A Case Study Describing How Servant Leadership Attributes Impact Superintendent Longevity and Leadership Styles

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A CASE STUDY DESCRIBING HOW SERVANT LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES IMPACT
SUPERINTENDENT LONGEVITY AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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December 2015
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In an era denoted by increased accountability, mandated reporting, and constant public scrutiny, the workload and pressures for the superintendent is daunting. As a result of these pressures, an apprehension regarding superintendent longevity and the number of available superintendent candidates has become a growing concern. This study utilizes a case study approach to examine six long-serving superintendents that have been identified as a servant leaders and have served as superintendent in the same school district for a minimum of ten consecutive years. Individual interviews were used to examine the servant leadership attributes that the long serving superintendents utilized during crucible moments in their tenure. The servant leadership attributes, longevity increasing events, leadership styles, and leadership themes were examined through the lens of Greenleaf’s (1970) servant leadership theory, Collins’ (2001) level 5 executive leader, and Maxwell’s (2011) level 5 pinnacle leader theoretical frameworks. This research identifies the common servant leadership attributes and crucible moments that impacted the leadership and tenure of the long serving superintendents.