


The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The overall composition is clean and modern, with the text centered on a white background.

Becoming a Female Superintendent

Advantages, Challenges, and Pathways

- ▶ 80% of public school teachers are female --- 24% of school superintendents are female
- ▶ Upward trend from the 1970s of 1.3%
- ▶ Increase in number of vacancies
- ▶ Dwindling pool of qualified candidates

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- ▶ Colleges and universities have enrolled more females than males in graduate programs
 - ▶ Opportunities to reduce the under-representation of females in administrative positions
 - ▶ Need to identify resources
 - ▶ Investigate career path
 - ▶ Look at advantages and disadvantages

Historical Information

- ▶ 24% of superintendents are female (2010)
- ▶ Increase from 13% (2000)
- ▶ Gains caused by 2 factors ---- significant increase in job vacancies and deterioration of working conditions or rewards

Barriers

- ▶ Gender Bias
- ▶ Lack of Career Planning and Career Paths
- ▶ Lack of Mentors
- ▶ Limited Mobility
- ▶ Family Responsibilities
- ▶ Gatekeepers

Resources

- ▶ Leadership Development
- ▶ Career Planning and Development
- ▶ Mentoring and Coaching

Resources

- ▶ Networking
- ▶ Superintendency Knowledge and Skills

Quantitative Studies Conducted

All living, female superintendents in Alabama

29 questions

Qualtrics format

Results

- ▶ Themes that were prevalent:
 1. Male Mentors
 2. Family Responsibilities
 3. Never planned to be a superintendent

Qualitative Studies Conducted

- ▶ 5 in Alabama 2013
- ▶ 5 in Texas 2014

- ▶ Interviews 1st - face-to-face
- ▶ 2nd - face-to-face and telephone
- ▶ 3rd - telephone

Results

- ▶ Career Planning and Career Paths
- ▶ Mentors
- ▶ Mobility and Family Responsibilities
- ▶ Recruitment and Selection Process
- ▶ Networking
- ▶ Knowledge and Skills
- ▶ Gender Bias

Comments -- Career Path

- ▶ Participant A --- “My father said to me, “Why don’t you just get a teacher’s certificate while you are at it.” So I did... You know that is just what women did then. They were teachers or nurses.”
- ▶ Participant D --- “While attending (doctoral) classes, and especially the class on the Superintendency, I came to realize I could be successful as a superintendent.

Comments -- Mentors

- ▶ Participant C: “I did not participate in any formal mentoring program.”
- ▶ Participant A: “None of the mentors... said, I am your mentor and I just did not say -Will you be my mentor. They were all unofficial who just decided to help me”
- ▶ Participant D: “The mentor told me on several occasions that I would make a good superintendent.”

Comments - Mobility and Family Responsibilities

- ▶ Participant A: “I had to do something in (city) because that was where my children were.”
- ▶ Participant B: “I did not have the required certification and (Institution) was close, so I went there.”

Comments --- Recruitment and Selection Process

- ▶ Participant D: “He... told the (district) board members he was grooming me to replace him one day.”
- ▶ Participant B: “The board president came to me and asked why I did not have an application with them.”

Comments --- Networking

- ▶ Participant C: “I became a member of a (national) superintendents’ network... This is a group of likeminded, reform oriented superintendents who meet a few times each year to learn together. We all were united by our desire to truly transform public school. Their stories have encouraged and inspired me.”
- ▶ Participant D: “I began attending (the state school superintendent association) meetings with our superintendent and gained a system-wide view of the challenges of running a school system.”

Comments --- Knowledge and Skills

- ▶ Participant B: “I did not know anything about interactions with a board... I was not at all prepared ... to handle all the board issues... I learned (on the job)... I knew nothing about bids... the bid process and construction.”
- ▶ Participant C: “(Network) provided support through difficult political situations.”

Comments --- Gender Bias

- ▶ Participant A: “One of the Rotary Club members.... Told me that his idea about the glass ceiling had totally changes and the reason was because his daughter was in a (male dominated) profession and had run into those .. Issues.”
- ▶ Participant D: “I never enjoyed the warm good ol’ boy relationship with those in charge of the town; but they respected me.”
- ▶ Participant D: I did face the challenge from a few men that thought a woman couldn’t do the job. A principal retired because he wasn’t going to work for a woman.... (Later) he apologized and (said) that he had been unfair in his assumptions. The question of a woman being able to do the job never surfaced again.”

Employment Opportunities

- ▶ Know state school board associations and who works with recruitment
- ▶ Know what firms are doing searches for positions
- ▶ Have someone make introduction for you to the firm

Mentoring programs

- ▶ Connect to local and state mentoring programs
- ▶ Have an informal mentor and ask for guidance on next steps (tell people you know and trust that you want to be a higher level administrator so they will reach out to you)
- ▶ Have your paper credentials in order

Career Development

- ▶ Obtain certification/credential for the highest position possible
- ▶ Stretch ---- take a risk ---- don't stay in same position where it is safe (variety of jobs)
- ▶ Take initiative and ask for additional responsibilities in current position
- ▶ Learn more about areas where you may be perceived as weaker (curriculum, construction, facility management, financial management, political landscape)

Networking Opportunities

- ▶ 1. Professional Organizations - state, regional, national
- ▶ 2. College and University Professors
- ▶ 3. Alumni Groups
- ▶ 4. Civic Clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis)

Summary

- ▶ Know yourself (your strengths and weaknesses)
- ▶ Develop a career plan and re-visit often
- ▶ Identify formal and informal mentors
- ▶ Take advantage of opportunities in your geographic area
- ▶ Know recruitment firms and selection process for position
- ▶ Be active in local, state, and national professional organizations
- ▶ Expect bias and develop strategies to “deal with” the bias
- ▶ Continue to learn