Challenges of the Public School Superintendency:
Differences by Tenure and District Location

Daniel Trevino, Jr., Ed.D.
LaFeria Independent School District

Richard T. Braley, Ed.D.
Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Michelle Stallone Brown, Ed.D.
Texas A&M University-Kingsville

John R. Slate, Ph.D.
Sam Houston State University

In this study, the researchers examined current challenges faced by 46 public school superintendents in South Texas. Challenges faced by these superintendents which were investigated in this study were: political obstacles/governance; high stakes testing; curriculum and instruction; funding; student socio-economic status; student demographics; personnel ethics; a lack of highly-qualified teachers and paraprofessionals; a lack of educational diversity; and, student discipline. Through a survey completed by 46 public school superintendents in South Texas, statistically significant relationships were found between superintendent tenure and concerns about these challenges. Statistically significant differences were present in superintendents' views about these challenges as a function of school district location. Implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: Superintendents; Organizational, Economic, Personnel, and Student Challenges

The last quarter of the 20th century saw many efforts to rethink and improve education for America's children. Numerous efforts to improve and reform public schools have occurred. These efforts have ranged from new state standards for student achievement to high-stakes testing and charter school legislation. One important dimension, however, has largely been overlooked: school district leadership, governance, and teamwork (Goodman and Zimmerman, 2000).

Horine and Bass stated that "as organizational leaders struggle to lead their organizations to become higher performing, quality organizations, there is an increasing recognition that a new leadership paradigm is needed to successfully develop and sustain a motivated and committed workforce." (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1993, p. 1) Bennis and Nanus (1985) noted the critical need for leaders to respond to change and the challenges that change entails. Leaders need to have what it takes to stay in the game. To survive the

challenges, leaders, not managers, are crucial to the success of education in the 21st century (Shelton, 1997). Moreover, educational leaders need to be responsive proactively to mandates that require substantial changes in schools and schooling such as the No Child Left Behind Act (Linn, Baker, and Betebenner, 2002).

Unfortunately, in our view, public school superintendents continue to live in a culture that is based upon conflict, insecurity and uncertainty (Allison, 1988). We contend that superintendency turnover is, in large part, due to the challenges in the position. Key positions such as the superintendency need longer tenures so that long term, positive influences occur. Dr. Donald Drayer, superintendent of Minnetonka Public Schools in Minnesota succinctly asserted:

> One of my greatest apprehensions about the future of the superintendency is the short tenure in a key position. Important and needed organizational change occurs over many years. Leadership that is in a constant state of flux can rarely bring about effective change which truly impacts student learning. (Carter and Cunningham, 1997, p. xvii)

Schools in the 20th century were slow to respond to changes in school organization from the bureaucratic model that was developed in the early 1900s. That has continued to be the predominant structure of school systems into the early years of the current century as well. Schools were being led and are continuing to be led from the top down, and interactions with employees were then and continue to be carried out in a traditional autocratic manner (Bass and Avilio, 1994; Leithwood, 1994; Senge, 1990). The 21st century, however, has brought additional challenges to the field of public educational leadership. Examples of such challenges include the No Child Left Behind Act and its mandates for student testing, adequate yearly progress, and school accountability (Linn et al., 2002). In addition, for some states, substantial increases in immigration and in minority students have occurred.

Fewer researchers have addressed superintendent tenure and turnover impacts on education. Addressing the issues surrounding superintendent performance and evaluation, Glass (2000) emphasized that, "whether or not superintendents can measurably affect student achievement has not been the subject of extensive research." (p. 62) Bridges (1982) argued that despite the importance of the superintendency in the governance of schools, limited studies have been conducted and, therefore, "nothing of consequence is known about the impact of the occupants of this role." (p. 26)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to analyze the current challenges facing public school superintendents in South Texas. The challenges that were investigated include: organizational, economic, personnel, and student-related challenges. The relationships between superintendent tenure, school district size, and school district location in comparison with these present challenges were also investigated.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do superintendents view organizational issues, economic issues, personnel-related issues, and student-related issues as being challenges in their school districts?
2. What is the relationship between superintendent tenure and views concerning the challenge issues?
3. What is the relationship between school size and superintendent views concerning the challenge issues?
4. What is the relationship between school district location and superintendent views on the challenge issues?

Methods and Procedures

Participants

 With the target population being the 79 South Texas public school superintendents, 69 participants were requested to complete a survey created by the senior researcher. All of the superintendents in South Texas were not selected because 10 of them were newly employed and, thus, would not be able to provide information specific to their current school district in South Texas. Participants were identified through use of the Texas Education Agency Database. A list of practicing South Texas public school superintendents was obtained from the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), Texas Association School Administrators (TASA), and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) of the state of Texas. Those lists differed due to constant superintendency turnover in the state. In the PEIMS information, the names of the superintendents were provided by the Texas Education Agency. The lists were used to create a complete superintendent database. From this list, all newly employed school superintendents were identified and removed from further consideration for this study.

 Of the 69 superintendents who were sent surveys, 46 returned completed surveys (return rate of 66.7%). As would be expected, the majority of the superintendents were male ($n = 39$, 84.8%), with only 7 superintendents being female (15.2%). The majority of superintendents were Hispanic ($n = 27$, 58.7%), with Whites constituting the remainder ($n = 19$, 41.3%). Concerning experience, 31 (67.4%) superintendents reported having 0 to 5 years of experience; 13 (28.3%) superintendents had 6 to 10 years of experience; and 2 (4.3%) superintendents reported having 11 or more years of experience.

 Regarding school district location, 4 (8.7%) superintendents reported being at urban locations (population greater than 50,000); 25 (54.3%) superintendents were at suburban locations (population between 2,501 and 49,999); and 17 (37.0%) superintendents were from rural locations (population less than 2,500). Large school districts were the most prevalent among respondents, with 23 (50.0%) superintendents being from large size districts (2,001 or more students); 13 (28.3%) superintendents from medium size districts (501 to 2000 students); and 10 (21.7%) superintendents from small size districts (up to 500 students).

Instrumentation

 A survey, entitled *Present Challenges of Superintendent Survey*, was created for this study. Survey instrumentation included six parts: Part I included demographic information; Part II contained questions concerning organizational challenges (i.e., politics/governance, high

stakes testing, and curriculum and instruction); Part III included economic challenges (i.e., funding, socio-economic status (free/reduced lunch; poverty), and student demographics (minority status; recent immigrants)); Part IV contained information on personnel challenges concentrating on a lack of highly-qualified personnel and professional development concerns; and Part V included student-related challenges (i.e., educational diversity and student discipline). Participants responded to these questions using a five-point Likert format, ranging from 5 (Almost Always, 99%-80%, a challenge), 4 (Most of the Time, 79%-60%, a challenge), 3 (Occasionally, 59%-40%, a challenge), 2 (Some of the Time, 39%-20%, a challenge), to 1 (Seldom, 19%-1%, a challenge). Thus, the higher the number, the more often that superintendents perceived the issue addressed in that question as being more of a challenge in their role as superintendents. Table 1 displays the survey items:

Table 1. Item Stems Used in Survey of Superintendent Challenges

---

Organizational Challenges
Politics/governance

1. Political obstacles are a daily occurrence in my superintendency.
2. Policy implementation can often exert forces that can be felt by teachers, students, staff, administrators, and parents.
3. Political challenges can make it difficult for my board and I to work closely together.
4. I feel as though I have to be a political strategist to get my job done well.
High stakes testing
5. High stakes testing is a present challenge in my superintendency.
6. High stakes testing is discriminative in my school district.
7. High stakes testing has increased student academic performance.
8. High stakes testing is worthwhile in my school district.
Curriculum and instruction
9. Curriculum and instructional design is developed through teacher input in my school district.
10. Curriculum and instruction is a present challenge in my superintendency.
11. Curriculum and instruction practices in my district include vertical and horizontal alignment.
12. I feel as though I have to manage the curriculum in my school district to get my job done well.
Economic Challenges
Funding
13. Funding is a present challenge in my superintendency.
14. Funding plays a major role in student academic performance in my school district.
15. Federal funds are implemented by my school district.
16. My district is a property-poor district and this serves as a challenge in my superintendency.
Socio-economic status
17. Socio-economic status of students is a present challenge in my superintendency.

18. Socio-economic status of students influences the student academic gap in my school district.
19. Socio-economic status of students influences the teaching preference of privileged and non-privileged students in my district.
20. I agree with the No Child Left Behind Act and its role to close the gap between privileged and non-privileged students.

Demographics
21. The student demographics of my school district are a present challenge in my superintendency.
22. The student demographics of my school district have an influence in my district's accountability ratings.
23. The student demographics in my school district are presently changing considerably.
24. The student demographics in my school district influence the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements.

Personnel Challenges
Personnel ethics
25. Personnel issues are present challenges in my superintendency.
26. Personnel ethics is a top priority in my school district.
27. Personnel ethics are a required in-service in my school district.

Highly-qualified teachers and paraprofessionals
28. Highly-qualified requirements are a present challenge in my superintendency.
29. Highly-qualified requirements are met by teachers and paraprofessionals in my school district.
30. Highly-qualified teachers increase student academic performance in my school district.
31. I am very familiar with the highly-qualified requirements of teachers and paraprofessionals.

Student-related Challenges
Educational diversity
32. Educational diversity is a present challenge in my superintendency.
33. Educational diversity exists in classrooms in my school district.
34. Educational diversity is frustrating for classroom teachers in my school district.
35. I am familiar with the definition of educational diversity.

Student discipline
36. Student discipline is a present challenge in my superintendency.
37. Student discipline offenses are increasing in my district.
38. Student discipline influences student academic achievement in my school district.
39. I feel that stakeholders of my school district feel safe when it comes to our school environments.

To determine the internal consistency of the survey items, several Cronbach's coefficient alphas were calculated. Part II, which consisted of the Organizational Challenges items, yielded a coefficient alpha of .739 for the 12 survey items. Part III, comprised of the Economic Challenges, had a coefficient alpha of .806 for its 12 items. Personnel Challenges,

comprised of only 6 items, yielded a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of .612. Finally, Part V, Student-Related Challenges, was found to have a coefficient alpha of .562 for its 8 items. Of the total scale and the Organizational and Economic Challenges, the internal consistency was more than sufficiently high for research purposes (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The scales of Personnel Challenges and of Student-Related Challenges did not yield scores as reliable and, therefore, readers should be cautious in the extent to which they generalize from findings based upon these two scales.

Procedures

A pre-contact postcard was sent to potential participants. The pre-contact involved the researchers identifying themselves, discussing the purpose of the study, and requesting cooperation (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2003). A follow-up contact was sent to non-respondents a few days after the 30 day deadline. This follow-up contact consisted of sending all non-respondents a follow-up letter, along with another copy of the questionnaire and another self-addressed envelope (Heberlein and Baumgartner, 1981). All participants were sent thank you notes for their assistance in the study.

Results

Results are organized around each of the previously presented research questions.
1. To what extent do superintendents view organizational issues, economic issues, personnel-related issues, and student-related issues as being challenges in their school districts?

To address this research question, the individual survey items that comprised each of these component areas were summed to create a total score for each of the areas under each of the Challenges sections. This total score was divided by the number of survey items in each section to provide a mean score that was comparable with the scoring format of each individual survey item. The higher the mean, the more often that particular item was perceived as being a challenge by the respondent. Lower mean scores reflected that the item or area was not perceived as being as much of a challenge by the respondent.

In looking at the means in Table 2, readers can see that superintendents viewed obtaining highly qualified teachers as being their greatest challenge of the ones queried in the survey. The second greatest challenge they perceived was the amount of funding or lack of funding received by their schools. The challenge superintendents reported as being their next greatest challenge involved curriculum and instruction issues. Political and governance issues received the lowest rating by superintendents, in relation to the other areas queried in the survey.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items Categorized into Challenge Areas

Variable	M	SD
Organizational Challenges		
Curriculum and Instruction	3.83	0.68
High stakes testing	3.26	0.63
Politics/Governance	2.67	1.14
Economic Challenges		
Funding	3.86	0.93
Socio-economic Status	3.12	0.85
Demographics	2.77	1.00
Personnel-Related Challenges		
Highly-qualified teachers & paraprofessionals	3.99	0.49
Personnel ethics	3.28	0.99
Student-Related Challenges		
Educational Diversity	3.15	0.73
Student Discipline	2.98	0.72

Following the calculation of these descriptive statistics for the survey item clusters, research question 2 was addressed.

2. What is the relationship of superintendent tenure and their views concerning the above issues?

To address this research question, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated between the number of years the superintendent reported that he/she was at his/her present school district [Readers should be aware that, because we were interested only in our superintendents' experience with their current school district in South Texas, only their years of experience at their current South Texas school district were used in this study.] and the aggregated responses to each of the major areas of the survey: Organizational challenges; Economic challenges; Personnel-Related Challenges; and Student-Related Challenges. Table 3 depicts these relationships.

Table 3.   Pearson rs for Relationship of Superintendent Tenure with Superintendency Challenges

Variable	Tenure r
Organizational Challenges	-.167
Economic Challenges	-.303*
Personnel Challenges	-.314*
Student-Related Challenges	-.298

* indicates that the correlation was statistically significant at the .05 level

As shown in Table 3, superintendent tenure was found to be statistically significantly related with the superintendent's perceptions of economic challenges. The more years that the superintendents were in their present school district, the less likely they were to report that economic challenges were less of a challenge for them. Similarly, the fewer years that superintendents were in their school district, the more likely they were to report that economic challenges were a concern.

Personnel challenges were also found to be statistically significant related with superintendent's tenure. The more years that the superintendents were in their present school district, the less likely they were to report that personnel challenges were a challenge for them. Similarly, the fewer years that superintendents were in their present school district, the more likely they were to report that personnel challenges were a concern. Therefore, in both of these cases, when superintendents had more experience in the same school district, they viewed these areas as less challenging than when superintendents had less experience in the same school district. Readers should note that the effect sizes for both of these statistically significant relationships were small, 9 to 10% of the variance. Tenure was found to be unrelated to organizational challenges and to student-related challenges.

Prior to addressing research questions three and four regarding school size (i.e., large, medium, and small) and school district location (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural), a Pearson chi-square procedure was used to determine the extent to which these variables were correlated. Findings were statistically significant, $\chi^2(4) = 22.387$, p = .0001, Cramer's V = .493. Thus, a large effect was present between school size and school district location. Over 70% of the schools in urban locations (75.0%) and in suburban locations (72.0%) were large, compared with only 11.8% of schools in rural locations. Because of this collinearity issue, only the research question addressing school district location was addressed.

Regarding "What is the relationship between school district location and superintendent views on the above issues?" a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted, with school district location serving as the independent variable and the challenge areas serving as dependent variables. This analysis yielded a statistically significant overall difference, Wilks's $\Lambda = .559$, $F(8, 80) = 4.521$, $p = .002$.

Follow-up univariate F's revealed statistically significant differences among the school districts for Organizational Challenges, $F(2, 43) = 5.239$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2 = .494$ or large (Cohen, 1988); for Personnel-Related Challenges, $F(2, 43) = 3.577$, $p = .037$, $\eta^2 = .408$ or large; and, for Student-Related Challenges, $F(2, 43) = 9.061$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .648$ or large (Cohen, 1988). No statistically significant difference was present for Economic Challenges, $F(2, 43) = 2.468$, $p = .097$.

As can be seen in Table 4, a statistically significant difference was present among school district location for Organizational Challenges. Superintendents of rural school districts responded that organizational challenges were less of a concern for them than did superintendents of urban school districts. Suburban school districts did not differ from the other two school district locations for the organizational challenges variable.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Challenges by School District Location

Variable	Rural M (SD)	Suburban M (SD)	Urban M (SD)
Organizational Challenges	2.99 (0.49)	3.31 (0.62)	3.96 (0.19)
Economic Challenges	2.98 (0.79)	3.46 (0.57)	3.12 (1.03)
Personnel Challenges	3.32 (0.71)	3.81 (0.54)	3.93 (0.73)
Student-Related Challenges	2.67 (0.38)	3.29 (0.55)	3.31 (0.43)

A statistically significant difference was also yielded among school district location for Personnel-Related Challenges. Superintendents of rural school districts responded that personnel challenges were less of a concern for them than did superintendents of suburban school districts. Urban school districts did not differ from the other two school district locations for this variable. A statistically significant difference was present among school district location for Student-Related Challenges as well. Superintendents of rural school districts responded that student-related challenges were less of a concern for them than did superintendents of either suburban or urban school districts. Suburban and urban school districts did not differ from each other for the student-related challenges variable.

Discussion

Results of this study have implications for recognizing present challenges of the practicing public school superintendent. Public school superintendents, educational leaders of present day public schools, encounter organizational, economic, personnel, and student-related challenges. Governance and financial challenges exist for the superintendent during the day-to-day operations of school districts. If the expectations of society today are to increase student academic performance and attempt to reform our public education system, then the present challenges of the superintendent need to be better understood. Both public school superintendents and stakeholders should work together to improve our school systems.

Public schools and the superintendency are facing many challenges in the wake of cultural, political, economic, and moral changes that are reforming the basic institutions in our society, including public schools. Those changes are influencing governance, management, and policy development in education. The public school superintendent continues to face controversy because of the educational and political balance of the position, but in most communities the superintendency has been respected. In the past, aspiring superintendents were plentiful because of the salary package, status, and challenges inherent in the position.

Clearly, the time is right for a broader, more vigorous discussion of the important issue of school governance. Across the nation, states and local districts are taking dramatic

steps to alter governance structures and change how schools are designed, funded, managed, overseen, constructed, and held accountable (Education Commission of the States, 1999). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 heightened the responsibility of public school superintendents to close the gap between privileged and non-privileged children. However, that came when many public school superintendents were already struggling with unfunded mandates, and complexities and challenges of the education reform agendas in their own local districts. Confusion apparently still exists concerning the appropriate roles of school boards and superintendents. Moreover, district bureaucracies still appear to be especially problematic in large districts. Superintendents also face increasing state and federal regulation of public schools (Ziebarth, 2002).

The superintendency has changed. Additional challenges created by heightened public demands for improved student performance even when increasing enrollments of students from more diverse backgrounds are occurring have lead to more stress placed on educational leaders. Moreover, teacher and principal shortages, inadequate school funding, deteriorating and crowded school facilities, and excessive time demands have created a leadership crisis. Those complex factors have contributed to a gradual loss of faith in public schools and loss of respect for the position of the public school superintendent.

Texas school reform legislation, the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), and other national and state education reports on the declining state of our schools, have revealed why the role of the superintendency is more complex and stressful than ever before (Hoyle, 2002). Texas has become more diverse, and schools are becoming caldrons of social change resulting in heightened public scrutiny of public schools and superintendents. This particular attention has forced superintendents to become more political to balance the competing interests of accountability and demands by special interest groups, while attempting to provide the best program for students. This balancing effort causes conflict for the superintendency. Interestingly, in this study, superintendents responded that politics and governance were the least challenging issues for them, of the issues examined. It may be that their previous experience in schools had prepared them, at least somewhat, for the political and governance issues faced by superintendents.

In this study, superintendents reported difficulties in obtaining highly-qualified personnel. This issue is a challenge faced by many superintendents across the country (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). With the No Child left Behind Act requiring schools to hire high-qualified teachers and by defining this term through educational degrees, the issue of personnel-related challenges will most likely be present for the near future. Another issue of concern to superintendents was that of inadequate funding. Even a cursory search of online sources will reveal to the reader the extent to which inadequate funding is an issue to superintendents, to teachers, and to parents. Texas, Arkansas, and Kentucky are just three of the states in which their funding mechanisms of public education were ruled unconstitutional as a result of challenges from poor school districts. Even though Texas changed its funding system in response to a court mandate, concerns still exist among superintendents regarding its adequacy.

This study has contributed an element of research that is unique as current challenges faced by public school superintendents were investigated. Even though researchers have examined the superintendency, a void exists in the literature of the actual challenges that

influence the day-to-day operations of public school districts, not only in South Texas but in school districts across the country.

References

Allison, D. J. (1988). *Ontario directors and American superintendents: A study of contrasting cultures and contexts.* Division of Educational Policy Studies, London, Ontario: University of Western Ontario.

Bass, B. M. and Avilio, B. J. (1994). The implications of transactional and transformational leadership for individual, team and organizational development. *Research for organizational change and development.* The Free Press. New York.

Bennis, W. and Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge.* New York: Harper & Row.

Bridges, E. W. (1982). Research on the school administrator: The state of the art, 1967-1980. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *18*(3), 12-33.

Carter, G. M. and Cunningham, W. G. (1997). *The American school superintendent: Leading in an age of pressure.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass, Inc.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Drucker, P. F. (1989). *The new realities.* New York, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc.

Drucker, P. F. (1992). *The practice of management.* New York, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc.

Education Commission of the States. (2003). Accessed from http://nclb.ecs.org/nclb/

Gall, G. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction.* Pearson Education, Inc. Boston, MA.

Glass, T. (1992). *The study of the American school superintendency: America's education leaders in a time of reform.* Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Glass, T. E. (2000). Superintendent/school board relations. In T.E. Glass, L. Bjork, and C. C. Brunner, *The study of the American school superintendency.2000: A look at the superintendent of education in the new millennium.* (pp. 53-76). Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Goodman, R. H. and Zimmerman, W. G. (2000). *Thinking differently: Recommendations for 21st century school board/superintendent leadership, governance, and teamwork for high student achievement.* New England Development Council: Educational Research Service.

Heberlein, T. A. and Baumgartner, R. (1981). Is a questionnaire necessary in a second mailing? *Public Opinion Quarterly, 45,* 102-108.

Hoyle, J. R. (2002). *The highest form of leadership: How we can help tomorrow's leaders catch the spirit.* American Association of School Administrators. Arlington, VA.

Leithwood, K. A. (1994). Leadership for school restructuring. *Educational Administration Quarterly.* 30(4), 498-518.

Leithwood, K. and Steinbach, R. (1993). Total quality leadership: Expert thinking plus transformational practice. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*. 7(4), 311-338.

Linn, R. L., Baker, E. L., and Betebenner, D. W. (2002). Accountability systems: Implications of requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. *Educational Researcher, 31*(6), 3-16.

Nunnally, J. C. and Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline*: *Strategies and tools for building a learning organization.* Doubleday Publishing. Mechanicsburg, PA.

Shelton, L. (1997). *Creating teamwork.* Scott, Foresman, and Company: Denver, CO.

Texas Association of School Boards. (1994). *Guide for school board candidates* (Brochure). Austin, TX: Jess Butler.

Texas Association of School Boards. (2005). *TASB board effectiveness audit.* Retrieved October 8, 2007 from: http://www.tasb.edu.

Texas Association of School Boards. (2006). *State Academic Assessment Report*. Retrieved October 8, 2007 from: http://www.tasb.edu.

Texas Education Agency. (2002), *Snapshot: Item Definitions*. Retrieved October 8, 2007 from: http://www.tea.edu.

Texas Education Agency. (2003). *Highly Qualified Requirements*. Retrieved October 8, 2007 from: http://www.tea.edu.

Texas Education Agency. (2004). *2003-2004 Academic Excellence Indicator System.* Retrieved October 8, 2007 from: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis.

Texas Education Agency. (2005). Student budget expenditures. Retrieved October 8, 2007 from: http://www.tea.edu.

Texas Education Agency. (2006). *2004-2005 Student Enrollment,* Retrieved October 8, 2007 from: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/cgi/sas/broker.

Texas Education Code. (2000). *Powers and duties of board of trustees of independent school districts*. Chapter 11, Subchapter D, 11, 151. Retrieved October 8, 2007 from: http://www.tea.edu.

U.S. Department of Education. (2003). *Meeting the highly qualified teachers challenge: The Secretary's annual report on teacher quality.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Office of Postsecondary education.

Ziebarth, T. (2002). *Rewards and Sanctions for School Districts and Schools*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Daniel Trevino, Jr. is Assistant Superintendant for Special Programs with the LaFeria Independent School District.

Richard T. Braley is Assistant Dean of the College of Education, Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Michelle Stallone Brown is Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Counseling with Texas A&M University-Kingsville

John R. Slate is Professor of Educational Leadership and Counseling with Sam Houston State University.