

Title: Chief School Business Officials: A Qualitative Investigation of Employment Longevity and the Career Plateau

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The pool of candidates for the chief school business official position is shrinking, as with other senior-level leadership positions in public school districts. In order to develop future professionals in school business leadership, it is important to learn from those who have experienced success. Since chief school business officials are prone to reaching a career plateau early in their careers, discerning the strategies used to mitigate the impact of career plateauing is important to employment longevity.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify attributes that contribute to employment longevity of chief school business officials in Pennsylvania, identify the category of professional standards published by the Association of School Business Officials International that is most important to employment longevity, and identify strategies used by chief school business officials to mitigate the effects of career plateauing which can impact employment longevity. For the purpose of this study, employment longevity was defined as ten or more years of service in the same school district. Nine chief school business officials with employment longevity were interviewed using a semi-structured process.

The findings indicate that the attributes that contribute to employment longevity of the chief school business official are a strong ethical frame of reference, effective relationships, job challenge, autonomy, and ongoing mentoring. The most important relationships are with the superintendent and school board. Chief school business officials with employment longevity

experience structural and personal career plateaus, but do not experience a job content plateau due to the continual challenges associated with the position. The Association of School Business Officials International professional standards related to leadership and ethics were most important to employment longevity.