



# The Dark Side of Educational Leadership: Superintendents and the Professional Victim Syndrome

By Walter Polka, Peter Litchka

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A valuable resource to institutions of higher education and various state and national superintendent organizations and agencies, *The Dark Side of Educational Leadership* provides valuable insights into specific resiliency behaviors that contribute to superintendents' abilities to overcome the trauma associated with being a professional victim. Specifically illuminating those issues that contribute most often to the victimization of superintendents, well-researched chapters demonstrate strategies employed by superintendents to prevent similar issues from causing additional pain.

Polka and Litchka identify resiliency factors of most significance to superintendents in dealing with the professional victim syndrome, helping superintendents to better prepare for the professional victim syndrome during their professional career.

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**The Dark Side of Educational Leadership: Superintendents and the Professional Victim Syndrome** By Walter Polka, Peter Litchka **Bibliography**

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

A heart-rending and even shocking account of the price men and women pay to make a difference in the lives of children. *The Dark Side of Educational Leadership* shows the heart of devotion and the heart of determination; this book also shows the heart of darkness. It should be required reading for every teacher, administrator, and Board of Education member. (Linda Arthur, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University)

Polka and Litchka have done a creditable job of identifying the type of assistance a superintendent under fire needs and also ways a sitting superintendent can guard against being blindsided by a renegade or newly elected majority school board. This book should be a reading must for superintendents regardless of how secure they may feel or be at the present time. (Glen Earthman, professor emeritus, Virginia Tech University)

The authors' style of writing will make this an easy read for the busy administrator. The well-crafted scenarios are the real-world experiences of superintendents. Superintendent turnover and board turnover are critical issues in the lives of superintendents. The authors clearly articulate these critical issues.... (Marilyn L. Grady, Professor of Educational Administration, University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

Great book. It is apparent that all educational leadership programs involved in the development of district level administrators must include this book in their arsenal of instructional materials. The superintendency is a challenging profession, and students need a clear picture of the realities and guideposts identified in this publication to overcome the forces of evil pressuring a school district's CEO. (Carelton R. Holt, assistant department head of curriculum and instruction in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of, assistant department head of curriculum and instruction in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas.)

It is a good read, an easy read, but insightful and meaningful. I'm sure that all currently sitting superintendents will want to read it. Great work! The themes in the book certainly mirror Gardner's latest book about the five minds for leadership. The ethics theme is of particular note! (Linda K. Lemasters, Associate Professor and Program Coordinator for Educational Leadership and Administration at The George Washington University)

These former school superintendents have put together a superb book that should serve as an excellent resource for educators in search of their initial superintendent of schools position as well as experienced superintendents. Every educator aspiring to become a public school superintendent must read this book. (Mike Bitar, Retired Battle Creek Michigan Superintendent of Schools)

The authors' style of writing will make this an "easy read" for the busy administrator. The well-crafted scenarios are the real-world experiences of superintendents. Superintendent turnover and board turnover are critical issues in the lives of superintendents. The authors clearly articulate these critical issues. (Marilyn L. Grady, Professor of Educational Administration, University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

An honest assessment of the emotional realities that exist for those willing to accept the challenge of the superintendency. Polka and Litchka present a vivid description of why school superintendents need a strong

set of personal values and beliefs in order to lead effectively and survive the often turbulent waters in which they work. If you wonder why there are fewer and fewer educators willing to become school superintendents, simply read Polka and Litchka's *The Dark Side of Educational Leadership* and it will become clear. In a system that all but guarantees lifetime employment to everyone, there is one person flying without a net: the superintendent of schools. Worse yet, the superintendent is held accountable to standards that, in some instances, are the result of grudges and local politics divorced from the mission of our schools. These *Dark Side* realities are explored in depth and in detail by Polka and Litchka. As a former superintendent, I found *The Dark Side of Educational Leadership* to be an authentic, powerful, and emotional description of the superintendency. Countless ordeals, challenges, and trials from my own experience raced through my mind as I read accounts of colleagues who are striving to lead amidst the myriad political obstacles, most often of the inane variety, that sap a true leader's energy and spirit. Despite it all, being a school superintendent is the most rewarding and challenging role I can imagine. Polka and Litchka understand this perspective and capture it well in their book. (Robert McClure, Assistant Professor at the College of St. Rose in Albany, NY and Superintendent-in-Residence for New York State Council of School)

Gripping, illuminating, mandatory! Polka and Litchka reveal that certain school boards, based upon their political agenda, will sacrifice the professional life of a superintendent to meet their own partisan desires. Polka and Litchka's compendium of victim scenarios is an awakening read for every superintendent who believes that his good intentions and personal interest in the welfare of the school district will shade him from the often invisible damaging rays of ill-informed, ill-advised, or ill-intending board members. This book should be mandatory reading for all who aspire to the superintendency, for the naive who believe that their board will do no harm, and for community leaders who need to understand the volatility of school leadership. (James Mills, Clinical Professor of Educational Leadership at Niagara University, NY)

This book is a real page-turner?very gripping and captivating. A poignant and profound rendering of the personal and professional anguish of being terminated. The reader will skip from page to page as this exceptionally well-written narrative captures the drama, shock, and tragedy of the experience. (Charles Reavis, Former Director of the Georgia Center for Educational Renewal)

This book by Dr. Polka and Dr. Litchka was excellent reading. It's good to see issues for potential school administrators actually aired. Great job! No one should even consider a stint as a superintendent without reading and digesting this literary gem! The authors' leadership wisdom manifests itself into an area that is often absent from many leadership reads. They have broken through the glass ceiling, exposing their readers to female leadership issues that all too frequently make the job even lonelier, darker, and harsher than a novice can imagine. All leadership students, regardless of gender, should consider this insightful text as a valuable resource. (Jesse Strickland, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Ogeechee Technical College, Statesboro, Georgia)

These are compelling stories and really point to several realities. This book should be required reading for anyone aspiring to be a superintendent. (Stephen Uebbing, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Rochester, NY)

Polka and Litchka describe leadership behaviors that could be of value in lessening the trauma and pain of an assault by the school board or members of the community. This book would be of value to aspiring superintendents as well as incumbents. It is helpful to know what to expect, as there are actions to lessen the harmful effects. (*School Administrator*, December 2009)

#### About the Author

Walter S. Polka is Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at the Niagara University College of

Education in New York. Peter R. Litchka is Assistant Professor of Education and Director of the Graduate Program in Educational Leadership at Loyola College in Maryland.

## **Users Review**

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#### **Anita Rhodes:**

This The Dark Side of Educational Leadership: Superintendents and the Professional Victim Syndrome is great publication for you because the content and that is full of information for you who else always deal with world and have to make decision every minute. This particular book reveal it information accurately using great coordinate word or we can state no rambling sentences inside it. So if you are read this hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only provides straight forward sentences but challenging core information with splendid delivering sentences. Having The Dark Side of Educational Leadership: Superintendents and the Professional Victim Syndrome in your hand like keeping the world in your arm, details in it is not ridiculous a single. We can say that no publication that offer you world throughout ten or fifteen moment right but this reserve already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Hello Mr. and Mrs. active do you still doubt that will?

#### **Doug Martin:**

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