towards superintendent leadership style with regards to culture vs. student achievement	More reading with regards to culture, continue researching measurement instruments

Date	Time	Location	Attendance	Items Accomplished	Items To Do
4/3/10	9:00 am-Noon	Smithville CO	Both	Cataloged essential reading thus far, began to identify measurement instruments for school district culture and student achievement, determined survey timeline	Set up meeting with Dr. Rebore on Saturday, determine potential survey questions, begin IRB application
4/10/10	1:00-1:10 pm	Longview CC	Both + Dr. Rebore	Gave Dr. Rebore an update on our progress, he wanted us to write a problem statement	Write problem statement
4/17/10	2:45-3:00 pm	Phone conversation in lieu of face-to-face meeting	Both	Established responsibilities: Ken on problem statement, Todd on finding a student achievement score/instrument	Ken: problem statement, Todd: find a student achievement score/instrument
4/20/10	5:30-7:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Found superintendent leadership style measurement instrument, discussed discovery of student achievement score/instrument	Todd: Contact Jeffrey Glantz (author of one of our sources) Ken: Write problem statement, begin compiling student achievement scores
5/8/10	11:30 am-1:30 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Set meeting times for the summer, draft progress email for Dr. Rebore	Todd: contact Glanz and Wayne Hoy/Michael DiPaola – permission and assistance with measurement instruments, create instruments Ken: Start IRB, write problem statement, continue compiling student achievement scores
5/23/10	10:00 am-Noon	Smithville CO	Both	Finalized superintendent and culture surveys in preparation for IRB application, ceased compiling student achievement data until pool of districts known	Establish process of determining Missouri districts with superintendents with 3+ years in present position, have IRB prepared to send in once Dr. Rebore gives approval

Date	Time	Location	Attendance	Items Accomplished	Items To Do
5/29/10	8:00 am-3:30 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Finalized work breakdown structure, project management plan and initial bibliography	Email Dr. Rebore with progress report, ask for reader recommendation, clarify any hurdles preventing May graduation and finalization of problem statement
6/11/10	7:30-9:30 am	Smithville CO	Both	Finished work breakdown structure and project management plan—sent to Dr. Rebore, documented bibliography readings, planned out week’s activities with Dr. Rebore during next week’s Gateway conference	Again email Dr. Rebore with progress report, ask for reader recommendation, clarify any hurdles preventing May graduation and finalization of problem statement, asked for exclusive meeting time during Gateway
6/16/10	11:30 am-12:30 pm	Allied Health Building – SLU campus	Both + Dr. Rebore	Discussed work accomplished thus far and determined that the plan thus far lacked a direct link from student achievement back to leadership styles. Our problem statement will need to be redone.	Brainstorm a new path to take with regards to the project that makes it relevant, doable and creative.
7/2/10	9:30 am-Noon	Smithville CO	Both (plus Dr. Rebore via speakerphone)	Established new meeting dates for the remainder of summer, decided upon staying with same topic, but taking a more qualitative approach. Discussed idea with Dr. Rebore who would like us to begin the lit review and create a new problem statement	Next meeting on Monday—be prepared to finalize notes taken to bibliography
7/5/10	9:00 am-3:30 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Finalized our bibliography notes and opened a Google docs and website documents.	Ready to begin writing the outline for our literature review

Date	Time	Location	Attendance	Items Accomplished	Items To Do
7/6/10	9:00 am-12:30 pm	Ken's house	Both	Organized and completed the outline for the literature review, discussed changing the focus of our study to creating a tool/product	Begin writing the literature review
7/9/10	12:30-3:00 pm	Todd's house	Both	Began writing the literature review—Todd will focus on writing, Ken will focus on proofreading and APA style	Continue the back and forth concerning the literature review on our now-established Google website
7/14/10	2:30-3:30 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Reviewed first few pages of the literature review with focus areas described above	Continue the back and forth concerning the literature review on our now-established Google website
11/14/10	7:00 am-2:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Came back together after comps to review what's been done and to plan next steps. We have decided to change to a product develop approach. Added to bibliography with new literature	Add to the literature review and create a draft to send to Dr. Rebore ASAP
11/24/10	2:00-7:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Finished rough draft of literature review, work breakdown structure and problem statement and emailed to Dr. Rebore	The next portion of work will depend upon approval and feedback received from Dr. Rebore. We would like to begin work on the product over the holiday break.
12/10/10	3:00-3:30 pm	Phone conversation	Both + Dr. Rebore	Received confirmation from Dr. Rebore he received our information and provided feedback to continue with our next step	Decide whether to proceed on a qualitative or quantitative research basis and continue to communicate with Dr. Rebore
12/12/10	7:30 am-12:00 noon	Smithville CO	Both	Created plan for qualitative research methodology and sent to Dr. Rebore, started IRB, introduction for project paper	Await feedback from Dr. Rebore and continue IRB and create introduction for paper

Date	Time	Location	Attendance	Items Accomplished	Items To Do
12/19/10	7:00-10:30 am	Smithville CO	Both	Conducted additional research to add to introduction	Await feedback from Dr. Rebores and continue IRB and create introduction for paper
12/27/10	1:00-1:30 pm	Phone conversation	Ken + Dr. Rebores	Discussed the case study approach to our methodology	Will take information into next meeting on 12/28/10
12/28/10	9:30 am-3:00 pm	Smithville High School	Both	Received feedback from Dr. Rebores – focus needs to be changed to highlight school district culture and to expand lit review. Researched case study methodology and added to lit review	Create new plan of attack and focus on Robert Yin’s case study methodology. Decided on studying Nixa Public Schools. Need to send new proposal to Dr. Rebores.
12/30/10	8:00-11:00 am	Smithville CO	Both	Worked on IRB and lit review and resubmitted proposal to Dr. Rebores	Start lining up connection in the IRB department and at Nixa
1/8/11	8:00 am-Noon	Smithville CO	Both	Worked on steps necessary to complete the case study methodology	Submitted information to Dr. Rebores – will await to hear from him for next steps
1/17/11	1:30-2:00pm	Phone conversation	Ken + Dr. Rebores	Dr. Rebores reiterated the need to fully immerse ourselves in the case study methodology and suggested steps to improve IRB	Rework lit review and gameplan for steps and questions to use for case study. Will rework IRB.
1/22/11	10:00 am-12:30 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Discussed direction project is taking as a case study. Researched case study methodology, in general, to see if we were still on track. Began to rewrite questions to ask in interviews and on surveys	By tomorrow have IRB completely rewritten as well as update sequence of events.

Date	Time	Location	Attendance	Items Accomplished	Items To Do
1/23/11	7:30 am-3:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Reformatted and analyzed survey and interview questions to ask in Nixa. Reformatted the IRB exempt application and emailed it to Dr. Rebore.	Rework literature review to reflect new focus concerning school district culture. Begin work on procedures to use in Nixa and Dr. Rebore's final IRB approval.
1/29/11	7:30-10:30 am	Smithville CO	Both	Began work on Chapter 3 – methodology and reformatting lit review to fit culture angle	Continue to contact Dr. Rebore to get feedback on IRB...will be meeting with him Feb. 4 in person
1/30/11	7:30 am-3:30 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Continued work on methodology and lit review chapters	Same as above
2/6/11	7:30 am-3:30 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Continued work on methodology and lit review chapters	Due to snow storm, unable to meet with Dr. Rebore on Feb. 4...will have phone conversation on Feb. 8 with the hopes that the IRB will be approved to move forward with research protocol
2/13/11	7:30 am-4:00 pm	Smithville CO	Todd alone until 11:00 am, then both	Began to establish itinerary for visit to Nixa, pared down lit review to fit with emphasis on school district culture	Dr. Rebore approved our IRB with the hopes it would be approved quickly. We need to formally contact Nixa for approval of our study as soon as the IRB comes back and continue working on preliminary procedures and writing.
2/19/11	11:00 am-5:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Continued writing introduction and rewriting lit review	More of the same tomorrow
2/20/11	7:30 am-3:30 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Continued writing introduction and rewriting lit review, make plans for Nixa visit in a week pending IRB approval	Follow up with Dr. Rebore on IRB and Nixa protocol
2/24/11	3:15-3:45 pm	Smithville CO	Both + Dr. Rebore on conference call	Came to the realization that our project was not going to be finished on time to graduate this spring, had to find new reader with Dr. Scott's leave of absence	Create new Nixa timeline and process the conference call

Date	Time	Location	Attendance	Items Accomplished	Items To Do
2/27/11	7:30am-1:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Came up with new timeline to visit Nixa and to report our findings, scrutinized our first three chapters thus far	Wait on IRB approval, create online surveys and plan appropriately
3/6/11	7:30am-Noon	Smithville CO	Both	Created plans for Nixa in the event the IRB was approved.	Wait on IRB approval, create online surveys and plan appropriately
3/9/11	All day	Nixa	Both	IRB approved 3/8/11. Traveled to Nixa to meet with superintendent, several building principals, toured district, introduced at board meeting	Begin compiling qualitative information and set up and send survey to Nixa communications director
3/13/11	7:30am-Noon	Smithville CO	Both	Set up survey and sent to Nixa communication director and finalized dates to conduct our interviews and visits in Nixa, informed Dr. Rebore of our progress and intentions	Follow through with Nixa and continue to compile qualitative information
3/27/11	8:00am-Noon	Smithville CO	Both	Followed through with Nixa communication director to ensure the correct parties received the correct surveys	Continue to compile survey data, plan for upcoming interviews and visits to Nixa
4/2/11	7:30-11:30am	Smithville CO	Both	Have not received requisite number of surveys. Contacted Nixa communication director and requested more communication be sent to district employees to increase survey data	Talk with Dr. Rebore about next steps to take in this process of data compilation

Date	Time	Location	Attendance	Items Accomplished	Items To Do
4/9/11	7:30-11:30am	Smithville CO	Both	Dr. Rebores indicated that our survey data collection amount was sufficient, continued to set up template for data collection regarding observation and interviews	Confirm plans and intentions with all parties and stakeholders regarding upcoming visits to Nixa
4/17/11	7:30am-2:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Made final arrangements with each other regarding travel plans to Nixa and confirmation to administration in Nixa about our plans	Get ready to compile data
4/25-4/27/11	All day – 3 days	Nixa	Both	Interviewed building principals and school board members, visited schools, attended cabinet meeting	Begin compiling data into spreadsheet, collaborate about processes utilized thus far in data gathering
5/4-5/5/11	All day – 2 days	Nixa	Both	Interviewed central office administrators, attended Academic Huddle, administrators meeting	Continue data compilation
5/10/11	All day	Nixa	Both	Attended Koffee with Kleinsmith (community meeting), interviewed final central office and building administrators	Continue data compilation, begin analyzation of data process
5/14/11	1:00-4:00 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Began sorting through the data and establishing trends observed throughout data	Settle on names for each trend and begin specifically tagging data to come up with detailed conclusions
5/22/11	8:00-11:30 am	Smithville CO	Both	Established names for trends and began tagging all data points in spreadsheet	Continue tagging
5/29/11	8:00 am-3:30 pm	Smithville CO	Both	Continued tagging each data point – nearly ¾ complete at this point	Finish tagging (hopefully) tomorrow

Date	Time	Location	Attendance	Items Accomplished	Items To Do
5/30/11	7:30 am-Noon	Smithville CO	Both	Completed tagging nearly 2,200 data points	Outline and begin writing Chapters 4-5!
6/5/11	7:00-11:30 am	Smithville CO	Both	Sorted newly-tagged data into trends, counted number of data points in each trend to determine significance of each trend to culture and student achievement, began outlining and writing Chapters 4-5	Continue writing

**APPENDIX B: SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION
Ed.D. PROGRAM**

KEN CORUM AND TODD SCHUETZ (KC-10 COHORT)

GROUP NORMS

October 1, 2009

Decision Making

- Our discussion will lead to consensus.
- We will use e-mail, but if a consensus is not reached; the item will be tabled for a face to face meeting.
- Phone calls may also be used to make decisions between partners.

Communication

- E-mail: Immediately send verification that an email was received.
- Each team member will have all telephone numbers for contact.
- Face to face: must meet at a minimum of once per month, more frequently is preferred.
- Be straight forward and honest.
- Be open to criticism or suggestions when group members are evaluating your work.

Participation

- We will make meeting times that both members can meet.
- Both members are expected to be present at all meetings except in case of an emergency.
- Group will meet at Smithville Central Office.
- We will assign roles for group members through their expertise or strengths, not necessarily to make work load even.
- Always be willing to assist another group member with their responsibilities, helping them if they struggle in an area.

Problem and Conflict Management

- When conflict arises, work through the frustration with professional and appropriate communication. Be candid and communication works best in person or in real time (i.e.: over the phone) is preferred rather than email.

Confidentiality

- Do not share negative aspects of our group to anyone outside of our group.
- Feel free to share all of the positive attributes.

Timeline/Deadline

- Meet established guidelines set by group, no exceptions.

Respect for Group Members

- Evaluate each member's work for improvement.
- Listen and respect to the opinions/concerns of partner.

Management/Facilitation

- Will set a scheduled meeting at a minimum of once a month.

Assessment

- Use some of your group meetings to review what members have accomplished up to that point.
- Set new roles, guidelines, expectations and deadlines as appropriate and/or needed.

**APPENDIX C: SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION
Ed.D. PROGRAM**

KEN CORUM AND TODD SCHUETZ (KC-10 COHORT)

DOCTORAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN AND WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE

November 23, 2010

Problem:

Establishing there is a correlation between school district culture and district student achievement.

Rationale:

We believe a school district's culture contributes to the academic success of lack thereof of its students. Identifying those practices that support a productive school district culture would provide a resource for school districts seeking improved student achievement.

Problem Mission Statement:

The mission for this project is to determine if there is a correlation between school district culture and student achievement.

Project Objectives:

1. To identify best practices in the literature regarding productive school district cultures
2. To determine commonalities of effective school district with regards to student achievement and culture.
3. To identify framework that would allow for school district culture that points to higher student achievement.

Target Audience:

Superintendents, school leaders

Project Work Requirements:

1. Team norms
2. Topic application
3. Problem statement
4. Working bibliography
5. Project management plan
6. Outline of capstone project
7. Drafts of capstone project
8. Problem based learning outcome
9. Finalization of capstone project
10. Finalization of problem based learning outcome

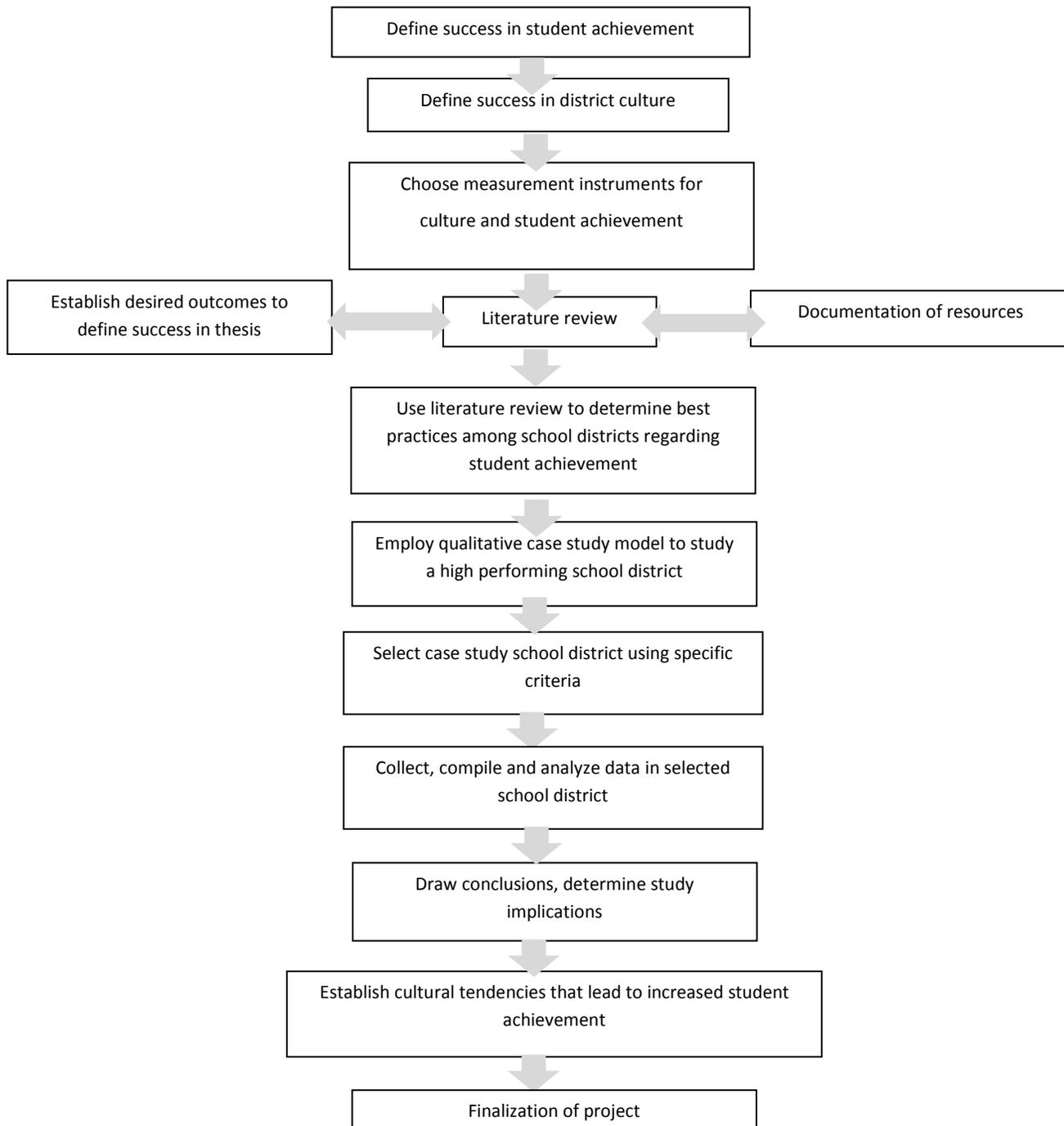
Exit Criteria:

Each subsection of the project work requirements will be discussed, reviewed and approved by our advisor, Dr. Ronald Rebores.

End-Item Specifications To Be Met:

The *American Psychological Association Documentation* format will be utilized as well as the *Policies and Procedures for Theses, Project and Dissertation Formatted Issued by the Graduate School, Saint Louis University*.

Work Breakdown Structure:



Schedule:

Milestone schedule

Team norms				Problem statement	Ongoing research	Ongoing research					
Brainstorm topics	Research leadership	Research culture	Research student achievement	Ongoing research	Outline	Collect/analyze data from case study district	Rough draft	Draft approval	Finalize capstone project	Individual reports	Project defense
Timeline discussion			Topic choice	Bibliography	Literature review				Dr. Rebore	Dr. Rebore	
Dr. Rebore			Dr. Rebore	Dr. Rebore	Dr. Rebore						

Color key				
	Work requirements			
	Initial work breakdown structure			
	Dr. Rebore exit criteria			
	Individual			
	Final defense			

Project Timeline (planned timeline listed, actual timeline in parentheses):

March 2009	Formation of groups Todd located in Lebanon, Ken in Kansas City – unable to meet until fall
May-August 2009	Email discussion and brainstorm possible topics
October- November 2009	Establish team norms (September 2009) Continue to narrow topics Center topic area to superintendent leadership style, school district culture and student achievement
December 2009	Meet monthly for discussion
January-May 2010	Reading period Meet monthly for discussion
June 2010	Finalize problem statement Working bibliography Meet monthly for discussion
July 2010	Outline Deploy superintendent leadership survey Meet bi-weekly for discussion Literature review
August-October 2010	Continue on literature review (November 2010)
November 2010	Collect necessary data (May 2011)
December 2010	Rough draft (June 2011) Feedback period from advisor and reader (July-August 2011)
January 2011	Work on subsequent drafts (August 2011)
February 2011	Finalize capstone project
February 2011	Work on individual papers (July-August 2011)
March 2011	Final papers due to Graduate School (August 2011)
April 2011	Oral project defense (September 2011)

Required Resources:

1. Organizational notebook/timeline
2. APA Manual
3. *Policies and Procedures for Thesis, Project and Dissertation Format*
4. *Fundamentals of Project Management*
5. *Teamwork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong*

Risk Areas with Contingencies:

1. Insufficient data: Modify topic area
2. Incorrect thesis assumptions: Look at broader data
3. Time management: more efficient correspondence

**APPENDIX D: SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION
Ed.D. PROGRAM**

KEN CORUM AND TODD SCHUETZ (KC-10 COHORT)

DOCTORAL PROJECT PROBLEM STATEMENT

May 1, 2010

1. Who is affected or who is involved in the issue?

Our belief is that the culture of an entire school district is at stake with regard to the leadership style of the superintendent. There is a direct correlation between the leadership style of the superintendent when it comes to the culture of a school district, and in turn, when it relates to student achievement within the district.

Ultimately, every person associated with the school district is affected when it comes to student achievement. The very welfare and overall well-being of a district is measured by student achievement scores. Even though there are many levels in between students and the superintendent, we believe that superintendents that exhibit certain leadership characteristics have a positive effect on the culture of the school district and that eventually leads to increased student achievement.

2. What is the nature of the problem?

To define the problem and the nature of the study, we will need three essential pieces of data.

The first involves the superintendent. Despite the fact that the bona fide head of a school district is the school board, our contention is that, in most districts, the superintendent, oftentimes, is the face of the district and has more potential influence in the day-to-day operations. With that understanding, since the superintendent acts as the chief operating officer and the leader of the district, there are definitive styles that characterize effective leadership from ineffective leadership. We plan on defining those styles in the context of Jeffrey Glanz's 2002 text, "Finding Your Leadership Style: A Guide for Educators." The only stipulation will be that we will only consider superintendents that have been in their positions for at least three years at the time this measurement instrument is being administered.

The second data reservoir involves our plan to qualifying and quantifying school district culture measurement through use of an instrument in the 2008 book by Wayne Hoy and Michael DiPaola, "Improving Schools: Studies and Leadership In Culture." This will allow us to compare and contrast superintendent leadership style and the impact of that with regards to the aspects concerning the school district's culture.

The final, and probably terminal, piece of data is student achievement scores. We plan on using the status scores from Missouri school districts courtesy of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to place a simple designation on school districts to define a district's performance solely on their MAP and EOC scores. The hope is that significant trends and strands will be observed through these three pieces of data so that conclusions may be drawn about which superintendent leadership style may result in desired student achievement statistics.

3. What is your goal for addressing the problem?

There are always exceptions to the rule, but based on the reading we've done thus far, we believe there are certain characteristics and leadership styles defined by Glanz that would lend themselves better to superintendents, if the goal of that district was to improve student achievement scores. This study will ultimately involve all 524 school districts in Missouri, but only fully involve a number that will agree to submit their superintendents and employees to surveys that we will administer in fall 2010.

We plan on looking first at student achievement scores of school districts statewide and select high performing, average performing and low performing districts and request of those districts selected to submit themselves to our data collection procedures. From that, we should be able to find correlations as well as roadblocks and establish trends that will assist us in proving or dispelling our theories.

With this study, we hope to publish it for the benefit of the academic community. It may be a first step in learning more about how student achievement can be influenced on many different levels and also may, in turn, influence how superintendents tackle the role of being an educational and instructional leader.

**APPENDIX E: SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION
KEN CORUM AND TODD SCHUETZ (KC-10 COHORT)
FINAL PROJECT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROPOSAL TO DR. RONALD REBORE**

December 12, 2010

Per our phone conversation on Dec. 10, you stated that our problem statement was acceptable and that our focus should now be concentrated on methodology related to measuring our core relations between qualitative and quantitative means.

After measuring the pros and cons of both, we have decided that a qualitative methodology of investigation would best express the essence of our problem statement and hypothesis. In this document, we intend to express to you how we would like to conduct our qualitative study to meet with your and Saint Louis University's approval.

Our guiding document in our research to come is "Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide" by Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2005).

OVERVIEW:

We would like to concentrate our study to one high-performing Missouri school district, likely in the Kansas City area, to focus on the traits, characteristics and philosophies of that district's superintendent that lead to higher student achievement. We have a district in mind, however, the final determination would be made by considering the district's state rank regarding MAP, EOC, and ACT scores. We realize, of course, that formal approval will be required by the district superintendent.

To that end, we would like to conduct interviews of the aforementioned superintendent as well as the members of the superintendent's cabinet, central office directors and building principals to gauge to what extent what the superintendent exhibits such research-based traits that lead to higher student achievement.

We would appreciate your feedback on the following potential questions to be asked in personal interviews, as well as any other direction you believe we should take in said interviews:

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS ASKED OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:

1. Do you believe leadership characteristics/behaviors exhibited by the superintendent have an impact on student achievement?
2. What superintendent leadership characteristics/behaviors do you feel have a positive impact on student achievement?
3. What superintendent characteristics/behaviors do you believe have the biggest impact on student achievement?
4. What aforementioned characteristics/behaviors do you believe you exhibit with the most success?

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS ASKED OF CENTRAL OFFICE PERSONNEL AND BUILDING PRINCIPALS:

1. Do you believe leadership characteristics/behaviors exhibited by the superintendent have an impact on student achievement?
2. What superintendent leadership characteristics/behaviors do you feel have a positive impact on student achievement?
3. What superintendent characteristics/behaviors do you believe to have the biggest impact on student achievement?

4. What aforementioned characteristics/behaviors do you believe your superintendent exhibits most successfully?

DETAILS/QUESTIONS:

1. We will need your stamp of approval and (we assume) will need to complete an IRB to continue our research.
2. We would like to conduct personal interviews with the superintendent and assistant superintendents as well as a sampling of central office-level directors and building principals totaling 10-15 interviews.
3. According to Mack, another method of qualitative research is through direct observation of the superintendent. We are considering engaging in this process for 1-2 days, where the observation will be concentrated on qualities and characteristics the superintendent exhibits that would lead to increased student achievement.
 - a. We are unsure as to whether or not this method would appropriately assist us in answering our guiding question.
 - b. Will the personal observation piece unnecessarily complicate our project?
4. We would appreciate your feedback on our qualitative methodology proposal. Are there any other considerations we are forgetting before moving forward?

**APPENDIX F: SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION
KEN CORUM AND TODD SCHUETZ (KC-10 COHORT)
FINAL PROJECT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROPOSAL TO DR. RONALD REBORE**

December 31, 2010

Our mission is to identify the superintendent's role in a high performing school district's culture.

Our last conversation pertained to putting together a case study methodology that would allow us to explore a single entity and collect detailed information through a variety of data collection techniques. The case study research design we have studied is based on Robert Yin's model. In contrast to strict quantitative research where a phenomenon is dissected into its component parts, Yin suggests that qualitative case study methodology works towards examining how parts fit together. We believe using this model will enhance the credibility of our research.

Parts of case study methodology include:

1. Determine and define the research questions
2. Select the case and determine data gathering and analysis techniques
3. Prepare to collect the data
4. Collect data in the field
5. Evaluate and analyze the data
6. Prepare the report

To that end, we would like to concentrate our study to focus on the traits, characteristics and philosophies of one district's superintendent that shape that district's culture that lead to higher student achievement. Our research questions are two-fold:

1. What are the factors in the superintendent's leadership practices that support a school district's culture leading to student performance at an optimum level?
2. What are the cultural components in a school district that leads to student performance at an optimum level?

With that in mind, we have chosen the Nixa (MO) Public Schools.

Our criteria in school district selection are as follows: DESE requires that school districts test their students in 17 areas ranging from 3rd grade reading and math to high school Biology and Algebra. There are 523 districts in the state, and we rank-ordered them based on their index score for each test. Seventy-four school districts ranked in the top 15 on at least one test. When considering how many times a district ranked in the top 15, seven districts rose to the top ranging from 10 tests to all 17 tests.

Due to the fact that we wish to explore the culture of a high-achieving district and the superintendent's impact on its culture, the superintendent's tenure in the district was our next consideration. Three district superintendents have considerably more time on the job with 10, 11, and 15 years. These districts are Nixa, Park Hill, and Clayton respectively. Both researchers' spouses work in the Park Hill School District. That fact, coupled with the district's size, makes Park Hill a less desirable district for us to study. With Clayton and Nixa remaining, we considered the free and reduced rate of each district. Clayton's rate is 16.3% and Nixa's is 35.1%. This makes Nixa's long term high level of performance more interesting, thus, should the stars align and we receive all the appropriate approvals, we would like to evaluate the culture of the Nixa Public Schools and that superintendent's contribution to the culture.

There are four ways we would like to collect data:

- a. Open ended questionnaires to all teachers in the district to gain the perspective of those actually in the classroom regarding leadership and student achievement. Surveys will be on hard copies and accompanied with a consent form and explanation of process. Responses will be written and the following five questions will be asked:
 1. What programs in this district do you feel contribute to high student achievement?
 2. Are there any barriers hindering your district's progress? If so, has your school overcome them?
 3. What opportunities are there for staff members to participate in decision-making that affect student achievement?
 4. Describe what communication looks like in this school district.
 5. What do your leaders do that makes your district successful?
- b. On-site interviews with central office administrators and staff, board members, building principals to gauge the perspective of those closest to the superintendent regarding the culture of the district and the role that the superintendent plays.

The following is a list of questions that will be asked of this group:

1. Why is this school district successful?
2. What is the superintendent's role in the success of the school district?
3. What are your specific challenges in your job?
4. How do you overcome the challenges of your job?
5. What type of support do you receive in overcoming those challenges?
6. To what degree is the superintendent the instructional leader in the school district?
7. Describe the communication between yourself and the superintendent.
8. Describe what communication looks like in this school district.
9. To what degree is the superintendent responsible for communication in this school district?
10. How is conflict dealt with in this school district?
11. What is the expectation in this school district in addressing the needs of all students?
12. What is the expectation in this school district in addressing the needs of staff?
13. How are people in this district recognized for their accomplishments?
14. Describe the district's approach to allocation of fiscal resources.
15. What programs do you believe are critical to student success?
16. How do you see accountability in the school district?
17. Why are students achieving?
18. Describe a typical teacher in this school district.
19. How are decisions made in this school district?
20. Describe the culture of this school district.
21. Please provide any other information you feel might be helpful in explaining the success of your school district?

Of course, some questions will be omitted or modified when interviewing the superintendent directly, but our goal is to see how answers of the superintendent align with the answers of those around the superintendent.

- c. Formal and informal observations will take place in the form of shadowing the superintendent, sitting in on district and building level meetings and observing actual classroom instruction. This type of observation lends itself to exploring topics that may be uncomfortable or difficult for participants to explain or discuss.

- d. Document and artifact analysis will include, but not be limited to, district accountability report cards, MAP and EOC assessment data, district mission and vision statements, program materials, teacher and administrative handbooks, board policy, daily bulletins, memos, emails and school newsletters to ascertain the depth and the embedded nature of the philosophies of the superintendent in the culture of the school district.

Once our data collection events are complete, we would need to find a proper source of data analysis and display. We have researched a few different models, but we feel we should decide on that model once we have an idea of what data we have and what it means.

These are our current thoughts on qualitative case study and hopefully answers the questions you posed to us about how we will make this study credible along with what we want to do and how we want to do it.

Thank you for your feedback—we are hopeful that we have given you enough time to peruse this document in the hopes we can receive your feedback during our phone conversation on Tuesday at 3:00 PM.

APPENDIX G: SEQUENCE OF EVENTS FROM PROBLEM BASED LEARNING RESEARCH PROJECT

This document is intended to outline our sequence of events for a qualitative case study to analyze the culture of high performing school district and the superintendent's impact on the culture.

After rank ordering Missouri school districts on the 17 state required assessments by index score, 74 districts scored in the top 15 at least once. Seven districts achieved this status repeatedly. Since we are studying district culture, we felt the superintendent's tenure in the district would be pertinent information. Three of the seven superintendents had significant more time on the job with 10, 11, and 15 years. Those districts are Nixa, Clayton, and Park Hill respectively. With both researchers spouses working in the Park Hill District coupled with the size of the district, Park Hill is less desirable. Finally, Nixa's free and reduced far exceeds that of Clayton, which makes Nixa a more interesting target to study. Should Nixa deny our request to study their district, we will consider Park Hill or Clayton.

- I. IRB submission by Jan. 14
- II. Contact district superintendent to gauge receptiveness. Provide research proposal detailing various activities of researchers.
- III. Upon IRB approval, submit formal request to district superintendent
- IV. Target date to visit the district is the first two weeks of March
 - a. Interview
 - i. All seven cabinet members
 - ii. Superintendent
 - iii. All nine building principals
 - iv. A sampling of assistant principals
 - v. Two or three board members
 - vi. PTA President
 - vii. Director of Maintenance
 - viii. Director of Food Services
 - ix. CO Administrative Assistants
 - b. Provide electronic survey to teachers
 - c. Gather district documents such as CSIP, crisis plan, newsletters, communication plan, etc.
 - d. Attend activities as allowed such as cabinet meeting, administrator meeting, parent meeting, board meeting, etc.
- V. Analyze Data and complete the paper

APPENDIX H: FORMAL RESEARCH PROTOCOL

**SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION
Ed.D. PROGRAM**

KEN CORUM AND TODD SCHUETZ (KC-10 COHORT)

Qualitative case study analysis (as designed by Robert Yin) will be utilized. When conducting the research, we will use a number of different methods of data collection, as Yin suggests. We will conduct personal interviews with the superintendent, school board members, the superintendent's cabinet and building principals. Electronic surveys will be deployed for the director of food service, director of maintenance, central office support staff, teachers, counselors, process coordinators, teachers on special assignment and all other non-administrative certificated staff. Observation will occur at board meetings, parent group meetings and cabinet meetings. In addition, data that will be utilized to paint the picture of school district culture will involve the obtaining of artifacts such as district Missouri Assessment Program district achievement data (available on the Missouri Department of Secondary and Elementary Education website) along with comprehensive district improvement program documents, district newsletters, communication plans, crisis plans, district objectives, teacher handbooks and bulletins.

APPENDIX I:

TODD B. SCHUETZ AND KENNETH D. CORUM

A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF A HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOL DISTRICT'S CULTURE

NOTETAKING FORM

DATE _____

TIME _____

LOCATION _____

EVENT OBSERVED _____

SHARED SENSE OF PURPOSE: Purpose and values are consistent and shared across staff members
GROUP NORMS OF CONTINUOUS LEARNING: Group reinforces importance of staff learning and a focus on continuous improvement
RESPONSIBLE FOR STUDENT LEARNING: Staff feels a sense of responsibility for the learning of all students
COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAFF MEMBERS: Staff works together to share ideas, problems and solutions to build a better school
FOCUS ON PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE: People interact through professional development, staff reflection and share to improve teaching as a shared collaborative

APPENDIX K: FIVE DIMENSIONS OF THE SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Reflective of its mission, Saint Louis University strives to engage its students in five interrelated dimensions: scholarship and knowledge, intellectual inquiry, community building, leadership and service, and spirituality and values. Under each of the dimensions described below are sample indicators of a student's engagement with the dimensions. These are examples only and are not exhaustive.

Scholarship and Knowledge

By developing a well-rounded educational foundation, by becoming scholars in their chosen fields, and by dedicating themselves to the advancement of knowledge, students are prepared for advanced study, for their careers, and for lifelong learning.

Indicators include:

- Being prepared for advanced study
- Being prepared professionally for work
- Demonstrating substantial knowledge and understanding of at least one field of study

Intellectual inquiry and Communication

By developing the abilities of intellectual inquiry and communication, students are able to learn effectively, express ideas and concepts clearly, and apply their knowledge to new situations they encounter.

Indicators include:

- Using the tools and methods of research
- Understanding and applying technology and other resources
- Demonstrating the skills of:
 - Communication
 - Critical thinking (application, integration, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
 - Problem-solving
 - Inquiry

Community Building

By welcoming all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or gender, students build an inclusive community which leads to respect and compassion for human life and the dignity of each person.

Indicators include:

- Working collaboratively
- Demonstrating acceptance of and respect for others' differences
- Advocating diversity

Leadership and Service

By serving others and by promoting social justice, students become men and women for others who lead by their example.

Indicators include:

- Devoting time and effort to help others in need
- Serving as an example for others to follow
- Demonstrating an understanding of the interconnectedness of global and local concerns

Spirituality and Values

By developing their spirituality, values, and openness to the transcendent, students determine principles to guide their actions and their relationships with others.

Indicators include:

- Defining and articulating one's own values and beliefs
- Practicing self-reflection
- Making informed and ethical decisions in personal and professional situations

APPENDIX L: SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES

1. To prepare reflective practitioners committed to excellence in service to others.
2. To install four “habits” within our students: the habit of service, the habit of inquiry and research, the habit of self-examination and reflection, and the habit of leadership within a community of scholars.
3. To offer students an excellent professional education and a sound background within the liberal tradition of education.
4. To reaffirm and strengthen a commitment of service to the community.

APPENDIX M: INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE CONSORTIUM STANDARDS

1. Education leaders ensure the achievement of all students by guiding the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning, strong organizational mission, and setting high expectations for every student.
2. Education leaders ensure achievement and success of all students by monitoring and continuously improving teaching and learning.
3. Education leaders ensure the success of all students by managing organizational systems and resources for a safe, high-performing learning environment.
4. Education leaders ensure the success of all students by collaborating with families and stakeholders who represent diverse community interests and needs and mobilizing community resources that improve teaching and learning.
5. Education leaders ensure the success of all students by being ethical and acting with integrity.
6. Education leaders ensure the success of all students by influencing interrelated systems of political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts affecting education to advocate for their teachers' and students' needs.

Vita Auctoris

Kenneth D. Corum was born on October 10, 1973 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He graduated from George Washington High School in the Cedar Rapids Community School District in 1992. In 1997, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Physical Education and Secondary Education from Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa. He went on to complete his Master of Science in Educational Administration in 2002 from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas. He continues to pursue his commitment to continuous and lifelong learning at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri, where he hopes to earn his Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership in 2011.

Mr. Corum has served students in the North Kansas City Schools in Missouri for 12 years by teaching at both the middle school and high school levels in core and encore subject areas. In addition, he has served as a head and an assistant coach in interscholastic volleyball and basketball for 15 years.

His career goals involve serving as a building and a central office administrator to coincide with personal goals of being a loving husband and father.