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**GLOBAL MINDEDNESS OF SUPERINTENDENTS: A  
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GLOBALIZATION AND ITS  
IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION**

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GLOBAL MINDEDNESS OF SUPERINTENDENTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL  
STUDY OF GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
to the faculty of the  
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of  
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
at  
ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY  
New York  
by  
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Dr. Anthony Annunziato

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **GLOBAL MINDEDNESS OF SUPERINTENDENTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION**

Lauren Kate DiMartino

Globalization has quickly woven its way into every aspect of our economic, technological, and social lives. It is only natural that the educational system transforms into a globally competent powerhouse. We must hold our educational system accountable for creating quality education based on equity and realistic policies. With skilled leaders creating school districts that can compete, thrive, and communicate in the global community, we must work to nurture future generations that can maneuver and excel in the 21st century.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the global mindedness of educational leaders, specifically superintendents, and to explore the future implications of globalization on education. Superintendents represent the top tier in the school leadership. It is essential to understand the views of those who understand the operational steps that can bring global interactions and global learning to our classrooms. If leaders understand the importance of the global community, this may give rise to actionable policy change to include global learning in classrooms. Therefore, it is imperative to better understand the global mindedness of our leaders. It is through leadership that informed change can be brought about in policy. Merging leadership perspectives with policy recommendations can result in actionable change. Findings from this research reflect how clear communication and civic buy-in is imperative when creating new

initiatives within the educational system, especially those on a grand scale such as globalization and education. Superintendents reflect on a desire to bring global learning into their districts for the benefits of student outcomes. Current hindrances to globalization and education include the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of frameworks to guide educational leadership and the learning community towards globalized learning, and lack of funding and resources to support the incorporation of globalization and education. Educational leaderships' perspectives offer insight into the realities of educational structures. Therefore, by valuing educational leaderships' global mindedness we can better discover the underlying factors that make global learning easy and difficult to implement.

## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated to my family. With all my love, thank you for supporting me.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

-Peter Drucker

Education without borders exposes the idea that, in a globalized world, borders serve as a way to maintain the status quo. However, if the status quo adequately serves only those who can afford it, what are the implications of inequity in education for the ability of educators and leaders to incorporate globalization into education? At the center of this debate are policymakers who argue for global learning in schools but who are unable to navigate effective avenues to lead the public education system towards this innovation. By investigating global mindedness among educational leaders, we can explore the major and minor patterns, themes, or links to global learning with regard to 21st-century educational policy.

How do students of multiple languages, cultures, and modalities of learning interact and find value in each other’s abilities? Can an individual’s life-learning be seen as an asset on the global scale? The implications of globalization with regard to education are vast, intricate, and far reaching. But to what extent does globalization change education? Change is inevitable, and globalization has forced education to shift, as we saw in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, not knowing the extent to which globalization affects education creates a problem. Furthermore, the viewpoint of educational leadership is essential to creating actionable change. How can educational organizations make changes to, prepare for, or teach for global learning if there is no collective research to identify and provide evidence of how education is being affected by globalization or to determine the effectiveness of current policies?

Evolution determines survival in the natural world. Similarly, educational structures must evolve now that the global community has become a reality of our existence, both to ensure that future generations are prepared to work in increasingly globalized jobs and because education based on 19th-century models of teaching are becoming obsolete. Incorporating globalization into education is essential. With the undeniable educational platform shift following the COVID-19 global pandemic, we have first-hand experiential knowledge of the inequities of student access to global learning platforms. Instances were reported of students and even teachers sitting outside of fast-food restaurants to gain access to Wi-Fi. If we fail to teach children how to be active/productive participants within the global community, we are failing to prepare them for the future. Education in the age of globalization must merge learning with a child's natural creativity and curiosity in order to maintain relevancy.

For this academic integration of global thinking to occur, there must be policy that guides the learning community. Well-defined policies can be game changers. Educational institutions need clarity on the best practices with regard to policy that can naturally diffuse globalization into education and provide access to this global learning to the masses. Educational leaders' perspectives on this dimension of education can assist policymakers in creating meaningful laws that reflect the needs and aims of educational leaders who represent the larger educational community. Access to the global community, evolution of current educational structures, and the application of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to improve student outcomes can be potential effects of valuing educational leaderships perspectives with regard to globalization and education.

Globalization has quickly woven its way into every aspect of our economic, technological, and social lives. It is only natural that the educational system transforms into a globally competent powerhouse. We must hold our educational system accountable for creating quality education based on equity and realistic policies that reflect the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs of our youth. It is with skilled educational leaders and collaborative educational structures, school districts can compete, thrive, and communicate within the global context. Effective communication is a pillar of effective educational leadership. Therefore, educational leadership perspectives of how to incorporate complex ideas such as globalization and education are valuable to policy makers. It is with educational leaders that a balance of the individual community and the global community can intertwine to create meaningful global exchange. When we educate with a global perspective, we create the future leaders of our country who can maneuver and excel in the global 21st century. Therefore, it is imperative to better understand the global mindedness of our leaders, as it is through leadership that informed change can be introduced through policy to bring about actionable steps for progress.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze and synthesize educational leaders' global mindedness regarding the future policy implications of globalization on education. This research aims to serve as a way to solidify the major and minor identifiable themes that make policy with regard to globalization easy or difficult to implement in the field of education from the perspective of educational leaders. It seeks to discover how globalization fits into the field of education, and to identify if there are policies currently in place that are based on outdated or insufficient research. Just as Apple seeks to update

their products and software with improved internal analytics, the education sector must also remedy policy that could work better. Fixing a problem before it emerges can elevate productivity. The purpose of this research is to fundamentally ground how the perspectives of superintendents' and their global mindedness can highlight the phenomenon of globalization regarding education.

An alternative motive for this research is to investigate where and why delays in implementing globalization may occur from a leadership perspective. By identifying these patterns, educational leaders and policymakers can use this study to reflect on local practices. Research based on community policy can also prepare future educational leaders, policymakers, educators, and students for their role in our globalized educational society. Providing access to quality globalized education means creating avenues through collaborative policy for educational leaders to organize and communicate with the educational community and for students to explore the opportunities afforded by globalization.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research is guided by the *diffusion theory of innovation* framework. This framework highlights how a phenomenon or innovation is viewed, practiced, and shared to bring about change.

#### **Diffusion Theory of Innovation**

Leadership in the 21st century recognizes that it is only through the collective whole that effective and ongoing change is possible. The global innovations shaping the economy are not the sole purpose of change. The diffusion, acceptance, and increasing preference for these new innovations in daily life has created the need to reconsider

where globalization and global mindedness fit within the educational system: “Diffusion is a kind of social change, defined as the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system” (Rogers, 1995, p. 36). Educational leadership pairs with this diffusion of social change and alterations in the way they communicate the need for innovation or change in educational structures. Educational leadership balances the mandates from policy and needs of individual districts. Effective communication of new or potential innovations such as globalization and education is needed to establish civic buy-in in an attempt to diffuse the benefits to the larger community.

Educational systems are structured with educational leadership at the forefront of implementing change. The way educational leaders communicate empower the culture of change within their learning community. For the purposes of this research, “Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory, developed by E.M. Rogers in 1962, is one of the oldest social science theories. It originated in communication to explain how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system. The end result of this diffusion is that people, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behavior, or product. (LaMorte, 2019, p. 4).” Effective communication of educational leaders that can invite collective change towards a global learning experience. Different communities have different needs and different perspectives of what globalization and education can mean for their district, however striving toward the goal of a more collaborative global learning community can create meaningful opportunities for global learning to prosper. “Adoption means that a person does something differently than what they had previously (i.e., purchase or use a new product, acquire, and perform a new behavior, etc.). The key to adoption is that the person must

perceive the idea, behavior, or product as new or innovative. (LaMorte, 2019, p. 4).” The global mindedness of school district superintendents is the initial step to discover how far global change is from the educational system. The perspectives of educational leaders can determine how or if the adoption of globalization and education is an innovation desired within their local educational community. Because superintendents are the paramount leaders and agents of change in their school districts, their perceptions and global mindedness fosters the diffusion of global educational opportunities. The theory of diffusion suggests that there are different stages to the adoption of new innovations, therefore it would be sufficient to suggest that the global mindedness of educational leaders relating to globalization and education may also have different stages perceptions with regard to this topic. With regard to educational leadership, early adaption is benefits superintendents’ ability to lead and the learning community’s ability to evolve. The benefit of inclination to adopt innovation is, “The early adopters are not too far ahead of the average individual in innovativeness, they serve as a role model for many other members of a social system... The early adopter knows that to continue to earn this esteem of colleagues and to maintain a central position in the communication networks of the system, he or she, must make judicious innovation decisions... The early adopter decreases uncertainty about a new idea by adopting it, and then conveying a subjective evaluation of the innovation to near-peers through interpersonal networks” (Rogers, 1995, p. 489).” Educational leadership that recognizes innovation in its infancy has the time to use it to create future possibilities and potentials. Educational leadership does not have to be the innovator but has to be able to recognize the innovative shifts within educational potentials within their district to create continuous prosperous change. It is

important to understand the connection between educational leaders and global mindedness in globalization and innovative educational policy. Educational leadership that finds significance in global learning for better student outcomes will more readily seek global opportunities for their district.

### **The Connection to Social Justice and the Vincentian Mission in Education**

As the Class of 2013 St. Vincent DePaul Social Justice Award holder for the St. John's University School of Education, I hold the university's dedication to providing equity in education. This research reflects the particular values associated with our university mission statement as it is rooted in the desire to represent all people in globalized educational research while discussing the global mindedness of educational leadership. Research can no longer serve only those with privilege or power. Institutional structures that demolish barriers and seek instead to build educational systems that value many forms of learning and knowledge can flourish in the age of global learning. Global connections for educational advancement can create connections that people may strive to feel when learning. Global learning is the act of intellectual togetherness. The phenomenon of globalization and education will continue to evolve within the field of education. Superintendents' perspectives of the global community are an important piece to uncovering what the needs are to meaningful global exchange.

### **Research Question(s)**

The overarching research questions primarily seek to uncover the global mindedness of superintendents in suburban school of New York and how it shapes their views on globalization in education. The research questions are the following:

**RQ1:** How do superintendents view education as a means for creating global connections, ambassadors, and innovators?

**RQ2:** What major or minor concepts do superintendents consider when explaining the phenomenon of globalization for the purposes of education?

**RQ3:** With regard to education and globalization, does the current educational system provide the capacity for meaningful global learning and/or exchanges?

**RQ4:** Are there national or local educational policies that are easily or meaningfully put into practice that provide avenues to guide educational leaders toward a more global and interconnected educational system?

**RQ5:** In what ways does educational leaders' global mindedness impact educational policy and influence the presence of globalization in educational practice?

### **Design and Methods**

This research calls for a qualitative methodology for data collection, which is useful as it can uncover the intent to which questions are responded to. When discussing the phenomena of globalization, educational leadership, global perspectives, and policy, it is important to gather insight into the interviewees' perspectives through their responses: "The pure qualitative strategy... combines naturalistic inquiry, qualitative data, and content analysis" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016). This strategy is beneficial for this research as it provides a full response from the participants and an opportunity for them to explain their perceptions and intent.

A phenomenological qualitative study can best analyze and synthesize the perspectives of suburban New York superintendents regarding global mindedness.

Globalization as a concept or goal is a lived experience. Here, the phenomenon and its implications on education and policy is studied through the perceptions of educational leaders that point to the increasing diffusion of global awareness and pave the way to interpret possible policy shifts. Phenomenological research by definition is meant to “describe the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experience of a concept or phenomenon. Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75). The chosen methodology is meant to synthesize superintendents’ experiences of educational policy, educational leadership, and global mindedness to create shifts in potential educational policy to better align global learning with 21st-century learning skills.

The need to predict and further the needs of educational leadership to create space to incorporate globalization lies at the forefront of this study. This qualitative research has the capability to open a conversation with educational leaders about how educational policy and leadership affects those with the least social, financial, and/or political power. For change to last, it must be incremental and steady, and it must have shareholder input. When educational leaders empower the learning community to build trust, consolidate visions, and evolve the system, embracing the future becomes a matter of action. Policy done with haste may result in pockets of resistance or uncertainty. Isolated visions form disconnections, which then become gaps and fissures in the foundations of a shared vision. Concise, well-crafted visions produce true policy change. To reveal the fixed structures that inhibit globalized changes in educational policy, we must be prepared to let go of the status quo of educational structures that cater only to a portion of the student population and prepare students for the globalized world they will become a part of.

Change in the form of the structured theory of diffusion suggests that evolution of knowledge is based on leadership that sees value in change. By incorporating educational leadership perspectives into educational policy, we can introduce incremental improvements to those who balance between required mandates and the learning community. Slow and purposeful steps to change the mindsets of policymakers can help to bring about meaningful change in how educators feel valued on a global scale.

In this study, the global mindedness of educational leaders serves as the foundation for the exploration of future changes in policy. The research is based on interviews, peer-reviewed articles, and papers regarding education, globalization, and/or policy. The use of peer-reviewed scholarship provides a solid foundation of high-quality evidence and themes within educational policy and how policy is influenced by policymakers and leaders. The end goal of this study is to have a better idea of how educational leadership and educational policy can be reviewed to implement evidence-based theories regarding globalization, education, and policy.

Using integrative literature to integrate globalization, education, and policy, this study offers an in-depth analysis of educational leaders' global perspectives on globalization and education in a way that may connect to educational policy reform. The study analyzes educational leaderships perspectives of on globalization and education and how policies can combine to incorporate the leadership outlook. The significance of this study lies in the ability to highlight how educational leaders can bring forth perspectives that encourage new policies to bring globalization to the local educational level. Through comparative coding and the technological assistance of a program called Dedoose, the researcher compares multiple sources of information to uncover consistencies in patterns

and themes in the data gathered from participant interview responses. The study aims to understand educational leaderships' perspectives regarding globalization, why globalization may be difficult to implement in education, and where there are small pathways that open the way for gains. Educational leaderships' global mindedness regarding the phenomenon of globalization and education can uncover what promotes or delays globalized education and contribute to frameworks to guide policymakers.

### **Definition of Terms**

#### ***Global Competency***

Zhao (2009) stated that, according to the University of Wisconsin Global Competency Task Force (2008), a globally competent person should have “the skills, knowledge, and attitude to work effectively in our increasingly interdependent world.” This report further states, “Foremost amongst these ‘global competencies’ are the abilities to communicate effectively across linguistic and cultural boundaries, to see and understand the world from a perspective other than one’s own, and to understand and appreciate the diversity of societies and cultures. Students need to appreciate the interdependence of nations in a global economy and to know how to adapt their work to a variety of cultures” (p. 3). Fernando Reimers, a Harvard University education professor, has a similar definition: I define Global Competency as the knowledge and skills that help people understand the flat world in which they live, the skills to integrate across disciplinary domains to comprehend global affairs and events and to create possibilities to address them. Global competencies are also the attitudinal and ethical dispositions that make it possible to interact peacefully, respectfully, and productively with fellow human beings from diverse geographies. (Zhao, 2009, p. 165)

### ***Global Mindedness***

Hett's (1993) research defines global mindedness as, "a worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the global community and feels a sense of responsibility to its members. This commitment is reflected in the individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors" (p. 143). For the purposes of this research, this definition of global mindedness aligns directly with superintendents' global mindedness with regard to community, responsibility, and commitment. A second defining factor of global mindedness is that "[p]eople who are global-minded possess an ecological world view, believe in the unity of humankind and the interdependence of humanity, support universal human rights, have loyalties that extend beyond national borders, and are futurists" (Hett, 1993, p. 9). Unity, interconnection, support, and loyalty are grounding pillars for superintendents who use the complexities of the present to create a better future.

### ***Globalization***

Thomas Friedman (2016) viewed globalization to relate to an organization and individual equally: "For a long time, many economists insisted that globalization was simply a measure of trade in physical goods, services, and financial transactions. That definition is way too narrow. Globalization, for me, has always meant the ability of any individual or company to compete, connect, exchange, or collaborate globally. And by that definition, globalization is now exploding" (Friedman, 2016, p. 120). Using this definition for globalization intends to highlight that, today, a single person can be a global entity.

## ***Policy***

This study uses “John Prunty’s definition of policy as the ‘authoritative allocation of values’” (Taylor & Henry, 2000, p. 498). Educational policy is a set of communal and cultural values that is put in place authoritatively to develop a pathway for citizens to create a world within the structure of regulations. While regulations and policy can change, the allocated values and intent of the authority and policy are consequential.

## ***Twenty-First Century Skills***

There is an immense latitude that learning now encompasses. This is why the Partnership for 21st Century Learning “agrees that understanding and appreciating diverse cultures are additional core competencies that all high school graduates need to master and thus has included ‘Global Awareness’ in its ‘21st Century Skills Framework,’ which it has been promoting for the last several years to policymakers and education leaders around the country” (Wagner, 2009, p. 25).

According to the Partnership, global awareness refers to the ability of students to:

- “[use] 21st century skills [such as critical thinking and problem solving] to understand and address global issues;
- [learn] from and [work] collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work and community contexts;
- [understand] other nations and cultures, including the use of non-English languages.” (Wagner, 2009, p. 25)

Wagner (2009) acknowledged how “[p]olicymakers and education leaders all like to talk about ‘21<sup>st</sup> century skills’ for a 21<sup>st</sup> century society shaped by globalization and

technology. [The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills] believes that ‘every child in America needs 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills to succeed as effective citizens, workers and leaders, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’... According to its framework ‘the skills, knowledge and expertise students should master to succeed in work and life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ are the following:

- Core Subjects (English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history, government, and civics) and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Themes (global awareness, financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy)
- Learning and Innovation Skills (creativity and innovation skills, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, communication, and collaboration skills)
- Information, media, and Technology Skills (information literacy, media literacy, ICT [information and communication technology] literacy)
- Life and Career Skills (flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility).” (Wagner, 2009, p. 24-25).

These aforementioned skills are directly linked to those needed to be a productive global citizen and personal ambassador. They create a well-rounded view of how instrumental the education system is in shaping the future of not just a country, but the planet. The educational leadership’s perspectives of these 21st-century skills can highlight the need for policy change that aligns with a global perspective.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH**

Leadership in the 21st century relies on collective innovation. However, innovation alone does not guarantee the implementation of new practices or perceptions. Effective leaders bring educational systems to change with dynamic equilibrium, which “occurs when the rate of change in a social system is commensurate with the system’s ability to cope with it” (Rogers, 1995, p. 798). Within the dynamic system, there is a sense of trust that great innovations balance the gains and losses. The willingness to grow and learn is the dynamic piece to this equilibrium. This aligns with Friedman’s (2016) example of how the complexities of globalization rely on an individual’s ability to continuously move forward, like pedaling on a bike rather than attempting to balance in stillness.

### **Theoretical Framework**

“Many technologists believe that advantageous innovations will sell themselves, that the obvious benefits of a new idea will be widely realized by potential adopters, and that the innovation will therefore diffuse rapidly. Seldom is this the case” (Rogers, 1995, p. 37). This is due to the need to see the benefits of innovation in action. Abstract ideas for potential technologies serve no purpose without the ability to see them resolve a problem or challenge. Diffusion is “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. The four main elements are the innovation, communication channels, time, and the social system” (Rogers, 1995, p. 53).

Educational leaders are directly linked to this process through communication and system thinking actions. Leaders assume the need to motivate people to change.

However, before motivating others to change, they must uncover the essential information and possible hurdles: “Innovation-evaluation information, is the reduction on uncertainty about an innovation’s expected consequences” (Rogers, 1995, p. 73). By reducing uncertainty, they create a more precise understanding of the benefit of the innovation: “Diffusion is a particular type of communication in which the message content this is exchanges is concerned with a new idea” (Rogers, 1995, p. 67). This leads to decisions to either reject the innovation, or to continue with it. With time, one moves from “knowledge [of the innovation], persuasion [to use the innovation], decision [to reject or adopt the innovation], implementation [using the innovation], and confirmation [reinforcement of innovation]” (Rogers, 1995, p. 72). The process of “diffusion occurs within the social system” (Rogers, 1995, p. 79). Educational leadership and policymakers perceptions drive educational endeavors that in turn reflect “how the system’s social structure affects diffusion” (Rogers, 1995, p. 79).

With regard to globalization, the global mindedness of the educational leadership reflects the authority innovation-decision to incorporate the diffusion of innovations. “Authority innovation-decision are choices to adopt or reject an innovation that are made by a relatively few individuals in a system who possess power, status, or technical expertise” (Rogers, 1995, p. 89). Educational leadership that plans global educational possibilities allow globalization to diffuse and be reflected in actionable decision-making. As such, “[a]uthority decisions are much more common than optional decisions in formal organizations, such as, factories, schools, or government organizations... Generally, the fastest rate of adaption of innovations results from authority decisions (depending of course on how innovative the authorities are)” (Rogers, 1995, p. 90). This is why the

perceptions and global mindedness of superintendents are essential to incorporating globalization in public schools: “One can imagine other types of innovation-decisions in which the first decision is of an authority sort followed by a collective decision” (Rogers, 1995). Superintendents can be the catalyst of diffusion for globalization as an innovation and create actionable policy to structure meaningful change.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **A Historical Introduction of the United States to the Global Platform**

Globalization today might ignite thoughts of the technological advances and global interactions that only the 21st century could fuel. However, the presence of globalization precedes today by far. It dates back to the Silk Road that linked Asian and Europe for the trade of silk, spice, and salt. It can also be seen in more the founding of the New World and the arrival of pilgrims to North and South America. What makes globalization different in the 21st century is the technology that makes the economic and the social injustices of globalization instantly apparent. This makes it increasingly important to consider what globalization can mean in the future: “Indeed, as the world becomes more interdependent and complex, it becomes more vital than ever to widen your aperture and to synthesize more perspectives” (Friedman, 2016, p. 14). In essence, “[t]he flattening world means that we are now connecting all the knowledge centers on the planet together into a single global network which—if politics and terrorism do not get in the way—could usher in an amazing era of prosperity, innovation, and collaboration, by companies, communities, and individuals” (Friedman, 2007, p. 23). Globalization must be seen to include and represent the global community, which we are now able to represent adequately. The future of globalization will be led by generations

who have grown up with access to the global community, where personal success can “go viral” in an instant. This new age of globalization can represent the world as a whole, not only those who can afford it or have privilege over others.

At the forefront of globalization is the United States, where policies can live and die as bills in Congress. However, with American innovation, great diplomatic decisions can affect how global policy is shaped: “It was not only immigration that invented the American people. The American people invented themselves. They found themselves with an unprecedented regime and an extraordinary land, and they came here to find things they could not find at home. Once here, they had to invent their lives. It was not simply a matter of choosing among the many possibilities. It was also inventing possibilities that were not yet seen” (Friedman, 2020, p. 102). Therefore, it was not only immigration that invented globalization, but the monetary value placed on cultural diffusion and cultural reciprocity. Today, there is a need to turn to other cultures and groups for new needs and desires. Thus, as the nation “created by immigrants,” the United States has always focused on the needs of the homeland while also concentrating on the broader impacts on a global scale.

The United States has become a global stakeholder, and U.S. policy has been a stronghold assisting innovation and leading to roads “paved with gold”:

Technology is intended to create products, and products must be sold. [Thomas Edison] understood the subtlety of invention, which was not mastering the science nor building the product. The subtlety was in understanding what society needed and what the customer would buy. It was not enough to be a scientist or an engineer. It was also necessary to be a sociologist. Thomas Edison became the

template for Henry Ford, Bill Gates, Elon Musk, and all of the rest who understood that the inventor had to have a user and that business was the bridge between the two. (Friedman, 2020, p. 116)

Therefore, understanding what society needs leads to the need for effective communication of innovations. It is with effective communication of new inventions that they disperse throughout society. Business has found extreme success in the global market, and it is time for educational policy to do the same. In order to advance education, we must create a solid foundational policy for support. The following exemplifies why the United States is a global power with the responsibility to create policy that can inspire other countries to adapt a global mindset through innovative policy:

At the heart of this is the culture of technology. It is not unique to America, but it still is quintessentially American. In a book by Arthur Koestler on Stalin's purges, the protagonist, sitting in his cell, wonders what is happening in the world, having not read a newspaper in months. He wonders if the Americans have invented time travel. This gives you a sense of how the world, even in the 1930's, thought of America. No great art, no deep thought, no brilliant strategy, but a country capable of extraordinary feats of technological brilliance. (Friedman, 2020, p. 382)

The educational community is at a precipice of a golden age that will merge educational opportunity with global exposure: "A golden age is an age that in spite of all the pains that are normal and possible nevertheless creates something extraordinary...What we remember about the golden ages in history is not what was

common to all times but what was unique to them” (Friedman, 2020, p. 347). The unique aspect that 21st-century globalization brings to education is the opportunity to appreciate the distinctiveness of cultures with the awareness that globalization affords a multitude of perspectives.

### **Tensions in Policymaking**

Policymaking in the United States is a process that involves many central and local governments which need to collectively find a purpose in new legislature. This can inspire debate, which leads to the re-writing or re-thinking of the intent behind the legislature. This is why we have amendments in place that can apply change that is seen to be fit by the collective, following any debate and discord. The success of the United States lies in its ability to combine the new and old to develop mechanisms for innovative change: “Every layer of innovation gets built on the next” (Friedman, 2007, p. 124). The same applies for policy. We must remember that the world watches the United States as it seeks problem-solving pathways. Creative innovation in the United States offers global possibilities, and global responsibilities. The United States is a global powerhouse that offers problem-resolution pathways that have far-reaching consequences on human lives.

As such, those who speak about the innovative nature of the United States refer to it as an invented culture, referring to “the regime [that] was invented, I am therefore saying that it was invented by men who were lifelong inventors. They were technologists. They tried to create things that would manage nature and ease human existence. Invention was not only part of the regime. It was built into American culture” (Friedman, 2020, p. 44). The U.S. culture disrupts the systems in place that already work, in search of a quicker, smarter, more economically efficient, and financially appealing way. U.S.

culture is disruptive, as it offers a more direct way to travel, but others must still pay a toll to use the road. Without the toll, they can still reach the same point, but it will take longer and likely be a bumpier process. U.S. culture is designed to compete constantly. Within interconnected systems, a competitive culture is what drives new and better innovations. Educational structures can benefit from innovation based on competition that disrupts in order to bring new and better systems.

### **Power/Dominance**

The U.S. global dominance is undeniable: “The United States has become an empire. It is an empire of power and global reach, but of course not a formal empire. Its power derives from the size of its economy, its military, and the seductive power of its culture. These in turn derive from its regime, land, and people” (Friedman, 2020, p. 143). It is important to note that the American people are part of a global phenomenon. The modern-day U.S. empire has unmeasurable global effects. Education as a globalized interest can have wide reaching impacts. In fact, “[a]n empire exists when its power is so great compared with other nations that simply by existing, it changes the shape of their relationships and the way other nations behave” (Friedman, 2020, p. 144).

The purpose of this study is not to determine whether or not the United States changes other nations’ behavior positively or negatively, but simply to acknowledge that other countries view policy made in the United States as reputable:

Empires are resented and hated. They are also admired and envied. They define the culture of the world. By this definition, the United States is an empire. English has become the global language of business and government, and it has become an expectation that professionals around the world will speak English. I have been

at meetings where the United States was vehemently condemned by foreign experts and politicians speaking English. The British opened the door to the use of English, but the Americans have taken it much further. The fact that American power exists without any formal structure indicates that the United States is more powerful than most empires have been, historically. Its empire is not only global but casual. It has and uses power casually, controlling the world without a clear plan or even a systematic intent. (Friedman, 2020, p. 157)

Therefore, educational policy stemming from the U.S. may bring traction and interest to the global education arena. While the U.S. can be seen as a global superpower, if the U.S. uses globalization and education to incorporate a sense of collaborative systems, other nations may follow suite. If the United States chooses to be part of the global educational structures, other nations may have more incentive to participate educationally.

### **Innovation and Innovative Policy**

Before we can discuss the policies that should be put forth for the betterment of education, we must discuss why the United States is different from other countries in terms of policy. The country was shaped by its founders to create policy hubs that grapple with the minutia of policy and the vision and intent of policy. In this way, the collective whole is impactful when the separate parts work in tandem towards a common goal. The U.S. Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution to transcend time through balance and flexibility. While the separation between private and public life was meant to create safe boundaries, it has also resulted in difficulty in creating legislation to fulfill the needs of both private and public entities: “The moral principles were complex and sometimes at odds with each other, but they had a common core: each American ought to be free to

succeed or fail in the things he wished to undertake” (Friedman, 2020, p. 33). Our constitutional documents describe our basic rights: “The state would not hinder anyone. A person’s fate would be determined only by his character and talents. The founders did more than separate the state and private life. They created an ongoing tension between them” (Friedman, 2020, p. 33).

This tension is displayed in the way policy has become nearly impossible to implement in a timely manner. Through the action of specific political parties, it has also become focused on prominent figures rather than on practicality. “Governments can be machines, but nations have to accommodate the actual lives of people. People don’t live abstract lives. They live real ones, within nations, and those nations give them a sense of who they are. Partly it has to do with the government. Partly it has to do with the principles of the nation, the things that tell us what kinds of people we are and ought to be” (Friedman, 2020, p. 36). This is an important feature of policy, which must reflect a country’s values and core beliefs, in addition, to being practical. Policy that is not easily put into practice, or that is impractical due to the financial burden or untimely implementation, will be left to those who have passion: “Jefferson and Franklin questioned all political premises. They also questioned all things and how to improve them. This inventiveness can be seen throughout American history, from farm implements to smartphones. This inventiveness was coupled with a sense of urgency” (Friedman, 2020, p. 44). Urgency can be unspoken or unidentifiable, but it is a motivation that cannot be ignored, especially if shared by the masses. Educational policymakers must reflect the needs of the people they govern, while effectively communicating and the core beliefs of their community within new innovations.

## **Community**

A shared vision can create policy that motivates stakeholders. It is most beneficial to the community when stakeholders are present for discussions on new and old policy. Stakeholders can provide insight into how policy directly hinders or helps achieve a goal. Policymaking should also be done with a team mentality and searching for evidence of why a policy is needed and how it can preserve the initial intention while still progressing with time. It is only through the phenomenon of globalization that organizations now have global outreach. Participation in the global community for large and small communities is now possible.

Globalization is the word we came up with to describe the changing relationships between governments and big businesses,” said David Rothkopf, a former senior Department of Commerce official in the Clinton administration and now a private strategic consultant. “But what is going on today is a much broader, much more profound phenomenon.” It is not simply about how governments, business, and people communicate, not just about how organizations interact, but it is-about the emergence of completely new social, political, and business models. (Friedman, 2007, p. 83)

These new global interconnections reflect a system modeled for a global community that reflects local people. Part of globalization is balancing one’s participation in the global and local community. Therefore, the educational model is still in need for a systematic review to incorporate these new models. “National policy leaders can still be central players in reform adoption, even in the globalized world that exerts isomorphic pressures on national education systems” (Komatsu, 2013, p. 13). Policy leaders are central to

educational policy reform with regard to ensuring their policy reflects the people they govern. Inclusive measures allows for more widespread adoption and incorporation of educational policy reforms.

### **Progress**

Progress is slow and develops with shared mindsets. However, “the democratization of information is having a profound impact on society” (Friedman, 2007, p. 280). Progress that produces positive results cycles through a culture long after the initial idea was introduced. Therefore, ensuring adequate access to information is important. For example, technology is part of our culture and now “[t]echnology is not just a machine but a mode of approaching a problem” (Friedman, 2020, p. 258).

The skeptics all said, “It takes people a long time to change their habits and learn new technology. [But] people did it very quickly, and ten years later there were eight hundred million people on the Internet. The reason? “People will change their habits quickly when they have a strong reason to do so, and people have an innate urge to connect with other people” said Andreessen. “And when you give people a new way to connect with other people, they will punch through any technical barrier, they will learn new languages—people are wired to want to connect with other people and they find it objectionable not to able to.” (Friedman, 2007, p. 113)

The connections available make seeing multiple perspectives of issues necessary. Using the technology available today, we have access to free “think-tanks” that represent the good, bad, and ugly thoughts in society:

It is interesting to note that at the time of political instability there is frequently a new communication technology that is blamed for the dissemination of negativity or vitriol. In the 1960's, it was television, rendering the country passive victims of the news media. In the 1920's, it was the movies, peddling a form of collective sentimentality and licentiousness, along with radio introducing the immediacy of news. (Friedman, 2020, p. 251)

We must not focus on the pros and cons of technology available today, but acknowledge the progress it has offered to the global community, which proves it is here to stay: "The big question for the future is, what is the next transformative technology and how do we recognize it in its early form?" (Friedman, 2020, p. 305). Early adopters to new innovations have the ability to grow with new technologies as it evolves. There is evidence that suggests that the global market is changing. What we should note is that "Uber, the world's largest taxi company, owns no vehicles. Facebook, the world's most popular media owner, creates no content. Alibaba, the most valuable retailer, has no inventory. Further, Airbnb, the world's largest accommodation provider, owns no real estate. "Something interesting is happening" (Friedman, 2016, p. 97).

Technology is making it possible for future generations to eventually allow parents to choose their children's teachers, the classroom content, and the classes their children take on a global scale. It will be the movement toward a "school of choice" with people centering their education on their wants, needs, likes, and passions. For this reason, educational policy must stay relevant, and there cannot be gaps in legislation: "The flatter the world gets, the more we are going to need a system of global governance that keeps up with all the new legal and illegal forms of collaboration" (Friedman, 2007,

p. 390). There are innovators and inventors in classrooms today who are dreaming of the next big transformative technology. It is the responsibility of leaders and policymakers to find urgency in developing policy and frameworks towards globalization and education. Put bluntly, “[y]esterday’s solution doesn’t solve tomorrow’s problem” (Wagner, 2009, p. 17).

### **Policy Change/Modification**

An educational leader’s role in education is to remove roadblocks to ensure forward progression leading to elevated success, and to guarantee that teachers have access to quality material to challenge, create wonder, and inspire future generations. “Happiness is the emotional engine powering the United States. It is the only country to make the pursuit of happiness a fundamental right. But with happiness comes disappointment, just as with technology comes obsolescence” (Friedman, 2020, p. 46). It is not only necessary that policy is created but necessary for policy to be updated as new technology and awareness becomes available. Connections between policy makers and educational leaders presents the multiple aspects of leadership needed to create large scale policy that is flexible enough to be implemented in local communities. “The challenge is for education leaders and policymakers to agree on the skills that matter most for administrators and then to develop ways to assess them” (Wagner, 2009, p. 153). In these instances, time is of the utmost importance. Simply providing *more* education is probably a good thing on balance, especially if a more educated labor force is more flexible and can cope more readily with non-routine tasks and occupational changes. But it is far from a panacea. In the future, *how* we educate our children may prove to be more important than *how much* we educate them” (Friedman, 2007, p. 471). Creating citizens

with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can transfer rote knowledge into actionable skills needed. No longer do student need to memorize facts, it is using facts to create new thoughts.

With this in mind, creating educational policy is difficult because it relies on predictions on the future: “The problem is that prediction depends on modeling (a subject I know a little about) and **effective modeling of change** depends on understanding all of the variables, their baseline interaction, and the impact of new forces on the variables” (Friedman, 2020, p. 367). However, modifying educational policy should not be considered a failure but should be treated as an update: “Once invented, the inventions had to be reinvented to deal with new challenges and new possibilities” (Friedman, 2020, p. 367). Educational policy must be modified to reflect new challenges and possibilities, and policymakers and educational leaders can create policy with the intent of “[f]reedom of action based on commander’s intent means that the expectation is success, not a particular way of achieving success” (Friedman, 2020, p. 338). Intent-based policy is created to assist educational professionals in creating new educational evidence-based practices.

### **The Speed of Globalization**

The limitless speed of globalization is enough to send any system into overdrive. However, Thomas Friedman discusses the concepts of creation as “[w]hen you press the pause button on a machine, it stops. But when you press the pause button on human beings they start,” ...Dov Seidman, CEO of LRN, which advises global businesses on ethics and leadership (Friedman, 2016). “You start to reflect, you start to rethink your assumptions, you start to reimagine what is possible and, most importantly, you start to reconnect with your most deeply held beliefs. Once you’ve done that, you can begin to

reimagine a better path” (Friedman, 2016, p. 4). We all know the saying that if you do not learn from the past, you are doomed to repeat it. Well, “the ancients believed that there was wisdom in patience and that wisdom comes from patience... Patience wasn’t just the absence of speed-It was space for reflection and thought” (Friedman, 2016, p. 6).

The speed at which globalization is changing our world is compounding. In other words, the shifts may appear small, but over time they become quite monumental:

To illustrate this kind of exponential growth, Brynjolfsson and McAfee recalled the famous legend of the king who was so impressed with the man who invented the game of chess that he offered him any reward. The inventor of chess said that all he wanted was enough rice to feed his family. The king said, “Of course, it shall be done. How much would you like?” The man asked the king to simply place a single grain of rice on the first square of a chessboard, then two on the next, then four on the next, with each subsequent square receiving twice as many grains as the previous one. The king agreed, noted Brynjolfsson and McAfee—without realizing that sixty-three instances of doubling yields a fantastically big number: something like eighteen quintillion grains of rice. That is the power of exponential change. (Friedman, 2016, p. 26)

Exponential growth in terms of learning capabilities are now possible through collaborative learning platforms. The learning experiences and exchanges of the world are now possible. Part of the learning process are the mishaps that teach endurance from failure. “Innovation, Teller said, is a cycle of experimenting, learning, applying knowledge, and then assessing success or failure. And when the outcome is failure, that’s just a reason to start the cycle over again. One of X’s mottos is ‘Fail fast’ (Friedman,

2016, p. 35).” Between the constant compounding principles of globalization and “fail fast” innovations, the concept of lifelong learning is essential to any type of stability in the 21st century:

The new kind of stability has to be dynamic stability. There are some ways of being, like riding a bicycle, where you cannot stand still, but once you are moving it is actually easier. It is not our natural state. But humanity has to learn to exist in this state. (Friedman, 2016, p. 35)

This dynamic stability creates momentum for innovation. Education can be the promotion for young innovators that learn how to use this dynamic stability to their advantage. However, “Another big challenge is the way we educate our population. We go to school for 12 or more years during our childhood and early adulthood, and then we are done. But when the pace of change is this fast, the only way to retain a lifelong working capacity is to engage in lifelong learning. These are signs “that our societal structures are failing to keep pace with the rate of change,” ...Everything feels like it’s in constant catch-up mode” (Friedman, 2016, p. 33).” Therefore, education can be the groundwork that brings calm to future populations who will need to be comfortable with constant improvements. “Leaders need to be able to operate in this new dynamic environment of globalization, the shrinking of distance and reaction time, working in different cultures, new nuclear powers, and clash of civilizations” (Wagner, 2009, p. 21). Incorporated within this new form of leadership will be the need to effectively communicate with those that share different opinions.

Dynamic leadership is creating new leaders. We must all find and surround ourselves with people who can visualize better solutions: “Another part of critical

thinking is surrounding yourself with people who have differences of opinion and who can help you come to the best solution: team-based leadership” (Wagner, 2009, p. 22). Some solidarity can be reflective, but “isolation is the enemy of improvement” (Wagner, 2009, p. 157). “Command-and-control leadership style is becoming less and less valued in organizations. People have to understand the importance of working fluidly and across boundaries. As organizations become more global, the ability to work fluidly around the world is a competitive advantage: understanding how to leverage the globe, time zones, where the work can best be done, where there are skills that best match the task, either because of the culture or the training” (Wagner, 2009, p. 23). Policy makers should recognize the value in collaboration of educational leaders. “The recognition of the factors that are critical for success in education policy reforms calls for policy makers to have better knowledge on how to respond” (Pont, 2014, p. 25). Part of gaining the knowledge to respond is knowledge of what is happening within local communities. Collaboration between educational leadership and educational policy makers can expand commonalities and create meaningful dialogue for educational needs.

### **The Role of Leadership**

The speed of globalization drives the need for leadership that views the community as the knowledge base for collective goal setting:

Despite the unprecedented speed and frequency related to the amount of information and ideas that traverse the globe, education appears to be stuck in a time warp framed by issues and objectives set decades before the effects of technological innovation, enhanced communication, changing political conditions and global migrations. (Hersey, 2012, p. 1)

By creating educational leadership with the capacity to exchange new and innovation thoughts, new educational connections can be created. Leadership in the 21st century needs to “take advantage of the commons and the notion that all of us are smarter than one of us; if everyone works on a program or product and then shares their improvements, that product will get smarter faster and then drive more change even faster” (Friedman, 2016, p. 55). Educational improvements should not be left within isolated learning communities. By sharing new and important knowledge bases, the bar can be heightened for educational community as a whole. “The interconnectedness and interdependency of peoples, countries and nations increase every day through travel, commerce, advancing technologies, international relations, environmental concerns and a growing global identity” (McCarthy, 2011, p. 35).

The idea of a global identity is interesting, as it supposes that an individual can have an identity on a global scale through the use of technology-based processes, such as social media, while also contributing to the community in which they live. This type of global access makes learning, teaching, and leading in the 21st century extremely dynamic: “Some superintendents are including global education for their students. More superintendents may decide to include global education if more research and case studies were available” (McCarthy, 2011, p. 21). Research provides evidence on which the leadership can base claims and motivate change within their district. If the global mindedness paradigm creates a desire and capacity to expand educational leadership’s view of what education can mean for the future, it is the duty of policymakers to ensure that leaders have the freedom to systematically explore the possibilities:

The definition of leadership offered by a Harvard University expert on the subject, Ronald Heifetz, who says the role of a leader is ‘to help people face reality and to mobilize them to make change’ as their environment changes to ensure the security and prosperity of their community (Friedman, 2016, p. 311).

Without resources or collaborative forums, educational leadership is forced to create change in isolation. Therefore, in order for educational leaders to promote global educational experiences, they need the opportunity to learn and fund such experiences.

Leaders must innovate within a social culture, as [o]ur ability to forge deep relationships—to love, to care, to hope, to trust, and to build voluntary communities based on shared values—is one of the most uniquely human capacities we have. It is the single most important thing that differentiates us from nature and machines. Not everything is better faster or meant to go faster.

(Friedman, 2016, p. 6)

The culture within the learning community is based on experiences and relationships. For educational leadership purposes, new innovations come from effective communication and connection with the learning community. Educational leaders who understand and connect with the learning community can effectively communicate why new innovations, such as globalization and education can be beneficial. “If school leaders are to be seen as responsive and active participants, and real change in education is to occur, then an understanding of the perspectives, skills, characteristics, and mindsets needed for life in a global world must be identified and understood” (Hersey, 2012, p. 49).

The organized, meaningful use of data can sway public opinion in favor of making substantial change. This is the premise for this research. Statistics reminds us that

correlation does not equal cause, but organized data can help maximize leaders' ability to prove cause through data correlation. However, for educational leadership, providing concise accurate structured data takes time and resources. The major difference between unstructured and structured data becomes: "Unstructured data was a mess. It meant you just vacuumed up everything out there that you could digitize and store, without any particular structure" (Friedman, 2016, p. 58), whereas structured data assists in the grounding of shared visions based on documented realities. When educational leadership has access to data grounded in research, they can make informed decisions for their learning community. In the words of Friedman (2016), "[b]ig data analytics: when you can see more, you can understand more, and if you can understand more, you can make better decisions rather than blind guesses. And so, data tied to analytics gives us better vision" (p. 58). Having a clear vision for the learning community centralizes energies and resources towards a common goal. When technology made the leap from unstructured to structured data, we became able to "search all that unstructured data and find the patterns. This ability to sift mountains of unstructured data, without necessarily knowing what you were looking at, and be able to query it and get answers back and identify patterns was a profound breakthrough" (Friedman, 2016, p. 59). Globalization and education is in its infancy of research, however there are plenty of opportunities to begin gather data. "Finally, it is important to understand that going from practice to policy requires taking into consideration the context and challenges of implementation. Every policy reform can be different because of the system's political structure, social, cultural and economic context" (Pont, 2014, p. 24). Finding research based trends of commonality and connecting them to the community takes understanding the important features of the

learning community. “It is important to note here that the sociological analysis of institutional isomorphism focuses on systems rather than the individuals who control them” (Komatsu, 2013, p. 6). Changing the educational system to provide more global learning experiences will allow those within the learning community to choose to participate and in what capacity. Komatsu (2013) mentioned “Steiner-Khamsi (2006), for example, insisted that the global convergence of education occurred only at the level of ‘policy talk’ and very rarely at the level of implementation” (p. 7). Discussing potential is the starting point, but implementation is where the educational leadership can help shape policy into action: “Changing the mind-set of students and teachers to recognize the importance of globalization requires the efforts of a visionary school leader who is committed to the importance of global education” (Merriman & Nicoletti, 2008, p.14). When educational leaders choose to invest resources into global education, there are learning experiences that shape the youth and provide a wider range of possibilities for their future. Therefore, it is essential for educational leadership to communicate effectively new innovations, such as global education in a way that makes the learning community willingly and wanting to explore what global learning can mean for their content, students, and community. More options and opportunity for exploration of innovations, create a larger pool of knowledge within a district learning community.

### **Superintendency**

Superintendency reflects the top echelon of leadership within the educational community with regard to ability to inspire research-based change. Superintendents lead the other leaders within a school district. Being that the superintendent is the leader of leaders within a school district, and the culminating force behind meaningful change, this

research focuses on their perspectives and thoughts behind globalization and education. Many superintendents create meaningful cultures within their districts to serve students with quality educational experiences. This does not mean that superintendents do not perceive the barriers within educational policy. Educational leadership must remove barriers to empower teachers in their instruction, and superintendents must also be served by policy that reflects their needs and the needs of the community. Superintendents' thoughts, suggestions, and reflections on global mindedness can offer insight into the factors that are important to educational leaders at the district and local level for globalization to be brought into schools in meaningful and actionable ways.

Superintendents face internal challenges, such as resource limits, Board of Education (BOE) decisions, and more. There are also the external challenges, such as budget cuts, policy changes, public perceptions of education, and educational reforms not made by local governing units. While balancing internal and external factors, superintendents must find ways to reflect the core values of their local community and develop the learning community into a coherent systems thinking machine focused on a shared vision.

Superintendency as a utility of change leadership continues to evolve as policymakers recognize the complexity of educational reform: "Superintendents are being viewed as pivotal actors in the complex algorithm for managing districts and leading policy implementation efforts" (Björk et al., 2014, p. 444). Therefore, if superintendents are being seen as crucial in terms of implementation of policy, their perspectives are valuable in the creation of said policy. By incorporating superintendents in policy decision-making processes, they can better communicate the need to implement

new initiatives within their local district. “A superintendent serves as a school district’s chief executive officer (CEO) and manages its day-to-day affairs” (Björk et al., 2014, p. 446). Superintendents serve as the formal collective leader within the school community. With the incorporation of new innovations, superintendents have had to expand their responsibilities to incorporate oversight into these new advances. Thus, the perceptions of superintendents are essential in the introduction of any functional policy:

The formal position of school-district superintendent was established in Buffalo, New York in 1837... the superintendent position has been defined through a process of continuous adaptation to social, economic, and political changes [and]... [a]s the pace of change accelerated during the twentieth century, these events not only had a profound effect in terms of redefining the nature of schooling but also in reshaping superintendents’ work. (Björk et al., 2014, p. 447)

Change is no simple task when approaching a community. Clear communication and understanding of this new change is vital for the stakeholders. Superintendents must connect with the many stakeholders with different perspectives to communicate how this change is beneficial for the learning community. When superintendents are put in the position of communicating policy without full comprehension or collaboration, there is a disconnect between policy and action. “In many instances, externally imposed educational reforms are often accompanied by ambiguity, uncertainty, or resistance, which means that superintendents must possess the acuity to handle political dynamics within municipal governments, school boards, district offices, and parent organizations” (Björk & Browne-Ferrigno, 2016, p. 130).

“[S]hifts in national education policy altered how school districts were organized, managed, and governed which in turn reconfigured superintendents’ roles” (Björk & Browne-Ferrigno, 2016, p. 121). According to Bjork et. Al. (2014), the roles of superintendents are to serve as teacher-scholar, manager, democratic political leader, social scientist, and communicator. Superintendents effectively lead when these five roles of superintendents reflect the local community they serve. One role that reflects educational leadership is the superintendent as teacher-scholar: “Since the early 1900s, the state-level policies directed toward establishing common schools unambiguously called for superintendents to implement mandated curriculum and supervise teachers” (Björk et al., 2014, p. 452). Discussing this through a leadership perspective lens, superintendents’ state-regulated protocols become negotiable when best practices using evidence-based research teaching methods have an influence on how state mandates are taught: “To be successful, superintendents are expected to be creative, implementers, facilitators, and motivators for change all in the hopes of achieving the primary goal of increasing student learning” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 18). Ultimately superintendents are responsible to the learning community to bring resources for the improvement of student outcomes. Superintendents’ displays of leadership within the academic community reflects back to the learning community in dynamic equilibrium, where constant improvement becomes the norm. Creating motivation assists superintendents’ goal to increase student learning as new efforts to incorporate latest quality learning practices come around. Effective communication and professional resources for faculty also contribute to the success of superintendents as teacher-scholar.

On the other hand, the second role of superintendent as manager was “imposed on school districts to make them run like businesses” (Björk et al., 2014, p. 453). This was initially controversial, but “[w]ithin a few decades it was recognized that serving as both effective school-district manager and as an instructional leader were not mutually exclusive but actually complementary aspects of their work” (Björk et al., 2014, p. 453). Explicit discussion to the BOE regarding the balancing of public resources and funds for instructional improvement has become part of the superintendent’s responsibility. “In the USA, superintendents convened leadership teams to achieve greater coherency of support services, and to achieve operational efficiencies and consistency of vision and voice” (Björk et al., 2014, p. 470). The creation of educational leadership teams within local districts assist in the organization of educational data and progression of shared visions. Fundamentally, the third role of superintendent as democratic political leader reflects “superintendents’ political success rested on their capacity to galvanize support of school board members, citizens, parents, and employees for district initiatives, while also deftly handling demands of special interest groups during decision making” (Björk et al., 2014, p. 454). Effective communication and alignment of shared visions within the local community promotes support for new initiatives geared towards improving or implementing features of a shared vision. Superintendents’ role as they incorporate “In current circumstances, the issue is not whether superintendents enact a political role but how well they do it” (Björk & Browne-Ferrigno, 2016, p. 128). Effective connections and communication to the community reflects the balance of different ideals within education and what that means for different families within the learning community.

Superintendents must engage with the local community and the different stakeholders within it. Educational leadership balances and ensures equity within the different stakeholder groups within a community.

Although they tend to be cautious in disclosing the breadth and intensity of their political involvement in working with central office staffs, school principals, school boards, and community-based interest groups, most do not have a choice as to whether they are engaged in politics but rather only how they will participate. (Björk et al., 2014, p. 471)

The development of professional relationships with community members provides alternate perspectives and considerations when attempting to bring new initiatives to a learning community. “Superintendents responded to political influences by working closely with school board members, forming leadership teams, communicating frequently and directly to various stakeholders, and developing relationships with key community members” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 19).

Public education provides education for all. Keeping in mind the societal struggles do not cease to continue to affect students when they walk into school buildings. Therefore, effective educational leadership ensures to plan for possible social struggles of their student and community population. The fourth role of superintendent as applied social scientist recognizes how “[s]uperintendents’ disposition towards data-informed decision making recognizes the relationship between education and society and is central to understanding how changing demographics, poverty, racism, drugs, and violence may affect children’s academic performance” (Björk & Browne-Ferrigno, 2016, p. 126). High quality educational experiences with global perspectives may change

perspectives of possibilities, especially for students who live in instability. Knowing there is more to the world than their community and acknowledging global impacts can promote academic motivation. It is therefore the superintendent who can rally the community through effective communication to bring new initiatives for change. Finally, the fifth role of superintendent as communicator reflects the importance of making connections and being able to effectively address the purpose, role, and function of change:

Educational reforms launched during the early 1980's underscored the need for superintendents to communicate with a wider array of stakeholders and engage them in rethinking the nature and direction of public education. During this period, traditional, top-down models of communication were challenged by scholars who believed that it had a negative impact on worker commitment and job satisfaction. Which reduced overall organizational effectiveness. (Björk et al., 2014, p. 456)

Superintendents weave and connect the many stakeholders and central needs of a local school district. This takes exploration of how all stakeholders are interconnected and the role of superintendent is to find common interests among stakeholders.

“These nationwide reports and scholarly studies not only enhance our understanding of the devolution of governance and decision-making authority in the Nordic countries but also heighten our understanding of how superintendents' have increased their acuity for micropolitics” (Björk & Browne-Ferrigno, 2016, p. 122). All in all, the role of superintendent echoes the need for analytical reflection of self and community. The coalescence of each role and educational leadership experiences creates

the perspective for superintendents. Therefore, by better understanding superintendents' perspectives of leadership and global-mindedness we can have a well-rounded understanding of what New York superintendents might need in order to find success on a global scale. Systematic reform for global education require participation from superintendents for they are closely connected to the community they serve.

During the last three decades, the emergence of a global economy and competitive markets heightened concern for the future well-being of the USA, fueled demands for improving education, and simulated interest in superintendents' leadership role in launching and sustaining large-scale systematic reform. (Björk et al., 2014, p. 459)

### **Superintendency in Finland and China**

Different educational systems such as Finland and China reflect alternative educational perspectives. National well-being does not need to come at a cost while introducing globalization to education. "The notion of globalizations helps reveal the shared sense of urgency in policymakers' efforts to preserve, protect, and promote their nations' social, economic, and political well-being" (Björk et al., 2014, p. 468). The educational system currently in place has left superintendents in a traditional leadership pattern and "Findings suggest that superintendents hold ideas and go about their duties significantly shaped by leadership traditions, as well as social, economic, and cultural contexts" (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 1). Different educational systems reflect the leadership style of their country. "Furthermore, the educational contexts that superintendents operate under in their respective countries inform why particular practices are existent" (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 1).

Education in Finland is a well-respected course for study. Education and educational leadership is based on ensuring high-quality educators are teaching students.

In Finland, [a]ccording to the 1968 Act on the Administration of the Municipal Provision of Education, the basic task of superintendents was to assist municipal school boards in the preparation, supervision, and execution of local educational issues. The 1969 Decree on the Directors and Secretaries of the Municipal Provision of Education that followed also reinforced the need for professional superintendents by stipulating their qualifications and job responsibilities.

Although superintendents could meet these qualifications in various ways, they all had to meet the requirements of possessing teacher qualifications, completing university-based studies in pedagogy and advanced studies in educational administration, and having prior administrative experience. These qualifications provided a strong foundation for superintendents to be able to address effectively their 16 specified work responsibilities. (Risku et al., 2014, p. 391)

Finnish leaders understand that strong educators create strong educational leadership.

Finland also represents an educational style that welcomes the community-created shared vision. Finland's approach to education represents a strong grounding of educational philosophy and values. It uses competent and experienced educators as leaders within their educational system. By ensuring a strong core of educational practice throughout the educational system, a common understanding of how to bring change can be adopted in an actionable format.

On the other hand, China's education system appears to have a structure based on strict adherence to tradition: "superintendents are chosen on seniority or for local political

motives ...it is common for superintendents to have no educational experience whatsoever” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 14). China reflect a more seniority based educational system. “The authoritarian style of management that is carried forth severely restricts the prospects for change and amendments to the overall structure, human capacity, and objectives of the school district” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 15). It appears that within the Chinese educational system consistency is important. “Decision making follows the bureaucratic format of passing along directives from higher echelons of authority to those that will ensure the policies will be carried out as mandated” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 15). Educational policy appears to stem from authoritative perspectives. “Administrators— superintendents and principals—are typically, civil service officials with little or no K-12 experience” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 15). The culture of the educational community is led by educational leaders. The “government policies and the mindset of the ‘common good’ is deeply-seated in present day Chinese society, thus creating a sense of anxiety whenever change is encountered” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 16). Chinese preservation of culture may be why change is met with hesitance. This hesitance can also suggest the need for more communication from leadership. “Superintendents are restricted in the current framework and for the most part are ill prepared to take on the responsibilities of change if opportunities were to come forth” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 16). “The superintendent is more of an operational implementer; rather than a visionary planning strategically” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 16). This perspective of educational leadership is vastly different from that of the western world. “There is barely room for the superintendent to seek changes as a response to specific district concerns or interests. Simply put, the current system quashes such

thinking” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 16). This educational system is meant to create citizens that reflect the needs and culture of Chinese society.

While the educational system in China is very different from the U.S., there are instances of similarity. “Similar to U.S. rural superintendents, Chinese superintendents, particularly in the western portion of the country, deal with divergent community beliefs and values” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 16). Instances of conflicting community beliefs and values is where the role of superintendent is essential for the educational good of the youth. To fuse oppositional educational perspectives based on the common good of their learning community is the responsibility of the superintendent. “Up to this point in time, Chinese educational leaders and policymakers have been open to many Western theories on education and leadership; however, the present situation implores the question of how far China should go to using Western ideas to building new organizations within its educational system” (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 20). When global education is viewed as a means for collective good and knowledge creation, we can move away from East versus West mentality towards global educational innovations.

[F]or China to just adopt the U.S. structure of district leadership and the roles of the superintendent will simply not work... The philosophical disparity between the two countries is clearly evident concerning education. It would be unreasonable to simply suggest Chinese superintendents to shadow the actions of those of the United States. (Przybylski et al., 2018, p. 23)

Leadership must develop their own personal style of leadership, simply copying another leader will not be effective. However, exploring alternative leadership perspectives and

styles can be beneficial. Effective leaders keep what works and make small changes that benefit their leadership needs.

### **Globalization and Education**

For most of the world, education serves as a means for upward social and financial mobility. The United States has created legislature surrounding the value of higher education:

...it follows from the 1787 Northwest Ordinance that was introduced by Thomas Jefferson in 1784, requiring every new state to fund a university. Jefferson and his colleagues believed that the development of such universities would create a learned class of farmers and merchants, contributing to the development of the economy and establishing the basis of democracy. The graduates of these universities would serve as the educated leaders of their community and as inventors of the future. (Friedman, 2020, p. 324)

This aligns with the thinking that each community has value and leaders can lift society. A strong foundation of the United States is education. To provide perspective on the role education plays in the United States:

America has 4,000 colleges and universities,” said Allen E. Goodman, president of the Institute for International Education. “The rest of the world combined has 7,768 institutions of higher education. In the state of California alone, there are about 130 colleges and universities. There are only 14 countries in the world that have more than that number. (Friedman, 2007, p. 504)

Education is part of the cultural identity of the United States. However, how does our educational policy reflect the skills one must master for success in life after 12th grade?

“Effective communication, curiosity, and critical-thinking skills, as we will see, are much more than just the traditional desirable outcomes of a liberal arts education. They are essential competencies and habits of mind for life in the twenty-first century” (Wagner, 2009, p. 346). With access to so many educational institutions and a large array of educational possibilities, the United States educational system can be used to create meaningful educational development towards twenty-first century learning competencies.

“The global achievement gap remains invisible to most of us—in part, because it is fueled by fundamental economic, social, political, and technological changes that have taken place so rapidly over the last two decades that they seem more like static in people’s lives than like tangible forces that are shaping our future. But these changes are powerful, and until we understand them and rethink what young people need to know in the twenty-first century and how they are best taught, our future as a country remains uncertain” (Wagner, 2009, p. 9). Globalization and technology have been catalysts to the rapid change happening, by ensuring education parallels the needs of the twenty-first century we develop students with the skills they need to ensure stability in the workforce of the future. “All of these changes illuminate the importance of another set of essential survival skills for work today: agility and adaptability” (Wagner, 2009, p. 30).” Using knowledge develops one’s ability to innovate in the stage of constant change. This dynamic stability related to finding calm within constant change will be important for the twenty-first century.

“Education is supposed to prepare future citizens—that is, to equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes, and perspectives to live a prosperous and happy life as well as to perform responsibilities required of them as citizens of a society” (Zhao,

2009, p. 13). Therefore, education is at the core of all societies and their operational functions. Well-defined educational frameworks grounded in collaboration of stakeholders map out effective change. “What we need is a paradigm shift in thinking about education both what we should teach and how we should deliver it” (Zhao, 2009, p. 18). This shift includes acknowledging that global education is a possibility with current technologies. Creating a global educational experience prepares students for global markets that otherwise they would need to learn privately. “Public education is one of the largest investments Americans make, it affects their future on many levels” (Zhao, 2009, p. 32). “Governments and their constituents are calling for more efficient and effective public services, with greater engagement, and schooling is at the heart of this public provision across OECD countries” (Pont, 2014, p. 7). With public education at the heart of public investments, it is important to better understand the perspectives of those running the current educational system. Those in a position of leadership have ideas and understanding of how to create actionable change. “Building on current leadership practices, contextualized policies can weave together different components to professionalize school leadership” (Pont, 2014, p. 19). Superintendents and educational leadership provide meaningful actionable perspectives behind initiatives, therefore incorporating them in educational decision-making would be beneficial. Komatsu (2013) noted, “[w]ith the global models more easily available and actively advocated by international organizations, it is argued that these global models penetrate daily life more than ever before (p. 6)” Global citizenry, especially in the United States, is prevalent; it is time our educational structure matched the business and commerce sector in providing global learning. “Government and business groups talk about the necessity of schools

meeting the needs of the global economy” (Spring, 2008, p. 331). “It is certain that a central global discussion is about the knowledge economy. Contained within discourses about the knowledge economy are discussions of technology, human capital, lifelong learning, and global migration of workers” (Spring, 2008, p. 337). Lifelong learning and global learning pair in unison, as global experiences expand one’s experiential knowledge of the world. “Discourses about the knowledge economy focus on the necessity of educating students with skills for the global workplace” (Spring, 2008, p. 337).

Globalization has trickled its way into education, now best educational practices can be shared globally. “Education is affected by all of these changes associated with globalization: it is affected structurally, in policy terms, in practice terms, and in the experiences that young people bring with them to their education” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000, p. 421). “Educational policy is now often conceptualized as a central plank of national economic planning the skills of a nation’s people being an important factor in attracting peripatetic capital to a specific place” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000, p. 424).

Education is the foundation for the future workforce. Exploring global innovations of educational practice can create options and opportunity for educational leaders to grow their own potentials and therefore the potentials of their learning community.

### **Educators**

“For instance, we have not even begun to tap the potential of putting the lectures of great teachers on video. Why suffer through bad teachers when a great teacher is just a flat screen away” (Friedman, 2007, p. 593). The media platform called Masterclass is a series that teaches “students” who pay for a membership the ins and outs of various subjects taught by high profile masterminds in their chosen field. It truly tips its hat to

“learning by choice.” We can agree that there are certain ground level needs that students should be exposed to in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and history. However, student choice is a development that technology affords, granting the opportunity to truly prioritize student-centered study. The virtual world of the internet unlocks limitless opportunities for study: “Therefore, teaching them how to navigate that virtual world, and how to sift through it and separate the voice, the filth, and the lies from facts, the wisdom, and the real sources of knowledge becomes more important than ever” (Friedman, 2007, p. 474).

### **PISA/OECD**

International comparative studies such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) allow for global exploration using competition and high stakes testing as a way to organize educational systems.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was founded in 1961 in order to promote economic growth and world trade. It sponsors the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which was launched in 2000. PISA develops and administers standardized assessments of reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy to a sample of between 4,500 and 10,000 15-year-olds in participating countries. However, the OECD leaders were concerned about the extent to which these subject-content skills translate into the kinds of skills adults need in life. (Wagner, 2009, p. 73)

These international examinations were the beginning of acknowledging that the educational systems of the world may in fact be comparable. In addition, by

acknowledging the inadequacies of such examinations and attempting to create new ones, again international educational institutions recognize the importance of transferrable skills as important over rote memorization of facts.

So, in 2003, they [PISA/OECD] administered a remarkable test of problem-solving skills, in addition to other assessments, in all forty-one of the countries then involved in the program. The goal was to measure what they call “cross-curricular competencies”—that is, to directly assess life competencies that apply across different areas of the school curriculum. The assessment measured students’ problem-solving abilities in three areas:

- Making decisions under constraints
- Evaluating and designing systems for a particular situation
- Trouble-shooting a malfunctioning device or system based on a set of symptoms. (Wagner, 2009, p. 73)

Measuring transferable skills also creates global equity. When skills are measured rather than rote memorization, global equity is involved because it can level the playing field to measure ability and maneuvering of information. Global skillsets are ones that are maneuverable and applicable from country to country.

When international educational systems find value in international collaboration for the success of future generations, this is where global learning begins to expand. This translates to the need to expand educational policy to reflect the new needs of the future global workforce:

The OECD is essentially an intergovernmental organization, comprising twenty-nine predominantly wealthy Western countries though, since the mid-1990’s, the

trajectory has changed to include countries such as Mexico, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Korea, and Poland. While there are significant ideological differences among OECD countries, in particular between social democratic and market liberal orientations, decision making is essentially consensual. This means that policy positions tend to be sufficiently flexible to enable individual member countries to develop their own policy stances. Unlike, say, the World Bank, the OECD has no prescriptive mandate over its member countries. Rather, it describes itself as a place for reflection, discussion, research, and analysis “that may often help governments shape policy,” exerting influence through processes of “mutual examination by governments, multilateral surveillance and peer pressure to conform or reform. (Taylor & Henry, 2000, p. 489)

This collaboration assists in expanding the possibilities for future educational policy on a global level. The OECD is a platform for educational discourse. Using platforms currently available would be beneficial for the purposes of not repeating already solid global education findings. Instead, benefits of organizations such as OECD and examinations such as PISA can be used for the purposes of expanding global access. Education leaders need access to as many research based organizations as possible. By offering true connections for educational leaders with reasonable stipends, payment no longer becomes a hinder to educational leadership access. When educational leadership has access to meaningful organizations, they can begin to incorporate meaningful global actions into their local district. In addition, “international organizations influence the incorporation and diffusion of educational ideologies and practices within and among nation-states and suggest that international organizations ‘have been an important catalyst

in spreading world cultural themes and accounts, and research conceptualizing them as institutionalizing mechanisms can provide important insights in the area of comparative education” (Taylor & Henry, 2000, p. 489). This is the future of educational cultural reciprocity. Educational cultural reciprocity can mean a form of education based on the value of knowledge regardless of where in earth such knowledge derives.

In order for mutual respect-based knowledge to be the norm, educational leadership in return needs actionable policy. “Educational reform and improvement do not end with policy recommendations or with legislation. Successful reforms require effective policy implementation, which translates intentions into effects in the world of educational practice” (OECD, 2018). This tips its hat to the educational leaders and educators who implement global learning societal changes in isolation because of the value it may have towards the betterment of their districts’ student body.

Upcoming initiatives reflect the needs of the future. The “OECD has created a Framework 2030 for students entering school in 2018, who will be young adults in 2030. Part of the shared vision includes environmental, economic, and social endeavors to teach and prepare students with skills for the future” (OECD, 2018). Creating a shared vision that reflects environmental frameworks recognize how a changing climate can affect current and future citizens of the world. This framework reflects global interconnections related to how individual countries can longer ignore global environmental impacts. This is a very recent incorporation of science-based research that we must educate our youth on preservation for future generations. “Recognizing how globalization might affect national education policies and practices involves three things: appreciating and specifying the nature and force of the extranational effect; specifying what it is that may

be affected, in this case ‘education,’ and what forms those changes may take; and how that effect occurs, whether directly, in traceable ways indirectly, or consequentially on other changes it may bring about within or on the education sector” (Dale, 2000, p. 427). Educational research on the interconnections of education and globalization can be used to explicitly discern the ways in which education and educational policy is changed by global interactions. Interconnecting factors and exams

### **PISA OECD Standings**

The duplication of prosperity is a desired outcome, especially when it relates to international student achievement and learning outcomes. In Europe, “Finland’s long-term commitment to public education has contributed to perhaps its most notable accomplishment—its students consistently being ranked at the top of international comparisons of academic performance since the early 2000s. For example, Finland had the best total results in the 2000, 2003, and 2006 PISA surveys, and in the 2009 survey, Finland was ranked third” (Risku et al., 2014, p. 383). International ranking of European educational systems such as Finland provide a comparable educational format. Linguistically European countries acquire language, even English, at a rate of success that the United States has not been able to mimic. However, based on the 2018 PISA, it appears that Finland has declined in overall performance. The following rankings are reflected from the 2018 PISA by OECD:

- Reading was the main subject assessed in PISA 2018. The PISA 2018 reading assessment, which was delivered on computer in most of the 79 countries and economies that participated, included new text and assessment formats made possible through digital delivery. The test aimed to assess reading literacy in the

digital environment while retaining the ability to measure trends in reading literacy over the past two decades. PISA 2018 defined reading literacy as understanding, using, evaluating, reflecting on, and engaging with texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.” (OECD, 2019) Digital literacy is an essential skill of the future. Being able to determine perspectives, biases, and purpose within a digital context is a skillset students must be able to develop in order to function in the digital era.

- In Reading: Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang (China) and Singapore scored significantly higher in reading than all other countries/ economies that participated in PISA 2018. Estonia, Canada, Finland, and Ireland were the highest- performing OECD countries in reading. (OECD, 2019)
- In Math and Science: Around one in six 15- year- old students in Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang (China) (16.5%), and about one in seven students in Singapore (13.8%), scored at Level 6 in mathematics, the highest level of proficiency that PISA describes. These students are capable of advanced mathematical thinking and reasoning. On average across OECD countries, only 2.4% of students scored at this level. (OECD, 2019)

Based on these findings, China's student population is leading the world in reading, math, and science. This finding is significant for purposes of international educational reflection. This is because “Trends in Performance: On average across OECD countries, mean performance in reading, mathematics and science remained stable between 2015 and 2018” (OECD, 2019). The 2018 PISA by OECD is again reflected by:

- Seven countries/economies saw improvements, on average, in the reading, mathematics and science performance of their students throughout their participation in PISA: Albania, Colombia, Macao (China), the Republic of Moldova, Peru, Portugal and Qatar. Seven countries saw declining mean performance across all three subjects: Australia, Finland, Iceland, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the Slovak Republic. (OECD, 2019)

Equity of education using the PISA evaluations can also be assessed. Access to education and educational resources, is an indicator for academic success. Therefore it is no surprise that countries who are in need of educational infrastructure scored well below those with adequate access. “Around the world, the share of 15- year- old students, in grade 7 and above, who reached a minimum level of proficiency in reading (at least Level 2 on the PISA scale) ranged from close to 90% in Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang (China), Estonia, Macao (China) and Singapore, to less than 10% in Cambodia, Senegal and Zambia (countries that participated in the PISA for Development assessment in 2017).” (OECD, 2019).

Strong findings based on the PISA show that there is clearly room for improvement in the U.S. education system. In order to keep the United States competitive on the global market, educational infrastructure to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills is needed. In order for the United States to create an equitable educational system that functions for the purposes of creating a competent workforce, we must analyze the ways in which we educate our students in comparison to countries who outrank the U.S. If we take this line of global comparison seriously, we can begin to hand pick educational practices that develop the needed skills for the twenty-first century workforce.

## **Educational Career Paths for the 21st Century**

Education serves its nation by developing human capital into effective citizens of society. Educational policy is meant to serve as standards for those they govern, however, very rarely do life events happen in exact spectrums. “Indeed, there is a certain paradox between the ideal school policies and the different realities in which they are implemented” (Magalhães, 2013, p. 92). For this reason, flexibility built within policy is necessary. Educational leadership that prepares its learning population with 21<sup>st</sup> century transferable skills, prepares the future workforce. “Louis Pasteur said it a long time ago: ‘Fortune favors the prepared mind’” (Friedman, 2007, p. 215). Preparing learners today with transferable skills, provides a solid foundation for building upon other unforeseen yet potentials. Therefore, “[t]he first more important ability you can develop in a flat world is the ability to ‘learn how to learn’—to constantly absorb, and teach yourself, new ways of doing old things or new ways of doing new things” (Friedman, 2007, p. 472). This can look like a staircase; you rise and achieve success in an area of choice (or need) and then you perfect it, which feels like a plateau. However, this is truly the learning curve that enables the learner to grapple with the small parts that make up the whole (new buttons, new integrated technology aspects). Then you engage in the process of what needs to be done to make the process better, faster, stronger, more efficient, and then take the next step up, learn the new process, perfect it, and move up another step.

This process provides a solid foundation of learning that builds on prior knowledge, with infinite possibilities. Part of shaping the minds of 21st-century learners is teaching students how to enjoy the process of learning, to see that learning is supposed to awaken and enlighten and teach perseverance: “To learn how to learn, you have to love

learning—or you have to at least enjoy it—because so much of learning is about being motivated to teach yourself” (Friedman, 2007, p. 473). Educational systems that create educational experiences surrounding intrinsic exploration allows for students to learn where and how to research and test hypotheses. “Curious passionate kids are self-educators and self-motivators” (Friedman, 2007, p. 479). Technology available today allows for students to develop innovations, track their progress, and reinvent better solutions. “In the flat world, educational opportunities are limitless, even without help from school, government, churches, or business” (Friedman, 2007, p. 478).

The virtual world of the internet unlocks limitless opportunities of study. “What schools should do is to provide opportunities and resources to support students’ development in their chosen areas” (Zhao, 2009, p. 154). Similarly, to how students choose their elective coursework, education now can be studies of choice that extend student interest into actual areas of study. “In the increasingly globalized world, what is needed is a diversity of talents rather than individuals with the same competencies. If we adopt a global mindset, rather than a local, nationalist one, we will find that historical, cultural, and political factors have resulted in a variety of educational systems that have developed varying practices to cultivate talents valued in different societies” (Zhao, 2009, p. 158). Companies in the 21st century look for competency in knowledge that is “less about technical skills and knowledge than about learning how to think, and their concern was that time spent on test preparation and memorizing more content knowledge comes at the expense of teaching students to use their minds well” (Wagner, 2009, p. 6). Career paths in the 21<sup>st</sup> century reflect common ideas of effective communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and creation. Students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century reflect an interconnected

global workforce, and therefore global learning experiences are necessary to develop global competencies.

### **Conclusion**

Education as a whole is deep rooted in the governmental structure of the United States. For generations, education has been viewed as a means for upward social mobility. With that said, the United States is currently outranked on the PISA international assessment. Being that education is a major financial public investment, it is clear that outdated learning approaches serve to only perpetuate current outcomes. Therefore, it is time for the United States educational system to transform to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By focusing on transferable skills, the educational system will more closely align with the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. It should be noted that innovations, even well-functioning ones, do not encourage mass acceptance. Therefore, globalization and education, while appearing to be beneficial, will have an uphill battle without proper policy, community, and educational leadership support. Leadership that communicates effectively can bring about meaningful change. In addition, educational policy should reflect the needs of the educational leader. In closing, educational leadership perspectives provide valuable educational and leadership knowledge based that is beneficial for actionable change and policy makers alike.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHOD**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to develop an understanding of the educational leaderships' global mindedness through the perceptions of superintendents in suburban New York regarding globalization and policy. Globalization is generally defined as “the ability of any individual or company to compete, connect, exchange, or collaborate globally” (Friedman, 2016, p. 120).

### **Methods and Procedures**

#### **Research Questions**

In this research, the interviews with superintendents of suburban New York school districts sought to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** How do superintendents view education as a means for creating global connections, ambassadors, and innovators?

**RQ2:** What major or minor concepts do superintendents consider when explaining the phenomena of globalization for the purposes of education?

**RQ3:** With regard to education and globalization, does the current educational system provide the capacity for meaningful global learning and/or exchanges?

**RQ4:** Are there national or local educational policies that are easily or meaningfully put into practice that provide avenues to guide educational leaders toward a more global and interconnected educational system?

**RQ5:** In what ways does educational leaders' global mindedness impact educational policy and influence the presence of globalization in educational practice?

The intent of this research is to create strategic representation those in power can use to provide perspective on globalization to inform policy designed for an interconnected educational future.

### **Setting**

Suburban New York State (NYS) encompasses the eastern suburbs of New York City. Typically, these schools are community centered and lead by school leadership in the form of a superintendent and the community comprising of the school board.

Suburban New York demographics range from the wealthy gold coast to homes deemed inhospitable and everything in between. This qualitative research was conducted virtually using interviews. This allowed for a higher likelihood of participation. Acknowledging a district leader's capacity to change is shaped by the district climate. The theory of diffusion to progress or be delayed is directly impacted by effective communication from leadership. Change to incorporate globalization into education, a district leader must feel that they are within a district that's community encourages large-scale change.

### **Participants**

The participants in this research were past or present suburban New York superintendents. The recruiting process included virtual interviews which may have encouraged more participants to participate on this topic that is so relevant but still not yet grounded in actionable practice. The pertinent demographic characteristics were that the participants currently held the role of superintendent in suburban New York. This ensured consistency within the role of the participants and across the regional setting. The participant sampling was homogeneous, as this “[f]ocuses, reduces, simplifies, and facilitates group interviewing” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159). Each participant also

needed to meet the criterion of being a present educational leader in the role of superintendent, as setting this criterion was “useful for quality assurance” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection was in the form of virtual interviews using a password-protected Zoom meeting platform. The reasoning for this is that the Zoom virtual conferencing source became widely known during the pandemic. Zoom also provides the option to record sessions, and the password option provides a sense of security and anonymity for the interviewee. The researcher used planned questions, as the purpose of qualitative research is to move beyond “yes” and “no” or scaled answers. When appropriate, follow-up questions to responses were recorded and included within the study. The qualitative interview process “attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 164). In the attempt to understand the participants’ perspectives, going slightly off script to uncover a deeper perspective can prove helpful for research. However, the data collection procedures followed relevant systematic topics that related solely to the research.

The diffusion theory assisted directly with the reasoning behind using interviews as the form of data collection. Ideas and perspectives diffuse when organic interactions take place and honest conversation about thought-provoking topics can occur. Interviews allow for individuals to explain their thought-processes and verbally visualize how the future of education can be shaped. Superintendents have extremely strict timeframes to

do pro bono interviews. Therefore, there was an extremely limited timeline for the interview process.

### **Trustworthiness of Design**

The organization of information is essential for validation. Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed research validation by relating it to perspective and terms for research. Each superintendent had their own personal experiences, they brought with them to the global learning community. Therefore, perspective was essential to the data collection. “Terms: Primary criteria: credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity Secondary Criteria: explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 258). These terms are essential when attempting to unveil meaningful connections and findings within the data.

In terms of reliability, the password required to enter our virtual interview conference was a form of protection of validity. This ensured that only the researcher and interviewee were in the virtual conference and that no other unknown virtual interceptor had access to the confidential perspectives and ideas of the participants. To order the interview data, the researcher used the DeDoose platform to discover patterns and themes and to present them in a manageable format. When the researcher was not analyzing, synthesizing, or using the research, it was kept within an external hard drive.

### **Research Ethics**

The researcher extended formal emails for participation to non-charter public suburban New York school districts. New York State has a core curriculum that is taught using state standards, so the superintendents of suburban New York lead within a framework based on state mandates. For the purposes of this research, non-charter public

schools reflect the majority of the student population and require a public balance between the Board of Education and the acting Superintendent.

A signed voluntary participation and confidentiality agreement was distributed after approval from St. John's University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participant benefits from participation included the healthy discussion of global thoughts and their influences or impacts on education, and the notion that participation could be a foundation for meaningful change.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis Approach**

The phenomenon of globalization steers this study. By definition, phenomenological research “describe(s) the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experience of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75). The ontological philosophy of research seeks to uncover “the nature of reality: (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 20). For the purposes of this study, the nature of reality was focused on educational leaders' global mindedness, which can have direct impact on community. The goal was to discover the global mindedness and different perspectives of educational leaders on the topic of globalization and education. The ontological philosophical structure can help expose the reality of “divergent perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 315).

This research focused on “phenomenology [, which] emphasizes the common experiences for a number of individuals” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 82). It entails a philosophical discussion about the basic ideas involved in conducting a phenomenological study. This revolves around the lived experiences of individuals and how they have both subjective experiences of the phenomenon and objective experiences

of something in common with other people. “Thus, there is a refusal of the subjective–objective perspective, and for these reasons, phenomenology lies somewhere on a continuum between qualitative and quantitative research” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 76). An ending for phenomenology with a descriptive passage that discusses the “essence of the experience of individuals incorporating “what” they have experienced and “how” they experienced it. The “essence” is the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 77).

Superintendents are in a very specific role at the precipice of a period that is new enough to be both wearying and exciting for globalization and education. The “[r]esearcher in the phenomenological mode attempt[s] to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016, p. 23). These particular situations reveal the absolute interconnectedness of the world, and the desire to be part of a community. Douglas, 1976 discusses how “Phenomenologists do not assume they know what things mean to the people they are studying (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016).” Psathas, 1973 mentions, “Phenomenological inquiry begins with silence (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016).” This “silence” is an attempt to grasp what they are studying by bracketing an idea the participants take for granted as true. That is, researchers act as if they do not know what a phenomenon or idea means and study it to find out what is actually taken for granted. What phenomenologists emphasize, then, is the subjective aspects of people’s behavior. They attempt to gain entry into the conceptual world of their informants (Geertz, 1973) in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016). “Phenomenologists believe that multiple ways of interpreting experiences are available to

each of us through interacting with others, and that the meaning of our experiences constitutes reality. Reality, consequently, is “socially constructed” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016, p. 23).”

For the purpose of this research, virtual interviews served as the safest forum that minimized exposure to COVID-19 for all parties. The virtual forum chosen was a confidential password-protected Zoom conference room. The interviews were recorded and transcribed solely for research purposes. To maintain participant anonymity, the recordings were held in a password-protected digital folder. For coding, the researcher formatted the qualitative computer-assisted data with Dedoose. This was chosen for its digital research formatting assistance and coding assistance.

### **Researcher Role**

The researchers’ role in this study was to use current educational leadership’s global mindedness to condense unbiased information into themes relating to educational policy centered on the implications of globalization for future policy. This meant to discover what overall research on this topic was accurately portraying before policymakers to sway their thoughts and policies. Combining unbiased research into a single relevant resource promotes efficiency for future researchers and policymakers alike. Uncovering the implications of globalization on policy and policymakers opens way for a discussion on the role of globalization in education. Along with this, it reveals what systems must be put in place for a successful roll-out of new innovative policy that is flexible enough to be interpreted to fulfill the needs of a local community but strong enough to hold the basic values and intent with which it was meant to be implemented.

## **Researcher Assumptions**

As an English as a New Language (ENL) educator, my perspective of the global community reflects the importance each local community plays in the greater world. I believe that each culture shares geographical knowledge at an expert level, even those cultures whose knowledge is measured on an experiential basis, and all are equally valuable to knowledge pursued in academia. I believe that globalization of education is a key to elevating the human race towards 21<sup>st</sup> century skillsets. To ensure my views of inclusivity as a source of greater good for humanity did not skew my research, it was essential that I voluntarily reported my potential bias regarding a global educational equity policy and framework, which are the visions that underlay this project and my future research.

## **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of globalization is a continuous factor for the educational system. Therefore, understanding the implications of globalization has on the perspectives of superintendents can unlock policy needs. Virtual interviews were performed for the purposes of participation and pandemic safety protocol. The Dedoose coding software was used to code research. Codes were then used to present findings.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

For the purposes of this study, the researcher interviewed five New York State superintendents to provide an in-depth analysis of their thoughts and perspectives regarding globalization, education, and what might help or hinder these interconnected interactions. Of the interviewed superintendents, three (3) were female and two (2) were males, with an age range from 49 to 62 years. All of the superintendents were born in the United States, and English was their native language. Two superintendents had parents immigrate to the United States from other countries. All of the superintendents described their ethnicity as White, Caucasian, or Irish American. All of the superintendents had over 22 years in education and also had licenses or experience in other career pathways prior to going into education. They all participated through Zoom interviews, and the researcher then transcribed the audio of that interview.

This research revealed the following themes: educational leadership, the global community, educational structures/systems, funding and resources, communication, collaboration, civic engagement and buy-in, policy, student outcomes, and the pandemic (Figures 1-2). It is important to note that the researcher anticipated many bi-focal thoughts regarding the incorporation of global learning in public education. During the pandemic, many global interactions such as exchange programs were also paused. Between 2020-2022, the educational leadership had to be hyper-focused on the health and wellbeing of their communities to expose gaps in exposure. Prior to this study, the researcher also anticipated many uncut ideas of globalization and education, as there is a clear need for more research and more supportive educational frameworks.

Figure 1 below represents each individual participant and their themed coded responses. The focus of this research was on educational leadership. Therefore, the significance of coding total for educational leadership highest (48 coding responses) is reflective of research topic. This is not significant as this is an anticipated and expected research outcome based on the topic centered on this research. Another code that represents research is global community, which is second highest code found within research (39 coding responses). Again, this was anticipated as it is the focus of research. The research hypothesized that hindered policy would reflect higher (31) coded responses than helpful policy which reflects (13) coded responses. Also, not monumental findings. Findings of interest in terms of participant coding responses in Figure 1 reflect student outcomes (38 coded responses). This is significant as participants reflect to student outcomes for reasoning to incorporate global learning community in education. A second finding from Figure 1 was that civic engagement/buy-in reflect (22) coded responses and are expressed as a major impact for participants' ability in helping/hindering globalization in education. A final finding from Figure 1 displays communication (28) coded responses and collaboration (25) coded responses. Both communication and collaboration are thought to affect how globalization is incorporated within education.

Figure 2 below represents code co-occurrence within participant responses. This acknowledges that some responses incorporated more than one coded responses within the research data. The highest three code co-occurrences from superintendent participant responses linked students' outcomes and global community with 11 co-occurrences, educational leadership and student outcomes with 10 co-occurrences, and educational structures and collaboration with 9 co-occurrences. Significance of linking student

outcomes with global community code co-occurrences reflects the overall findings that superintendents believe students may benefit from the global community. The code co-occurrences of educational leadership and student outcomes are significant for this research as it connects how educational leadership impacts student outcomes. The third code co-occurrences of educational structures and collaboration reflect the desire of educational structures to be created through collaborative efforts that represent the educational leadership perspectives.

**Figure 1**

*Themes from the Qualitative Interviews*

Media	Civic Engagement/Buy-in	Collaboration	Communication	Educational Leadership	Educational Structures/Systems	Funding/Resources	Global Community	Pandemic	Policy	Helpful Policy	Hindered Policy	Student Outcomes	Totals
Participant 1.docx	6	7	6	14	11	8	8	3		3	12	7	85
Participant 2.docx	3	2	6	11	3	6	7	3	4	2	4	5	56
Participant 3.docx	3	10	6	10	8	6	10	2	6	3	8	11	83
Participant 4.docx	7	3	6	5	1	5	8	4	3		4	5	51
Participant 5.docx	3	3	4	8	13	1	6	2	4	5	3	10	62
Totals	22	25	28	48	36	26	39	14	17	13	31	38	

**Figure 2**

*Co-Occurrence of Codes*

Codes	Codes												Totals
	Civic Engagement/Buy-in	Collaboration	Communication	Educational Leadership	Educational Structures/Systems	Funding/Resources	Global Community	Pandemic	Policy	Helpful Policy	Hindered Policy	Student Outcomes	
Civic Engagement/Buy-in		1		1	1	2	1	1			2	4	13
Collaboration	1			3	9	2	1	1		1	1		19
Communication								1	1				2
Educational Leadership	1	3			3	7	5	2	1	1	6	10	39
Educational Structures/Systems	1	9		3		2	3	4	4	2	5	5	38
Funding/Resources	2	2		7	2		1	3		1	4	1	23
Global Community	1	1		5	3	1		3				11	25
Pandemic	1	1	1	2	4	3	3				1	1	17
Policy			1	1	4					4	3		13
Helpful Policy		1		1	2	1			4		8		17
Hindered Policy	2	1		6	5	4		1	3	8		1	31
Student Outcomes	4			10	5	1	11	1			1		33
Totals	13	19	2	39	38	23	25	17	13	17	31	33	

**Results/Findings**

**Research Question 1: How Do Superintendents View Education as a Means for Creating Global Connections, Ambassadors, and Innovators?**

The five superintendents interviewed for this study not only felt that education could be a means for creating global connections, ambassadors, and innovators, but also expressed an overall sense of responsibility to create rewarding global educational experiences for their students. The themes relating to this question addressed educational leadership responsibility, the global community and education, student outcomes, and the pandemic. These will all be discussed more at length below.

The educational leadership perspective of responsibility was a continuous thought. The superintendents understood that they had a hand in shaping and creating

educational outcomes within their student learning community. Each superintendent felt responsible for student outcomes and expressed that, if a funded globalization framework was offered as a research-grounded educational best-practice, they would give exposure and time to that taskforce. With regard to the attempt to create global connections, ambassadors, and innovators, the superintendents expressed that more inclusive collaboration was needed for this to be successful. They also spoke to the benefits of the global community, stating that the future of education and the workforce will involve specific skillsets that the global community needs.

The superintendents mentioned that the global community can develop student understandings of the broader world and shift their perspectives to a global outlook. Educational leaders want to improve student outcomes, and global connections are considered to improve student outcomes on resumes, job prospects, and transferrable 21st-century workforce skills. As this is the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, it would be remiss not to note the underlying “cause for pause” with regard to the virus and globalization. The COVID-19 virus has created many educational obstacles for school leadership. The luxury of thinking creatively in terms of education has not been easy in the past 2 years in the realm of global learning. While the pandemic has created many obstacles, it has also displayed the clear interconnectedness of our planet.

### ***Educational Leadership Responsibility***

Education is a means for creating the foundations for participating in a global society. The participants in this study did not shy away from the awareness that they had a duty to expand their learning communities’ global competencies. When asked if educational leaders are responsible for educating global competencies of students, the

participants unanimously affirmed that they were. Participant 1 (P1) responded, “I believe we do, but in the format that we currently have, I think it’s difficult. And again, that’s driven by policy, curriculum, mandates.” P2 responded, “I think so. Yes.” P3 replied, “I would say so. Yes. I think that because if they’re not going to learn it at home, then we need to learn it in school. We have to learn someplace.” P4 responded, “Yeah, I think we should be,” and P5 replied, “Absolutely. 100%. We are responsible for that.”

There was a degree of passion that differed between each interviewee, but they all respond affirmatively. The response of P1 includes other themes, such as policy and factors that make global learning difficult to implement. However, it is important first to focus on the fact that five NYS superintendents all felt a sense of responsibility for educating their students on global competencies. This displays the responsibility of educational leadership. While this view is commendable, the participants were also realistic about the fact that there are many more forces acting upon the meaningful execution of globalization in education. These will be discussed more later. The educational system as a whole can create global connections, ambassadors, and innovations. While this may or may not be actively happening within each NYS district, the interviewees believed that educational leadership is responsible for global competencies related to student outcomes.

Educational ambassadorship for the purposes of education can form pathways to allow for more global interactions. These interactions can point to best practices. When asked about educational ambassadors, P2 stated, “I think it’s always great when you have the opportunity to have conversation about what’s happening in other places and what could you do to improve your local school district.” As an educational leader, choosing

the interactions that will best fit your population matter. When asked about ambassadorship, P5 mentioned that an important role of educational leadership's was to vet or research potential sources of global development. According to P5,

I think those are wonderful opportunities for dialogue and for conversation and for learning. Obviously, you would want to look at and study systems that have a demonstrated, proven track record of providing optimal opportunities for kids in their learning experiences. And conversely also, inviting others to see what we are doing and also get feedback on how we could do things better. I think anytime you have the opportunity to create connections and bridges and relationships, you open up the door to learning and to improving outcomes and opportunities for everyone.

P2 also voiced the importance of vetting by saying, "I think if educational ambassadors were well trained, that could be something beneficial." Analyzing educational systems aligns with educational leadership's commitment and understanding of the community it serves. While there are many big innovations in education, understanding the learning community is essential for motivating change. When educational leaders have a grounded understanding of what they need, it can be easier for them to research the types of educational systems applicable to their learning community.

### ***Global Community and Education***

The educational leaders in this study viewed the educational community as a source of learning that could lead to greater student outcomes. Shifting from their personal thoughts on the responsibility of the educational leadership to push for global competencies, the participants here viewed the global community as a perspective-

changing, skill-creating opportunity. Participation in the global community was an opportunity to expand global competencies. P2 made the point that the global community was, “very important. If we don’t work together, I think we’re going to all fail together.”

P1 stated that education is preparation for the future. This follows the common theme of superintendents feeling responsible for their students’ educational outcomes regarding exposure to globalized educational experiences. Participant 1 revealed the appeal of being a part of the global community as, “it [the global community] definitely appeals to me because my, I guess, motto, is that we are preparing students for occupations that don’t currently exist. So, we have to think of the skillsets that they may need, to tackle the jobs that we don’t even know are out there or will be out there.” The underlying idea behind this is that students should be exposed to the skillsets they need to become a meaningful part of the workforce and global community. When students are exposed to these skillsets, they can participate, collaborate, or compete meaningfully within the job sector or chosen career pathways that emerge down the line.

While revealing the importance of the global community for student outcomes, a second perspective was the notion that many other aspects of our society are global. This shows that educational leaders understand how interconnected the global community is and how important it is for education to pave the way for the global community. P1 discussed the global community in terms of the realization of access to needs and found that the future of education lies, at least in part, with the global community: “It’s huge. Just because we live in a society that it’s easy for us to go out and get clean water, there are societies that don’t have clean water. And exposing our children to that and solutions to those problems, I think, is where we have to [make] our society not just creative and

innovative, but compassionate. We all don't live with the freedoms that we have, that we take for granted in United States." P1 brought up the ideas that underly the purpose of the global community, one being that the students of today will grow into the society of the future, so we are all empowered when we shape students to be creative and innovative citizens and to have compassion for those around them.

P5 discussed the global community for the future of education by mentioning other large societal factors and how they contribute to education. Alongside the expansion of educational opportunities, the future of education will include more interconnected capabilities. As P5 stated,

Well, I think it's critically important. I think we are part of a much larger society. It's expanded exponentially by a variety of factors: economic, political, technological, social. And so that global community will, we need to be able to prepare our kids to be able to live within it and be successful in it and interact within it. And we also have to be aware of how it impacts our life in every way and have an understanding of how to be able to contribute to that global community to make it better for everyone.

Part of the preparation for our students is providing perspective on how the global community affects education. P3 found that the global community does impact education: [F]or example, right now, there's this growing tension with Ukraine and certainly what's going on with Russia with that, and also China and Taiwan. I mean, these things do have an impact. We're taking a look at how at the Olympics, there's the political implications. So, I think that there's impacts from that. I just truly believe that everything does trickle down into the schools. I mean if we keep our head in

the sand, then we're not doing our children any service, so it's important to have current events to discuss current events and for students to be aware of what's going on globally.

Being part of the global community for educators is being able to discuss difficult topics and analyze the different perspectives using facts. For any community, it is easy to become comfortable in benign day-to-day processes. Being part of the global educational community appeals for P4 under the premise that students deserve an expanded view of the world: "it appeal[s] to me so that students could be more worldly and understand that things don't happen in a vacuum."

This idea of being part of the global community can reveal to students how outside influences change, mold, and impact the educational system that leads directly to them. The global community is constantly changing. P3 defined the global community in this way:

[T]o me, global community is not only the respect for our cultural differences but working together. This is a global history term with, cultural diffusion, as we embark and trade. We're also sharing our cultural aspects with that trade. And it's influencing one another. I mean, certainly United States is the prime example that we are, except for our indigenous native Americans, we are a nation of immigrants. And so that's what makes America great. We have a little bit of influence from many different countries around the world.

P3 nodded to the idea that respect for the global community includes recognizing that it has had an impact on the United States through cultural diffusion. The global community is connected through many aspects of life. It is only reasonable that these

educational leaders expressed the opinion that the global community as a whole impacts larger societal factors, even inadvertently.

### ***Student Outcomes***

The participants revealed their own responsibility for creating global educational experiences and acknowledged the larger impacts of the global community. However, student outcomes were a major theme throughout this research. At the core of global connections for education is the notion that these can bring quality student learning and outcomes. The educational leaders interviewed here believed in the importance of practicing the skillsets that will be required for future educational and career endeavors. P3 discussed student outcomes in terms of how globalization has changed education from the perspective of hire ability based on educational experiences. P3 stated, “to see students be successful, to see them feeling prepared and feeling that they are... I’m trying to think of the right term here, like that people want to hire them. And that people look at their high school resume and say, ‘Wow, you’re so prepared for the real world,’ that would make me happy.”

This merges the association of a student body with competent global knowledge, the potential for successful student educational outcomes, and the personal feelings of educational leaders. It shows that educational leaders know their responsibility in ensuring that society has the knowledge base it needs for the future and building global connections as a skillset. Students need to be able to find the value in these educational outcomes. When discussing the rewards of global education, P4 mentioned, “I think of it as students becoming more worldly and understanding that maybe they have to become global citizens, not just local.” This leads to the thought process that global connections

can lead to improved student outlooks in terms of personal possibilities. P4 also mentioned, “I think life experience and getting out of your community is really important for growing and expanding your horizons.” This leads into the idea that, when students “expand their horizons,” they can be more innovative in their problem-solving and critical thinking abilities, particularly if coupled with effective communication skills to create a “well-rounded” person.

Education creates global connections, ambassadors, and innovators when we use our current resources to build meaningful bonds centered on shared interests. In the words of P1, “we have an opportunity to provide children and staff with the resources they need to explore a greater area. I think of robotics because robotics has an international component. It provides students with like a blog that they’re able to find out what they’re doing in China, what they’re doing in some of the other countries, like Costa Rica. It’s a common language that the kids all understand. We may not understand it, but they do. I mean, they’re speaking in code.” Part of global connections is creating meaningful relationships where international students have new common learning interests to explore. This provides learning experiences based in the value of all cultures and perspectives, ensuring a balance of power so that no student can be considered an expert. Educational outcomes centered on student interests such as robotics is an “opportunity,” P1 stated.

Such student-centered interests that explore focused learning outcomes can further the potential needs and skillsets that allow for innovation among youth. An interesting thought P1 mentioned subtly is that technological coding can skip language barriers that can clog the pipelines to global communications and connections. P1

appeared to align their personal responsibility with student global connections and experiences to benefit the future of the learning community. When discussing the rewards of global learning, P5 said,

I think there's just so many things that are rewarding and beneficial for students. It's the cross-cultural connections, it's the humanistic element of globalization. It's also the skillsets that we want to help students develop so that they are applicable to any kind of environment that they see themselves in terms of their post-secondary education and careers. The collaboration skills, the creativity opportunities, the communication skill sets, critical thinking, and problem solving. All of those types of things or those attributes are applicable in almost anything that we do. So, I think, globalization helps to enhance it from that approach.

All the aforementioned skills are needed for the 21st-century workforce. The assembly line worker has been replaced by machines, and the future workforce will rely on the student outcomes of today. Multiple and alternative perspectives are important for student outcomes, as they lead to new ideas. In the case of NYS, students do not necessarily need to leave the state to interact with those outside of their "zone of familiarity," as there are urban, suburban, and rural parts to the state that have different ways of life and that may lead to different learning perspectives. P1 perceived the rewards of a more interconnected educational system in the following way: "The creativity, the innovation, the collaboration with other countries with other students... You don't have to go far for it to be different from a different perspective." On the other hand, P2 saw the rewards of global education as "the ability to see the results and the

impact that it could have.” Global education can lead to skillsets that develop into positive student educational and experiential outcomes.

**Research Question 2: What Major or Minor Concepts Do Superintendents Consider When Explaining the Phenomena of Globalization for the Purposes of Education?**

The phenomenon of globalization for the purposes of education, at first glance, is about the interconnected learning community. However, in order for superintendents to create educational experiences that allow for global interconnections, there must be local public support. The greater civic and learning community interests must align with buy-in factors that make local support actionable. Therefore, superintendents’ perspectives of the local community must be considered when explaining the phenomena of globalization and education.

When considering globalization and education there is a need for educational leaders to have the capacity to create educational experiences that allow for global interconnections, without media or public perceptions skewing local attitudes toward international communities of learning. When explaining the phenomenon of globalization in the educational system, civic buy-in through effective communication is at the core. The common themes related to the second research question were therefore civic engagement and buy-in, communication, educational structures and systems, educational leadership participation within educational structures, and student outcomes.

***Civic Engagement and Buy-In***

A common theme within this research was the need for civic engagement and buy-in. Fascinatingly, the superintendents reflected on their responsibility for developing global competencies, how the global community affects many facets of life, and the

potential global learning has to creating meaningful student outcomes, but they also pointed to a major obstacle to explaining the phenomenon of globalization in education: public opinion. P4 mentioned that civic buy-in is essential: “people aren’t necessarily looking at that [global education] or clamoring for that type of education. But the timing of it is interesting because there’s a faction, probably, of a lot of communities that would rail against globalization.” These hypothetical scenarios are not deceptive, and this is where effective communication becomes fundamental.

P2 noted a second facet of civic buy-in that needs to be considered when explaining the phenomena of globalization and education: “You need buy-in, and that’s tough to get people to realize that they need to add another thing onto their plate.” With the major changes to the educational system introduced to the pandemic, it is not surprising that superintendents, educational leaders, educators, families, and students alike are hard-pressed to add another educational change to the learning community. This is where clear communication can systematically change the educational structures in place. A potential way to encourage civic buy-in is to have a strong understanding of the values and needs of the community and speak to those uniting factors and interests.

### ***Communication***

Communication is intensely important to explaining the phenomena of globalization for the purposes of education to the public. When asked about how important effective communication was to their educational leadership role, each participant found it to be essential. P1 said, “you can’t communicate too often,” P2 noted it was “totally 100% important,” and P3 said it was “100%, the most important thing. Communication is the key.” P4 also stated, “it’s crucial,” and P5 agreed: “It’s mission

critical... I think a lot of people lose sight in the idea that it's one-way. It's got to be two-way." P5 pointed to the importance of active listening in good communication and emphasized this aspect:

It's really important to engage in two-way communication. You have to be available to listen and meet with people and talk with them and hear their concerns. So having an open-door policy, making myself available to the community, to stakeholders, to the faculty, to kids, to parents, to all of the stakeholders in the community and being an active listener with regard to their... Obviously the school board is involved in that as a major stakeholder. Being an active listener in terms of understanding what they want for their children and their community is part of communication. It's important to also engage the stakeholders in the activities and keep them well-informed about what's going on in the district.

Effective communication begins with listening. However, when communication is not frequent enough, interest and buy-in can waiver. P4 found that "good leaders communicate frequently. I think the communication is clear. I think it's explicit. I think it's honest. And I think good leaders communicate in a way where people can feel their passion and it motivates people." The motivation that brings about educational change lies within each communal stakeholder groups. P4 expressed that educational leadership communication should be

transparent and inclusive. And I think the one [communication style] that works the worse is non-answers and "because I said so." If you've been watching board meetings and you think about communication, all over [New York], there's board

members and superintendents that are getting pelted from people... It's a challenge, every board meeting. I find that people can respect an answer. I find they more readily accept an answer, even if it's one they don't agree with, than a non-answer.

Non-answers are a bookmark that prevents the conversation from moving forward. P1 agreed with the notion that an upsetting answer was better than no answer and noted the importance of ensuring "honesty and transparency." This shows respect when having difficult conversations, especially regarding excessed positions. When educational leaders prioritize having those uncomfortable conversations, this reflects the culture of the community. P1 stated, "it's important. Otherwise, you... you're going to have angry people." P4 mentioned "trying to nip things into bud too. You anticipate what's going to be a hot button issue." Each superintendent used the common adjective of "transparency" with regard to communication. This reveals that, to create meaningful working relationships, we must be able to communicate in a way that reflects ethical and moral responsibilities to the learning community we serve.

### ***Educational Structures/Systems***

There are educational systems and structures in place that we must consider when explaining the phenomena of globalization and education. Educational structures are crucial to the successful incorporation of global learning in education. P2 found that the educational system, "gives the framework. I think it really requires a commitment on behalf of the individuals within the different school systems." This points to the larger realization that frameworks alone do not ensure civic support or community interest; rather, these supports ebb and flow depending on district initiatives. When discussing the

idea of global education as conjoining civic support and learning structures, the framework that aligns with individual district objectives that will pique interest for communities. Global learning and global participation are not remotely enforceable, like state exams for graduation. All educational leaders are responsible for ensuring that the educational structures in place reflect and promote the healthy exploration of new global topics. Global learning must reflect authentic partnerships.

A healthy combination of collaboration and competition within the global learning community can provide balance. When asked if education is based more on competition or collaboration, three of the five superintendents responded that it was competition. P2 stated directly, “Competition.” P3 elaborated with,

Certainly competition. I mean, even when I was a teacher, some colleagues wouldn’t even want to share out a lesson plan, or they were very territorial on what they were doing, and I’m the opposite. I’m like, “Listen. I did this, you want to come into my class? Do you want to see what I’m doing?” I was the first teacher in my district to have a smartboard. I invited everybody in to see, but some people, instead of being happy, were like, “Why did he get it?” I think we’re way too competitive, and we need to be much more collaborative.

An educational structure based on individual competition leads to individual innovation, and this can create concerns for global learning, as collective systems thinking and collective shared visions are inherently more collaborative in nature. If teachers feel that they cannot collaborate within their own districts, the global education system has a long way to go.

However, a sidenote regarding this individualized competition might align with the time it takes to creating elaborate lessons, which is not always compensated. Online formats like teachers-pay-teachers encourage the capitalistic entrepreneurial systems within our government format, as these systems allow teachers to pay one another for lesson plans, virtual and paper-based student work, summative and formative assessments, behavioral systems, and more. P5 found our education system as a whole to be based on “competition. That is typically the mindset of American schools, American education, especially pre-K-12. And that is almost cultural. For Americans, there’s this cultural idea of individualism and survival of the fittest. And much of American history, American literature and American culture have a tendency to glorify that kind of competition.” When explaining globalization for the purposes of education, P5 made a good point of recognizing the internal workings that motivate the core of U.S. culture.

Two superintendents did say that education aligns with collaboration. P4 stated, “in places I’ve worked, the competition’s not necessarily within the organization. So, I would say it’s collaboration.” This perspective is based on personal experiences and aligns with leadership. Leaders who promote shared visions, systems thinking approaches, and collaboration can slowly shift mindsets to a more open exchange of best practices. P1 agreed: “Collaboration. Competition doesn’t drive what we do.”

Interestingly, each participant believed that both competition and collaboration have a place in education and in society as a whole. When asked about the benefits of education based on competition and collaboration, P2 stated:

[F]or some communities, competition is important to be number one, to be at the top. And then for a district like [District Name], I need to collaborate because I

don't have the resources that, let's say, [another District Name] has. So, I have to rely on them. I don't have all the staff that they have. I don't have the public's relations that they have... transportation, sharing with your colleagues... because you don't have enough buses or bus drivers.

This is a direct example of P1's experiences as a superintendent and their perspective on the importance of collaboration. P1 expressed that relying on others does not make a leader weak but provides the essential resources to be able to compete. P2's perspective on competition and collaboration was that "competition forces you to try to do the best you can. Collaboration, working together for the best of all." Each participant pointed to the fact that education must find an internal balance. However, P3 had a commercial perspective toward educational structures:

Well, certainly I don't want to say that all competition is bad because businesses sharpen themselves when they're in competition. So, if we lived in a rural area, there would be much less competition. And I find that there's less opportunities. Whereas [New York], there seems to be commerce everywhere. And so, there's a lot of competition and businesses have to stay sharp to meet those needs. But I also feel that we need to do a much better job of the collaboration, and the more collaboration we have, I think will lead to more opportunities.

While P3 reflected on competition within education as important, both competition and collaboration are needed to improve different aspects of society. P4 mentioned historical events that require both a competitive aspect and used science as an example of a curriculum that encourages collaboration: "I think if you think about education based on competition, we could go all the way back to the space race probably.

To be the first on the moon and so on. I think that's a good example of competition. Then there's probably some science examples that are based on collaboration, I would imagine." Both history and science offer two perspectives that highlight the benefits of competition and collaboration.

In terms of education, based on the benefits of competition and collaboration, P5 stated,

So, when you really take a look at the effectiveness of the private and public sector, when it comes to achievements whether they are in science, whether they're in research, whether they're in medicine, whether they're in discovery, discovery of new ideas and pathways, those typically occur in environments that encourage collaboration. Even when you look at some of our successful corporations and companies in the United States. And we really need to align more effectively and move away from this culture of individual achievement, as opposed to collaborative success, and get people thinking along those mindsets.

Two of the superintendents, P3 and P5, believed that education is based on competition but that collaboration should be a stronger aspect within the educational system and structure. When asked if the educational global community is connected, all interviewees said "no" or answered this question in the context of how individual districts can be global but not as a collective international educational community. P1 said, "I don't think so." P2 said "no," and P3 voiced

Not at all, because I certainly see Finland's approach, which I think most of the world does look towards and has that respect. I think that quite frankly, and I hate to say this, but the United States, I think we've kind of lost our way when it

comes to public education. I don't think we are putting enough concentration and supports and financial supports that we should. And I think that, unfortunately, politics in America has entered into public education when it should not. And I think we need to continue to think out of the box and be more innovative the way we were in the past.

P3 noted the lack of global connections available due to the lack of funding as a feature of the educational system's lack of global interconnections. P4 responded, "not in my experience" to this question, and P5 replied,

It is connected in sort of an ad hoc kind of a way. I think that's more connected on the university level and on the research level, at much higher levels than it is at the pre-K-12 level. And I think that part of that has to do with the fact that, at least in the United States, we have really 50 different systems of education and they're all governed in very similar ways and also very dissimilar ways. So, I think that there's more work that definitely can be done in terms of that globalization or interconnectedness on the pre-K-12 level. It's happening, those connections and partnerships are happening, but it's not very well organized or very well-orchestrated. And it really is dependent upon individuals who are interested in seeking out those types of opportunities.

Creating connective international frameworks can create a more equitable and full global learning experience. The current education system only creates islands of innovation. While competition is important, collaboration among educational leadership can form meaningful bonds and create authentic learning possibilities. P3 thought that educational leadership, if provided supportive educational policy structures, would

benefit from more collaboration. P3 found that globalization integration could be made possible, as “I would say to allow more of a deeper conversation between superintendents, between us and our colleagues in other countries.”

Of the five participants, P2 mentioned global education experiences: “I visited different schools in different countries.” Creating meaningful pathways for educational leadership participation in the international arena is important. P3 noted, “I don’t really do that because I don’t see those pathways... And I would certainly welcome that if I would be able to be put in touch with somebody who can make that happen.” P5 also said, “in terms of the global participation, I would say that I am not part of any global organization at this time in my career that is focused on educational issues.” Without creating learning opportunities for educational leadership to participate globally, this perpetuates independent global learning experiences rather than collaboration.

### ***Student Outcomes***

When explaining the phenomena of globalization and education, student outcomes are at the core of creating meaningful learning experiences. When defining globalization, P3 stated,

[T]he definition would have to share that it’s preparing students for the world that we’re in nowadays. For example, I look at Manhattan as the Mecca or the metropolis of the world, people from every walk of life are in Manhattan, and anybody can come from any country, and they could work hard to do what they need to do and to advance and to get ahead. And there’s a lot of innovation with that. So, I think if we are able to connect the importance of future job prospects being prepared... teaching about the various cultural experiences and historical

experiences. I just think that's important. Kids really need to know that so that they're really fully prepared as citizens and can make informed decisions.

NYS in particular does have access to a very culturally diverse population.

Student outcomes are where the results of global learning can speak for themselves. The future of society is built in part within the educational experiences provided to the youth.

When considering reasons to integrate globalization into schools, P4 shared, "I think people should consider it so that our children, and our students, in the future are able to compete because I think that'll probably be necessary." Considering the educational and global structures currently in place when explaining the phenomenon of education can better prepare students for the future and for careers we cannot even imagine yet.

**Research Question 3: With Regard to Education and Globalization, Does the Current Educational System Provide the Capacity for Meaningful Global Learning and/or Exchanges?**

*Educational Structures*

The capacity of the educational system to provide meaningful global learning and exchanges currently relies heavily on those seeking out ways to pursue these educational features. Innovation working in isolation promotes inequity. When asked about the educational system's capacity to provide global learning or exchanges, P5 responded with,

I believe that there are pockets of innovation, of opportunity, of creativity when it comes to this issue, and how it happens is really dependent upon having individuals who are committed to that vision and committed to that purpose. I would say that the [educational] system itself needs to improve in that area to

provide those opportunities. And it would require... a focused, systemic effort on those specific areas that would allow further, really, freedom of opportunities for exploration, opportunities to pilot some areas of innovation, and study their outcomes, and what the effects are, and what the benefits are. I think that would be a first step in moving in a direction that would allow the [educational] system to expand.

Educational structures must be in place that support those who are willing and who want to explore educationally. P1 relayed the idea of risk-taking in the format of the current educational structure and how it limits those who want to take methodological risks. The current educational framework does not account for calculated risk in the improvement of educational outcomes, creating an unstable foundation for education. P1 spoke to the educational system and observed,

I don't think we're there yet, until we change the education of educators. Right now, I think the individuals teaching, our teachers have been far removed from the classroom. Many of them are retirees, and this is their retirement job. We could do a lot better. Our teachers are still standing up in front of a room, and speaking to children, versus letting children explore, and they feel like they're not teaching if students are doing the heavy lifting. It's a hard shift. There are very few teachers that I know do it and take that risk. Very few.

Again, it is important to note that unplanned risks have unplanned outcomes. However, when educational systems allow for well-researched risk, in particular in relation to global learning, the implications for learning outcomes can create 21st-century

educational exchange. The educational system's capacity to provide meaningful global exchanges can grow. With regard to this, P3 stated,

I think we do [have the capacity]. I don't think it's enough. I mean, certainly, we're very fortunate. BOCES [Board of Cooperative Educational Services] does offer a lot, so we have a lot of different types of coursework and partnering with them. We also partner with [local university] as well... So, I'm very happy to see that we're working with [local university]. But I think we need to do more...

Again, it all has to do with the district synergy, working with different groups, and really having the best opportunities for our students.

P3 mentioned the need to continue reaching out to work with others and develop a more interconnected base to ensure that students have opportunities. Currently, the educational system encourages isolated innovation within individual districts. A potential pathway to integrate global learning could be the partnering of educational leadership and stakeholders to create interconnected international learning communities focused on providing global learning outcomes for students.

### ***Funding/Resources***

The capacity for any educational system to make change depends on the support of the civic community and funds from local, state, and federal governments, which should invest in all they deem beneficial and necessary. Therefore, if the government views education as a pathway for the civic future, it must make financial investments towards global learning outcomes. P1 highlighted that policymakers should have a reason for globalization, affirming, "I would think they [politicians] would. I just look at the resources that schools are given, and for the most part, our politicians don't put the

money into education.” P2, when asked about limitations for global learning, replied: “Time and money.” P4 echoed that the major hindrance to more meaningful global exchanges for education are funding, the pandemic, and civic support: “I think [what hinders it is] its finances. I certainly think right now it’s a pandemic. I think it’s misinformation campaigns.”

Again, civic involvement is essential to creating any change, but even publicly supported initiatives are difficult to implement without the needed funding. When asked what was needed from policymakers to make globalization possible in schools, the superintendents emphasized resources in the form of a framework and funding. P1 said, “I do think we have a big disconnect when it comes to what’s required of schools and the funding behind it and the reality base.” P2 stated, “money.” P3 observed,

Well, certainly if they gave us funding and opportunities to partner and meet with leaders from other nations. I would love the opportunity to meet with educational directors or the equivalent of the tendency of somebody in another country. I would love the opportunity for our students at [District Name] to go and exchange programs and our staff as well with a particular country in their school district.

Just to kind of get another perspective because we all learn from looking at all of the different things that we’re doing. I think when everybody does everything the same way, and we have conformity, I don’t think that that leads to any innovation or growth.

When speaking to the capacity to introduce globalization to schools, P4 remarked, “I think policy makers should first ask what the goals are, ‘What do we need to accomplish this’ and then work backwards from that. Then of course... studying abroad

or getting to really immerse students in cultures over summertime. I think funding because trips and programs like that you don't really move the needle on globalization if the only people that study abroad are the people who can afford it." Focusing on the inclusivity of globalization for students and the funding required to ensure all students have access to this educational endeavor is essential is fully understanding the benefits of global learning and global relations in education.

On this point, P5 remarked, "I think that we open up the opportunity to create this framework to pursue opportunities that support this understanding of what globalization is and how it impacts our society, and how our children need to be prepared to interface with that globalized world, and the resources and the support to be able to implement those kinds of initiatives." This response can be linked to those of P3 and P4 because collaboration with others from alternative perspectives towards a shared vision creates a mental model that reflects a global framework. This can then become a shared resource used by multiple districts that can individualize it to fit their districts' needs. The capacity to create these collective frameworks is possible but, as P2 explained, local leaders are limited in their ability to create a global community when resources such as "time and money" are not allotted.

Superintendents would support for globalization in education with the proper funding and policy frameworks. Communication and support is key to expressing the urgency for any change initiative. When asked if they would want more exposure to globalization if policy and funding supported this endeavor, all five superintendents replied with a "yes." Regarding policy and funding support, P1 said, "I would definitely be in favor of it, and I would spend time and resources if it was provided to me." P2

stated, “Yes. I would be interested. And the amount of time really would be dependent upon the amount of time I have in a day.” P3 noted, “absolutely without a doubt, I think it's so important and vital. So, I would say we probably need to start like planting a seed and then watch it grow and then see as it becomes more influential.” P4 was very honest by saying, “yeah, I would want access to it, and I’d be willing to spend a good amount of time, but it would not be a top priority on my list. I feel like where I work at the moment, we have bigger fish to fry first.”

Knowing your community and its capacity to make meaningful change is important. Also, globalization does not have to be a top priority for it to be a progressive structure within educational structures; it can be phased in through slow, meaningful stages. P5 noted, “I think that it’s really important. And again, I would want to see it not within a vacuum, right? But across the content area it’s something that should be diffused throughout the curriculum, throughout the content areas. And I think it’s aligned with what research tells us our best practices in terms of higher order in student engagement and higher order learning. So, I would want to spend a lot of time on something like that.”

### ***Civic Encouragement and Buy-In***

The capacity for globalization to be meaningfully incorporated into our education system relies on funding just as much as it does on public support. Without public support for global interactions and learning, this avenue of learning is immobile. P3 highlighted the hindrances for more meaningful global exchanges within education as “time, money, politics, I would say, are the big roadblocks.” Time for collaboration and funding are typical responses to questions, but it is clear that politics have an impact on

public education. The limitations local leaders face while incorporating global learning tied back again to funding for P4: “I think it’s budget constraints. And then I also think it’s closed mindedness, to be honest with you.” The perspective of P1 regarding hindrances was, “finances, resources, support from our government, support from our parents.” P3 explained the phenomenon of globalization for the purposes of creating global community connections in the following way:

I think it has to do with synergy. It’s so important for districts to partner with many different groups and organizations. The great thing that I see about [District Name] is that really, I’ve met with practically every single stakeholder group in the district, and they either currently partner with the district or want to partner with the district further. So, I think that that’s truly beneficial, but in addition to that, we collectively need to do a better job of having more conversations with innovation, taking risks, supporting our teachers and students to take those risks. And we know that sometimes when you take a risk, you fail, but then we learn from the failure. When we become too scared to take risks, we become complacent, and then we end up falling behind. And from all of the courses that I took in my experience in the business world is that businesses that continue to change and put effort into their research and development are more successful. I’ll give you a very simple example. If you look at McDonald’s, why is McDonald’s so successful? Because they’re always looking at their menu, they’re trying to come up with different ways. Right now, they have their app, and they offer all these different things. So, they’re bringing in people Millennials and Gen-Z into the equation. And at the same time, they have certain staples on their menu that

people may have had when they're kids and maybe older now. So, they do a nice mixture of that, and they market very well. So, I feel that that's extremely important too.

When schools incorporate stakeholders as a means to create new opportunities, the shared vision of communal empowerment creates community bonds. This fail-fast mentality allows for risk taking within a confined placeholder. This type of systematic experimental global learning could be the bridge along which to bring in new positive civic opinions regarding what global learning can mean. The capacity for global learning to enter our educational systems depends heavily on funding, the opportunity to collaborate, and civic support.

### ***The Pandemic***

The capacity to educate during a global pandemic over the past 2 years has been exhausting. Educators have had to shift from in-person learning to various distance learning methods, reaching what is now described as the “new normal.” This has included new vocabulary that can be applied to the field of education: social distancing, contact tracing, virtual/distance learning, flattening the curve, and super-spreader events to name a few. Educators are now seen as essential workers and have been creating educational remedies throughout the span of the pandemic, which has exposed food insecurities, housing insecurities, financial insecurities, medical inequities, racial inequities, a social/emotional crisis, and, for the purposes of this research, to learning inequities within education.

Educational leaders have had to become creative and to move education on a pathway toward success while keeping in mind the health and safety of the entire learning

community. Therefore, this study comes at an interesting moment. During this global pandemic, the attempt to incorporate globalization into education is not very high on any educational leader or politician's list of needs. However, we now know the capabilities of our educators, educational leaders, and policymakers. If only we knew then what we know now! Through educational initiatives, we also have access to the technology base to support potential international connections. Therefore, to fully discuss the capacity for education to incorporate a global view, we must consider the experiences of educational leaders during the pandemic, which made it clear that global connections are at the forefront and future of our interconnected world.

Due to the pandemic, education became virtual, almost immediately. In this context, P2 found that, in terms of meaningful global exchange, "I think it's also very difficult to do a whole lot right now with COVID because everything right now pretty much has to be virtual." At the same time P2 found that globalization,

...probably should affect it [education] more. But again, just the world and current events and what's happening around us is impacting how we're responding. And again, I point to COVID. That now has changed the entire world and made us realize, or at least made me realize that we're very interconnected.

What's happening in one part of the world really does impact everybody.

The pandemic seems to have brought out this virtual togetherness, while simultaneously increasing separation. However, the appeal of being a part of the global educational community for P3 was that,

absolutely because it's not just New York State or the United States, but we really are a global economy as we see how we're all being affected due to the pandemic.

We're all connected. And so, it's important for us to have perspectives not just educationally, economically. We do need to be aware of other nations as well.

P5 reiterated the current effects of globalization and the pandemic, saying,

Well, I think that globalization has really affected all of us in education right now on a variety of different levels. Certainly, responding to a pandemic has really had a tremendous impact on everyone. Policymakers, politics, the classroom teacher, obviously school leaders have really had to juggle a lot over the last 2 years now. We're coming into 2 years in March that we've been dealing with this situation. I mean, that, in and of itself, I think demonstrates and illustrates the point about the fact that we are in this interdependent world.

The pandemic has also exposed limitations and inequities in our educational system, like those P3 mentioned: "I would say certainly Wi-Fi issues, socioeconomic issues." Educational leaders have been put in difficult positions to uphold legislation that they are not part of making, and, as P5 remarked, "superintendents and school leaders were kind of left to figure things out on their own." The pandemic may have also weakened the appeal of global exchange, as it has been 2 years since international travel was not at a limited capacity. When asked about globalization impacting education, P4 stated,

I don't think it does presently. Certainly, in the last two and a half years, maybe that's an anomaly, but I don't think it really does. I think it's limited to the trip to Spain, France, or Italy, and I think that makes it [globalization in education] lacking."

P5 discussed the process of looking beyond the pandemic to the future of global learning:

I think that there are tremendous opportunities and capitalizing, again, as we come out of the pandemic, we're just starting, to not only regroup, but also reengage a with the rest of the world. We've been very isolated, but there are opportunities, it's [global education] very interdisciplinary in its approach. And there are opportunities across the curriculum to move in those directions to provide opportunities for kids. And so, again, I imagine that if we were having this conversation pre-COVID or well post-COVID, I'd be able to be providing you with more concrete kinds of examples... everything has sort of been ground to a halt because of the pandemic.

The pandemic has exposed weak systems within our government. Our educational system was turned upside down, but the confusion brought on by the pandemic may have actually opened the door to global education in a way we never thought possible previously due to the new sense of virtual togetherness.

### ***Pandemic Technology***

One benefit of the pandemic in terms of the integration of globalization in schools has been the expansive shift to online learning platforms. While some schools were already incorporating online learning, the educational shift would not have been possible without distance learning. When asked what technology platforms were most beneficial during the pandemic, the participants highlighted similar platforms across all schools. This is promising because using the same online learning platforms ensures that all students have experience with the same formats for learning and the things that were initially difficult to understand, such as how to turn in an assignment, are now nearly common knowledge for all students with virtual learning experience.

Common learning platforms create common formats for dialogue. This can be beneficial to global learning if international students also have exposure to the same learning platforms. This technology learning shift rested on the capacity for students and staff to have access to technologies for learning and teaching. P1 explained that their district was fortunate because

...we were a Google platform before [the pandemic] and students from four to eight had their own Chromebooks. So, we only needed to get Chromebooks for K to three, but our teachers were already using them in the classroom. So, it was an easy transition. And again, funding could have prevented us from putting those Chromebooks in everybody's hands immediately, but we were fortunate enough to get a donation and the person who donated them had them in his warehouse. So, we didn't have to wait for a supply to come in.

Not all districts were as fortunate to already be using Google learning platforms prior to the pandemic. However, P2 stated, "we use Seesaw primarily for elementary, and Google Classroom, secondary. Administratively, Google Meet, even FaceTime, Teams, whatever we're on. All of those types of things have been very beneficial." P3 remarked, "I would say it's definitely different between the availability of Seesaw... on the elementary level, the secondary level Google." P4 used "Google Classroom." Finally, the technology for P5 was mainly Google:

Our platform was Google platform. It was Google classroom, the Google suite of applications. That had existed prior to the pandemic. And so our staff was used to utilizing that pretty regularly, every day. It was already a system of an educational platform that existed, but we had to harness it and make it work for kids that were

now no longer in the building, that were at home. And so there's going to be continued research in this area of virtual learning in the different virtual platforms. The thing that I feel was very important from the beginning of the pandemic was the relationships and keeping the kids connected to each other and to the faculty. And so we really focused our efforts on live streaming, and that was challenging for the staff, very challenging for lower elementary kids who needed a lot of assistance at home back when we were fully remote. For their parents, it was really challenging. But I think it goes back to, again, there's a whole host of methods that we can use, and we have to be open to an amalgam of tools that work for kids and for the faculty. The teachers worked extremely hard to get through that, as did families and kids. And so I know that as time passes and we look back and reflect on this period of education during the pandemic, I think there's going to be a lot of lessons that come out of that for us.

Focusing again on the similarities between these five districts, with each district using the same learning platform, the pandemic actually brought learning closer in terms of educational capacities. To have five districts, and countless more across the country, using the same educational platform is an educational feat. It is extremely rare to see non-mandated or systemically regulated educational experiences that work effectively across multiple districts. Technology is the great unifier. The exchange of thoughts can be made global using technology. With shared educational platforms, this thought-sharing space can create meaningful educational learning experiences.

## ***Collaboration***

The capacity for collaboration could be the most important yet exclusionary factor when discussing the incorporation of globalization into education. When discussing ways policy could integrate globalization into schools, P1 replied, “I think globalization has to be more global. We’re all in our own bubbles. We really are.” This leads to educational leader isolation. When asked which educational leadership forums support NYS superintendents, P2 said “My superintendent’s association primarily.” However, P3 said,

I’m part of quite a few different organizations... in my current superintendency, I do meet regularly to share with my colleagues in [name of] County. I’m also part of the legislative committee. We do take a look at policies and procedures in New York State, and I’m able to give input and speak with them regarding that. And it’s important for any of us to reach out when we need any type of assistance or help and to really be vulnerable and say, “I could use some help.” I think everybody does in life. I don’t think there’s anybody who knows all the answers to everything. And I think if I had that approach, I don’t think I’d be a good superintendent. So I think that it’s all about seeing what my strengths are and looking at what my areas of weakness are, and getting the help to be better with those areas.

P4 shared, “well, first it’s colleagues, then it’s local and state organizations. For me, it’s [name of] County School Superintendents. It’s New York State Council School Superintendents.” P5 said,

We have a lot of professional organizations to be part of. The biggest one, of course, is for the region, which is New York State... New York State Council of

School Superintendents. We also have close partnership and affiliation with the New York State Council for Social Studies... we have a lot of resources and networks that exist to support us and that we connect to and collaborate on a very regular basis. School Boards Association. We also have regionals superintendents' groups. We have the AASA, which is a national organization. These organizations have the capacity to collectively encourage and form meaningful connections for superintendents. With these systems in place, currently there is the opportunity for a more global outlook of educational experiences. When superintendents have access to other educational leaders, meaningful connections can form. With these forums and organizations in place, if global learning was to become a topic implemented at the state level, these educational leaders could have access to each other as a collaborative knowledge base.

When discussing forums for support, P1 said, I would not have gotten through this pandemic without the [name of] County superintendents, without the New York State Council of School Superintendents... Those days of hiding and not sharing are gone. Survival has been to share, and I think that's what we need in education but yet if you think about it, my teachers don't have the opportunity to share like I do with my superintendents. When you try to do a shared superintendent's conference day, people are missing, or you don't have the same day off. We can't get subs, so professional development to go visit another school is out of the question. They're limited. They really are. I would love more exchange programs, I would love for teachers to go over to Finland and having somebody pay for that. I think we

would get teachers going to Ecuador in South America to spend time working on building schools, if somebody would pay for it. I have a lot of young teachers here that do not have families. Some of them are former contractors. Some of them are servers. I could see some of my younger teachers going to Ecuador and studying there for a year. How great of a teacher would they be to come back to Springs if they had that opportunity? I haven't seen anything that provides that opportunity. If I want to go to Finland, it's going to cost me about \$10,000. They have a program. It's an immersion program for, I guess it's six weeks. So, your employer has to give you your salary, you have to pay for your airfare, you have to pay for them to provide this program to you. I just think there's more that the government can offer to make our teachers better, to make our administrators better. It's all on us to do it ourselves.

This exhibits the frustrations for public education leaders. There may be great programs available but, without the proper resources, it is out of the question for public school districts. This is another example of why global learning integration moves at a slow pace. It appears to be mostly the entrepreneurs and private sector noticing that educational leaders and professionals want access to the best practices not just in their state but around the world. However, due to the high costs and the lack of public funding for global education, this is left to individuals or individual districts. Within NYS, each superintendent collaborates within their state superintendent association. However, when asked nationally how they collaborate, P1 answered, "I don't participate nationally due to the enormous cost to belong to national organizations." P4 also replied, "I haven't

really.” However, P2 responded, “I belong to several different organizations,” and P3 replied,

It’s a challenge, but I do try at least once or twice a year to attend different national conferences and connect with my colleagues. A lot of time nowadays, we do have the ability to communicate with one another through like we are now through Zoom. So that is helpful, but when you’re in person with your colleagues, and you can spend that time, and you can discuss some of the concerns that you have, or some of the problems you have in your district and speaking to colleagues in other districts and what their experiences are and where we could mentor and support one another and help to make things better. And even though no two districts are exactly the same.

Participant 5 noted, “I’m involved in a number of national organizations, leadership organizations, and that’s how I stay connected with regard to national issues.” With each superintendent having to afford their own resources to belong to different association, it again points to why collaboration might help more for global learning.

**Research Question 4: Are There National or Local Educational Policies That are Easily or Meaningfully Put into Practice That Provide Avenues to Guide Educational Leaders Toward a More Global and Interconnected Educational System?**

***Policy and Policymakers***

Within this research, policy appeared to be another unifying them, but not in the success stories of policy promoting a global perspective, and more in the scarcity of policies that promote global frameworks and globalized learning. In terms of this study,

policy offers educational leaders a pathway to creating a more global and interconnected educational system. However, the superintendents interviewed had perspectives on policies, policymakers, and what was helpful or hindered educational policies and frameworks. When asked what policymakers needed to know about education, P1 said, “We need a shift. We need a change. They need to know that the way we’ve been traditionally doing things is not the way that we have to continue to do things. If you look at Finland’s education system, which is one of the books that I’ve read, they do things very differently than here. There isn’t the kind of testing that we do. They have more recess; they have more time to explore a topic.” P2 said that policy makers should know “how significant it is and how beneficial” globalization can be in education. P3 mentioned,

I think that they [policy makers] really need to know that there’s a missed opportunity there, that we’re not doing enough, and that we need to have that synergy with other nations as well. For example, I mean our closest ally being Great Britain, we speak the same language, but their educational system is completely different than ours, but why don’t we have those conversations? Why don’t we take a look and see what the Brits are doing, is that better? Or what we’re doing, is that better? Or what could we change? What could they change? Why are we not engaging in conversation with our cousins, if you will, from Great Britain?

To begin global learning, why not start with a country that has a different culture but is linguistically similar? P5 thought that policymakers

need to be able to have an understanding and a framework, fundamentally, what are the underpinnings and outcomes that we expect from public education. And in light of the fact that we are in a globalized interdependent world, how do we create opportunities to prepare our citizens, to prepare our students to be able to actively engage in and participate in such a world. And I would argue that there are some differing opinions about that, about what that ought to look like. And so, I think that policy makers, first, need to be educated about the implications of globalization, and then have an understanding of how education has to help provide support for effective well-educated citizenry in such an environment.

Understanding the inner workings of how education systems really work within our school districts and the extensive communications needed to garner civic support would reflect a more inclusive decision-making team.

When asked what policymakers need to know about education and what policy makers misinterpret about education, P1 said, “I don’t think policymakers have been in a classroom in a long time.” This disconnect between what really goes on within schools can be why educational policy often is met with resistance. P2 reiterates this point: “I don’t think that they realize how sometimes their ideas actually get carried out. And I don’t think they realize how difficult change can be.” P2 mentioned the difficulty of change because most change is based on the realization of better practices, efficient communication, and a foundation built on trust. When asked about policymakers, P3 observed,

I think that policymakers, with all of their best intentions in trying to help districts, are trying to raise the bar, [and] forget that we are dealing with children,

and we're not dealing with a product. We're dealing with children who come into our buildings with real concerns or issues or learning gaps. I will say teaching is a very challenging job. There are so many facets to it, and being an administrator as well, all of this work in education, it's not easy. I think that policymakers don't understand that. And I think that a lot of times, they don't think things through when they're making policies. Because then, all of a sudden, it becomes another mandate that the district has to do... And a lot of the time, the politicians don't really look at the whole picture, and I wish that more politicians would reach out to us as educators when they're going to make policy. Because I look at it this way, I'm certainly not going to tell a medical doctor how he or she should perform heart surgery, but it seems that with education, everybody seems to be an expert... and they don't realize that there's a whole science behind it. And there's a tremendous amount of research behind it. And that as educators, we obtain our certification through really a rigorous process. So, I think that's where there's a little disconnect, and I do wish that politicians would work with us more and ask us to be involved in the decision-making process more.

P3 did a great job visualizing the humanism of our students and families within the learning community. This type of change does not have to do with manufacturing; it has to do with changing perspectives, and that lies in connecting with the hearts and minds of the people. This is why creating meaningful bonds within the community is essential for superintendency. In order to bring about change, it must be communicated effectively, with urgency, and tug at the hearts and minds of the learning community. When policymakers skip stakeholder buy-in and enforce new policies and frameworks

without the proper communications, they force superintendents to juggle upholding mandates (probably linked to funding), communicating why these mandates are in place to stakeholders, and implementing them in a way that reflects the needs, desires, and resources within their learning community. P5 linked this to the abstract thoughts regarding the purpose of education. When asked about what policymakers need to know and what they misinterpret about education P5 stated, “I think it goes back to what is the purpose, what is [public education’s] reason for existence, and having an understanding of what that is, and a defined, focal focus and vision and plan for education. I think that’s important.”

When asked what policymakers contribute to the field of education, P1 said, “they add layers.” P2’s response aligned with that of P1: “Well, they’re the people that tell us what we have to do.” P3 stated, “I think it has to do with all of the different mandates that we have all the rules and regulations. I would say that’s where it’s driven by.” P4 discussed the role of policy as, “I think policy has the power of steering focus or targeting focus. Sometimes the focus is a good thing. Sometimes it distracts from really important things. Sometimes a policy action creates competing demands. Sometimes it has unintended consequences, but sometimes it hits the mark.” Finally, P5 discussed the power of policymakers and their impact on education:

Policymakers have the ability to set policy and therefore set the direction. And there are a lot of factors that can influence the policymakers themselves. And it goes back to that idea of what are those philosophies with regard to things like globalization, and how are policymakers impacted by their own political

alignment and ideology. That's going to have an impact. So, they're very powerful.

Adults in education have so much power over the learning experiences to which students are exposed, which reflects back on educational philosophies and why this work is so important for education. Educational policy is a driving factor. P2 discussed the effects of educational policy in the following way: "Well, policy is the guiding principles of what you do, but it could also be the other way around. Your practice can shape your policy or create your policy." P3 stated that educational policy

has a tremendous effect because it drives a lot of our professional development. It drives programming. It drives all the different vendors in which districts partner with, whether it is a shared partnership or where we're paying the vendor with taxpayer money. So, I feel that it has a tremendous impact, and that's why I stand by again that our members of Congress need to speak to teachers and administrators before they make policies in the federal level. And certainly, in Albany, I would hope that they would continue to engage with educators, administrators more so on our state level.

P3 also mentioned how incorporating educational administrators and educators within policy is necessary. P4 then discussed the larger effects of educational policy: "I think it has a trickle-down effect." P5 commented on the effects of educational policy in the following way:

Policy really sets the direction for what the expectations are in terms of standards and outcomes and expectations for what we do as educators, as teachers, and what the expectations are for learning. I think there's so many ways that policy

impacts... the testing programs that exist, that are federally aligned... there's an expectation that the system has to prepare students for those benchmarks, that measured program, and measure student outcome and performance. So, they really set the course in the direction.

High-stakes educational testing is linked to funding, which is another way that policy affects educational outcomes.

Global education is a topic relatively isolated from the rest of the conversation on educational structures. Students in the United States are not required to travel to other countries, learn of other cultures, or even speak another language fluently in order to graduate from high school, so global education typically can be sidelined. In some instances, policy may make leadership in a global society easier. P4 remarked that "policymakers could probably do a better job getting buy-in and participation earlier on in the process, rather than just handing down a policy where people are obligated to follow the policy." This perspective reinstates the idea that communication is key to successful policy implementation. On the other hand, P3 stated,

I think that however we look at things, you do need policies. You do need rules. So, there are rules and regulations we have with everything. I think that that's necessary. Otherwise, we'll have chaos in society and expectations. But I think that we do need to do a better job in having those opportunities come up, that we have that in policy for globalization. I do feel currently it's pretty absent from most policymakers' minds. I don't think that they really look into that. I could be remiss, I could be wrong, but from anything I've read, it seems to be a lot of policy right now in this country on internal. We're looking too much the way

America is behaving internally, and we're not looking enough of how we're dealing internationally. We're looking at really domestic policy instead of foreign policy.

There are many factors as to why international educational expectations are not in place. However, with no framework for this global educational process, individuals are left to explore this avenue of education alone. When asked if there were national or local policies to guide educational leaders towards a more global educational system, the majority of participants were not aware of any, stating, "None that I know of" (P1), "if there any, I am not aware of any" (P4), and "I don't think that there is... I think it, again, it exists in pockets. I don't think that it exists as a particular pathway or one particular approach" (P5). P3 expanded on this:

I'm actually not aware that there is anything like that. Which again makes it more challenging for us. Because I guess I don't understand why we seem to operate more in our individual silos in districts, and it would be nicer to have more of those opportunities. But the only opportunities I have out there is that if I say I personally attend a conference and I meet with other superintendents, and we get together, or I meet with the county superintendents... there's so many things that we're talking about that have nothing to do with globalization, which is unfortunate. I feel there's a tremendous amount of missed opportunities.

The underpinning of the participants' responses focused on a desire for a more collaborative administrative experience where interesting topics within education could be explored, discussed, and framed as meaningful learning opportunities.

### *Aspects That Are Helpful*

Educational policy that respects individuality and incorporates a sense of flexibility in the approach is more likely to create meaningful outcomes. In terms of creating meaningful policy that promotes global educational outcomes, collaboration with educational leaders and educators is crucial. When asked if policy can help integrate globalization into public education, the majority of superintendents interviewed replied with some form of yes: “I’m sure it would” (P2). P3 believed that the integration of policy would best be implemented “if we really worked with the secretary of education and our members of the Senate in the House on the federal level, and then the state level getting more support from Albany, but also to working with them so that we provide more professional development opportunities for our board members because that’s also important too.” P5 also discussed how policy with educational leadership collaboration can help integrate globalization into education:

Policy can definitely help support that [globalization]. And again, policy creates... frameworks and creating that framework, getting information from the field on how to develop that so that that can become a focal point in an initiative that gets attention across the content area and within the curriculum. That’s very important.

There are occasions when policy has been helpful. P1 remarked that “the policy that I think have been helpful is the safety policies about anti-bullying, the financial policies to keep districts safe as far as financial, data privacy policies to keep our kids’ data and our staff’s data safe. I think the biggest three that I support is the financial ones, the safety ones, which includes the anti-bullying.” These are policies that promote

financial, digital, and social emotional safety. P1 also mentioned other helpful policies, such as “policy that helps us is the sexual harassment, the anti-bullying, the social emotional policies that we have to deal with the whole child. I think those are some policies that have been helpful.” Policies that focus on the protection of private data, social emotional wellness, and safety in the workplace are all examples of how policy can promote a better educational system.

Policy that promotes high standards is also helpful in educational structures. P5 stated,

I think what they [policymakers] get right is wanting to have a standard of expectation with regard to equity, with regard to access, with regard to opportunity for all. I think what they get right is, especially in the United States, supporting the needs of special education learners who need interventions, learners who need accommodations and support. And as much as we still have yet to go traveling in terms of truly making sure that we are providing equity, policymakers are focused on it, and I think that’s a positive thing. Economic, with all the different disaggregated groups, students who are economically challenged, students who are challenged because they’re English language learners, or there are incidents of racism. And the fact that there are some who have not had, for a variety of different reasons, the same opportunity. That work is really important, and I think policymakers are really working on that.

P5 appeared hopeful for a better educational future because of policy focused on equity in educational opportunities. P3 remarked this regarding helpful educational policies: “I would say they’ve gotten right, certainly, our supports for special education

students. I think that they've gotten that right, with an IEP, even 504 Plans for our students. I think that that has been ways to help address situations." Discussing policies that have been a success in education sheds light on how creating meaningful policy is possible. As echoed throughout this research, funding, effective communication that encourages civic support, collaboration among stakeholders, and policies that provide a framework can help integrate global learning in public education.

### *Aspects That Hinder*

Educational policy that is a one-size-fits-all approach ignores the fact that educational structures serve individuals with individual educational needs. Educational policy often overlooks that people have different talents and does not allow students to shine in their own chosen or practiced skill in the educational setting. P5 discussed the educational detriment of one-size-fits-all policies: "I think in terms of what they [policymakers] could improve upon, is that there have to be many pathways. And there isn't just one-size-fits-all. There is just one way for students to demonstrate that they have mastered and accomplished what they need to in order to demonstrate that they're proficient. I would say that we've got to be more individualized in our approach for the learning needs, and we certainly have the ability to do that." An educational structure that allows for global learning opens the possibilities for students to explore individual talents and see people using those same talents to participate meaningfully within global society. P5 also mentioned that a hindrance to educational policy is

bureaucracy [as you] stifle a lot of opportunity, creativity, innovation when you overly regulate. I think that's always the concern with policy in terms of broad strokes. There has to be flexibility within policy to allow for the individual needs

and unique needs that may exist in a particular area. And I think that New York does that well. I think that New York allows for opportunities at the local level for decision making that are really important. From a broad perspective, I would look at it that way. You don't want policy to be so narrow that it doesn't allow for the meeting of the unique needs of the various constituents that are served by the policy.

P3 also mentioned that policy can be restrictive and, to remedy this, stated that policy should be created in consultation with those who have to implement it. P3 stated,

I find that most of the time, policy could actually be a little restrictive, and it may not fully allow us the opportunities to engage in conversations. So again, I circle back to. I think the main problem is that our policymakers, whether it's on the federal or state level, may have the best of intentions, but they really should sit down and let teachers and administrators look at some of these potential policy changes they want to make and ask our opinion for it.

Policy implementation without community support hinders policymakers, educational leaders, teachers, and, ultimately, the students. P4 discussed a hindrance in educational policy connected with communication:

I think policies that are intended to force schools, or educators, to focus on all students. I think something like No Child Left Behind was actually well intended. I think Common Core policy was well intended. I don't have disputes with that, but I think at least in New York, the way Common Core was rolled out was disastrous. As a person who was a building principal and a superintendent, I understand this notion of having a sense of urgency and in education, if you delay

a decision by a year, then you've cost a whole other year of not attending to the needs of students. I understand that, but sometimes the rollout that policy makers implement, it seems to be that... If I have a criticism, I think that's where they get it wrong sometimes because I think that they might not understand the challenges of a rollout, and that a rushed rollout causes more resistance. You can't get the positive momentum you need. I think Common Core is a good example of that.

Student educational outcomes are important, as is providing high-quality learning experiences. However, educational policy that hinders individuality in education is where policy hits a snag. P4 continued: "sometimes policy promotes angst and anger. A good example of it is Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) and Common Core. I mean, those are two policy examples that riled up teacher unions and riled up parents. And it forced educational leaders to expend a great deal of energy on things that didn't have to do directly with the classroom or instruction."

Another hindrance to educational policy is when policymakers underestimate the time, buy-in, funding needed, learning curve, and process it takes to make meaningful change. P3 stated,

I think where they [policymakers] get it wrong... I mention APPR... I think too that they just feel that it's very easy for us to snap our fingers and to make change. I don't think they realize that change is slow, and it has to be methodical and done right, and paced correctly. I think that's the other thing, too, is that our policymakers don't understand that it's all timing and pacing.

Another hindrance is the lack of support. P2 observed, "I don't really think they [policymakers] give us a whole lot of support in general. I think they make policy, but I

don't know that they often help us carry it out." In terms of global learning and policy, P5 noted,

[F]rom a K-12 perspective, I think that the achievements of any kinds of globalized opportunities for exchange and ideas, provide opportunity for outcomes that can really expand understanding, knowledge, opportunity, collaboration, but I can't think of anything that has occurred, sustained systemic kind of an approach to that. I think it goes back to what I'd said earlier about those things being ad hoc, happening because people saw value and had a vision and wanted to make those things happen. So I definitely think that there are achievements in those areas, but to what extent they've been built into some kind of a systematic approach, I don't know that exists yet, from the K-12 perspective.

Hindered policy in terms of global learning will continue to confine international learning experiences to pockets of exploration. This exploration without frameworks, funding, or community support will also be experienced inequitably by those who cannot afford international experiences. Policymakers need to communicate in ways that are meaningful to educational leaders and to the greater educational community. The study participants did not know of any major policies that promoted educational globalization because. without frameworks and pathways or actionable policy, globalization and education remain isolated experiences. This displays how policy and policymakers who do not support, promote, or encourage collaboration on the local, state, or national levels fail to foresee the benefits of global learning. Superintendents have ideas to ways incorporate global learning, but when they are kept isolated, global, local, and state collaboration, competition, and communication suffers.

**Research Question 5: In What Ways Does Educational Leaders' Global Mindedness Impact Educational Policy and Influence the Presence of Globalization in Educational Practice?**

*Educational Leadership Perspectives*

Throughout this research, multiple superintendents stated repeatedly that educational leadership could benefit from more collaboration and that educational policy would be more effective if the perspectives of educational leaders were taken into account. However, when discussing the global community and education, P3 brought a larger perspective regarding globalization's effects on innovating through collaboration:

I would say that life is much more complicated today than it was even 20 years ago. So certainly, there are many more challenges that our educators, our administrators, policymakers, we're all facing. The world is becoming more complex. But the beauty in it is that if we work together collectively, and without kind of sounding like I'm being too much of an optimist, but if we could get together as nations and work closer, like the United Nations' original intent was supposed to be, I think we could accomplish so much more. Instead, there's so much negative competition between nations and trying to outdo one another, trying to have that control. But what I try to say to people is that if you look at things economically, everybody could have the pieces of the pie, but when we work together, and we provide a more solid foundation, the pie gets bigger. When the pie's bigger, there are more pieces for people to have. And when you do the opposite, and you don't encourage the innovation and the conversations and the support from one another, then what happens is the actual pie starts to get smaller,

and then people start competing for those pieces of pie. That's not something that I think benefits America or the world.

This is an all-encompassing idea: the vision that the global community can expand with innovation. The "pie" is a great analogy for the potential for the global community. If we choose to stick with this analogy, we can also infer that different "flavors of pie" can increase opportunity for thought. This reflects the global mindedness of P3 in very clear ways, showing how the global community and education can meaningfully interact, leading to innovation and success.

The global community as a means for creating global connections is also seen in a statement by P5:

Education has the potential to be the incubator, and has the potential to really be at the forefront of providing those kinds of [global] opportunities. And to the extent that we can provide those opportunities for kids requires that level of creativity, that level of entrepreneurship, and the freedom to be able to explore those opportunities. I think that fundamentally and foundationally, those really are the purposes of education. And when we think about the creation of public education as an opportunity for all citizens that speaks to the desire to have a well-educated citizenry, that can effectively compete, engage, and collaborate in whatever arena there is to do so, and certainly now in a globalized arena. I think it's a mission critical function of education to provide those things.

P5 reflected on global mindedness that welcomes critical thinking and problem-solving. P5 also reflected on global mindedness in a way that "fundamentally and foundationally" provides perspective of what this participant found to be the purpose of

education and how global education can fit into the public education arena. Global participation and global mindedness in educational leadership must begin with a better understanding of the population. P1 did research to build cultural connections within the student population:

...from reading books on education. I have personally been reading a lot of books about the struggles of Latina students on coming into this country. Some are non-fiction, some are fiction, but they still give me a perspective on what their journey was like here, because I do want to better understand my population.

This educational leader is aware that personal awareness and responsibility for alternative struggles can impact their ability to positively lead a learning community. Global mindedness can include considering alternative perspectives from varying cultural norms. An educational leader educating themselves on cultures reflected within their learning community is a form of global mindedness.

P4 reflected on experiential learning that can provide a high level of global integration and appreciation for other cultures through

summer trips to other countries where children have more than five days to get immersed in a culture, where the trip is more than say a February break, or spring break trip, but where they have time to really get immersed in a culture, and live among people that are from other nations, and use that as a starting point for building relationships. I think it would need to be not just one school, somewhere in Europe, or some other part of the world, but it could be really powerful if school districts had connections all over the place.

P4 mentioned a high level of global learning exchanges because, while in another country, students can use language acquisition, cultural norms, and the opportunity to reflect on their own life experiences to visualize how there are different lifestyles around the world, not associating them with “good” or “bad” but appreciating the “different.”

Every community has some expertise or something to be proud of and share with the global educational community. P2 believed her district spends a lot of time on building good character:

We spend a lot of time trying to think of ways to do things compassionately and kindly. I do spend a lot of time with my colleagues, so we share ideas some with each other. I do think that my district has a lot to contribute [globally]. I think everybody’s district has a lot to contribute.

This emphasis on global mindedness is what inspired this research. If we as educational leaders influence the educational structures in which we work, we can appreciate the hard work others put into their districts and communities. These examples of global mindedness paired with funding and frameworks can lead to true implemented change towards a more global learning experience in public education.

### ***Educational Structures/Systems***

Globalization within educational practice is currently linked to individual district capabilities and funding. The global mindedness of educators does not appear to shape policy outcomes at the federal or state level due to a lack of collaboration. When asked if it will be educational leaders or policymakers to forge globalization in education, the participants offered a variety of perspectives: “I think it’s going to be policymakers, unfortunately, unless they give leadership the ability to be independent” (P1); “I believe

leadership. Policies can be enforced, or they can be not enforced so much” (P2); “I would say effective leadership because we, through our conversations, could influence policymakers if they listen to us” (P3). On this question, P5 remarked, “I think it’s a combination of both. And I think it’s important for the leaders to communicate to the policymakers what their concerns are in this area, so that they have an understanding. And by the same token, it’s important for policymakers to seek out that information and seek input from the field and from the educational leaders. It is clear that, with the current educational structures in place, superintendents feel responsible for creating the global educational outcomes for students.

The presence of globalization within educational practice is, again, based on individual district initiatives. P2 described the global exchanges available to her students:

Our district takes field trips to other countries. We did before COVID. We are picking them back up this year. We do a lot of, particularly the foreign language, there’s a lot of pen pals, your traditional kind of thing. We have a business program that collaborates with students from around the world.

These global exchanges, if broadened to a larger scale that incorporates other districts, could create “pods” of educational learning friendships for students. P3 looked to the future, following the pandemic, for ways to incorporate “student exchange programs or teacher exchange programs. That’s something that I think would be great.” P4 discussed global exchange within educational practice in their district as a “a trip abroad with foreign language students.” Bringing high school students abroad opens the world to them and shows them it is much larger than their hometown. On this, P5 mentioned other potential for growth through a

...technical education program in agriculture. We also have entrepreneurial courses and classwork where kids are communicating with students from other parts of the country. It is not in other parts of the region, it's not international yet, but certainly that is an area of opportunity that we want to pursue. Up until the pandemic, travel was an important opportunity for educational interests and activities... In previous settings, we've had exchanges with students in South Africa, learning opportunities, opportunities to connect and certainly opportunities to participate in workshops with the United Nations. Providing opportunities to expose kids to the world beyond our doors is really a very important, and we're hoping to be able to get back to those opportunities as we move past this pandemic, which is another example of how we're so interdependent in how the world has become really globalized.

Based on these examples of global learning within independent districts, there is a desire to continue to incorporate similar practices within education. Acknowledging the global mindedness of these superintendents is important, but this must be put into practice in individual educational structures. This research reflects how the current educational structures in place can be improved with global educational frameworks and collaborative input with educational leaders. With these educational structural improvements, the 21st-century student may emerge from public education with the ability to think critically, problem-solve, and view the world from multiple cultural perspectives and experiences.

## **Conclusion**

Applying the perspectives of superintendents to the vast landscape of globalization and education can be a humbling experience. Obviously, these thoughts and perspectives require collaboration and communication for the exchange of alternative perspectives, which can be a daunting task. All of the participants used their educational experiences, knowledge base, and personal thoughts to create a better international educational forum. Cultural reciprocity is the awareness of other cultures for their core values and to promote the development of healthy cultural exchanges, meaning that each culture is valued for what it can learn from and teach to another. Global learning reflects an understanding of the responsibility to the local learning community by providing experiences that can change student and teacher perspectives on the possibilities and capabilities of the learning community.

Beneficial student outcomes are at the core of the educational community, and global learning is just an extension of those potential outcomes. Again, without the support of educational leaders in focusing, developing, and providing actionable practice of global exploration, 21st-century skillsets must be acquired outside of public education. This increases inequity in education and in future education and career paths. The education system as a whole relies on effective communication to introduce new and innovative perspectives. Effective communication and collaboration can increase civic buy-in and propel new learning initiatives forward.

The superintendents' perspectives documented here reflect those of the learning communities they serve, their personal experiences, and the resources available. Therefore, global educational frameworks must be flexible enough to allow all districts to

incorporate global initiatives. When we explore the benefits of global learning, this can lead our students to evolve into well-rounded, productive 21st-century global citizens.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Globalization has impacted education in ways research has not yet caught up to. Therefore, effective policy for global education is stagnant. Educational leaders have many thoughts and ideas that can benefit the global learning community. The responsibility felt by the superintendents interviewed in this study is clear and apparent. While their sense of responsibility for their leadership role and desire for a more interconnected global educational platform is evident, this often depends on independent innovations within individual school districts in NYS. It is admirable that school superintendents feel a sense of responsibility to create global exchanges and ambassadorship experiences when there is such a lack of funding and structures around which to base their internal systems. It reflects that educational leaders know that global competency is essential for the future, and their own personal experiences and district emphases drive this learning. A profound element that emerged from this study is how superintendents feel about effective communication and civic buy-in. The impacts of forward thinking in education today can create the foundations for our society in the future. The overall implications of findings determine that collaboration with educational leadership is necessary for globalization and education to be integrated into public education with actionable policy. Superintendents in this research are able to comprehend the importance of global learning for student outcomes and desire funded collaborative frameworks to guide this innovation.

## **Implications of Findings**

### **Educational Leaders' Responsibility**

Overall, it appears that the New York public school superintendents in this research felt a sense of responsibility and duty to their students and local community. The data support the findings that all the superintendents appeared to be open and interested in creating global connections, ambassadorships, and innovations. However, they needed more partnership in the form of research-based exposure, funding/resources, and collaborative time to bring global learning to their districts. Each superintendent responded in a “yes” format when asked if educating students on global competencies was the responsibility of educational leaders. However, the participants also recognized that there are many other forces that complicate how globalization and global learning are brought into the public education arena, including communication, the pandemic, civic buy-in, and the lack of funding/resources.

The educational leaders' sense of responsibility was reflected within the theoretical framework, as leaders, in this case the superintendents, must review, reflect on, and evaluate the new phenomenon of globalization within the arena of educational innovation. Then, they must communicate effectively in order to reduce uncertainty about how this is beneficial for the betterment of student outcomes. A potential limitation of this finding is that non-mandated educational potentials, such as global learning, are typically interesting to discuss in abstract terms but difficult to implement within districts without public support, policy, or funding/resources.

## **Global Community and Education**

The educational leaders in this study viewed the global community as an “opportunity.” They reflected on the global community as interconnected and pointed to the pandemic as an example of the inability to ignore global issues. Twice, the “trickle down” effect was mentioned relating to how global concerns, global conflicts, and current events trickle into our educational systems. The participants also referenced that globalization has made its way into other aspects of life, including “economic, political, technological, and social” spheres. They mentioned the fortunes and amenities that come with living in the United States and stated that global learning can help students reflect on their lifestyles. Global learning can broaden the opportunities for students with regard to educational outcomes relating to problem-solving, innovation, and emotional wellbeing. Part of the importance of a global education for superintendents is ensuring that students have access to the skillsets they need for the future. These findings suggest how the theory of diffusion, and educational leaders who perceive the global community as important, can use the phenomenon of globalization to create learning opportunities.

## **Student Outcomes**

The notion of preparing students with transferrable skills for future careers aligns with the idea that education creates opportunities for the future, and it would be a disservice to students to ignore global impacts. In terms of the global community and educational leadership, the data reflect that all the participants found global educational experiences, exchanges, and innovations beneficial for student outcomes. Global experiences change students’ perceptions, which can impact how they view their future possibilities. When we connect student interest to global partnerships, with robotics, for

example, we expand their outreach and create friendships based on mutual discovery and innovation. Language through technology in the form of coding can bridge linguistic gaps. Creating international student activities broadens perspectives and can be the foundation for mutual respect.

The participants considered researching best practices in education and leadership collaboration to be important in creating global educational networks. They discussed educating students for the future and ensuring that they have the skills for careers that do not yet exist. The superintendents in this study found education as a means for developing needed skillsets that are transferable into the 21st-century workforce. The educational leaders found that teaching globalization can emphasize the need to prepare students for the future. When global learning is incorporated into education, student outcomes are the results that speak for themselves.

### **Civic Engagement and Buy-In**

A major unexpected finding and theme was that civic buy-in is the most influential factor in superintendents' ability to incorporate global learning into education. The researcher expected that the political climate could inspire criticism for international learning experiences. However, from the superintendent perspective, the greater public must be ready for and want global education before educational leaders can begin the process of researching best practices or international exchange experiences. It appears that the superintendents felt there were communities of people who preferred isolationism and U.S. solidarity rather than globalization. This is valid and reasonable during a pandemic. Another form of civic buy-in is from the learning community of educators and educational leaders because, without state mandates to require global learning, this can be

viewed as another educational initiative. These findings are congruent with the literature. McCarthy's (2011) research mirrors this perception of the importance for community engagement: "Each superintendent emphasized that as important as superintendent leadership is unless the whole community is on board—global education will not be successful" (p. 156).

### **Communication**

Communicating the goals and role of global learning within education is essential. Effective communications overlap with civic buy-in when introducing new initiatives. Within this research, each superintendent emphatically acknowledged the importance of communication in their leadership position. Effective communication is at the core of motivating community interest, especially in non-mandated initiatives. The superintendents felt that transparency, approachability, active listening, and honesty are the most important communication traits for educational leadership. Communication is closely tied to the globalization of education. Rogers (1995) theory of diffusion used leadership communication as a pivotal aspect in explaining how an innovation or idea is adopted throughout a social system. This theoretical framework aligns closely with the findings in this research on how effective communication can inspire new innovations. In this research, educational leaders' global mindedness and communication created global educational opportunities.

### **Educational Structures/Systems**

The educational structures and systems in place are described as frameworks for implementation. The most successful frameworks are flexible so that educational leaders have the leeway to incorporate them into the structures and resources available within the

district. The superintendents agreed that, with educational leader collaboration, global learning frameworks could assist in creating avenues of global learning. The participants felt that the nature of education lay somewhere in between collaborative and competitive. Within the current educational structure, it is not clear to what extent global learning, connections, or innovations are incorporated into NYS school districts. The lack of collaboration on global learning frameworks or systematic focus on global learning within the educational leadership forum is at least partially responsible for the innovation happening within isolated districts. Without equitable funding, opportunities for global learning will continue to happen only in exceptional communities motivated to provide global exchanges. The data shows that the participants wanted to offer global learning opportunities in an explicit and systematic way but did not have the necessary support to do so.

### **Funding/Resources**

The data shows that funding is a limitation of incorporating global learning into education. Funding is also one of the complications that impacts the incorporation of global learning with fidelity and equity. If only those who can afford to study abroad do so, this feeds into the gaps of knowledge and learning experiences among students. The capacity for superintendents to support global learning in education requires federal and state financial resources. One way that the federal and state governments “communicate” their values of targeted learning outcomes is through financial support.

### **The Pandemic**

A theme throughout this research was how the COVID-19 pandemic was a tremendous obstruction for global learning. Each superintendent referenced the COVID-

19 pandemic as a reason why global exchanges were brought to a halt. However, a second theme was that each superintendent also referenced the COVID-19 pandemic as an undeniable example of how interconnected we all are.

### **Pandemic Technology**

Pandemic technology brought about technological learning outcomes for both educators and students alike. For districts without one-to-one devices prior to the pandemic, the pandemic created learning opportunities and connectivity that was previously not available. If there was one benefit from distance learning, it was that students and educators refined their technological skills. A theme was the use of Google Classroom as a platform across all districts for distance learning. This common platform creates a shared technological knowledge that can make participating in the global education arena more interactive and exchangeable.

### **Collaboration**

A theme of educational leadership collaboration was that interaction through the county's Superintendents Association. This association can be the foundation for collaboration on global topics among superintendents and for sharing perspectives on how to successfully bring global learning into our schools. Financial expenses were named as limits to participation in other national superintendent associations. Whereas the participants expressed their interest in global educational associations, it is unclear to what extent they have access to global superintendent associations.

### **Policy and Policymakers**

As the researcher, I began this study knowing that there was little or no actionable systematic federal or state enforced global learning format for NYS districts. The

participants mentioned how easy it is to become sidetracked and lose focus because of the lack of frameworks available. With regard to policy, a common theme throughout this research was that educational leaders want to assist in the creation of policies and provide perspectives to policymakers of how educational policies can actually lead to civic pushback if they lack collaboration from district-level educational leaders, even if they are well-intended.

This leads back to the major common theme regarding the importance of communication. Healthy communication cooperation between policymakers and district leaders can generate actionable systematic frameworks for the incorporation of global learning within education. Helpful educational policy aligns with two themes: the health and wellbeing of students, and the flexibility to individualize mandates to fit local district needs and resources. Hindrances within educational policy emerge when policymakers ignore the individual needs of communities and local school districts and simply require that they incorporate new mandates without the proper funding to make meaningful change.

### **Relationship to Prior Research**

This study supports the prior literature with regard to the phenomenon of global learning in terms of the importance of how superintendents view education as a foundation for creating societal shifts. The tension regarding educational policy is at the forefront of education today, leaving educational leaders stuck navigating policy and community needs. Educational leaders want funded actionable frameworks to incorporate global learning. Superintendents also want more collaboration with policymakers in the creation of these frameworks.

A major extension of this study over the prior research was in the learning community population, was the addition of two superintendent participants, for a total of five superintendents from five school districts. To put this into perspective, if each superintendent conservatively governs 100 teachers and 3,000 students within their district, that is over 500 educators and 15,000 students under these five NYS superintendents. McCarthy's (2011) research relied on interviews with three superintendents and educators, visits to district schools, and the use of district artifacts to investigate how the integration of global learning appears within schools. McCarthy's (2011) research brought a different perspective, exploring how educational leaders incorporate global learning within school districts. McCarthy's (2011) study inspired this current research, as it showed that educational leaders were in the process of or already incorporating global education within schools. However, the study also showed that global education takes place in isolated school districts.

This current study supports McCarthy's (2011) past research by cross connecting the findings on superintendent perspectives. Both studies show that student outcomes can improve when exposed to global learning: "Students also need opportunities to put their global education learning to work to solve real problems" (McCarthy, 2012, p. 147). This aligns with the current research findings, which show that superintendents view global learning as a way for students to develop 21st-century learning skills, such as problem-solving.

A major theme throughout McCarthy's (2011) research and the present study is the need for policy to serve as a foundation for global learning: "The importance of establishing policy for global education needs to be highlighted. Without explicit global

education policy, global education practice can easily disappear” (McCarthy, 2011, p. 168). This shows that superintendents need policy and frameworks in place to be able to allocate resources and time to establishing global opportunities. The present study extends this finding as it establishes superintendents’ desire to have input on how the framework is designed and autonomy over how it applies to their individual district.

The work of Spring (2008) also serves as a foundation for this research, as it framed the knowledge economy as “focused on the ability of workers to adapt to a changing world of work” (p. 340). This research extends this idea by exploring how superintendents find value in global learning and globalization in the educational system. They connect global learning to the future of education and to 21st-century learning skills. Global learning in this research connects to Spring’s (2008) perception of the knowledge economy regarding 21st-century learning skills that can develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication. Spring (2008) also concluded that, “[g]lobal educational discourses on the knowledge economy, lifelong learning, and human capital education are influencing the decisions of national policy makers” (p. 352). This study also supports and extends Spring’s (2008) research as it offers the perspective of the superintendents interviewed who voiced that a clear framework, funding, and collaboration in conjunction with policymakers can help them incorporate global learning at the K-12 level of education.

It is apparent that global learning is becoming prominent in educational interests if national policymakers are researching ways to implement it and if superintendents know global learning is important to educational student outcomes. Quantitative research by Hersey (2012) noted that educational leaders are motivated

...[t]o ensure opportunities that raise awareness of issues such as diversity, inequality, and interconnectedness, educational leaders must recognize their primary role of reframing the vision and purpose of a school community by demonstrating the necessary characteristics and attributes for the development of a global perspective in education. (p. 36)

While global mindedness in a quantitative format reveals potential predispositions regarding educational leaders' global mindedness, this research relied on a qualitative methodology to understand global education through the perspectives of current superintendents. While both methods are important to the field of global education, future research might explore a mixed-methods approach, conjoining the two research initiatives.

Hett's (1993) research provided a logical backbone for the present study by offering key focal points. Hett's (1993) study developed aspects to quantifiably assess global mindedness in terms of responsibility to the larger global community, while the present study uncovered findings that educational leaders' global mindedness aligns with the responsibility of effectively educating in ways that improve student outcomes, including through global competencies. In this way, both studies found that part of global mindedness is a feeling of responsibility toward others.

The findings in this research show a clear connection between superintendents' perspectives on global learning and potential positive learning outcomes. Rogers' (1995) diffusion of innovation served as the theoretical framework for this research. The findings directly support the theoretical framework as the participants revealed how effective communication with regard to the phenomenon of global learning will promote

the community's buy-in. The findings show that superintendents believe that effective communication is essential in their leadership positions. However, their perspectives on the innovation of global learning and education will continue to be isolated without civic support, a clear guiding framework, or funding.

### **Limitations of the Study**

A limitation of this research is the number in interviews. While there were five participating superintendents, this is still a rather small number and is not representative of the entire state of New York. A second limitation to this study is that one of the participants is the superintendent of the school district where the researcher is a teacher. A third limitation to this study is that it was developed and conducted during a global pandemic. This is the major limitation to this study, as all global students exchange programs and international travel was shut down. Therefore, any pre-COVID-19 endeavors to incorporate globalization, global learning, or global interactions within educational systems were sidelined due to other more significant district needs. A fourth limitation drawn from the pandemic was that data collection was in the form of online interviews rather than in person, so body language was not represented within the data.

### **Recommendations for Future Practice**

The findings of this research suggest that superintendents have a desire to collaborate with policymakers. They want to create meaningful global learning frameworks that allow for the implementation of systematic, purposeful global learning, with equity for all, not only those who can afford it. The superintendents felt strongly that funding and resources, as well as effective communication and civic support, were needed to create meaningful global learning outcomes. They believed that effective

communication is at the core of these global learning opportunities. These are initial recommendations for future practice.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Recommendations for future practice would be to continue gathering the perspectives of superintendents, preferably in a post-COVID-19 setting. Opening this research up to assistant or deputy superintendents might also provide a wider array of perspectives on global learning. Future research might incorporate group interviews to create a space for the collaborative desires mentioned within this research.

Superintendent group interviews might be able to create a methodical framework and invite policymakers to discuss possible implementations. This may be the catalyst that propels global learning into a funded mandate.

### **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of globalization and its implications on the world are undeniable. This has been evident in the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Educational leaders' perspectives on global learning align with explicit frameworks, leadership collaboration, effective communication, local support, and ultimately positive student outcomes. When global learning is incorporated into education, this allows students to view the world in all of its vastness and as full of opportunities. Global learning can expand students' ability to develop 21st-century skills in problem-solving, viewing thoughts from multiple perspectives, collaboration, and critical thinking. The future implications of global learning and education will require collective efforts to create meaningful change.

## **AFTERWORD**

Global skills and citizenry are valuable for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Quality educational experiences, include teaching students to navigate the global sector by examining and finding conclusions from multiple perspectives within topics of study. In order to fully explore globalization and education, more research would provide alternative viewpoints on the underlying implications globalization has on society as a whole and how those impact education. There are compounding internal and external factors that complicate global learning. Change is the new stable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Educational leadership plays a great role in the effective incorporation of globalization and education into local communities. Local communities also play a significant role in superintendents' ability to incorporate new initiatives. The value behind this research is that superintendents are quite aware of how interconnected the world is and think education is a means of creating global competencies for students. Closer research might reflect the perspectives and global mindedness of international superintendent equivalencies.

## APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL MEMO



### Letter of Informed Consent

Dear Superintendent of Schools,

You are invited to participate in a research study to learn more about superintendent's perceptions of globalization and what leadership needs to promote globalization in K-12 education with fidelity. This study will be conducted by Lauren DiMartino, School of Education, at St. John's University in Queens, New York as part of her doctoral dissertation work. The supervising faculty sponsor is, Anthony Annunziato, Ed.D., School of Education, St. John's University.

If you agreed to participate in this study, on your own time, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Take part in a 30-minute password protected virtual Zoom interview on the topic of leadership perspectives of globalization in education that will be used for my dissertation.

The interview will be recorded. The recordings will be kept in a password protected file but will not necessarily be anonymous. You may review these recordings and request that all or any portion of the tapes be destroyed. Participation in the study will involve one interview lasting 30-minutes.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life. The use of a pseudonym is possible, if you choose so, your name will not be released, and answers will be coded. Despite these measures, someone may still be able to tell that the notes came from a conversation with you, while I cannot guarantee complete anonymity, I will do my best to ensure it. Identifiers will be removed from the identifiable private information and that, after such removal, the information may be used for future research studies without additional informed consent from the subject or the legally authorized representative.

While you will not receive a direct benefit from your participation, your responses are important to understanding the phenomenon of globalization, the perspectives of superintendents with regard to globalization, and explicitly discussing what leadership needs from policymakers in order to bring globalization into K-12 classrooms.

You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty, as this interview is completely voluntary and there is no penalty to refusing to participate. You must be at least 18 years old to participate, and by completing the interview, you are giving consent to be part of the research. During our interview, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about this study or your participation that is unclear or if you have follow-up questions, please feel free to contact me at XXXXX or Dr. Anthony Annunziato at XXXXX St. John's University 8000 Utopia Pkwy Queens, NY 11439

For questions, about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair XXXXX (XXX)XXX-XXXX or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, XXXXX (XXX)XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Lauren DiMartino

### Agreement to Participate

Your signature acknowledges receipt of a copy of the consent form as well as your willingness to participate.

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in the study conducted by Lauren DiMartino. I understand the risks associated with the current study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Lauren DiMartino  
Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator

1/28/2022  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCRIPT**

Hello, thank you for participating in my dissertation interview. My name is Lauren DiMartino. I am a doctoral student at St. John's University. Currently, I am an ENL teacher in grades 7 and 8. This is my 6th year teaching. In our profession, we hear the terms global community, globalization, and global citizenship. My topic explores leaderships perspectives of globalization. I believe that meaningful policy aligns with educational leadership needs. With that said, thank you for joining me today. Your answers will help me develop research-based findings that will provide grounding for globalization and education in the 21st century.

This interview should approximately take 30 minutes and will be recorded so that I can more easily review the notes. All identifiable information will be excluded from the research.

### **Background Information of Interviewee:**

- Gender (optional):
- Years in education:
- Other occupations:
- Fields of Study:
- How would you describe your ethnicity?
- Were you born in the United States? If not, please indicate how old you were when you came to the United States\_\_\_\_\_ and from what nation?
- How many courses have you taken which focus on another country?
- How often do you watch world news?

- What is your favored source to receive information? (ex. TV, social media, internet)
- What is your first language? Are you fluent in more than one language? What languages have you studied?
- Parents' influence on education:
- Parents' country of origin:
- Age on last birthday:

**Proposed Guiding Interview Questions:**

Throughout this interview, follow-ups to the guiding questions will be noted.

- In what ways does the global community impact your local district?
- Do you perceive the educational global community as connected?
- In what ways could educational ambassadors be beneficial to education in your district?
- Does your district provide avenues for global innovation or exchanges?
- How do you view education as a means for creating global connections?  
Ambassadorship? And/or innovators/innovation?
- Can you define "global community" in your own words? When you hear "global education," can you think of a definition that allows your district to participate in this "global community"?
- In what ways does the phenomena of globalization fit into your district?
- Does being part of the global educational community appeal to you?
- How would you explain the phenomenon of globalization for the purposes of education to a parent? Board member? Friend? Student? Teacher? Policymaker?

- Does the current educational system provide the capacity for meaningful global learning and/or exchanges? How? Do you have ideas that could make it better?
- How does globalization affect educators in 2021? Leaders? Policymakers?
- If we define globalization as “the ability of any individual or company to compete, connect, exchange, or collaborate globally” (Friedman, 2016, p. 120), do policymakers have a reason to want globalization to be integrated into school districts? What are possible policy changes that could make this possible?
- What are small achievements towards globalization in education?
- What do policymakers need to know about education? What do policymakers often mis-interpret about education?
- Are there national or local educational policies that are easily or meaningfully put into practice that provide avenues to guide educational leaders toward a more global and interconnected educational system?
- Do you consider yourself a global citizen? How do you benefit from this? Do you benefit as a leader?
- Nationally, how do you participate? Educationally?
- Globally, how do you participate? Educationally?
- How does educational policy affect educational practice?
- What role do policymakers contribute to the field of education?
- What do policymakers need to know about globalization and education?
- What do policymakers get right in terms of creating educational policy?
- What do policymakers get wrong in terms of creating educational policy?

- What do you need as a superintendent from policymakers to make globalization possible?
- What are ways you get support from policymakers?
- What forums do you turn to for educational leadership support?
- With regard to globalization, as an educational leader what type of support would be helpful from policymakers?
- What does globalization policy support look like for your district? Why?
- In your opinion, can policy help diffuse globalization into the public educational platform?
- Would you please describe your style or type of leadership communication? Why is this effective for you?
- How is your leadership communication style different or similar to policy makers?
- Of the other public school superintendents you know, in your opinion, what are communication characteristics of effective leaders?
- Is it effective leadership that will forge globalization or policy makers? Why?
- Explain your perspective of ways globalization changed education. What is most significant about this change in particular?
- Does policy promote support? Why/why not?
- If there is policy and funding to promote globalization, would you want more exposure to it? How much time would you be willing to spend on this exploration?
- In terms of global education, what do you perceive as most rewarding?

- In what ways are you a global citizen? Travel, language, food, etc.
- How important is the global community for the future of education in your opinion?
- Are there hindrances that prevent more meaningful global exchanges for education?
- What policy helps globalize education for your district?
- What policy hinders globalization for your district?
- As we educate children to become global citizens, what limitations does local leadership have to creating the global community in your district?
- Do you find that U.S. education has a global impact?
- Does policy make leadership in a global society easier? Are there avenues that need to be improved? How can policy help to make those improvements? If this is reformed, can globalization be linked to learning in your local district?
- Does your district currently participate in meaningful global exchanges?
- Do you feel part of the global community? How does the global community change your daily routine?
- In your opinion, is education based more on competition or collaboration?
- What are the benefits of education based on global competition? Global collaboration?
- Are educational leaders responsible for educating global competencies of students?
- Are there any policies that you find extremely helpful in education? Why? Explain further please.

- Any policy or one specific policy that you find most hinders education? Why?  
Explain further.
- What is the role of experiential learning in education?
- How does your district affect those around the globe? Is there something special about your district that it might be able to display knowledge to the world?

Thank you for participating today. I will forward my final dissertation to you when complete.

Take care,

Lauren DiMartino

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