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COMMENTARY

Christopher H. Tienken, Editor
AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice

TIMSS Implications for U.S. Education

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) released the latest results from the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) on December 11, 2012. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan proclaimed (2012):

Given the vital role that science, technology, engineering, and math play in stimulating innovation and economic growth, it is particularly troubling that eighth-grade science achievement is stagnant and that students in Singapore and Korea are far more likely to perform at advanced levels in science than U.S. students. A number of nations are out-educating us today in the STEM disciplines—and if we as a nation don't turn that around, those nations will soon be out-competing us in a knowledge-based, global economy (p. 1).

What do the rankings suggest about student achievement in the United States (US) and are other countries like Singapore and Korea, or cities like Hong Kong really going to

outpace the US in the global economy? In this article I untangle some of the results so that education administrators and bureaucrats might be able to make better sense of them.

Drawing Conclusions

I expected the results from TIMSS 2011 to show U.S. students ranked in the middle of the international pack in mathematics and science based the amount of rhetoric and press extolling the supposed failure of the U.S. public schools. A day rarely passes when someone does not write or say that the entire U.S. public school system is failing, especially in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Secretary Duncan's comments insinuate that the TIMSS 2011 results in some way reflect a lack of STEM preparedness.

Secretary Duncan seems to draw a cause and effect conclusion between the TIMSS 2011 results and the future of STEM and economic competitiveness in the third most populace country. However, I could not find any connection between the results and the future of STEM or economic vitality described or explained in the TIMSS report or technical manuals.

Apparently the developers of TIMSS did not create the assessment to allow for such conclusions. A deeper exploration of the data provides more insight to what one can infer from the TIMSS 2011 outcomes.

The Numbers

The results from TIMSS 2011 present a possible conundrum for those who use results from international testing to assail public education. U.S. students ranked high within the sample of countries and cities. In science, Grade 4 students in the U.S. sample ranked 7th out of 53 participating countries and international cities. The Grade 4 students ranked higher than approximately 87% of the students in the international sample. Grade 8

students ranked 9th out of 45 participating countries and international cities, or higher than approximately 80% of the students in the sample. U.S. students ranked 6th and 8th in Grades 4 and 8 when I eliminate Hong Kong because it is a semi-autonomous city and does not represent the Chinese education system.

In mathematics, Grade 4 students in the U.S. sample ranked 8th out of 53 participating countries and international cities; tied with Finland. Grade 8 students ranked 7th out of 53 participating countries and international cities. Grade 4 students outranked approximately 85% of the students in the sample and Grade 8 students outranked approximately 87% of the students in the sample (See Table 1).

Table 1

TIMSS 2011 Mathematics and Science Rankings for the US, Grades 4 and 8

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Rank Grade 4</u>	<u>Rank Grade 8</u>
Mathematics	8 th	7 th
Science	7 th	9 th

The mathematics results for Grade 8 students interest me because 30% of the questions on the TIMSS 2011 contain algebra concepts such as functions and solving equations. Readers should keep in mind that not all students in the US complete Algebra I in eighth-grade, but most students do complete it by the time they graduate high school.

The creators of TIMSS acknowledge that there is a curricular mismatch on the test for some nations. Hence it is hard to judge student knowledge on topics that they have not yet been formally instructed. The skills being assessed at Grade 8 on the TIMSS might not be

secured until the American student completes Grade 9 or 10, so the TIMSS Grade 8 snapshot of achievement could be a little out of focus.

Some education bureaucrats, like Secretary Duncan, might say after reading this article: "Wait, U.S. fourth-grade students ranked 11th in mathematics, not 8th." That is true if the Secretary and other bureaucrats disregard statistical significance. For example, there is only a one-point difference between the fourth-grade U.S. mathematics scale score and the scale score of Russian fourth-grade students; 541 and 542 respectively. It is possible to use statistics to determine if the

difference in mean scores is significant or if it occurs by chance.

The researchers at IEA provide that information in their report to help the Secretary and others who might not be familiar with statistical techniques to make better sense of the results.

The TIMSS report contains other important information about things such as student confidence in mathematics. Zhao (2012a) presents a comprehensive analysis of the TIMSS 2011 and PISA 2009 results from another angle. I suggest readers consider his points in light of the results from those assessments and review the reports themselves.

Economic Realities

I cautioned education bureaucrats previously about generating crises over the results from international tests, especially in terms of which

country's students outrank U.S. students. As I explain in my forthcoming book with Don Orlich, *The School Reform Landscape: Fraud, Myth, and Lies*, one must compare apples to apples when attempting to make international comparisons (Tienken & Orlich, 2013). In this case the apples represent the overall size of a country's economy. I present in rank order, the countries with the 10 largest economies in the TIMSS sample, based on their 2011 gross domestic product (GDP), as if they were the only countries in the sample (See Table 2).

The table is based on rank only and does not take into account statistical significance. The list is ordered by GDP size. The US never ranks below 5th in either math or science TIMSS achievement within its comparison group. I left Hong Kong in the sample as a GDP placeholder for China. If I remove it, the US rankings improve in all areas except Grade 4 science.

Table 2

TIMSS 2011 Mathematics and Science Ranks for the 10 Largest Economies

<u>Country</u>	<u>Science Gr. 4</u>	<u>Science Gr. 8</u>	<u>Math Gr. 4</u>	<u>Math Gr. 8</u>
U.S.	3	5	5	4
Hong Kong ¹	4	3	1	1
Japan	1	1	3	2
Germany	6	6	6	DNP
France	DNP	DNP	DNP	DNP
Brazil	DNP	DNP	DNP	DNP
England	5	4	5	5
Italy	7	7	6	6
Russia	2	2	3	3
India	DNP	DNP	DNP	DNP

¹ Only Hong Kong participated. The city does not represent the Chinese education system but it is used as a placeholder for the Chinese economy in this table.

DNP = Did not participate

I used GDP as a proxy for the group with which the US competes because it is nonsensical to think that smaller economies like Singapore, Finland, Northern Ireland, Slovenia, Taipei, or Korea will surpass the US in GDP or innovation. They simply do not have enough workers to outperform the larger economies.

For example, according to data from World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), there are very few countries that compete with the US in terms of innovation as measured by the number of patents approved in the areas of (a) electrical engineering, (b) technological instrumentation, (c) chemistry, (d) mechanical engineering, and (e) related fields.

I encourage readers to review the patent information for themselves in the report from WIPO titled, *World Intellectual Property Indicators – 2012 Edition*. I gathered the specific data on patents from *Section A: Patents, Utility models and Microorganisms*, Table A.7.1.2 Patent Applications Worldwide by Field of Technology.

Poverty

What about the influence of poverty on the test results? The secondary TIMSS sample, called the *Benchmarking Participants*, includes results from several states, including Massachusetts, Florida, and California.

Just as Tirozzi (as cited in Riddle 2010) demonstrated with the results from the PISA 2009 tests, the rankings change when the data are disaggregated by poverty rates. I used the TIMSS 2011 scores from Massachusetts (MA) as a proxy for the scores from a less impoverished “US” national sample to model lower levels of child poverty.

According to The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the 2011 child poverty rate in MA was 15% whereas the rate for the U.S. was approximately 23%. Although 15% poverty is higher than many countries in the TIMSS sample, it does provide a method to look at the influence of poverty on TIMSS results and gives insight as to how U.S. students might score if less of them lived in poverty.

Grade 8 students in MA participated in the science and mathematics portions. In science, the MA students achieved a scale score of 567, second only to Singapore at 590 and ahead of such participants as Chinese Taipei, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, and Finland; all of which have lower rates of childhood poverty. A decrease in the poverty rate by 8 percentage points (23% U.S. average—15% MA average) increases the U.S. scale score by 41 points and propels it to 2nd place in the world on TIMSS 2011 Grade 8 Science.

In mathematics, the MA students achieved a scale score of 561 compared to the U.S. average of 509: a difference of 52 scale score points. The difference propels the U.S. students into 5th place and on par with Japan. Poverty matters in the US in terms of scale scores on the TIMSS.

Good or Bad?

Some readers might misconstrue my comments as boasting about the performance of U.S. students, but my aim was to present a clearer picture of the data. My true feelings border more on concern than elation. I wonder if these results indicate that the U.S. system is creating better test takers at the expense of better innovators. Keep in mind the 2011 results are from samples of students who will not contribute to the economy for many more years.

The innovative products for the patents referred to in the previous section were created by students who probably took tests like the First International Mathematics Study (FIMS) in 1964, the Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS) in 1982, and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS I) in 1995. The U.S. students in those samples ranked lower on their respective tests than the students in the TIMSS 2011 sample. In fact, U.S. students ranked 11th out of 12 on the FIMS.

As I discussed with Yong Zhao (personal communication, December, 2012), could the strong results on the TIMSS 2011 be an omen of a future creativity decline in U.S. students?

Zhao (2012b) compiled multiple indicators of creativity and found a negative relationship between high scores on international tests and high levels of creativity in a country's population.

Are U.S. students destined to become more like their high scoring, but less innovative peers in China, Singapore, and Korea; great test-takers but poor creators (Zhao, 2012b)? Will we start to see PISA and TIMSS study manuals show up on the shelves of grocery stores like they do in Singapore? Will there be TIMSS test preparation centers opening near your home in the coming years? Will there be a slow decline in the number of utility patents achieved by U.S. businesses and citizens due to a myopic focus on standardized testing and the accompanying lack of emphasis on creativity and divergent thinking in the U.S. curriculum and national standardized test?

Alternative Indicators

Other indicators such as the percentage of the population age 25-34 that attained at least a tertiary degree, equivalent to the U.S. bachelor

degree (BA), and a high school diploma suggest that the U.S. public school system is functioning well and has been for a long time. Regardless of ranks on international tests, the U.S. ranks 10th out of 42 nations from the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the percentage of people with a BA degree, with 33% of 25-34 year-olds who attained the degree; the same as Japan (OECD, 2012).

There are only six other nations that out rank the US in percentage of their populations with BA degrees when one accounts for statistical significance: (a) Norway, 46%, (b) Korea, 39%, (c) Netherlands, 38%, (d) England, 38%, (e) Finland, 37%, and (f) Poland, 36%. China has approximately 2% of the population age 25-34 who completed at least a BA degree.

According to international data collected by OECD (2012) 88% of the U.S. population age 24-35 attained a high school diploma. The average for the G20 group of countries is 72%. The U.S. ranks 10th out of 42 OECD countries. Korea, Poland, and Slovak Republic have the highest percentages with ranges from 98% and 94%.

The Wrong Problems

The problems faced by U.S. students are not how well they score or rank on international tests, or any other tests. Children in the US face much larger issues that detract from academic achievement. Why should U.S. students rank first in the world on any international tests of academic achievement?

Is the US first in the world in terms of eradicating childhood poverty? No.

Is the US first in the world in the percentage of children who have access to high quality healthcare? No.

Are U.S. children the least prone to housing and food insecurity compared to the rest of the industrialized world? No.

Does the US lead the world in universal access to high quality pre-school? No.

We can spend our time chasing meaningless rankings and competing for those rankings with countries that have populations no larger than Dallas/Fort Worth or Northern New Jersey, but that would be an offensive waste of taxpayer money. The results from international tests do not suggest a cause and effect relationship to economic strength or innovation.

I believe that in the US we should use our massive resources to enrich a unitary, democratic public school system to foster students to become resilient, persistent, creative, innovative, collaborative, empathetic, intrinsically motivated, socially conscious, globally/culturally aware, and critically thinking human beings.

According to the released items from the TIMSS battery of tests, TIMSS does not measure any of those traits; nor does PISA or PIRLS. Focusing too much on any single test is a recipe for fostering limitation, not creation and innovation.

Editor and Author Biography

Christopher Tienken is an assistant professor at Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services, in the Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy. His research interests include curriculum and assessment policy and practice. His latest book, with co-author Donald Orlich, is *The School Reform Landscape: Fraud, Myth, and Lies* published by Rowman and Littlefield.

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Superintendent Tenure and Student Achievement

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Abstract

A correlational research design was used to examine the influence of superintendent tenure on student achievement in rural Appalachian Kentucky school districts. Superintendent tenure was compared to aggregated student achievement scores for 2011 and to changes in students' learning outcomes over the course of the superintendents' tenure. The relationship between superintendent tenure and changes in student achievement scores was statistically significant. A regression test indicated a significant correlation between the two variables, ($r [44] = .75, p < .01$). Data also indicated that students demonstrated significant growth in achievement test scores when superintendents served more than five years in the same school district, as shown by an independent samples t -test ($t [43] = 2.01, p < .01$).

Keywords

rural, superintendent, tenure

The success of a superintendent might be influenced by education background, leadership style, or job experience among other factors. The influence of superintendent tenure on student achievement has been a topic of research in recent years (Trevino, Braley, Brown, & Slate, 2008). However, the majority of research focused on urban school districts (Fuller, et al, 2003; Cooper, Fusarelli, & Carella, 2000). Research on the influence of superintendent tenure on the student achievement of children who attend rural Appalachian school districts is minimal (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005; Jenkins, 2007; Johnson, Huffman, Madden, & Shope, 2011).

The Rural Superintendent

In most states, the school superintendent is the face of the public school district; the office of superintendent is considered by some stakeholders to be similar to a CEO of a company. However, due to smaller populations, limited economic diversification, and traditional cultures and social norms in rural Appalachian school districts, the superintendent is often a leader in his or her geographic community.

Historically, the typical rural public school superintendent in Appalachia works in a culture influenced by a lengthy past in which both insecurity and uncertainty of the future events affect social interactions, including those between power holders and regular citizens (Allison, 1988). After a relationship is established between community leaders and members of the community, it seems reasonable that stability in the superintendent's office can have an influence on student learning across the school district (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

However, the role of the superintendent is becoming more challenging and indeed stressful as federal and state-level mandates are imposed on district administrators (Hoyle, 2002). Those stresses could increase the turnover rate in the superintendent's office and theoretically have a negative influence on learning outcomes of students in the school district. The public school superintendent in a rural school district faces many obstacles in the role of leading students to academic success.

Purpose and Significance

The national average tenure for superintendents has been reported as 5.6 years (Johnson, Huffman, Madden, & Shope, 2011). In a prior study on superintendent turnover in Kentucky, Johnson, Huffman, Madden, and Shope (2011) reported a pattern of district accountability indices increasing as the number of superintendent turnovers fell.

However, the pattern did not hold true for rural school districts. In this study I examined the relationship between superintendent tenure and student achievement scores in rural Appalachian school districts in Kentucky. Forty-five school districts were classified as rural and Appalachian, and were invited to participate in the study.

The findings of such a study are significant for school district leaders and policy makers. A better understanding of the relationship between the tenure of superintendents and learning outcomes of students can potentially inform policy making that could lead to increased retention of superintendents.

Due to increased education accountability in Kentucky school systems,

reformers are searching for vital factors that might provide a key to higher achievement scores on state mandated standardized tests. Because Kentucky is classified as 71 percent rural, this study might be of particular relevance for school district governing boards that are considering superintendent personnel decisions as a way to improve student achievement outcomes (Davis, 2009).

An underachieving school district can affect the culture of an entire community. The consequences of a poor district rating on the NCLB report card could mean the end of a district superintendent's tenure or even a lower market value for homes within the district. Additionally, districts labeled as "failing" would lose federal funding and could be restructured by the state. This type of legislative change in financial influence has decreased the traditional power of decision-making abilities of the district superintendents, school boards, and state governments.

Superintendent Tenure

Tenure is used in the study in reference to the length of time a superintendent serves a single school district. Byrd, Drews, and Johnson (2006) found that urban superintendents average 2.75 to four years of service in their districts compared to five to seven years for all superintendents (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000).

The Byrd et al study also determined that school board involvement in management was a significant factor in the superintendent's longevity, and 65 percent of superintendents presumed that school boards wanted to control or micro-manage superintendents.

Conflict with the school board has also been cited as a common reason for superintendents to leave a particular district (Rausch, 2001). Interestingly, 98 percent of

superintendents reported a collaborative relationship with their school board (Glass, 2001). However, 70 percent shared the belief that the existing governance structure should be replaced because it can foster micro-management (Glass, 2001).

Connecting educational systems to a business model, Whittle (2005) compared the stability of successful chief executive officers to the instability of superintendents in large urban areas.

Whittle argued that stability of leadership, whether in business or education, influences the success of an organization. He concluded that a correlation exists between superintendent tenure and educational improvement in a school district.

However, Whittle did not take into account variables other than tenure, such as leadership skills or education background of the superintendents. Whittle's findings have not been replicated to include rural Appalachian districts, or to determine if the extended tenures of superintendents were due to higher academic achievement.

Superintendent tenure remains an important educational issue. Most current researchers consider the influence of variables other than the superintendent with fewer studies aimed at superintendent tenure and the influence on student achievement.

Alsbury (2008) determined that superintendent turnover is related to political motives and declining test scores.

Johnson, Huffman, Madden, and Shope (2011) analyzed data from Kentucky over a 10-year period and found that districts with no turnover had the highest overall student achievement ratings whereas districts with two

or more turnovers of superintendents had the lowest ratings. This leads to the potential conclusion that less years of administrator tenure correlates to lower academic achievement in school districts.

Student achievement

Cuban (1998) argued that conflict is the “DNA of the superintendency” (p. 56). The three conflicting roles of a superintendent include: instructional, managerial, and political (Cuban, 1998; Johnson, 1996). Ultimately as the instructional leader for the school district, superintendents must make sure that student achievement progresses over time. As a manager, the superintendent has to direct the district with a minimum amount of friction, but make necessary changes to ensure growth.

Researchers who examined the influence of district leadership and student achievement found a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Waters and Marzano (2006) found a correlation of .24 between district leadership variables and student achievement.

Although accounting for a small portion of student achievement, the study conducted by Waters and Marzano (2006) provided policy makers with some understanding of the relationship between district leadership and student achievement.

However, these studies focused primarily on urban school districts, with little research taking into account the unique factors and dynamics that exist in school districts located in rural areas. The fact that rural Appalachian school districts are composed mostly of people widely known by residents of the district, Vann (2008) called these places *gemeinschaft* areas, which suggests that due to familiarity, people often forego the legal or

formal structures of local governance in exchange for less formal social networks.

Although on the surface this might seem to lessen the importance of the political function of the superintendent, it actually exacerbates it because in these places informal networks, which are less obvious to observers than formal political structures, are hidden sources of social power and influence.

In 2009, public education in Kentucky began a major reform with the passage of Senate Bill 1 (SB1). The bill called for more rigorous academic core standards, a balanced assessment system that monitors student learning, and program reviews in the areas of writing, arts and humanities as well as practical living and vocational studies.

SB1 further required Kentucky school personnel to implement a revised assessment and accountability system in 2011-2012. This assessment and accountability model is reported to be a balanced approach that incorporates aspects of school and district work and is organized around the Kentucky Board of Education’s four strategic priorities: (a) next generation learners, (b) next generation professionals, (c) next generation support systems, and (d) next generation schools and districts (KDE, 2011).

Furthermore, the model includes other factors apart from student knowledge in content areas. These factors consist of (a) achievement growth, (b) achievement gap, (c) readiness, and (d) graduation.

A student’s growth score is calculated by comparing the previous year’s scores in reading and mathematics with the current year’s score as compared to “typical growth” for students in that grade level. High school

administrators determine growth by comparing students standardized test scores from grade 10 to their ACT scores in grade 11 (KDE, 2011). Under this model, students are required to continue a pattern of growth.

The changes in school accountability legislation require school boards and superintendents to not only make sure each school is reaching the required achievement goals, but that each individual student is demonstrating growth. An overall district achievement index is also calculated using factors a-d listed above.

Method

Research questions

1. What is the influence of superintendent tenure on student achievement in rural Appalachian Kentucky school districts?
2. Is there a difference between districts with superintendents who have served fewer than five years, and districts with superintendents who served five or more years?

Research design

Because the study examined the relationship between superintendent tenure and student achievement scores, a correlational research design was selected (Spatz, 1997).

The dependent variable was student achievement scores (as depicted as a one year

variable and as a potential growth variable during the superintendent's time of service) and the independent variable was superintendent tenure.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by the validity of the Kentucky Department of Education's academic transition index, and related scoring instruments and conversions, as a means to assess overall student performance in a district.

The study was also limited by cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic characteristics shared by districts in Kentucky; therefore, inferences from the results of the study may be generalized to rural Appalachian school districts in Kentucky and perhaps to counties in neighboring states. The reasons for superintendent turnover were not addressed in this study. The overall design of the study limits the ability to draw cause and effect conclusions from the results.

Participants

The Appalachian Regional Commission (2012) and the National Center for Education Statistics (2012) databases were used to determine which Kentucky school districts were identified as both Appalachian and rural. There are 194 school districts in Kentucky; ninety-six of them were classified as rural, and 79 were designated as Appalachian. Of these school districts, 45 were designated as both rural and Appalachian. (See Figure 1).

The 2011 student achievement scores were obtained using the Kentucky Association of School Councils Transitional Index 2011. For years between 1999 and 2006, the Kentucky Testing Reports Archive (2011) was used to determine the student achievement scores. The score prior to the start of the current superintendent was subtracted from the 2011 score.

For example, if a superintendent completed his first year in the district in 2008, then I took the 2011 score and subtracted the score from 2007 to determine growth or lack thereof. For districts that had superintendents who served longer than the current testing system, their scores were calculated using the baseline score from 1999.

Rural Kentucky school districts were identified by a list provided by the National Center for Education Statistics; Appalachian districts were identified by the Appalachian Regional Commission's criteria (Appalachian, 2012; National, 2012). Superintendents of rural Appalachian Kentucky schools were emailed a request for the number of years they have held the office of superintendent in their current district. An explanation of the study and the treatment of the data were included in the correspondence. Superintendents were informed that their participation was voluntary and all results would be confidential.

All 45 superintendents of rural Appalachian Kentucky school districts participated in the study. There were 36 males and 9 females in the study. Of the current superintendents, six were in their first year of service and were asked a follow up question regarding the length of tenure of the previous superintendent. All first year superintendents

provided the requested information, and the previous superintendent's information was used in the study because the results were based on 2011 student achievement data.

As of 2011, the average tenure for rural Appalachian Kentucky school superintendents was 7.31 years. Twenty-one superintendents served one to five years; 13 served 6-10 years; eight served 11-15 years; and three served more than 16 years. Seventy-Six percent of the participants had served for 10 years or fewer years.

Data Analysis

The student achievement growth data and the superintendent tenure data for rural Appalachian Kentucky school districts were compiled in an Excel spreadsheet. The data were coded to ensure anonymity of the participants. A simultaneous multiple regression test was performed to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between superintendent tenure and student achievement scores. With respect to achievement indices, an independent samples *t*-test was performed between those superintendents with five or more years in tenure and superintendents with less than five years of service in their respective districts.

Results

Analyses of research questions

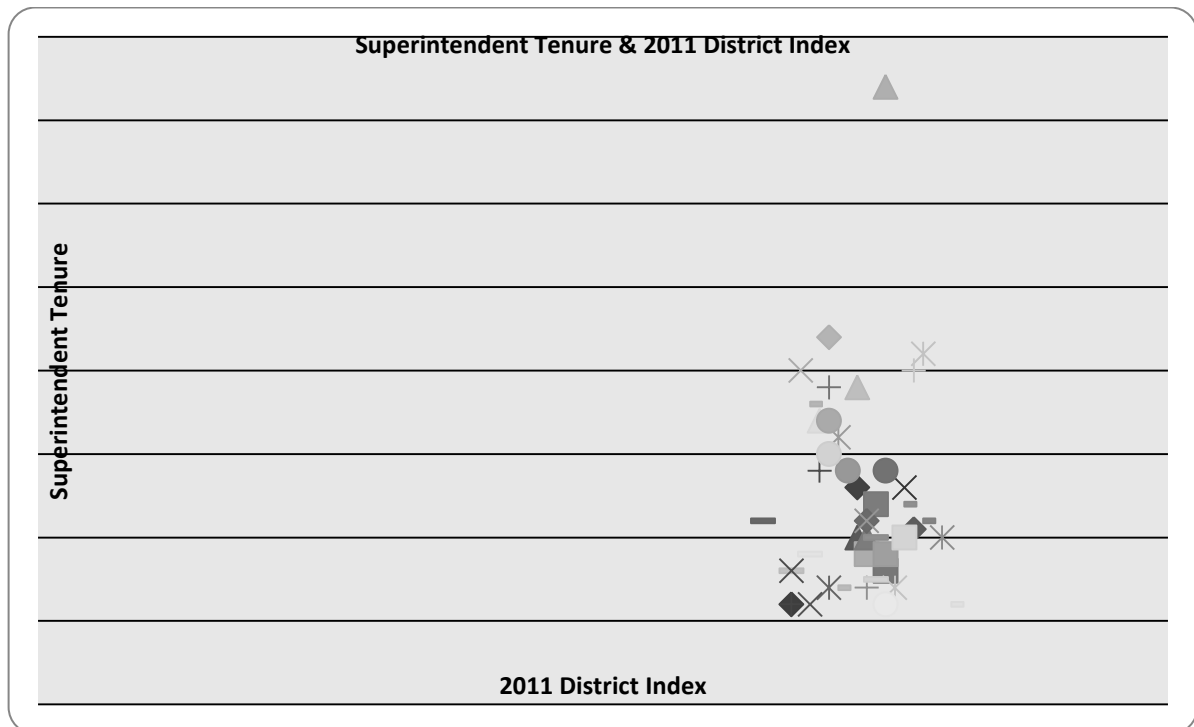
A regression test was used to assess the relationship between superintendent tenure and student achievement scores as reflected in each district's 2011 index. According to the regression test, there is a not significant relationship between superintendent tenure and student achievement based on the 2011 district index score, ($r [44] = .02, p > .05$) (See Table 1 and Figure 2).

Table 1

Regression test results

<i>Regression Statistics</i>					
Multiple R		0.029781			
R Square		0.000887			
Adjusted R Square		-0.02235			
Standard Error		4.812571			
Observations		45			
<i>ANOVA</i>					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	0.884048	0.884048	0.038169938	0.846023
Residual	43	995.916	23.16084		
Total	44	996.8			

Figure 2. Scatter plot of regression test.



A second regression test was conducted to assess the relationship between superintendent tenure and student achievement scores as reflected in their district's academic growth index over the course of the

superintendent's tenure. According to the second regression test, there is a significant relationship between superintendent tenure and student achievement, ($r [44] = .75, p < .01$) (See Table 2 and Figure 3).

Table 2

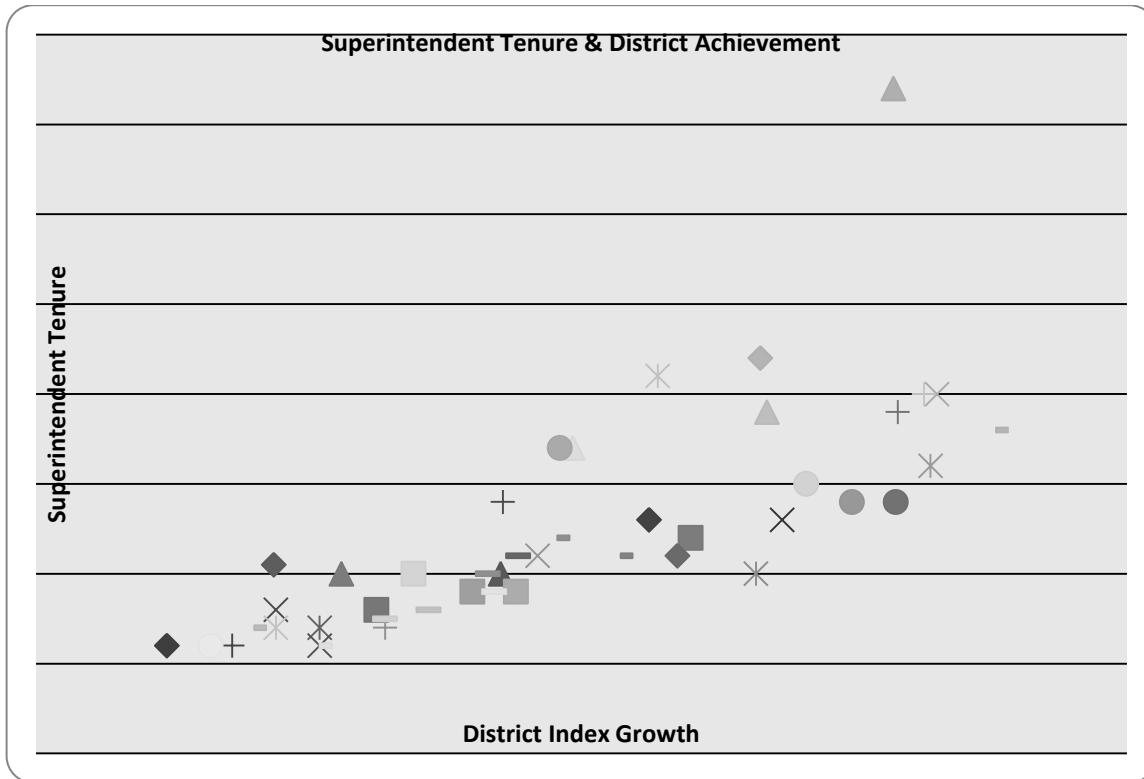
Regression test results

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.756762
R Square	0.572689
Adjusted R Square	0.562751
Standard Error	7.096625
Observations	45

ANOVA

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	2902.327	2902.327	57.6292	.001
Residual	43	2165.57	50.36209		
Total	44	5067.896			

Figure 3. Scatter plot of regression test.



The regression tests provided two different results when examining student achievement and superintendent tenure. The first regression test examined the absolute value of achievement compared to the number of years the superintendent had held the position.

This regression test did not show a significant relationship between the current student achievement score and the length of superintendent tenure. Conversely, the second regression test demonstrated that there is a statistically significant relationship between the district's positive change in achievement as measured by the overall achievement index and the length of superintendent tenure. The longer the superintendent served in a district, the

higher the overall achievement index of that district.

Next, I conducted an independent samples *t*-test to determine if there was a difference between districts with superintendents who had served less than five years, and districts with superintendents who served five or more years.

There were 16 superintendents who served less than five years, and 29 superintendents who served five or more years (See Table 4). The results of the independent samples *t*-test revealed a difference in student achievement growth between the two groups ($t [43] = 2.01, p < .01$). Although the sub-group sizes were small, the *t*-test is a robust statistical

analysis designed to withstand small sample size. An examination of the effect size using r^2 , determined that the effect was medium ($r^2 = .578$). The test revealed that for students whose superintendents served five or more years in the

district, those students demonstrated more overall academic growth than did students who attended districts in which the superintendent served less than five years.

Table 4

T-test Results

t-test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.9125	19.57931
Variance	22.49583	78.55741
Observations	16	29
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	43	
t Stat	-7.7233	
P(T<=t) one-tail	.01	
t Critical one-tail	1.681071	
P(T<=t) two-tail	.01	
t Critical two-tail	2.016692	

Discussion

The researcher determined that there is a correlation between superintendent tenure and improvements in the district's achievement indices.

Superintendents, who served a district for more than five years, demonstrated the most growth. This suggests that the longer a superintendent serves in a rural Appalachian district the more growth the district experiences in overall student achievement.

Overall student achievement improved the least in districts where superintendents served fewer than five years. Factors besides superintendent tenure may have been responsible for overall academic growth or lack of growth in some districts, but the correlation

for rural Appalachian superintendents is evident.

The regression models did not take into account gender, race, or leadership style. Ultimately, however, the length of years a superintendent leads a school district influences student achievement. In Kentucky districts, specifically rural and Appalachian, districts with superintendents who served at least five years demonstrate the most positive growth.

Frequent turnover, or tenure less than five years, in rural Appalachian Kentucky districts correlated to less overall growth. School boards, parents, and educators need to consider district growth and superintendent tenure in relation to decisions to extend superintendent contracts.

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Domestic Violence and Implications for Citizenship Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

This comparative qualitative study was conducted in four countries: Cyprus (central scientific coordinator), Italy, Romania, Slovakia. Research priorities are domestic violence and children's rights. I present the results of the Italian portion of the study and report some of the themes drawn from testimonies (n=58) from focus group interviews of women-mothers (n=31) who were victims of domestic violence. The participants described their awareness of the effect of violence on children and themselves. The documents collected confirm international and national evidence about: typology and reasons for the violence, violence reported to the police, and societal tolerance of violence against women and children. From the research results it is possible to think of new strategies for the teaching and learning of active citizenship that could help to uncover the hidden issues surrounding domestic violence.

Keywords

citizenship education, domestic violence, Daphne III European Project

The study of citizenship education is a topic of increasing interest in Italy. The traditional study of citizenship centers around governmental and civic topics like voting and participating in community services. In this article I present the results from a recent qualitative study about domestic violence and situate the topic within citizenship education.

I argue that the conception of citizenship education as taught in school needs to broaden to include aspects such as domestic violence. Domestic violence impacts children in the near term and long term and has negative influences on communities and society in general. The institution of school should teach active citizenship. Students should learn that speaking up and speaking out against injustice against human beings is a way to demonstrate active citizenship.

Perspective

The results from this study offer evidence-based suggestions for a new conception of citizenship teaching and learning aimed at helping families confronted with violence in their domestic environments and/or neighborhoods. I viewed the issue of domestic violence from three points of view: (a) Nurturing family environments conducive to personal growth; (b) Facilitating a close relationship between family and school as a way to support families as they deal with violence; and (c) Creating a macro-relationship with the larger social system in order to bring in resources to address the longer-term issues related to violence in the home and neighborhoods.

In general, these three points of view involve the interaction between person, culture, and society and combine to offer what I think is a more holistic, inclusive view of citizenship

education. I view citizenship to include not only political actions, but socially conscious actions as well. I include combatting violence against or within families as a critical component of citizenship because I believe citizenship education should extend beyond the traditional classroom and into the community to address issues of the community.

Citizenship education is a topic that many have studied in Italy and internationally (cfr. Landsman M. J., Capps Hartley C., 2001, 445–461; McGuigan W. M., Pratt C. C., 2001, 869–883) (cfr. Passuello M. G., Sgritta G.B., Longo V. 2008; Preziosi S., Bianchi M. 2009).

Italian studies focus mainly on the descriptive and diagnostic aspects of citizenship education in general terms, offering recommendations, rather than being prescriptive of the phenomenon. Few studies have been conducted to examine citizenship education as a way to study domestic violence and help to lessen it. The women and children who have witnessed violence constitute a field of study that has received little attention in terms of education components that can be used to prevent domestic violence.

Methodology

In Italy national data on domestic violence incidents were published in 2008 by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and by the Department of Equal Opportunities, under the auspices of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The most common types of domestic violence identified in the national data were (a) physical, (b) sexual, (c) psychological (i.e., isolation, control, economic, intimidation), and (d) stalking. Up to 43% of female population between the ages of 16 and 70 stated that they

had been victims of some form of domestic violence at least once during their lifetime. For example, stalking affected over 2 million women and most often followed a separation from a partner. For female victims of stalking, it was reported that 68% of their partners made repeated attempts to talk to the women after separation.

Among the 690,000 female victims of repeated physical violence from a partner, 62.4% declared that their children witnessed the violence and that in 15.7% of the cases, the children themselves were the direct target of domestic violence.

Results from on-going research suggest a link between being a witness of domestic violence as a child and being a victim or perpetrator of violence as an adult. Prior instances of violence experienced within the family increase the risk of victimization of the woman that suffers the violence and the man that uses it.

Almost 8% of women aged between 16 and 70 years of age witnessed their father's violence against their mother and among them 58.5% became victims of violence as adults. A similar relationship can be found with the men who commit violence. In 30% of the cases, the men witnessed violence as a child. In the sample for this study, 34.8% of participating females were victims of violence by their fathers and 42% by their mothers.

I used qualitative methodologies to complete this study. During March through July 2010 I collected data from the police, legal offices, crisis centers, family advocacy bureaus, and hospitals from specific areas in Italy. I conducted 58 focus group and individual interviews with 31 women.

Potential participants were identified through the public records of women who were victims of violence and whose children were present during the incidents of maltreatment. Interviews were conducted and historical records were reviewed and coded. Parent codes and sub-codes were assigned for all the data. Overarching themes were identified. Data were re-examined for additional themes. A final set of themes emerged.

Results

Five themes emerged from the data that suggested domestic violence is an issue of civic concern and should be addressed in the larger domain of citizenship as part of formal schooling.

Theme 1: Aggressive behavior of the child

Aggression was a common theme that arose from the data of children who witness violence and it can manifest itself against different people, even toward one's self.

The data suggest that children who witness domestic violence are more aggressive than children who do not. Some children are aggressive at home and at school, others only at home or only at school. Some children turn their aggression onto themselves, harming their own bodies, including attempts of running away from home and suicide.

Others are aggressive towards other children (e.g. biting, pushing, domineering attitudes, bullying). They can turn against the mother, the father or both parents.

Aggression in children often corresponds with episodes of witnessing violence and tends to extinguish over time after the child is no longer exposed to those situations. Nevertheless, there does exist a state

of latent aggression in the children exposed to domestic violence. This was especially true for the males in the sample who witnessed violence used against the mother.

In young children self-defense mechanisms are seen through self-aggression, aggression towards classmates, towards the mother and father, as well as other adult figures such as teachers. As the children approach the end of adolescence and become adults, they can also retaliate against the father if first assaulted by him. In one case a mother described her son's rebellion against the father who was offending him as a turning point of liberation and emancipation.

The experience of domestic violence can influence the children's behavior toward the parents. The women reported how the children sided with either the mother or father, with a further fragmentation of the family unit into a game of taking sides.

The results also suggested that the phenomenon of *pre-bullying* manifested itself in nursery children who prey on the younger and more vulnerable ones and they imitate the bigger and stronger ones.

The phenomenon of *bullying* manifested itself most often around the age of 10 with the children in the sample who witnessed domestic violence. Bullying occurred most often in middle schools. Overall, the data suggest a strong influence of domestic violence on the behaviour of children in terms of them replicating violence in the school and larger community.

Theme 2: Violence against the mother

The range of situations that set off the man's violent behavior go from "nothing" to being envious of the woman's professional success. The data suggested eight specific syndromes or

features that generated domestic violence:

1. Everyday life syndrome: No particular reason, futile motives, or everyday situations;
2. Inferiority complex syndrome: Jealousy, envy, a phone call, or emotive situations;
3. Dependence on alcoholic and psychotropic substances syndrome: Alcohol, drugs, and situations of altered psycho-physical conditions;
4. Psycho-social isolation syndrome: Unemployment, illness, car accident, *or* chronic poor health;
5. Authoritarian personality syndrome: Feeling of power or tyrannical ideas;
6. Peter Pan syndrome: Feeling of unlimited freedom, absence of responsibilities, carefree, or self-absorbed;
7. Bio-hereditary determinism syndrome: Education of the family of origin, inter-generational violence in the man's family, or situations of reproducing family dysfunction; and
8. Syndrome of infantilism. Bothering the woman-mother and her children, situations of immaturity or inability to manage the family.

With regard to *what keeps* the woman-mother at home despite the violence, I identified five different factors:

1. The woman identifies obstacles to reporting her partner. These can be summarized as factors of an *institutional* nature. The institutions that intervene first have a disorientating and obstructing attitude. The

attitude is chauvinistic. Sometimes the only route available is individual psychological therapy. When women attempt to report their partners they are discouraged by such phrases as: “Don’t wash your dirty linen in public, forget about it, you don’t really want to report your husband!” There is a general sense of isolation.

2. Factors of a legal nature due to the fact that legal proceedings in Italy are complex, captious and appear to accuse the woman rather than help her.
3. Psychologists represent the third obstacle because they talk about conflict and not the violence.
4. The perpetrators of violence go unpunished even after the woman has undergone exams, procedures, and court proceedings. The woman ends up being socially guilty. One of the women interviewed described her experience of isolation in the following way:

“everything was placed within his view of making life impossible for me. He slowly got rid of my friends, colleagues, loved ones, and began restricting my actions and my ability to relate with others that were not him. This context of isolation has repercussions on the children who see a limited environment. The family has limited social opportunities. All the children see is dysfunction. One woman remarked, “... even when chatting with my colleagues, they would talk about dinners, lunches, occasions in which they socialized without the family. We were limited, we didn’t have other friends.”

5. The fifth factor is of a cultural nature. Reporting the husband is a decision that breaks up the family and isolates the woman who actually believed in the marriage. The decision to get out of the situation of domestic violence is always a tormented one and represents the perceived failure of a life’s course. The woman has to face the failure of her marriage and she has to admit to herself that she can’t go on in her marriage any further.

Theme 3: The blame game

The laying of blame follows different trajectories. The mother blames herself for her husband’s behavior; the child blames the mother; the husband blames the mother; the children blame the father. A blaming game emerges, starting with the woman-mother who is the first to consider herself responsible for her husband’s/partner’s violent behavior and tries to change herself by turning to a psychologist or counselor, in the hope of saving the relationship.

Then others are later made to feel guilty: children, husband, family, husband’s mother. The behavioral scheme also fosters the male child taking on a protective role of the mother and the female child adopting an accusatory role toward the father. The perpetrator becomes a victim, thus producing the effect of victimization on the victimizer. The blame game is part of the total dysfunction caused by domestic violence.

Theme 4: Child and school

The data suggest that the effects of domestic violence on elementary and middle school children manifests itself in decreased levels of concentration on school subjects. They can’t see the point of school and they lose engagement. Attachment of the children to the mother increases out of fear of losing her.

The consequences at school manifest themselves in three phases: 1) acute or violent behavior when domestic violence first occurs; 2) escapism, disengagement, or other disaffected traits when the mother and children are removed from the situation of domestic violence and taken to a crisis center or temporary shelter; 3) stability or reconstruction, after the mother and child find an apartment where they can settle and live without danger and resume a more stable schedule.

Student academic achievement suffers during Phases 1 and 2. Depending on the length and severity of the conditions faced by the children in Phases 1 and 2, the effects on academic achievement can be long lasting.

A specific consequence of domestic violence that can be seen at school is a delay in the child's social maturity and a loss of interest in studying as a result of the overall distress.

A mother described the process of her children's emotional and cognitive exclusion, noting how scholastic failure became a setback that heavily weighed on relationships with others in school. The mother stated:

“The two elder sons' interest in school activities dropped considerably and they found concentrating in school difficult. They also had trouble relating to their teachers and classmates. This great emotional disease, this mental confusion, was so strong that they could no longer connect with the outside world, whether with a teacher or one of their peers and their school performance dropped significantly”.

During the first two phases of domestic violence it is common for the children to fail academic subjects or perform so poorly that they must repeat the entire school year. Some

participants remarked that the schools did not provide additional services to help their child “catch up” or that they were hesitant to get involved.

The data suggested that when the mother goes to live in the shelter with her children, they slowly begin catching up, though this is still difficult given that life in the shelter does not provide a stable environment. In some cases women remain in danger and have to change accommodation several times.

Finally in the third phase they can live in a stable environment such as an apartment. The mother and children can rebuild a more regular and normal life. The children's performance at school tends to improve during Phase 3.

Theme 5: Other consequences to children

The damage caused to the children by domestic violence is proportional to the period of exposure to violence. The data suggest the following types of harmful effects on the child:

1. Psychological damage: Personality disorders diagnosed as anorexia, bulimia, fainting, malaise, panic attacks, anxiety, pulling out hair, self-harm (cutting), suicide attempts, nightmares, somnambulism, bed-wetting, difficult and delayed weaning, and morbid attachment to mother;
2. Social damage: Problems socializing at school and with classmates, followed by the inability to assert their rights to play, display or accept affection, and demonstrate respect among peers and adults;
3. Cultural damage: Refusal to create a cohesive family structure and lingering concern about reproducing the behaviors of domestic violence;

4. Moral damage: Difficulty choosing between good and evil, representations of death desired for the perpetrator of violence against the mother. For example, one mother stated that her son told her: "I'll kill him, they can't do anything to me because I'm a minor and you are safe;"
5. Existential damage: Feeling the lack of a father they can be proud of and the masculine figure is controversial in the mind and heart of the child who witnesses violence. The feeling that "dad is always the dad" seems to even sometimes justify the violence;
6. Physical damage: Mobility problems with loss of balance, the mind loses control of the body which moves in a disharmonious and disorderly fashion. In some cases the child is immobilized. One mother remarked about her son that: "he throws himself on the floor and says that his legs hurt and that he can't walk."

Connection to Leadership

The results from the study suggest how domestic violence within families is a factor that counteracts the formation of free, responsible and active citizens.

Both mothers and their children live under the risk of being swallowed by the abyss of violence once domestic violence begins. The risk increases when school personnel and other civic leaders, the guarantors of social control, "do not see" the violence that occurs against the women and their children or do not recognize the symptoms. School personnel have a responsibility to speak up and to provide assistance and empathy to children who are victims of violence.

From this analysis arises the duty of institutions, especially school leaders, to train

teachers so that they are sensitized to issues of child ill-treatment in domestic violence situations.

The mothers in this sample remarked anecdotally about the absence of intervention from schools to help students cope with domestic violence. They also presented data to suggest that there was an inability of teachers to plan a system of support that enabled children to catch up on their work.

Women commented that the school system, the institution itself, needed to be an active citizen to support children who experience domestic violence.

School personnel can actively engage other social institutions to provide curriculum and lessons for children on domestic violence and what to do, and not to do, if they find themselves in the situation.

A broadly implemented citizenship education program can be used to help children understand that domestic violence is not good for society and should not be tolerated. Children can be taught how to actively work to combat domestic violence and keep themselves and others safe.

Children need to know that the victim/s is/are not to blame in domestic violence situations and that it is appropriate to speak up. In fact, children should know that it is their civic duty to speak up. Schools have a duty to provide that type of instruction for children.

It is possible to teach children and adults how to become active citizens, beginning with positive ideas of beauty, goodness and truth. But when these ideas are annulled by the experience of violence in the family, it is necessary to restore the sense of a person's

value and rights by empowering them to speak up and supporting them as they endure and eventually recover from domestic violence.

Once the children of domestic violence become adults they will have to learn to live with instruments of peace, justice, democracy, and not to repeat their tragic experiences through violence of their own.

It is my hope that a foundation of citizenship education can help children to achieve that long-term goal of productive and peaceful participation in society.

Conclusions

So that my hope may one day become reality, I recall the words of Pestalozzi (1783/1946) who wrote about the questions that constantly assail man: “What is man, what does he need, what

edifies him and what degrades him, what fortifies him and what makes him weak?”

Being able to answer these questions is a need we cannot avoid. Pestalozzi was one of the first educators and pedagogists to raise a voice regarding the struggles of single mothers and a broader conception of citizenship.

He identified the social duties of institutions to promote the human being’s rightful participation in civil life.

The lesson on active citizenship had already begun with this great schoolmaster.

Perhaps we can continue along the path he set out for educators to be active leaders in the development of productive citizens.

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Ethics

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* uses a double-blind peer-review process to maintain scientific integrity of its published materials. Peer-reviewed articles are one hallmark of the scientific method and the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* believes in the importance of maintaining the integrity of the scientific process in order to bring high quality literature to the education leadership community. We expect our authors to follow the same ethical guidelines. We refer readers to the latest edition of the APA Style Guide to review the ethical expectations for publication in a scholarly journal.

Upcoming Themes and Topics of Interest

Below are themes and areas of interest for the 2012-2014 publication cycles.

1. Governance, Funding, and Control of Public Education
2. Federal Education Policy and the Future of Public Education
3. Federal, State, and Local Governmental Relationships
4. Teacher Quality (e.g., hiring, assessment, evaluation, development, and compensation of teachers)
5. School Administrator Quality (e.g., hiring, preparation, assessment, evaluation, development, and compensation of principals and other school administrators)
6. Data and Information Systems (for both summative and formative evaluative purposes)
7. Charter Schools and Other Alternatives to Public Schools
8. Turning Around Low-Performing Schools and Districts
9. Large scale assessment policy and programs
10. Curriculum and instruction
11. School reform policies
12. Financial Issues

Submissions

Length of manuscripts should be as follows: Research and evidence-based practice articles between 2,800 and 4,800 words; commentaries between 1,600 and 3,800 words; book and media reviews between 400 and 800 words. Articles, commentaries, book and media reviews, citations and references are to follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, latest edition. Permission to use previously copyrighted materials is the responsibility of the author, not the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*.

Potential contributors should include in a cover sheet that contains (a) the title of the article, (b) contributor's name, (c) terminal degree, (d) academic rank, (e) department and affiliation (for inclusion on the title page and in the author note), (f) address, (g) telephone and fax numbers, and (h) e-mail

address. Authors must also provide a 120-word abstract that conforms to APA style and a 40-word biographical sketch. The contributor must indicate whether the submission is to be considered original research, evidence-based practice article, commentary, or book or media review. The type of submission must be indicated on the cover sheet in order to be considered. Articles are to be submitted to the editor by e-mail as an electronic attachment in Microsoft Word 2003 or 2007.

Book Review Guidelines

Book review guidelines should adhere to the author guidelines as found above. The format of the book review is to include the following:

- Full title of book
- Author
- City, state: publisher, year; page; price
- Name and affiliation of reviewer
- Contact information for reviewer: address, country, zip or postal code, e-mail address, telephone and fax
- Date of submission

Additional Information and Publication Timeline

Contributors will be notified of editorial board decisions within eight weeks of receipt of papers at the editorial office. Articles to be returned must be accompanied by a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope.

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The Journal is listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals, and Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities. Articles are also archived in the ERIC collection.

Publication Schedule:

Issue	Deadline to Submit Articles	Notification to Authors of Editorial Review Board Decisions	To AASA for Formatting and Editing	Issue Available on AASA website
Spring	October 1	January 1	February 15	April 1
Summer	February 1	April 1	May 15	July 1
Fall	May 1	July 1	August 15	October 1
Winter	August 1	October 1	November 15	January 15

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AASA Resources

- ❖ ***The American School Superintendent: 2010 Decennial Study*** was released December 8, 2010 by the American Association of School Administrators. The work is one in a series of similar studies conducted every 10 years since 1923 and provides a national perspective about the roles and responsibilities of contemporary district superintendents. “A must-read study for every superintendent and aspiring system leader ...” — Dan Domenech, AASA executive director. See www.rowmaneducation.com/Catalog/MultiAASA.shtml
- ❖ ***A School District Budget Toolkit***. In an AASA survey, members asked for budget help in these tough economic times. *A School District Budget Toolkit* provides examples of best practices in reducing expenditures, ideas for creating a transparent budget process, wisdom on budget presentation, and suggestions for garnering and maintaining public support for the district's budget. It contains real-life examples of how districts large and small have managed to navigate rough financial waters and offers encouragement to anyone currently stuck in the rapids. See www.aasa.org/BudgetToolkit-2010.aspx. [Note: This toolkit is available to AASA members only.]
- ❖ Learn about **AASA's books program** where new titles and special discounts are available to AASA members. The AASA publications catalog may be downloaded at www.aasa.org/books.aspx.
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Upcoming AASA Events

Visit www.aasa.org/conferences.aspx for information.

- ✓ **AASA's 2013 National Conference on Education**, Los Angeles, Calif., Feb. 21-23, 2013 and **AASA's 2014 National Conference on Education**, Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 20-22, 2014