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EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENT PERFORMANCE: TOWARD A GENERAL MODEL^{1,2,3}

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Overview

School district superintendents, the chief executive officers of boards of education throughout the U.S., play a crucial leadership role in the education of America's children and youth. To help assure effective implementation of this role, evaluations are conducted during several stages of a superintendent's career: namely, to determine whether or not the applicant has the prerequisite experience and aptitude to succeed in a superintendent preparation program; once graduated from the program, to determine if the candidate has developed sufficient competence to be certified or licensed for service as a superintendent; to establish whether or not a certified superintendent has the special qualifications to succeed in a particular position; once employed, to gauge how well the superintendent is fulfilling job performance requirements; and to identify highly meritorious service and accomplishments that deserve special recognition.

This paper focuses on the evaluation of the on-the-job performance of school district superintendents as they implement school board policy. The decision to focus on performance evaluation is due to its relative importance in the national movement to raise educational standards and improve educational accountability in U.S. schools. Also, the paper draws directly from the results of a federally supported project on improvement of administrator performance evaluation. This project has been funded over the past 18 months by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), as part of OERI's support of the Western Michigan University-based Center for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation (CREATE).

Objectives of the Paper

This paper has five main objectives:

1. To provide a general concept of the superintendency that can undergird development of a model to guide evaluations of superintendent performance

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Daniel L. Stufflebeam, Director of The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University, also heads the national center for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation (CREATE). He is currently conducting research on teacher evaluation and administrator evaluation; community-based real estate and economic development in Chicago and Hawaii. He also chaired the national Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation that produced professional standards for both program evaluation and personnel evaluation. Professor Stufflebeam is the author or coauthor of 12 books and approximately 80 journal articles and book chapters on evaluation theory, methodology, and standards, and on testing.

- 1 Partial financial support for developing this paper was provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) through its grant to Western Michigan University for the work of the national research and development center called Center for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation (CREATE). The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the positions of OERI and the U.S. Department of Education.
- 2 This paper was prepared for a special invitational symposium presented in New Orleans on April 5, 1994, during the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. The symposium was organized by Dr. Andrew McConney and included this paper plus others on new models for teacher evaluation by Dr. Michael Scriven, support personnel evaluation by Dr. James Stronge, and school evaluation by Dr. William Webster. The purpose of the symposium was to engage leading evaluation theoreticians and practitioners in examining and discussing CREATE's progress toward developing a unified model of educational personnel evaluation.
- 3 This paper is based on the work of CREATE's *Administrator Evaluation Models Project*. The author of this paper, director of the involved project, is especially indebted to the other project team members, Dr. Carl Candoli and Ms. Karen Cullen, for their collaboration in developing the concepts on which the paper is based. Special appreciation is also extended to Drs. Arlen Gullickson, Andrew McConney, Michael Scriven, James Stronge, and William Webster for their critical reactions to a previous draft of the paper. Finally, the development of the paper was aided by the inputs to the underlying CREATE project by project advisors: Dr. Edwin Bridges, Dr. Patricia First, and Dr. Jason Millman.
- 4 Appreciation is expressed to Sally Veeder for her excellent editorial assistance and to Patricia Evans, Elissa Joan, Mary Ramlow, Rebecca Thomas, and Susan Stafford for their technical production of the included charts.

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