



Book Series

## *Research on the Superintendency*

Series Editors

Meredith Mountford, *Florida Atlantic University*; Leigh E. Wallace, *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

The purpose of this series is to explore the most current research in the contemporary American school superintendency. Today's school environments present vastly different considerations for educational leaders. As the district's executive leader, the 21st century school superintendent must be prepared to tackle and embrace a new terrain focused on practices promoting justice and equity for every child as well as responding to myriad contextual and environmental factors. Harvey, Cambron-McCabe, Cunningham, & Koff (2013) identified a school superintendent must: 1) lead, not just manage, their school system, 2) lead without an ideal governance structure, 3) understand learning and assessment, 4) concentrate on equity and close the achievement gap, 5) develop principals, 6) collaborate, and 7) engage the community. In addition, a meta-analysis conducted by Waters and Marzano (2006) found that district leadership matters and through collaboration, focused goal-setting, alignment of goals and resources, and monitoring student achievement, effective superintendents are able to make a difference by fostering goal-oriented systems.

Despite significant findings on the critical role, responsibilities, and system impact of the school's executive leader, a commitment to focused research on the superintendency is needed. Our schools are changing and require a new focus, understanding, and response to diverse learning environments. Leading for social justice must be a primary consideration when studying the role of the superintendent and impact of her/his leadership. Garza (2008) states, "Leading for social justice incites political unrest because the hegemonic culture will resist change that provides equity to all members of society" (p. 163). The contemporary school district leader must recognize this challenge.

The superintendent is vital to this leadership response. This series creates a substantial opportunity for university scholars and practicing superintendents to come together in order to identify timely research topics important to 21st century superintendent leadership.

Garza Jr, E. (2008). Autoethnography of a first-time superintendent: Challenges to leadership for social justice. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 7(2), 163-176.

Harvey, J., Cambron-McCabe, N., Cunningham, L.L., & Koff, R.H. (2013). *The Superintendent's Fieldbook*. (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Waters, T.J., & Marzano, R.J. (2006). *School District Leadership that Works: The effect of superintendent leadership on student achievement*. Denver, CO: McRel.

### **Books in this series:**

- The Contemporary Superintendent

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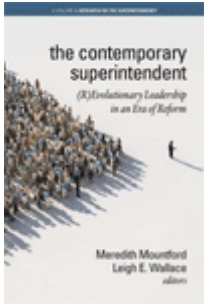
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## The Contemporary Superintendent (R)Evolutionary Leadership in an Era of Reform

Meredith Mountford, Florida Atlantic University; Leigh E. Wallace, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

2019. Paperback 9781641135245 \$45.99. Hardcover 9781641135252 \$85.99. eBook 9781641135269 \$65.

What is (R)Evolutionary Leadership? Why Does it Matter?

How can contemporary school district administrators, specifically superintendents, contend with so many difficult, and almost impossible competing commitments? Building on the definitions of revolution, revolutionary, evolution, and evolutionary, the notion of (R)Evolutionary Leadership emerged while discussing the need for school district leaders to push back against the status quo while improving teacher and leadership practices, improving student learning outcomes, engaging with the community, and ensuring decision making processes that include check and balance systems that are just, fair, and equitable for all.

The chapters in this book introduce superintendents or research on superintendents in which these tenants were practiced; both in their ability to enact radical change by “overthrowing” the status quo – as well as evolutionary in their deliberate approach to viewing change as a process they can control over time. These leaders were willing to confront and defy practices and policies that were counter to student well-being and achievement while concurrently knowing how to reach their desired results. The chapters chosen for inclusion in this volume are those that offered a glimpse of these revolutionary tenants in practice.

We ask that you consider this emerging concept as you explore the chapters of our book. You will find the (R)evolutionary Leaders you meet in the chapters know how to evolve, not just to stay alive, but to ensure the organization (school) remains relevant and vital to society. These leaders use their positional power, social capital, and expertise to advocate for policies and practices that are in the best interest of the school community and they innovate in ways that challenge the status quo. You will also find practices that are (R)Evolutionary and provide ways for leaders to innovate, collaborate, and simply take care of themselves and those around them. Our description does not seek to support or define or delineate the characteristics of a (R)Evolutionary Leader or how one might enact (R)Evolutionary Leadership-but serves as a way to (re)think the way we view the vastly complex work of school district administrators, specifically the superintendent. (R)Evolutionary leadership may change our ways of thinking about the significant advocacy role a superintendent can play in influencing both practice and policy to enact the change necessary to move forward issues of justice, equity, and quality in PK-12 schools and further to improve educational and social outcomes for those served.

**CONTENTS:** (R)Evolutionary Leadership: An Innovative Response to Rapid and Complex Change, *Meredith Mountford and Leigh Ellen Wallace*. Colorado School Superintendents: Meeting the Challenges of Leadership, *Wendy A. Clouse, Al Ramirez, Dallas Strawn, Patrick Radigan, William Dallas, Kevin Brooks, and Pat Green*. Systems’ Leadership in a Rapidly Changing English Education Landscape: Lessons for U.S. Superintendents, *Robin Precey and Terry Bennett*. Superintendents Who Lead for Optimum Learning: Nine Insights, *Jim Brandon, Paulette Hanna, Kent Donlevy, and Dennis Parsons*. Succession Planning for Administrative Positions: Supporting Order During Tumultuous Transitions, *Mark E. Deschaine and Raymond W. Francis*. Ethics and the Superintendency, *Denver J. Fowler*. Inclusive Leadership: Breaking Down Isolated Practice and Developing a Culture of Inquiry to Increase Student and Adult Learning, *Deborah M. Telfer, Aimee Howley, and Martha L. Thurlow*. Leading for Learning: District Leaders as Networked Change Agents, *Catherine McGregor, Judy Halbert, and Linda Kaser*. Some “Central” Issues in Creating Professional Learning Communities: A Superintendent’s Perspective, *Jesus “Chuey” Abrego and Jaime Lopez*. X Chromosome in a Y Dominant World: What Could Possibly Go Wrong? *Barbara Qualls*. Like Father, Like Son: Superintendents Mentoring for Success Through Fictive Kinship Community, *Rhonda Baynes Jeffries and J. R. Falor Green*. The Cost of Making a Difference: The Personal Toll, *Dennis Parsons, Jim Brandon, Sharon Friesen, and Michele Jacobsen*. Evolving Practices for Dealing with Superintendent Stress: Mindfulness, Compassion, and Self-Compassion, *Caryn M. Wells*.



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