Principals’ Perceptions of Readiness for Their Evolving Roles in High-Stakes Environments

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The University of Southern Mississippi

PRINCIPALS’ PERCEPTIONS OF READINESS FOR THEIR EVOLVING ROLES IN HIGH-STAKES ENVIRONMENTS

by

Angela Marie Huff

Abstract of a Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate School of The University of Southern Mississippi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2011
ABSTRACT

PRINCIPALS’ PERCEPTIONS OF READINESS FOR THEIR EVOLVING ROLES IN HIGH-STAKES ENVIRONMENTS

by Angela Marie Huff

December 2011

Principals are leading schools during an evolving time where preparation may not have prepared principals fully for the task of school leadership. The past decade has revealed an escalation in the disapproval of principal preparation programs and participants in these programs insist that these schools be held accountable (Levine, 2005). However, in revamping preparation programs, one must focus on student selection, curriculum and course content, pedagogical strategies, internships, and field experiences (Orr, 2006). Some have suggested that the job of principal may have become impossible for all but a few super leaders (Lashway, 2003). The requirements of the job may discourage qualified educators’ to pursue careers in leadership and possibly lessen the number of competent applicants. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to investigate principals’ perceptions of their readiness for evolving roles in high-stakes environments and to assess their need for additional training. The researcher also examined how experience variables affected principals’ perceptions of preparedness for their duties and if principals felt comfortable with their duties.

The survey instrument was developed based on the MCREL principal standards, the 2008 ISLLC education leadership policy standards, the Arthur Levine Principal Questionnaire, and the Southern Regional Education Board’s 13 critical success factors for effective principals. After making revisions based suggestions from an expert panel
and testing for reliability, the instrument was ready for use with the sample. Survey responses were obtained from 109 of the 112 principals surveyed in a large suburban Georgia school district. There was no significant difference between male and female principals’ perceptions of whether their training programs prepared them for the duties and responsibilities of the principalship. Individuals who had attained a doctorate versus a master’s degree perceived that they were more prepared for their duties and responsibilities. There were no differences in the level of comfort in performing duties and responsibilities or in their need for additional training based on degree attainment.
PRINCIPALS’ PERCEPTIONS OF READINESS FOR THEIR EVOLVING ROLES IN HIGH-STAKES ENVIRONMENTS

by

Angela Marie Huff

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School of The University of Southern Mississippi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The expectations on schools and the role of principals are continually evolving. Without debate, a critical shortage of principals in the United States exists (McNeese, Roberson, & Haines, 2009). Today, principals have the job not only of managing our schools, but also of leading schools through an era of profound social change that has required fundamental rethinking of how schools operate on a day-to-day basis (Levine, 2005).

Background of the Problem

Principals need to be educational visionaries, instructional leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, politicians, as well as expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Principals are asked to lead at a time when their authority is highly questioned and are held responsible for things that go wrong (Houston, 2000). This can lead to unfair criticism that is broadcast in highly public arenas (Houston, 2000). Rewards and sanctions affecting principals are becoming more common. California law threatens to fire principals as one possible consequence in low-performing schools; while in Portland, Oregon, a portion of a principal’s salary is based on a set of professional standards theoretically linked to student outcomes (Davis et al., 2005). With these kinds of pressures, some future principals may decide to choose other careers if not trained properly.
Educators are choosing early retirement or deciding to remain in mid-level jobs rather than take on the perils of leadership (Houston, 2000). The principalship is a calling, and sometimes seen as a mission–not an impossible mission–but a very sacred one (Houston, 2000). Implementing intensive administrator training programs has the potential to increase the efficacy and retention of administrators, in that principals may be better prepared to handle the myriad challenges associated with running a school (Miller, 2003).

The expectation of the job has evolved into many responsibilities that might need to be more appropriately balanced (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Effective leaders understand how to balance pushing for change, while at the same time protecting aspects of culture, values, and norms worth preserving (Waters et al., 2003). These leaders know when to enforce ideas or change and how to curtail one’s leadership strategies or style accordingly. This combination of knowledge and skills is the essence of balanced leadership (Waters et al., 2003).

Problem and Purpose Statement

The study focused on principals’ perceptions of readiness for their evolving role in high-stakes environments. The role of the principal is constantly changing. Principals are solely responsible for many of the schools’ mandates including, but not limited to, the overall operation of the school. Currently, many schools are suffering from both a lack of qualified administrators and the inability to keep qualified administrators once hired (Maulding et al., 2010). According to McNeese et al. (2009), negative factors of the principalship include ethical dilemmas, time demands, student discipline problems, termination of unfit employees, and union negotiations. Over 50% of the administrators
serving in our nation are eligible for retirement (Gibbs, 2008). Consequently, because of accountability programming, there has never been a more critical time for our schools to have competent leadership (Maulding et al., 2010).

Orr (2006) reported that university programs are the primary means of preparing principals. Some observers have expressed serious reservations about whether these institutions are capable of reengineering leadership preparation programs to educate aspiring principals to lead effectively (Levine, 2005). The past decade has revealed an escalation in the disapproval of preparation programs and participants in these programs insist that these schools be held accountable (Levine, 2005). Schools of education have been blamed for many issues that were not created by these institutions such as intractable social problems, the quality of people who choose to become administrators, low performing schools and school systems, and the inability to close the achievement gaps (Levine, 2005). However, in revamping preparation programs, one must focus on student selection, curriculum and course content, pedagogical strategies, internships, and field experiences (Orr, 2006).

A University of Texas at Austin College of Education study indicated that about 70% of new high school principals leave within five years (College of Education, 2009). The study was conducted between 1996 and 2008 and focused on principal tenure and retention to examine how long newly hired Texas principals were staying on the job. Results revealed that elementary schools have the longest principal tenure and greatest retention rates but that less than 30% of newly hired high school principals stay at the same school at least five years. The study also found that principal retention rates are strongly influenced by the level of student achievement during the principal’s first year of
employment, with the lowest achieving schools having the highest principal turnover. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students in a school is a major determinant in how long a newly hired principal will stay, with principals in high-poverty schools having shorter tenure and lower retention rates. The study found that over 20% of newly hired secondary school principals in the lowest achieving schools or highest-poverty schools leave after only one year on the job. Principal retention is somewhat higher in suburban school districts where most students are White and not economically disadvantaged. Demographics such as principal age, race, and gender appear to play only a small role in principal retention (College of Education, 2009).

Already, some have suggested that the job of principal may have become impossible for all but a few super leaders (Lashway, 2003b). The expectations of the job may discourage qualified educators to pursue careers in leadership and possibly lessen the number of competent applicants (Lashway, 2003b). The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional study was to examine principals’ perceptions of their readiness for the evolving role as principals in today’s schools. This study sought to examine current principals’ perceptions regarding their readiness and comfort level in performing their duties and responsibilities, and their need for additional training. Both before and after school leaders are hired, effective training should be mandated as a part of the job (Mitgang, 2008). Preparation programs must prepare individuals to handle not only managerial issues of the principalship, but also provide individuals the tools to assist with instructional leadership, community relationships, and time management (McNeese, Roberson, & Haines, 2009).
Hypotheses/Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study.

1. Are there gender differences in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be in their role as leaders in today’s high stakes environment?

2. Are experience variables, including years of principal experience, type of advanced degree, and level of school related to perceptions of preparedness?

3. Is degree attainment related to perceptions of preparedness?

4. Is degree attainment related to comfort level in the role of principal?

5. Is degree attainment related to perceptions of need for additional training for principal duties?

Rationale/Significance of the Study

This study is significant because principals are expected to be diverse in numerous areas. The job is sometimes described as never-ending and a responsibility that some days could evolve into a 24/7 expectation (Mitgang, 2008). To lead in today’s schools, principals must be prepared for demands that are personal as well as to be prepared for the demands of government and local agencies (Mitgang, 2008). Being an effective building manager was sufficient previously; however, in the evolving role of schools, high-stakes accountability has changed the view of principals and schools (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005).

This study is also needed to determine if changes should be made in preparation programs. According to Levine (2005), principals are appointed to and educated for jobs that no longer exist. Internships offered to aspiring principals by university preparation programs fail to provide authentic leadership opportunities (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001).
A survey of 61 programs in the 16-state Southern Regional Education Board region found less than one third of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities that create a mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible. Less than one fourth require aspiring principals to lead activities that implement good instructional practices and only 15% require aspiring principals to lead the work of literacy and numeracy task forces to improve student performances in these critical areas (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001).

The survey also found that only one third of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities such as creating or using authentic assessments of student work that set high expectations for all students (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001). Fewer than half of the surveyed university preparation programs require aspiring principals to lead activities in which faculties analyze schoolwide data and examine the performance of subgroups within the school. Only about half of the surveyed universities require aspiring principals to lead activities that support change through quality sustained professional development. Finally, the survey found that about one fourth of the surveyed university preparation programs require aspiring principals to lead activities for organizing and using time and acquiring and using resources to meet the goals of school improvement (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001).

Preparation for the job requires a leader who is willing to be flexible and ready to tackle the issues and problems presented. Houston (2000) referred to leadership as missionary work because of the involvement with saving children, creating community and transforming institutions. The work of a school leader is very dangerous and
spiritually rewarding (Houston, 2000). Moreover, today’s leaders must be reflective practitioners who are able to deal with dilemmas.

The roles, responsibilities, and expectations of leaders have shifted from managerial to focusing on what might be needed to guide and improve the school (Portin, Alejano, Knapp, & Marzolf, 2006). However, a principal must maintain a sense of balance while still being able to handle the managerial day-to-day expectations as well as the instructional leadership. Leadership and management are both important functions, but they have different purposes and they seek to obtain different outcomes (Dembowski, 2006).

Management is defined as a means to forecast, plan, organize, command, control, and create the internal environment of an enterprise where individuals working together in groups can perform efficiently and effectively toward the attainment of group goals (Dembowski, 2006). According to Leithwood and Riehl (2003), leadership is defined as having two functions: providing direction and exercising influence and inspiration in order to achieve the school’s goals. Lashway (2003b) affirmed that principals must serve as leaders for student learning and must know academic content as well as all strategies involved with teacher presentation and master the study of this content.

Jackson and McDermott (2009) declared that leaders are ministers. The root of the word administrator is minister, and ideally ministers’ work is to serve others to bring about greatness (Jackson & McDermott, 2009). Schools need people such as ministers, who look out for what is best. Schools also need people who are devoted to service and to schools. Of vital importance is for schools to have people who have the moral influence to improve conditions for learning and teaching (Jackson & McDermott, 2009).
An effective leader should possess a balance of leadership and management. Leadership risk-taking creates opportunities while management structure and discipline turns opportunities into tangible results (Dembowski, 2006).

Moreover, many authors have previously mentioned dissatisfaction with the organization of some principal preparation programs. The results of this study could be significant for universities in preparing programs for future administrators. These results could also be used by future administrators in choosing which program to receive training.

Assumptions

This study operated under the following assumptions:

1. Participants answered survey questions openly and honestly.
2. Participants were able to understand the survey including directions.
3. Participants volunteered to participate in this study.

Delimitations

The study will begin with the following known delimitations:

1. Only principals in one large school district in the Southern Region of the United States was selected to participate.
2. Only one school district was selected for this research study.
3. The survey was limited to one principal at each school.
4. The survey was piloted with current and former principals.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will help guide the reader in the interpretation and comprehension of this study.
A Nation at Risk. This report examined the quality of education in the United States during the 1980s (Lips, 2008).

Adequate yearly progress (AYP). AYP is an annual measure of student participation and achievement of statewide assessments and other academic indicators (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

Goals 2000. This legislation established a framework to identify world class academic standards, measured student progress, and provided the support students needed to meet expected standards (Portin et al., 2006).

Grandfathered. Allowing an existing operation or conduct to continue legally when a new operation or conduct would be illegal (Black’s Law Dictionary).

High-stakes environment. Federal, state, and local challenges and mandates faced by schools.

Instructional leadership. One who is focused on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making, and accountability (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. The ISLLC standards were first introduced in 1996 and revised in 2008. The standards can be used as a national model by states as they develop desired standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2007).

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). The NAESP was established in 1921 to serve elementary and middle school principals grades K-8 (Brown, 2005).
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The NASSP was established in 1916 to promote excellence in middle level and high school leadership through research-based professional development. A second focus was to ensure that every student could be prepared for postsecondary learning opportunities and be workforce ready (Brown, 2005).

National Education Association. The NEA was established in 1857 to unite as one voice in the cause of public education (Brown, 2005).

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB mandates provide principals with methods to analyze information such as student data, test score trends, longitudinal student data, ethnicity, and gender to gauge strengths and weaknesses (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

Principal. The leader of a grade school or high school.

Principal preparation programs. A principal preparation program is any unit of study that prepares an individual seeking the principalship information and insight into the principalship.

Specialist degree. An intermediate degree between a master’s and a terminal doctoral degree. The degree is designed for people who have a master’s degree in education and want to get an advanced teacher certification (Ehow Education, 2011).

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is based on the impact the leader has on followers. These leaders also garner trust, respect, and admiration from followers (Bass, 1985).
Summary

Principals are expected to accept a multitude of responsibilities in the role of leading schools. These school leaders must be ready for the personal and job related demands to be effective with staff, students, and parents. The role of the principalship has steadily increased and principals must be prepared to meet the challenges.

The discussion began with an introduction and the background of the problem. The researcher introduced the topic of principal duties and requirements. The problem statement thoroughly covered principal preparedness and that university programs are the primary means for preparing principals.

The statement of purpose defined the purpose of this study, which is to determine if principals are prepared for the demanding role of the school leader today. The researcher presented five research questions that guided the study to determine if principals feel that they are prepared to lead in today’s schools. Additionally, this study sought to clarify if additional training is required of principals.

Finally, Chapter I focused on the rationale and significance of the study, including how to prepare for the job as principal and the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of leaders. The chapter concluded by addressing the study’s assumptions and limitations. The last aspect of the chapter addressed the study’s key and integral vocabulary and terminology.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The expectation of schools and the role of principals are continually evolving. Many years ago, principals could fulfill the demands of accountability simply by working hard and following accepted professional standards (Lashway, 1999). New principals, having completed a principal preparation program are presumed to be prepared, and receive little direction and are left to sink or swim (Lashway, 2003a). Additionally, new principals that lead a school today face a considerably different environment than principals five years ago (Lashway, 2003c). According to Fullan (1997), principals are either overloaded with what they are doing or overloaded with all the things they think they should be doing.

Background

At the inception of education, schools were not led by principals, but rather by single teachers or masters who were answerable to the local community (Kafka, 2009). As schools became larger in the 1800s, the principal-teacher position was created and was largely held by a male. Kafka (2009) reported that in the 1800s the principal-teacher also handled some clerical and administrative duties that kept the school in order, such as assigning classes, conducting discipline, maintaining the building, taking attendance, and ensuring that school began and ended on time. As the century progressed, the principal-teacher eventually lost the teaching responsibilities and became primarily a manager, administrator, supervisor, instructional leader, and increasingly, a politician (Kafka, 2009).
The principal remained responsible for attendance and other simple tasks; however, the principal also maintained the grounds and gained authority over teachers (Kafka, 2009). By the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the principal in most large cities was recognized as a powerful and important head of the school. Moreover, as the principal role began to expand, central offices in many cities were forced to hand over more responsibility and decision-making ability to school leaders (Kafka, 2009).

The notion that principals were independent was critical. Assistant superintendents were hired later to closely supervise principals, but principals remained the head of individual schools. Principals decided to professionalize the principalship by organizing professional organizations to gain more local authority (Kafka, 2009). Although principals were once seen as teachers, the principalship gradually came to be seen as a distinct and increasingly prominent profession.

The United States has transitioned from an industrial to a global information-based economy, and the job of a school leader has evolved into increased expectations (Levine, 2005). The accountability measures of students, teachers, and administrators are continuously scrutinized. Education has been turned into one of the most powerful engines driving the economy (Levine, 2005). To be employable in an information society, children need more advanced skills and knowledge than what was required in the past (Levine, 2005).

The principal role of today has been met with an accumulation of expectancy that has increased the complexity of the position (Kafka, 2009). Principals must be more of an instructional leader to increase student achievement. Kafka (2009) contended that the history of the principalship demonstrates that although specific pressures might be new,
the call for principals to accomplish great things with little support, and to be all things to all people, is certainly not new. Specifically, because this rapidly changing role requires principals to lead their schools in the rethinking of goals, they must recruit and retain excellent staff members, provide professional development to match identified goals/priorities, build morale, and engage in continuous evaluation and school improvement (Levine, 2005).

Theoretical Foundation

Reeves (2006) noted that the dimensions of leadership are clearly defined. These dimensions are a wide range of characteristics and skills that are important for educational leaders. These dimensions describe components of leadership that are necessary on every leadership team, but rarely present in a single leader (Reeves, 2006). Reeves (2006) shared that leaders will not embody every dimension but should ensure that every leadership dimension is represented by one or some members of the school leadership team. Reeves declared that the dimensions of leadership include the following:

1. **Visionary leadership.** Infinite possibilities and unlimited horizons. Effective visions help individuals understand that they are part of a larger world and also reassure the individual importance to the organization.

2. **Relational leadership.** Listening without interruption or prejudgment, respect for confidentiality, and genuine empathy achieved through deliberate inquiry.

3. **Systems leadership.** Takes the time to understand each interaction and its impact on the entire system, and then communicate this complexity in a manner that enables each member of the organization to understand.
4. **Reflective leadership.** Takes time to think about lessons learned, record small wins and setbacks, document conflicts between values and practice, and notice trends that emerge over time.

5. **Collaborative leadership.** Teachers and administrators seek common ground.

6. **Communicative leadership.** Personal communication (voice to voice, pen to paper, heart to heart) is the best kind of communication for leaders.

In preparing leaders for the future, these dimensions of leadership should be considered in preparation programs (Reeves, 2006).

Equally significant in the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of administrators is building relationships. According to Maxwell (1999), people do not care how much others know until they realize how much others care. Administrators who become soul friends to the school community are better able to help teachers connect to students (Jackson & McDermott, 2009). Becoming a soul friend involves creating a circle of belonging in which (a) students and staff feel safe to share their cultural perspectives and personal contexts; (b) understanding and recognition are nourished and celebrated; and (c) meaningful engagement around powerful ideas flourishes. Held up by the support of fearless leaders, teachers and students can themselves be free (Jackson & McDermott, 2009).

Building relationships is also connected to becoming a soul friend, where one is getting to the heart and passion of what is important to employees, students, and the school. Deal and Peterson (1999) believed that a company can grow without losing the passion and personality that built the company, but only if it is driven not by profits but by values and by people because the key is heart. In creating a culture that will sustain
motivation and commitment, Deal and Peterson (1999) shared that school leaders should take on the following symbolic roles:

1. Historian. Seeking to understand the social and normative past of the school.
2. Anthropological sleuth. Analyzing and probing for the current set of norms, values, and beliefs that define the current culture.
3. Visionary. Working with other leaders and the community to define a deeply value-focused picture of the future for the school.
4. Symbol. Affirming values through dress, behavior, attention, and routines.
5. Potter. Shapes and shaped by the school’s heroes, rituals, traditions, ceremonies, and symbols.
6. Poet. Using the language to reinforce values and sustaining the school’s best image.
7. Actor. Improvising the school’s inevitable dramas, comedies, and tragedies.
8. Healer. Overseeing transitions and change in the life of the school, while healing the wounds of conflict and loss.

Schools will find their own path if the school has widespread leadership that can help find the right direction (Deal & Peterson, 2009).

Jackson and McDermott (2009) have indicated that being connected with strong relationships contributes to staff members, students, and other stakeholders feeling safe enough to share perspectives where meaningful engagement around powerful ideas flourish. Moreover, Maxwell (1999) stated that to manage and cultivate good relationships as a leader, three steps must be achieved: (a) having a leader’s head;
understanding people; (b) having a leader’s heart or loving people; and (c) extending a leader’s hand or helping people.

All principals regardless of where they fall on a continuum of most effective to least effective should have high expectations of teachers (Whitaker, 2003). Effective leaders also understand that the real secret to superior execution is providing a clear focus for the organizations and empowering employees to come up with solutions to current and future challenges (Goodwin, 2008). Leaders must also be cheerleaders for teachers in encouraging them to learn new skills and integrate the learned skills within the classroom.

A key role of an effective leader is to create a positive atmosphere and understand the power of praise (Whitaker, 2003). If one desires to be an effective leader, having a positive attitude is essential (Maxwell, 1999). However, not only should the principal be the cheerleader for teachers but also the public relations person in the community by encouraging all stakeholders to invest in students and continue to fulfill individual responsibilities to ensure academic success. In completing these tasks, principals must also participate in professional development so that the principal’s learning is translated to teachers (Maxwell, 1999).

Leadership Types

Rooney (2008) believed that leaders must possess the following characteristics in today’s schools: (a) a relationship builder, (b) a listener, (c) a reflector prior to major decision making, and (d) a mentee of a mentor or critical friend. Additionally, Hale and Moorman (2003) believed that schools of the 21st century require a new kind of principal, one who fulfills the following roles:
1. **Instructional leader.** One who is focused on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making and accountability.

2. **Community leader.** One who is imbued with a big picture awareness of the school’s role in society; shared leadership among educators, community partners and residents; close relations with parents and others; and advocacy for school capacity building and resources.

3. **Visionary leader.** One who has a demonstrated commitment to the conviction that all children will learn at high levels and is able to inspire others inside and outside the school building with this vision.

Among the three types of leaders, the priority is instructional leadership (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The traits of an effective educational leader are infinite. Becoming a good leader is a lifelong learning process (Maxwell, 2005).

Instructional leadership is most critical due to leaders needing the knowledge of what is missing in a classroom, what is missing in lesson plans, or what might be missing when participating in an informal walk-through (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Kafka (2009) shared that the expectation of classroom visitations and being aware instructionally, was expected of principals by one’s superintendents in the late 1800s. Principals during the 1800s were expected to walk classrooms daily, provide personalized instruction, conference with teachers, and advise on how to improve instructional practices.

Hale and Moorman (2003) asserted that today’s instructional leaders should be (a) leaders of instruction, (b) able to shape an organization that demands and supports excellent instruction and dedicated learning by students and staff, and (c) able to connect
the outside world and its resources to the school and its work. In addition, leaders of
instruction should be skilled observers of instruction and able to give valuable feedback
in ways that encourage and motivate teachers to improve practices (Hale & Moorman,
2003).

Moreover, strong leadership is the heart of all effective organizations (Hale &
Moorman, 2003). Principals may spend extensive amounts of time in classrooms, while
others may create collaborative teams of teachers or grade level leaders to implement
goals for instructional improvement. Hale and Moorman contended that the clarion call
today is for adept instructional leaders, not mere building managers. Principals’ abilities
are essential to the task of building schools that promote powerful teaching and learning
for all students (LaPointe, Meyerson, & Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Bass (1985) explained that transformational leadership is another leadership style,
initially introduced by leadership expert James McGregor Burns. Later, Bass expanded
on Burns’ original ideas to develop what is today referred to as Bass’ transformational
leadership theory. Transformational leadership can be defined based on the impact on its
followers. Furthermore, transformation leaders garner trust, respect, and admiration from
followers. Bass believed that transformational leadership consists of four different
components:

1. *Intellectual stimulation.* Transformational leaders not only challenge the status
quo, but also encourage creativity among followers. There is encouragement
to explore new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn.
2. **Individualized consideration.** Transformational leadership also involves offering support and encouragement. Communication lines are kept open so that ideas flow freely. Direct recognition is offered for unique contributions.

3. **Inspirational motivation.** Transformational leaders have a clear vision that is articulated to followers.

4. **Idealized influence.** Transformational leaders serve as role models.

Transformational leadership starts with the development of a vision, a view of the future that will excite and convert potential followers (Changing Minds, 2011). The vision should be created by the leadership team and then shared with the staff. A transformational leader must then sell the vision and take every opportunity to convince others to climb on board with the vision, and to garner the trust of the staff and stakeholders (Changing Minds, 2011).

The transformational leadership type is said to occur when one or more persons engage in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Leithwood, 2002). In addition, Leithwood contended that the transformational leadership style fostered the acceptance of group goals, communicated high performance expectations, and challenged people intellectually. Organizations that use a transformational strategy have the opportunity to motivate and inspire employees, especially when the company is facing a challenge or change in direction.

Leadership coaching is another strategy that should be studied to achieve the challenging results faced by school leaders (Reiss, 2009). This coaching model allows leaders to have a non-evaluative colleague to discuss ideas, concerns, and seek advice. Some leader coach relationships require the coach to be the supervisor/evaluator, but this
relationship is not recommended. School leaders and coaches can decide how often to meet and engage in one-on-one, confidential coaching on a regular basis (Reiss, 2009).

Benefits of coaching include (a) achievement of the organization’s objectives, (b) leader retention, (c) increased job satisfaction, (d) increased decision making, (e) improved working relationships, (f) reduced stress, and (g) increased motivation (Reiss, 2009). Additionally, coaching provides technical expertise, such as data analysis, while also focusing on issues with emotional intelligence, communication, and interpersonal skills (Butler, 2008). Principals are alone in local school buildings, and typically do not have someone to discuss new ideas. Leadership failure and high turnover rates can be avoided and successful longevity enhanced by school districts providing coaching support to local school administrators (Reiss, 2009).

Coaching is focused on success, flexibility, and respect for the individual (Reiss, 2009). Additionally, becoming a more effective leader is best learned in real settings, with real issues facing the leader than at off-site canned workshops (Reiss, 2009). Ideally, leadership coaching can help the teaching staff because leaders feel more confident in the execution of their duties. Moreover, coaching engages individuals in learning about strengths, lifelong goals, and the future they want to create (Reiss, 2009). Coaching can improve and develop leaders into great leaders. Coaching is not telling principals what to do but is about building principals’ internal capacity (Butler, 2008).

Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2007) designed and adopted the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards that were first introduced in 1996 and revised in 2008. These standards can be used as a national
model by states as they develop desired standards. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council Program Standards guide the planning, implementing, and accrediting of administrator preparation programs (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2007). Assessment standards provide test specifications to determine how licensed administrators should demonstrate entry-level knowledge and skills. Evaluation standards guide how practicing administrators should be evaluated as they move toward expert performance. Practice standards can be used to establish professional career plans and guide professional development as leaders demonstrate continuous improvement toward expert performance.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2007) has recognized that the ISLLC Standards are as follows:

1. An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders;
2. An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
3. An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
4. An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;

5. An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and

6. An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social economic, legal, and cultural context.

Management vs. Leadership

Success in organizations requires a balance of both leadership and management (Dembowski, 2006). In some schools today, the role of the principal encompasses being the lawyer, fire fighter, disciplinarian, instructional leader, change agent, custodian, mediator, police officer, budget analyst, and technology champion, while steadily improving achievement for all students. In this new era of accountability, where school leaders are expected to demonstrate bottom-line results and use data to drive decisions, the skill and knowledge of principals are more vital than they ever were (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

Management represents doing things right; leadership represents doing the right things (McGowan & Miller, 2001). Effective leadership from school administrators is crucial in today’s schools. The differentiation between management and leadership is (a) administration/management tends to focus on maintaining existing relationships and order, using proven ways of doing things, working within what people think is desirable and, working harder and longer; and (b) leadership is about taking risks, striking out in
new directions, creating visions, tapping imaginations, changing the way people think about what is desirable, creating excitement about working with children and communities, building new relationships and structures and changing the existing cultures. While management skills are necessary aspects of the school leader’s job, management skills and time are no longer sufficient to meet the escalating challenges and demands (McGowan & Miller, 2001).

McGowan and Miller (2001) declared that with education reform and continuous mandates coming to state governments, school districts and local administrators should offer three principles to ground a proposed school leadership effort:

1. Be willing to understand and promote leadership development at a systemic level but be able to act at a local level. Continually raise awareness among all stakeholders about the importance of leadership and leadership development. This will require increased understanding and appreciation of how leadership relates to student learning and achievement as well as education culture, funding, legislation and union constraints.

2. Base efforts on the understanding that leadership development differs from management development. People can be appointed to management positions, but leadership positions are earned. A key step is helping superintendents, principals, and school board chairs understand who they are, what they believe, what their vision is for the future, what their most important values are and how one’s behavior affects others.

3. Customize leadership development of individuals and teams to be effective at the local level. Customization should be thought of in terms of action research,
which includes gathering data on existing leadership capabilities, capacities, and challenges; analyzing the data; brainstorming possible strategies; and identifying and implementing these strategies.

Former Secretary of State Powell remarked that leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible (Harari, 2003). McGowan and Miller (2001) believed that people cannot teach each other the effective leadership qualities of courage, commitment, and empathy, but people can develop the kind of organization culture and systems that encourage and support these qualities. McGowan and Miller further affirmed that the time has come to move forward from intent to impact through the commitment of resources and practices to develop and support leaders focused on authentic school reform.

Mitgang (2008) concluded that when the right school leader is picked, great teachers will come and stay. Pick the wrong one and over time good teachers leave, mediocre ones stay, and the school gradually declines. Too often, however, school districts do not invest the requisite level of care, resources, and hard work into the critical mission of recruiting and identifying school leaders (Mitgang, 2008). Most districts have neither the capacity nor the data systems to infuse rigor into the principal selection process, and so they rely on their best judgment, and sometimes even pure inertia (Mitgang, 2008). Hess and Kelly (2005) asserted that the rise of charter schooling, increasing school choice options, more flexible teacher compensation and hiring have granted thousands of principals new opportunities to exercise discretion and operate with previously unimagined leeway. Moreover, the quality of school leadership is crucial in today’s schools (Hess & Kelly, 2005).
Jackson and McDermott (2009) stated that the best teachers practice what is sometimes called pedagogy of confidence. Strong leaders must also possess this confidence pedagogy. The true measure of leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less (Maxwell, 2005). Leadership is dynamic, and the right to lead must be earned individually with each person that walks into one’s path. Adjectives that have been used by superintendents to describe what characteristics a principal should display include accountable, instructionally capable, ability to close achievement gaps, and capable of improving teacher quality (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

Leadership and Student Achievement

School change is not a simple process or a normal occurrence that can be solved (McGowan & Miller, 2001). Rather, school change is a perplexing equation permeated with variables such as higher expectations, common standards, parent involvement, technology, integrated curricula, assessment, professional development, funding, teaching methodologies, and facilities. McGowan and Miller found that the primary factor underlying the disappointing results of our reform efforts is our inability to recognize and invest in the necessary local leadership capacities and capabilities. Just as the quality of teachers affects students’ academic success, the quality of school leadership is significantly related to student achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000).

Leadership is not about one person, it is about building a shared commitment with all stakeholders and building a leadership team (Mitgang, 2008). Because leadership has such an impact on student achievement, state and district policymakers are shifting leader preparation programs toward a dual focus on leadership skills and management training (Miller, 2003). Principals need core knowledge, as well as management skills, to inform
and lead change. The caliber of leadership in a school can have a dramatic effect on student achievement (Miller, 2003).

The principal is ultimately accountable for school success (Mitgang, 2008). The Pittsburgh Public School District (2009) report declared that a principal’s abilities are central to the task of building schools that promote powerful teaching and learning for all students. Building-level administrators must be steeped in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to supervise a continuous improvement process that measures progress in raising student performance (Maulding et al., 2010). Moreover, Bottoms and O’Neill (2001) declared that to increase student achievement leaders need (a) a comprehensive understanding of classroom and school practices, (b) to know how to work with teachers and others to facilitate continuous student improvement, and (c) to know how to provide the necessary support and professional development to achieve curriculum and instructional practices.

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) suggested 21 leadership behaviors influence student achievement. These behaviors include affirmation that recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures. A good leader is willing to be a change agent, willing to challenge and actively challenge the status quo. A leader proves contingent rewards and recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments. A good leader establishes strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students and fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation. The good leader protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus. Good school leaders have flexibility, adapting their leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and are comfortable with dissent. Good leaders keep their
focus, establishing clear goals and keeping those goals in the forefront of the school’s attention. Strong educational leaders communicate and operate from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling and involve teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies.

Marzano et al. (2005) contended that these 21 responsibilities provide new insights into the job of school leadership. Furthermore, these behaviors included a clear focus, affirmation of the faculty, relationship building, and strength of character (Maulding et al., 2010). These leadership behaviors must be continuous in a school setting in which leaders are consistently referring to the behaviors and following the practices (Maulding et al., 2010).

Coleman-Kiner, principal of Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis, Tennessee, was chosen as the 2011 Race to the Top High School Commencement Challenge winner. The win entitled staff, students, and parents the opportunity to have President Obama give the spring 2011 graduation address. The graduation rate at Booker T. Washington rose from 55% in 2007 to 82% in 2010, which resulted in the school’s win (Coleman-Kiner, 2011). When asked how she was able to make such massive gains, Coleman-Kiner stated that children rise to the expectations given, and they thrive on the support, but before the expectations are set, they are to be loved. Student achievement can be accomplished if led with love. Human interaction is sometimes considered a part of leadership style and theory, but the idea of love is largely absent in school (Coleman-Kiner, 2011).

Coleman-Kiner (2011) contended that when focusing on schools with a microscope intensity and focus without including housing, food, health, and other social-
policy matters sets a trap for educators and children. Additionally, the way the education is approached when dealing with students in poverty is simply unloving. Success with children academically and socially is built on the love that is shown them from teachers and administrators. Gains occurred at Booker T. Washington High School because the principal loved her children, hired teachers who would love the children, and then did her job each day (Coleman-Kiner, 2011).

Schmoker (2006) stated that when focusing on continuous school improvement, three concepts for results exist: (a) meaningful teamwork; (b) clear, measurable goals; and (c) the regular collection and analysis of performance data. Principals must lead their schools through the goal-setting process in which student achievement data is analyzed, improvement areas are identified, and actions for change are initiated (Seremet, Ward, Williamson, & Seikaly, 2010). This process involves working collaboratively with staff and school community to identify discrepancies between current and desired outcomes, to set and prioritize goals to help close the gap, to develop improvement and monitoring strategies aimed at accomplishing the goals, and to communicate goals and change efforts to the entire school community (Seremet et al., 2010). School leaders are expected to promote collaborative problem solving and open communication. Principals are expected to collect, analyze, and use data to identify school needs and plan for needed changes in the instructional program. Then they must implement and monitor the school improvement plan and establish a clear focus on attaining student achievement goals (Seremet et al., 2010). Effective leaders also add value to the impact of classroom and teacher practices and ensure that lasting change flourishes (Miller, 2003).
Pitner (1988) suggested the *reciprocal-effects model* offers a theoretical view and the understanding of the possible link between school leadership and student achievement (see Figure). This model reflects the reciprocal nature of the interaction of leadership, intervening variables, and student achievement, and suggests various interactions through which principals might exhibit leadership behavior in schools over time (Edvantia, 2005). Any subsequent changes in the condition of the school would produce feedback that will, in turn, affect the school leader’s future leadership actions.

**Figure 1.** Reciprocal-effects model.

The reciprocal-effects model assumes that some or all of the relationship between administrators and student achievement occurs through interaction with features of the school organization. This is consistent with the notion that school leader behaviors are ultimately related to student performance through one’s interactions with other people, most notably teachers (Edvantia, 2005). The caliber of leadership in a school can have a dramatic effect on student achievement (Miller, 2003).

**Leadership Authorities**

Sharma (2010) believed that organizations can experience explosive results that help them rise to a completely new level of innovation, performance, and customer loyalty. Sharma discussed the principles that can produce powerful results in a leader’s personal growth. These principles include the idea that leadership and success are one’s birthright— but to be a great leader, one must first become a great person. In order to
provide for personal growth, it is important to meet with a leadership mentor. A good leader must learn that mediocrity has sad costs, but that leadership mastery provides spectacular rewards. No title is needed to be a leader, turbulent times build great leaders. Building deep relationships makes personal leadership stronger (Sharma, 2010).

Collins (2001) contended that few people attain great lives, mostly because a good life is much easier to attain. Good is the enemy of great. Collins defined greatness as not simply a function of circumstance but rather greatness is largely a matter of conscious choice. Collins (2001) sought to find companies that moved from good-to-great. Twenty-one people worked on the project in teams of four to six at a time, and 28 companies were studied. Eleven of the companies were good-to-great, 11 were direct comparisons, and six were unsustained comparisons. Collins defined direct companies as those in the same industry as the good-to-great companies with the same opportunities and similar resources. Unsustained comparisons were defined as companies that made a short-term shift from good to great but failed to maintain sustainability.

Collins (2001) and colleagues concluded that the good-to-great companies did not focus principally on what to do to become great; they focused equally on what not to do and what to stop doing. Collins stated that instead of making a to do list, make a stop doing list. Moreover, Collins discussed how to take a good organization and create one that produces sustained great results, which is defined by the organization. Collins (2001) believed that the brutal facts have to be confronted and the right people need to be placed on the bus. The brutal must be sought and confronted instead of being ignored. Having the right people on the bus, sitting in the right seats, and going in the right
direction is very important for school leaders. Collins advised that when in doubt, do not hire.

Giuliani (2002) discussed 14 principles that can produce powerful results in a leader’s personal growth: (a) first things first; (b) prepare relentlessly; (c) everyone’s accountable, all the time; (d) surround yourself with great people; (e) reflect, then decide; (f) under promise and over deliver; (g) develop and communicate strong beliefs; (h) be your own man; (i) loyalty: the vital virtue; (j) weddings discretionary, funerals mandatory; (k) stand up to bullies; (l) study, read, learn independently; (m) organize around a purpose; and (n) bribe only those who will stay bribed. Giuliani reported how he demonstrated the effectiveness of the lessons learned in his role as mayor of New York with various scenarios and before-and-after examples. Leadership works both ways: it is a privilege, but it carries responsibilities—from imposing a structure suitable to an organization’s purpose to forming a team of people who bring out the best in each other, to taking the right unexpected risks (Giuliani, 2002).

Covey (1989) discussed seven habits that can produce powerful lessons in personal change: (a) be proactive; (b) begin with the end in mind; (c) put first things first; (d) think win/win; (e) seek first to understand, then to be understood; (f) synergize; and (g) sharpen the saw. Covey defined habits as powerful factors in our lives that are also the intersection of knowledge, skill, and desire. These seven habits are characterized as being effective because they are based on principles that result in maximum long-term benefits.

Marzano et al. (2005) believed that the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. If a school is a lively, innovative, child-centered
place and has the status of excellence in teaching, and if students are performing to the best of their abilities, the principal’s leadership could be a reason for the success (Marzano et al., 2005). Leadership is considered essential to the successful functioning of many aspects of a school.

Visionaries and Change Agents

Mitgang (2008) asserted that there are no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. Other factors may contribute to turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst (Mitgang, 2008). Scratch the surface of an excellent school and usually an excellent principal will be present. Peer into a failing school and weak leadership will be present (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Successful leaders are needed in all schools.

Moreover, Mitgang (2008) stated that three sets of practices make up the basic core of successful leadership. Set a direction by articulating a vision for shared organizational purpose, setting high expectations, and monitoring performance. Develop people by creating stimulating opportunities and providing models of effective practice and individual support. Redesign the organization by strengthening the school’s culture, modifying organizational structures, and building collaborative processes. Many now believe that the skills leaders display, or fail to, are vital in attracting and retaining good teachers to a school or a district (Mitgang, 2008).

Gandhi’s vision for leadership went beyond himself. Effective school leaders recognize when change needs to occur and implement the needed changes along with a vision. In educational organizations, there is an assumption that leaders of educational change should be both leaders and managers (Méndez -Morse, 1992).
Leaders of change are visionary leaders, and vision is the basis of the leader’s work (Méndez-Morse, 1992). Leaders should work with staff to develop the vision during the school improvement plan discussions. Méndez-Morse asserted that leaders take the initiative, anticipate and recognize changes in one’s environment, and begin to explore possible courses of action to respond to the changes. Without a vision to challenge followers, principals will not become leaders. Méndez-Morse (1992) shared that leaders who changed organizations take risks and are proactive in affecting the change needed in schools. A connection between a leader’s values and a leader’s vision is crucial for the organization. Additionally, leaders must recognize that people are the organization’s greatest resource. Effective communication and listening are key ingredients in facilitating school change. Leaders are proactive and recognize when changes need to occur. In addition, leaders also recognize changes in the environment and guide the organization to be responsive to the changes (Méndez-Morse, 1992).

Professional Organizations

Professionalizing the principalship became a focus for many school leaders (Brown, 2005). A need to discuss problems and create a network of colleagues became paramount. The establishment of the National Association of Secondary Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) as distinct departments within the National Education Association gave principals an outlet to voice concerns, gain skills, and to have opportunities to network with other persons in the same field (Brown, 2005).

The National Education Association (2010) was established in 1857 with the focus to unite as one voice in the cause of public education. Within the large
organization, subgroups were needed; thus, The NASSP was established in 1916. The mission of NASSP (2010) was to promote excellence in middle level and high school leadership through research based professional development and advocacy to ensure that every student be prepared for postsecondary learning opportunities and be workforce ready. The NASSP’s (2010) primary responsibilities are to advance middle level and high school education by promoting high professional standards and focusing attention on school leaders’ challenges. The NASSP provides a national voice for school leaders by building public confidence in education and strengthening the role of the principal as instructional leader. The NASSP also publicizes the issues and interests of members in the news media.

The NAESP (2010) was created in 1921 to serve elementary and middle schools principals in grades K-8. The NAESP sought to do the following:

1. Serve as an advocate for children and youth by ensuring them access to an excellent education;
2. Sustain and promote high professional standards and leadership among principals;
3. Heighten public awareness of elementary and middle school education as the foundation for all future academic achievement;
4. Serve as a national representative for elementary and middle school education to Congress, the Executive Branch, state and federal agencies, the news media, researchers, evaluators, and other education and child advocacy groups;
5. Serve as an advocate for the professional tenets and priorities of elementary and middle school principals; and
6. Ensure that education continues to be recognized as a matter of national priority.

**Education Reform Programs**

Portin et al. (2006) determined that historically, the overall responsibility for a school’s operation has fallen to the principal—a role that through much of the last century was largely vested in managerial expertise. Successful schools in the mid-20th century were often identified as clean and regimented institutions, well-oiled machines, running smoothly, and causing little stir, especially for district superintendents (Portin et al., 2006). Bottoms and O’Neill (2001) stated principals were once expected to do little more than hold school. Superintendents and school boards were satisfied if every classroom had a teacher, if every student had a set of textbooks, and if every class moved from one grade to the next at an orderly pace. If students dropped out of school, the failure was not surprising. As long as discipline prevailed and the buses ran on time, a principal’s job was secure (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001). Consequently, being an effective building manager was acceptable; however, in the evolving role of American schools, high-stakes accountability has changed the job requirements of principals and schools (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). Principals are still required to complete all responsibilities and tasks, but now even more is required.

Principals of the past were solely managers; but in today’s schools, the position has become more political (Kafka, 2009). Legislators, policymakers, governmental officials, and district leaders increasingly seek to hold schools accountable for student achievement. Inevitably, the focus is on the individual leaders of schools as agents of success or sources of failure. Furthermore, this level of responsibility may constitute a
high level of stress if one has not been adequately prepared in one’s principal preparation program (Kafka, 2009).

During the 1980s, schools were greatly influenced by *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1983). The National Commission of Excellence in Education focused on the following educational charges:

1. Assessing the quality of teaching and learning in the nation’s public and private schools, colleges, and universities;
2. Comparing U.S. schools and colleges with those of other advanced nations;
3. Studying the relationship between college admissions requirements and student achievement in high school;
4. Identifying educational programs that result in notable student success in college;
5. Assessing the degree to which major social and educational changes in the last quarter century have affected student achievement; and
6. Defining problems that must be faced and overcome if a successful course of excellence in education is pursued.

The final report of the commission was delivered along with recommendations in 1983 (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The Commission reported that U.S. students were at risk of falling behind students around the world and that this imperiled national security and future prosperity (Lips, 2008). The Commission consisted of 18 members from the private sector, government officials, and education colleagues. Thirty-eight recommendations divided among five major categories were suggested by the commission. The major categories were content, standards and
expectations, time, teaching, and leadership and fiscal support (Lips, 2008). Leaders were assessed by a list of characteristics that determined effective schools.

The 1990s brought another initiative, Goals 2000: Educate America Act, P.L. 103-227, signed into law on March 31, 1994 (Portin et al., 2006). This act provided resources to states and communities to ensure that all students reached their full potential by the year 2000 (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2010). Goals to be attained by the year 2000 were as follows:

1. All children in the United States will start school ready to learn;
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%;
3. All students will leave Grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, the arts, history and geography;
4. U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement;
5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
6. Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning;
7. The nation’s teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the
knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century; and

8. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

Goals 2000 established a framework to identify world-class academic standards, to measure student progress, and to provide the support students need to meet the expected standards (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2010). The central points of the Act were school readiness, school completion, student academic achievement, leadership in math and science, adult literacy, safe and drug-free schools, teacher professional development, and parental participation. Goals 2000 was based on the premise that when more is expected of students, students will reach higher levels of achievement (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2010).

The 2000s brought the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). This legislation funds a number of federal programs aiming at improving the performance of U.S. schools by increasing the standards of accountability for states, school districts, and schools, as well as providing parents the flexibility of opting out when a school fails and transferring to another school that made adequate yearly progress (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). NCLB also promotes an increased focus on reading and math. If the education laws remain the same, the mandates in this act are to be met in 2014 by all schools and students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the NCLB law is based on four main principles:
1. States must develop their own academic achievement standards and benchmarks, to which the federal government will hold them accountable;

2. Failing schools are designated as such, and parents may transfer a student out of a low-achieving or unsafe school to another public school;

3. States can transfer federal dollars between different grant programs to improve school progress; and

4. Education programs must be based on NCLB sanctioned scientifically based research.

Increasingly, student academic performance and school success have become the core responsibilities of the school principal (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001). Issues of keeping hallways and playgrounds safe, smooth operations of busing and meal services, and management have become less of a priority (Kafka, 2009). Additionally, to enforce the higher student achievement standards, legislatures have created high-stakes assessment systems that hold schools accountable for student achievement (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001).

President Obama (2010) stated that by 2020 the United States should lead the nation in college completion. To accomplish this goal, the expectations for students and schools must be raised. Students must be well prepared for college after graduating high school. President Obama also stated that schools must ensure that they have higher great teachers and principals. States should develop and implement a teacher and principal evaluation instrument to identify highly effective practices based on student growth and achievement (Obama, 2010). Additionally, President Obama proposed to provide resources to states and districts to create, maintain, and support effective educators,
focusing on improving their effectiveness in high-needs schools. Furthermore, President Obama believed that principal leadership is important and should be recognized to support teachers. States will work to address principalship effectiveness utilizing activities, such as strengthening principal preparation programs and creating training and support programs for high-needs schools’ principals.

The principal’s job description has expanded to a point where today’s school leader is expected to perform in the role of chief learning officer, with ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the enterprise (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001). Moreover, the principal is accountable for the success of every student and teacher in the school. Bottoms and O’Neill stated that this formidable challenge demands a new breed of school leaders, with skills and knowledge far greater than those expected of school managers in the past.

Principal Preparation Programs

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, business exerted considerable influence over preparation programs for school administrators (Murphy, 2001). Programs stressed technical and mechanical aspects of administration, specific and immediate tasks, and the practical dimensions of the job. Murphy argued that little thought was given to the theoretical underpinnings of the work of superintendents and principals. In 1905, the first two doctoral degrees were awarded in educational administration, and by the end of World War II, 125 colleges and universities had such programs (Levine, 2005). However, during these years, there continued to be differing opinions on what should be taught in preparation programs. Deans and directors of colleges of education agreed to disagree concerning if programs should be practitioner-
based, if should programs should be modeled after law and medical schools, or if
programs should offer the science of education research in preparing leaders (Levine,
2005).

The predominant trend between 1950 and 1985 was the infusion of content from
the social sciences into preparation programs (Murphy, 2001). Murphy reported that a
connection existed between science and administration, which intended to produce a
movement of foundationally, scientifically supported knowledge in educational
administration in lieu of the seat of the pants literature already in existence. Hale and
Moorman (2003) maintained that principal preparation programs should establish a
leadership development system that produces principals who have an understanding of
which school and classroom practices improve student achievement. The preparation
program should produce principals who know how to work with teachers to bring about
positive change. These principals support teachers in carrying out instructional practices
that help all students succeed. Finally, these training principals can prepare accomplished
teachers in becoming principals.

Today, educational leadership is being recast with materials from the intellectual
and moral domains of the profession (Murphy, 2001). A deeper understanding of the
centrality of learning, teaching, and school improvement within the role of the school
administrator should be the main vision. Additionally, principal preparation programs
should primarily maintain a focus and concern on teaching and learning as opposed to
management.

Creighton and Jones (2001) stated that graduate school programs must determine
the requirements of principal preparation programs, and if the correct individual is being
recruited, self-selected, and/or recommended. Creighton and Jones reviewed 450 principal certification programs and found that their admission criteria gave the most weight to Graduate Record Examination scores and undergraduate grade point averages. Six percent of the programs required personal interviews and only one university used assessment center activities as part of the process. Only 40% of the participants in the programs listed teaching experience as a requirement. With this data, imperative, major changes need to occur in principal preparation programs (Creighton & Jones, 2001).

Lashway (2003c) maintained that as leaders face new roles and heightened expectations, principals require new forms of training, and university preparation programs are coming under increased scrutiny. Specifically, the demand that principals have a positive impact on student achievement challenges traditional assumptions, practices, and structures in leadership preparation programs (Lashway, 2003c). One charge frequently leveled against preparation programs is that they are unbalanced; that students are saturated with education theory while enrolled in graduate programs but receive limited exposure to the types of professional challenges likely to be encountered in the real world (Lumsden, 1993).

A formation of stronger ties between public education and universities providing authentic and on-going school based experiences, less emphasis on management, and more emphasis on instructional leadership will provide much of the framework around which leadership programs must be built (Barnett, 2004). The lack of partnerships between colleges, universities, and school districts affects the selection and admission of candidates and the design and conduct of the preparation program (Hale & Moorman,
To prepare leaders for the future, a major shift in principal preparation programs needs to occur (Barnett, 2004).

Today’s partnerships must focus on the areas of greatest need for schools and districts (Hale & Moorman, 2003). University programs must analyze current programs, identify content gaps, research leadership standards, and align programs to the standards (Hale & Moorman, 2003). These programs must also include more field experiences and portfolio presentations on learned experiences while in the field. The lack of strong working relationships with school districts could result in developing learning laboratories in which student principals can make protected or mentored mistakes from which they can learn and develop (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Preparation programs do not usually include a detailed study of how to manage school budgets (Barnett, 2004). Future leaders should be required to develop budgets and provide a description of how the budget affects the instructional program and student achievement (Barnett, 2004). Universities have not felt the urgency in studying and updating their principal preparation programs. Perhaps this could be achieved in part through curriculum alignment work, requiring expected course outcomes to align with applicable national standards, working with practitioners in identified effective schools, and putting into place on-going program assessments with strategies to improve those areas not meeting the needs of today’s educational leaders (Barnett, 2004).

Specific Principal Preparation Programs

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (2008) initiated significant changes in the process for potential educational leaders to receive leadership certification. The new rule requires school systems to work in concert with leadership preparation
institutions to prepare individuals for leadership certification. In the past, leaders received L5, L6, or L7 certificates when participating in a leadership program. The new mandates required persons interested in leadership to earn a performance-based certificate to have a leadership position in the state of Georgia (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2008).

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission was prompted to initiate changes because many educators were being paid for their highest degrees without holding leadership positions in their schools. However, leaders who received leadership certificates prior to September 30, 2009 are grandfathered and will be able to secure leadership positions and renew certificates without being mandated to get the performance-based leadership certification. When candidates were hired in leadership positions, school systems were required to provide performance-based assignments to meet the performance-based leadership certification requirements. The following are characteristics of Georgia’s new program:

1. Close collaboration should occur between school systems, universities, and RESAs;

2. Collaboration will allow some customizing of preparation to best meet the needs of leaders and school systems;

3. Candidates are pre-selected by the school system and assigned in a leadership positions;

4. Candidates are assigned a coach and a beginning leader candidate support team;

5. Limited resources are focused on candidates who have demonstrated leadership potential and have communicated a desire to occupy a leadership position; and
6. Accountability is placed on candidates who must demonstrate proficiency through performance of real duties in real settings.

Principal preparation programs in some universities are being revamped to meet the needs of future school leaders (Mitgang, 2008). Three principal preparation programs housed at Delta State University, Wichita State University, and East Tennessee State University are anchored on teaching and learning with an emphasis on the role of the principal as an instructional leader (Hale & Moorman, 2003). LaPointe and Davis (2006) contended that the following four preparation programs are also exemplary with a tight focus on instructional leadership: The Educational Leadership Academy at the University of San Diego, San Diego School District; The Principal’s Institute at Bank Street College, Region 1 of the New York City Public Schools; The University of Connecticut’s Administrator Preparation Program, Hartford Connecticut Public School District; and Jefferson County, Kentucky Public Schools. These programs were put in place to meet the challenges of leadership in the 21st century (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

The Delta State University program was inaugurated in 1998 (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Delta State University is surrounded by one of the poorest regions in the United States. The program at Delta State was created because of an expressed need to leverage change in the Mississippi Delta region and the ability of its graduates to make a difference in the lives of children in area schools (LaPointe, Davis, & Cohen, 2007). A group of educators sat down and discussed the state of the schools in the Delta region. The reading and math data of all Mississippi students was compared ethnically to similar data of all United States students (LaPointe et al., 2007). Since student data trends were
extremely low, a tough decision was needed in determining how to turn around the schools in the Mississippi Delta region.

With the support of the dean of education at Delta State University, the committed educators drafted a plan to address the needs of students and teachers (LaPointe et al., 2007). The Delta State University School of Education faculty completely redesigned the administrator credential program (LaPointe et al., 2007). The dean solicited assistance from the State Superintendent of Education and the Mississippi State legislature. As a result, a full-time program, the Mississippi State Sabbatical Program, was created.

Delta State provided a full-time internship experience with financial support so that teachers could leave the classroom for a year to study to become administrators (LaPointe et al., 2007). Fifteen prospective principals are selected to participate each year. Candidates who are not nominated by their employing schools districts are able to apply on their own but do not receive the same benefits as those nominated (Hale & Moorman, 2003). An additional requirement is for candidates to acquire a passion of developing into school leaders capable of transforming the poor, mostly rural schools in the region (LaPointe et al., 2007). Upon completion of the program, candidates receive a master’s degree in educational leadership, and after passing the School Leaders Licensure Assessment exam candidates receive certification as a public school administrator in Mississippi. To repay the state, candidates who were nominated to participate in the preparation program serve as an administrator for five years in the district (LaPointe et al., 2007). Candidates who were not nominated must work three years in the district for repayment to the state.
The sabbatical program served as a major recruitment initiative for prospective school administrators in Mississippi (LaPointe et al., 2007). Other universities were approved to participate in the sabbatical program: Jackson State University, University of Mississippi, University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi College, and Mississippi State University. Furthermore, this preparation program has been proven a nontraditional approach in preparing principals for the school leadership role (LaPointe et al., 2007).

Wichita State University’s program leads to building-level licensure and a master’s degree in educational administration (Hale & Moorman, 2003). This program is a two-year program in which students are placed in a cohort that eventually becomes the learning family. Real-world experiences begin almost immediately as the student is placed with a mentor principal. The mentor principals allow the student to participate in daily experiences in leadership and then discuss strengths and weaknesses of the student in handling the issues. The required curriculum is focused on educational leadership, school finance, interpersonal relations and supervision, school law and personnel management, curriculum and learning theory, school closing and school opening, and diversity and social justice (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

East Tennessee State University students involved in the master’s degree program in educational leadership move through the degree program as part of a cohort group (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Students are selected based on academic credentials, leadership potential, and experience. East Tennessee State University collaborated with Greeneville City Schools and Kingsport City Schools in creating an effective principal preparation program focused on a philosophy of emergent curriculum and continuous program design (Foley, Glover, & Scott, 2008).
Students in the preparation program at East Tennessee State are required to complete an extensive field program in addition to a professional portfolio (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The portfolio also serves to spotlight skills and accomplishments that will be of interest to future employees. Evaluative tools include but are not limited to (a) written examinations, (b) videotaped performances, (c) oral presentations, (d) research projects, and (e) material development (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Foley et al. (2008) identified the following major focuses of the preparation program:

1. Providing opportunities for aspiring administrators to respond to real-world situations involving the use of their planning and decision-making skills by developing relationships with practicing school administrators and principals;

2. Linking opportunities to the objectives of the courses in the principal training program and the needs of the school as determined collaboratively by the students and principal of the school and facilitated by the university professor;

3. Vertically aligning the course objectives and learning outcomes of each course with field opportunities in the school as identified in the case study;

4. Providing an opportunity for analysis with the university professor within the safety of the university classroom;

5. Students continuing to study, research, and analyze best practices as plans are developed;

6. Students implementing plans in the school under the guidance of the cooperating principal;

7. Students reflecting on the process and the outcomes, and redesigning opportunities for learning; and
8. Continuing dialogue among student, cooperating principal, and university professor providing opportunities for renewal of objectives and alignment with field opportunities.

The programs in San Diego’s continuum of leadership preparation and development is a deeply aligned partnership between Educational Leadership Development Academy and San Diego Unified School District (LaPointe & Davis, 2006). The preservice and inservice programs support ongoing development of leaders across the stages of their careers, focusing on rich experiences, strong mentoring, and adult learning. The programs in New York City developed a continuum of leadership preparation. The continuum is focused and coherent to create leadership for improved teaching and learning in all district schools (LaPointe & Davis, 2006).

The University of Connecticut’s Administrator Preparation Program is dedicated to continuous program improvement and deep support for administrator candidates (LaPointe & Davis, 2006). The program is transforming a high quality but traditional university-based program into an innovative program that integrates graduate coursework and field experiences. Additionally, Hartford is seeking to establish a focus and common language around instructional leadership.

LaPointe and Davis (2006) reported that with sustained leadership since the late 1980s, the Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky has created a leadership development program tailored to the needs of principals and their districts. Working with the University of Louisville, the Jefferson County Public Schools created a pathway from the classroom to the principalship using professional development programs. The
professional development programs were designed around identified needs (LaPointe & Davis, 2006).

The Cobb County School District’s (CCSD; 2010) vision for leadership management is to create a deliberate and systematic effort to ensure leadership continuity in key positions while encouraging individual advancement. The Human Resources Department has an application period in which candidates are recommended by local principals and department heads. Following the submission of applications, human resources and area assistant superintendents select candidates. Two academies are available for applicants: the leadership academy for prospective administrators and the leadership academy for aspiring principals (CCSD, 2010).

To participate in the leadership academy for prospective administrators, candidates must have a master’s degree and hold a valid leadership certificate and a minimum of three years successful educational experience. The goals for the leadership academy for prospective administrators include (a) individual assessments leading to a professional development plan to prepare future leaders, (b) developing decision analysis for school leaders, (c) applying effective behaviors and practices that support proficiency of the Georgia School Keys and standards based instruction, and (d) intense training on understanding effective school operations systems. Candidates for the leadership academy for aspiring principals in the CCSD must hold a valid leadership certificate and have a minimum of three years successful experience in school administration (CCSD, 2010).

1. The CCSD (2010) required that both academies have similar requirements and assessments that must be met for completion: (a)
attendance/participation, (b) written reflections, (c) professional growth goals, (d) creating professional resumes, (e) shadowing, (f) book studies, and (g) field-based experiences. The academies were established to provide the needed professional development opportunities to meet the needs of prospective and current administrators in the school district (CCSD, 2010). Many of the administrators in the CCSD participated in one or both of the leadership academies.

Environmental Forces Affecting School Leaders

The environment can heavily influence a school leader’s work and a leader’s decision in taking the job (Portin et al., 2006). Environmental forces include ethnic changes in communities served by the school, policy actions of the federal and state governments, and policy responses of the local school district. These developments are wielding a profound influence on how school leadership is viewed by education stakeholders and how leaders should meet the responsibilities of the job. School leaders do not have much control with either of these two forces. Principals can give their opinions regarding proposed legislation and policy changes, but the ultimate decisions are made by legislators (Portin et al., 2006).

Achievement and accountability pressures have extended the job description of principals over the last few years (Heim, 1996). The school principal, as the primary leader and chief executive officer of the school, has the responsibility to ensure that demands for school accountability are adequately met (Heim, 1996). Portin et al. (2006) believed that the environment for school leadership today and in the near future will require those who take on leadership roles to acquire knowledge and skills, commit to a
different set of core values, and develop new images of possibility for the schools they lead.

Diversity aspects of race, ethnicity, language, and religious groups bring an additional dimension to administrative decisions pertaining to student needs (Portin et al., 2006). Student needs include difficult decisions about how to tailor instruction and provide support services for all children to succeed. The existing achievement gap among students calls for a different kind of school leader. Focused attention to the achievement gap will help states address the high expectations of NCLB (Portin et al., 2006).

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is a requirement that individual school districts, leaders, and teachers must adhere to in meeting the mandates of the NCLB laws (Georgia Department of Education, 2010). AYP is an annual measure of student participation and achievement of statewide assessments and other academic indicators. AYP requires schools to meet standards in test participation, academic performance, and a second indicator (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

The mandates of NCLB have provided principals an important way to keep up with information such as student data, test score trends, longitudinal student data, ethnicity, and gender to gauge strengths and weaknesses (Georgia Department of Education, 2010). Bringing all students up to an ambitious standard of academic learning in basic subjects has become the cornerstone of nearly two decades of state reform policy and more recently the NCLB legislation (Portin et al., 2006). These policies require school leaders and school districts to demonstrate progress of all students. To ensure that no student is left behind, schools must meet AYP standards (Portin et al., 2006).
The high stakes attached to test score improvement mean that success or failure can have far-reaching consequences, which could influence funding due to school-to-school and district-to-district comparisons (Portin et al., 2006). Government officials, policymakers, and district leaders increasingly seek to hold schools individually accountable for student achievement (Kafka, 2009). Therefore, strong leaders that care about students, student trend data, and the rate of success are needed to lead schools in this era of responsibility and accountability (Kafka, 2009).

Schools that do not make AYP in the same subject for two or more consecutive years are placed in needs improvement status with escalating consequences for each successive year (Portin et al., 2006). These schools could ultimately be taken over by the state or students and parents may be given the opportunity to participate in school choice (Portin et al., 2006). The pressures placed on leaders of schools that do not make AYP are enormous.

Lashway (1999) listed seven key responsibilities for school leaders. Principals must promote a safe and orderly school environment. The leader must sustain a school culture of continuous improvement, by implementing data-driven plans for improving student achievement, implementing standards-based assessment, and monitoring school-improvement plans. Leaders must also manage human and financial resources to accomplish achievement goals and communicate with colleagues, parents, and community members to promote student learning. In turn, districts and states must provide principals with adequate support and authority. Ultimately, school districts must provide resources for professional development and leaders must be willing to meet expected requirements (Lashway, 1999).
Summary

This chapter discussed the current literature available on the topic of principal leadership and preparation programs. The researcher introduced the theoretical foundation and was able to find many theorists who discuss principal preparation. A number of school leadership types—visionary relational, systems, reflective, collaborative, communicative, instructional, and transformational—were presented. The researcher then focused on visionaries, change agents, and their leadership purposes.

Subsequently, the researcher reviewed professional organizations in the field of education and their importance. The researcher also referenced recent educational reform programs. The ISLLC standards can be used as a national model by states as they develop desired standards.

Principal preparation programs and why they were created was addressed. Seven specific principal preparation programs and environmental forces affecting school leaders were reviewed by the researcher. These programs have been deemed as the top programs due to their focus on teaching and learning with a concerted focus on instructional leadership.

The chapter concluded with a section that addressed the environmental forces affecting school leaders. Forces such as ethnic changes, policy actions of federal and state governments, achievement, accountability pressures, and the increasing diversity of school populations and communities can make school leadership challenging. Appendix A contains a summary of the educational mandates across programs and a comparison of principals’ responsibilities across the researchers and authors reviewed in this chapter.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional study was to examine principals’ perceptions of their readiness for the evolving role as principals in today’s schools. This study sought to examine current principals’ perceptions regarding their readiness and comfort level in performing their duties and responsibilities, and their need for additional training. The role of the principalship is constantly changing. Many mandates are the sole responsibility of the principal, including but not limited to the overall operation of the school. Information from this study may inform the reader whether there is a need for a change in the way preparation programs are organized at universities, colleges, and/or school districts. This chapter contains the research design, the research hypotheses, a definition of the independent and dependent variables, and data collection and analysis methods for this study.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

This study sought to investigate principals’ readiness for their evolving roles in today’s schools. The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. Are there gender differences in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be in their role as leaders in today’s high stakes environment?

2. Are experience variables, including years of principal experience, type of advanced degree, and level of school related to perceptions of preparedness?

3. Is degree attainment related to perceptions of preparedness?

4. Is degree attainment related to comfort level in the role of principal?
5. Is degree attainment related to perceptions of need for additional training for principal duties?

The following hypotheses were developed for the research questions.

H₀₁. There is no difference in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be based on gender.

H₀₂. There is no difference in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be based on years of experience as a principal, type of advanced degree and level of school.

H₀₃. There is no difference in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be based on their degree attainment.

H₀₄. There is no difference in principals’ perceptions of their current level of comfort in performing the listed duties based on their degree attainment.

H₀₅. There is no difference in principals’ perceptions of their need for additional training aggregated across various duties based on their degree attainment.

Research Design

This was a quantitative study with a cross-sectional research design with data analyzed using quantitative analysis techniques. More specifically, the data were collected using a Likert-type format survey. For analysis, the data were re-coded to emphasize the importance of the responses in an increasing fashion. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS, v. 18) software was used to analyze the data.

Sample

The study population in the subject school district included 112 schools—71 elementary schools, 25 middle schools, and 16 high schools. These facilities serve more than 106,000 students (CCSD, 2011). This school district is the second largest school
system in Georgia and the 26th largest in the United States. Over 14,000 full-time employees, including 5,925 teachers, work in the district. Students in the district include 46% Caucasian and 55% African-American, Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, and other races (CCSD, 2011). Experience levels of the principals ranged from beginning to 40 or more years. The diversity of these schools include School of Excellence, Title I, Title I distinguished, charter, magnet, and Blue Ribbon schools. They also include schools that have been recognized as the highest performing schools in the state of Georgia.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument was developed as part of this study (Appendix B). Thirty-nine questions were generated, based on several extant principal standards and policy statements, to survey current principals about their perceptions of their level of preparedness to serve in their current role as leaders in a high-stakes environment. The McCrel Principal Standards, the 2008 ISLLC education leadership policy standards, the Arthur Levine principal questionnaire, and the Southern Regional Education Board’s 13 critical success factors for effective principals were used as examples by the researcher to create a list of principal duties. The survey asked principals to indicate where the training for each of the duties occurred, and whether principals wanted to receive additional training for listed duties. The instrument is a three-part survey consisting of self-report items that are categorized into the following domains:

1. Education leadership program preparation (Question 6);
2. Leadership preparation (Question 7);
3. Experience preparing for leadership (Questions 8-15);
4. Level of importance of various duties and responsibilities (Questions 16-27);
5. Percentage of time on various duties and responsibilities (Questions 28a-39a);
6. Current comfort level of performing duties and responsibilities (Questions 28b-39b); and
7. Current need for additional training in duties and responsibilities (Questions 29c-39c).

A panel of experts was selected to review the survey for content validity. These experts were former or current principals from school districts not participating in the study. The panel of experts suggested a few minor changes in wording, numbering, and length of survey. The researcher revised the instrument based on the feedback of the panel.

Following the receipt of all approval forms from the school district and the University of Southern Mississippi, the survey was piloted to measure the reliability using a sample of 22 former principals. Cronbach’s alpha was computed using survey responses from the pilot study. The alpha obtained for the 32 items (α = .88, n = 22) was similar to that obtained from responses in the full study (α = .82, n = 109). These high reliability values indicate good reliability. Alpha from the full study was computed separately for items measuring level of comfort (α = .88) and need for additional training items (α = .89), indicating good reliability for the separate domains as well. After making revisions based on the panel’s suggestions and testing for reliability, the instrument was ready for use with the sample population.

Data Collection Procedures

Permission was received from the school district’s institutional review board (Appendix C) and the institutional review board of the University of Southern Mississippi.
(Appendix D) to conduct the study. Consent forms (Appendix E) explaining the study and the survey were hand-delivered to principals at administrative meetings. Participants returned their completed surveys to the researcher either by U.S. mail or by hand. A second request for response was sent after two weeks. The researcher sent a reminder to principals until the return was above 30%.

Precautionary measures to insure confidentiality for the participants were assured by coding surveys by school number. Only the researcher had access to the participant responses, thus maintaining confidentiality. After surveys were returned, the researcher entered all data in SPSS.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (including means, standard deviations, range statistics, skewness, and frequencies for categorical variables) were computed on demographic variables (gender, experience variable, type of advanced degree, and type of school), principals’ perceptions of preparedness to lead, and their level of comfort in carrying out the roles and responsibilities of a school leadership position.

The dependent variables of preparedness for duties as principal and need for additional training were created by finding the average response for each principal across the 12 items in each scale. Data were analyzed to answer five hypotheses. This section outlines the data analysis plan for each hypothesis.

$H_01$. There is no difference in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be based on gender.

To test the first hypothesis, an independent-samples $t$ test was conducted with gender as the independent variable and their response to the question that asked
principals to rate the extent to which they felt that their leadership program prepared them for their duties as principal as the dependent variable.

H_02. There is no difference in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be based on years of experience as a principal, type of advanced degree and level of school.

In order to address this hypothesis, a standard regression analysis was conducted with principals’ perceptions of the extent to which their programs prepared them to be leaders as the criterion and years of experience, type of degree, and level of school as predictors. Dummy coded variables were created for level of school to make it amenable to the regression analysis.

H_03. There is no difference in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be based on their degree attainment.

In order to test the third hypothesis, a two way Chi Square was conducted with principals’ ratings on a Likert-type scale associated with highest degree earned (masters, specialist, and doctorate).

H_04. There is no difference in principals’ perceptions of their current level of comfort in performing the listed duties based on their degree attainment.

In order to address the fourth hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was conducted with highest degree as an independent variable and current level of comfort as the dependent variable.

H_05. There is no difference in principals’ perceptions of their need for additional training aggregated across various duties based on their degree attainment.

In order to test the fifth hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was conducted with principals’ perceptions of their needs for additional training for various duties as the
dependent variable and highest degree earned (masters, specialist, and doctorate) as the independent variable.

Summary

Principals in a large Georgia school district were surveyed to examine their perceptions of their reading for their evolving roles in today’s schools. The data were collected using a researcher-developed 39-item survey. A panel of experts and a pilot study assisted in determining content validity and reliability of the instrument. Independent and dependent variables, research questions, related hypotheses, and the analysis plan were outlined. Chapter IV contains the results of the data analysis.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Many researchers have reiterated Orr’s (2006) opinion that university programs are still the primary means of preparing principals to become school leaders. Yet observers of this fact have expressed serious reservations about whether these institutions are capable of re-engineering leadership preparation programs to educate aspiring principals to lead effectively in the 21st century (Levine, 2005). Many respected authorities in education leadership (Fullan, 1995; Gasner, 2000; Guskey, 1996) have even suggested that the job of a school principal has become an impossible successful career path for all but a few.

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional study was to examine principals’ perceptions of their readiness for the evolving role as principals in today’s schools. This study sought to examine current principals’ perceptions regarding their readiness and comfort level in performing their duties and responsibilities, and their need for additional training.

Descriptive Statistics

Responses were obtained from 109 of the 112 principals surveyed, for a response rate of 97%. A demographic description of the sample is presented in Table 1. Females comprised the largest proportion of the sample (77%). The majority (53%) of participants had attained a Specialist degree, with a large minority (28%) having attained a doctorate. Principals of elementary schools made up almost two thirds of the sample.
Almost three quarters of the principals (73%) had less than 10 years of experience.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Sample (n = 109)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience as principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principals were asked to rate their level of comfort performing various duties and responsibilities, using a scale that ranged from 1 (very uncomfortable) to 5 (very comfortable). Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics for each duty and responsibility.
Communication with stakeholders, facilities and operations, and budget/financial received the lowest comfort ratings.

Table 2

*Level of Comfort Performing Various Duties and Responsibilities (n = 109)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duties and responsibilities</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness/SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget/financial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>3.43*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing relationships with teachers, parents and students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>4.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing student behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>15.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>16.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with stakeholders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building community relationships</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>7.97*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>7.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher observations/evaluations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>6.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring student progress</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>6.93*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>7.94*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and operations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>1.33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating school strategic plan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>4.48*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Level of Comfort</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>8.44*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* *Indicates significant skew. Responses ranged from 1 (very uncomfortable) to 5 (very comfortable)*

The principals were asked to rate their need for additional training for various duties and responsibilities, using a scale that ranged from 1 (feel untrained) to 5 (need no additional training). Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics for each duty and responsibility. Facilities and operations, facilitating school strategic plan, and budget/financial were those duties that principals indicated they needed the most training. Following close behind those duties were other duties, such as developing relationships with teachers, parents, and students, and communication with stakeholders.
In addition to the items used to analyze the research hypotheses, the principals were asked to rate the importance of various experiences in helping them prepare for the principalship. They were also asked to rate the level of importance of various duties and responsibilities. The responses to these two questions are in Appendix F.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Items Indicating Current Need for Additional Training in Duties and Responsibilities (n = 109)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duties and responsibilities</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness /SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget/financial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing relationships with teachers, parents and students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>-2.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing student behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>-6.74*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>-6.27*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with stakeholders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>-2.88*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building community relationships</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>-4.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>-3.87*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher observations/evaluations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>-2.88*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring student progress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>-2.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>-6.74*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and operations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>-6.27*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating school strategic plan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>-2.88*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Level of Need for Additional Training</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>4.56*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Indicates significant skew. Responses range from 1 (feel untrained) to 5 (need no additional training)
Analysis of Research Hypotheses

*Research Hypothesis 1*

Hypothesis 1 stated there would be no differences in principals’ perceptions of the extent to which their programs prepared them to be leaders based on their gender. An independent-samples *t* test was conducted with gender as the independent variable and their response to the question that asked principals to rate the extent to which they felt that their leadership program prepared them for their duties as principal as the dependent variable. The analysis indicated no significant difference \[ t(107) = -0.26, p = .80 \] between male \( (n = 25, M = 1.80, SD = .41) \) and female principals \( (n = 84, M = 1.83, SD = .60) \).

*Research Hypothesis 2*

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be no difference in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be based on years of experience as a principal, type of advanced degree and level of school.

In order to address this hypothesis, a regression analysis was conducted with principals’ perceptions of preparedness as the criterion and years of experience, type of degree, and level of school as predictors. Dummy coded variables were created for level of school to make it amenable to the regression analysis.

Results indicated that there was a significant proportion of variance in the criterion explained by the group of predictor variables \[ R^2 = .148, F(5, 103) = 3.58, p < .01 \]. Only type of degree, however, was a unique predictor of preparedness to lead. More specifically, as can be seen in Table 4, individuals who had attained a doctorate
versus a master’s degree indicated a higher level of preparedness to lead ($b = .36, t = 2.4, p = .02$).

Table 4

*Summary of Regression Analysis of Years of Experience, Type of Degree, and Level of School as Contributing Factors in Level of Preparedness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Y intercept</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>23.17</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ph.D. vs. Specialist</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ph.D. vs. Masters</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school vs. elementary school</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle school vs. elementary school</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Research Hypothesis 3*

The third hypothesis stated that there would be no difference in how prepared principals perceived themselves to be based on their degree attainment.

In order to address this hypothesis, a two-way chi-square analysis was conducted between degree attainment (masters, specialist, and doctorate) and responses to one survey question that asked, “To what extent do you feel that your preparation/leadership program prepared you for your duties as a principal.” A significant association between these two variables resulted from the analysis [Likelihood Ratio (LR)$\chi^2$ (4) = 17.40, $p < .01$]. See Table 5 for Chi Square results.
Table 5

*Relationship Between Leadership Preparedness and Highest Degree Earned*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of preparedness</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>Std. Residual</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>-.6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very much</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>-.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the table was reduced by removing those principals with a doctorate (the group with the largest standardized residuals), the reduced model was no longer significant [LR $\chi^2(4) = 1.49$, $p = .526$]. In addition, there was a significant change from the full to reduced model ($\Delta$LR $\chi^2(2) = 15.91$, $p < .01$) indicating that those principals with a doctorate responded differently to the question than did those principals with masters and specialist degrees. Further inspection of the table revealed that while 50% of the principals with a doctorate reported feeling that their leadership programs prepared them *very much* for their duties as principal, only 19% of those with a masters and 16% of those with a specialist degree responded similarly to this question.

*Research Hypothesis 4*

Research Question 4 hypothesized that there would be no differences in principals’ perceptions of their current level of comfort in performing listed duties based on degree attainment (masters, specialist, and doctorate). To address the fourth hypothesis, perceptions of current levels of comfort in performing principal duties were
average. One-way ANOVA results with highest degree as an independent variable and current level of comfort as the dependent variable indicated that there were no differences in level of comfort in performing duties and responsibilities based upon degree attainment \[ F(2, 106) = 1.605, p = .21 \].

Research Hypothesis 5

Research Question 5 hypothesized that there would be no differences in principals’ perceptions of their need for additional training for various duties based on degree attainment. A one-way ANOVA was conducted with principals’ perceptions of their need for additional training averaged across various duties and responsibilities as the dependent variable and degree attainment (masters, specialist, and doctorate) as the independent variable. One-way ANOVA results indicated no significant difference in principals’ perceptions of their need for additional training based on degree attainment \[ F(1,77) = .831, p = .37 \].

Two additional exploratory analyses were conducted in order to more thoroughly evaluate comfort level in principal duties and need for additional training. A one-sample \( t \) test was used to determine if comfort level and need for additional training averages were different than an average indicating high comfort and no need for additional training. Results indicated that principals had a level of comfort in performing duties \( (M = 4.30, SD = .51) \) that was significantly lower \( [t(108) = -14.38, p < .001] \) than a maximum level of comfort \( (\mu = 5) \). The principals also indicated a need for additional training \( (M = 3.93, SD = .60) \) that differed significantly \( [t(108) = -18.73, p < .001] \) from responses that indicated no need for additional training \( (\mu = 5) \).
Summary

Survey responses were obtained from 109 of the 112 principals surveyed. Five research hypotheses were analyzed. There was no significant difference between male and female principals’ perceptions of their levels of preparedness for the duties and responsibilities of the principalship. There was no unique relationship between years of experience in the role of principal or level of school and perceptions of levels of preparedness. However, degree attainment did uniquely predict perceptions of levels of preparedness. Individuals who had attained a doctorate score higher on perceptions of levels of preparedness than those with a Master’s degree but not significantly higher than those with a Specialist degree. Results from exploratory analyses indicated that while self reported levels of comfort in performing the duties and responsibilities of the principalship are high, those levels are significantly lower than a maximum response. Correspondingly, perceptions of need for additional training are significantly higher than a level that would indicate no need for additional training. A discussion of these results follows in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

A critical shortage of principals exists in the United States (McNeese et al., 2009). Currently, many schools are affected from both a lack of qualified administrators and the inability to retain administrators once hired (Maulding et al., 2010). Principals have the job of not only managing schools, but also leading schools through an era of social change that has required fundamental re-thinking of how schools operate (Levine, 2005). Principals are asked to lead at a time when their authority is highly questioned and they are held responsible for things that go wrong (Houston, 2000). Moreover, preparation programs must provide individuals with the tools needed to deal with instructional leadership, community relationships, and time management (McNeese et al., 2009).

The purpose of this study was to examine principals’ perceptions of their readiness for the evolving role as principals in today’s schools. This study sought to examine current principals’ perceptions regarding their readiness and comfort level in performing their duties and responsibilities, and their need for additional training. This chapter provides a summary of the research findings and conclusions drawn from the data collected throughout the study presented in Chapter IV. The chapter also includes recommendations for policy and practice, limitations, and recommendations for future research on the topic.

The researcher studied principals’ perceptions of readiness for their evolving roles in schools. Additionally, the researcher determined if principals felt comfortable conducting their duties and if they felt a need for additional training. Therefore, the focus of this study was to determine if principals felt prepared for their duties as principals.
Conclusions and Discussions

Demographic characteristics of the sample in the current study indicated that most participants had attained their educational specialist degree, with the remaining participants having a masters or doctorate degree. The majority of participants surveyed had experience as a principal between 1 and 10 years. Additional descriptive statistics from the study are displayed in Appendix F. These statistics reflect the importance of experiences that help principals prepare for the principalship and their perception of the importance of their duties and responsibilities. Regarding the importance of listed experiences, principals responded that experience as an assistant principal was most important, followed by peer/collegial conversations, and mentorship from a principal. Principals regarded developing relationships and monitoring student progress as the most important of the listed duties and responsibilities.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 stated, Are there gender differences in how prepared principals perceive themselves to be in their role as leaders in today’s high stakes environment? Results indicated that there was no difference in principals’ perception of level of preparedness to lead in a high-stakes environment based on gender. A University of Texas at Austin’s College of Education (2009) study indicated that about 70% of new high school principals leave within five years. This study was conducted between 1996 and 2008 and focused on principal tenure and retention to determine how long principals in Texas were staying on the job after being hired. Elementary principals had longer retention rates. However, the demographics of the study indicated that principals’ age, race, and gender appeared to play only a small role in principal retention. According to
Kafka (2009), schools were largely led by males in the 1800s. These administrators were called principal-teachers and duties were primarily operational. By the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the principal role began to gain more notoriety and changes began to take place in the position (Kafka, 2009).

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, Are experience variables, including years of principal experience, type of advanced degree, and level of school related to perceptions of preparedness? Principals who attained a doctorate degree perceived themselves as more prepared to lead than principals with a masters degree. The College of Education (2009) found that principal retention rates were heavily influenced by the level of student achievement during a principal’s first year of employment and schools with low achievement had higher principal turnover. Additionally, a newly hired principal may not stay as long at a school where there is a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students (College of Education, 2009). The researcher found that years of experience in preparation of a principal was a new finding in the field, no research was found other than the College of Education information.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 asked, Is degree attainment related to perceptions of preparedness? Principals with a doctorate were observed responding differently to the question than did those principals with masters and specialist degrees. The analysis revealed that 50% of the principals with a doctorate reported feeling that their leadership programs prepared them very much for their duties as principal, while fewer than 20% of those with a masters or specialist degree responded similarly. Therefore, principals who hold a
doctorate degree feel they have been prepared and have experienced within their programs what is needed to lead.

Principals who have participated in an educational doctoral program have had specific classes focused on student achievement, curriculum and instruction, and assessment. Maulding et al. (2010) asserted that in order for principals to supervise a continuous improvement process that measures raising student achievement levels, they must be steeped in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Marzano et al. (2005) contended that principals have a profound effect on schools and the achievement of students. Principals must have an extended knowledge base to lead schools effectively. That extended knowledge base can come from participation in graduate level programs such as the doctoral programs. In the literature review, the researcher reviewed some of the 21 leadership behaviors introduced by Marzano and others. One of the responsibilities mentioned was that principals must have knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. To accomplish this task, principals must be students of best practices (Marzano et al., 2005). In most doctoral programs in education, some classes are focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Principals should be focused on effective instructional practices, assessment practices, and effective classroom practices (Marzano et al., 2005). Participation in these classes may be a reason why principals who have doctorate degrees feel more prepared to lead.

Research Hypothesis 4

Research Question 4 asked, Is degree attainment related to comfort level in the role of principal? A one-way ANOVA was conducted to discern differences in perceived comfort of performing listed principal duties by degree attainment. Overall, this analysis
did not measure any statistical difference among the degree categories in level of comfort in performing duties and responsibilities based on the type of degree they held. Where principals reported feeling least comfortable were in the areas of communication with stakeholders, facilities and operations, and budget/financial. As previously mentioned, leadership coaching can help the leader become more comfortable by participating in real-world experiences and real issues facing the leader (Reiss, 2009). With this non-evaluative approach, leaders and student leaders feel comfortable approaching more issues and solving problems. Hale and Moorman (2003) stated that real-world experiences and discussing the strengths and weaknesses with a mentor principal can also better prepare principals for their role as leader.

**Research Hypothesis 5**

Research Question 5 asked, Is degree attainment related to perceptions of need for additional training for principal duties? An analysis of this hypothesis indicated no significant difference in principals’ perceptions of their need for additional training based on degree attainment. Because no significant results were found when analyzing Hypotheses 4 and 5, the researcher conducted an exploratory analysis to evaluate more thoroughly principals’ comfort level in carrying out duties and their need for additional training. A one-sample *t* test revealed that principals have a level of comfort in performing duties that is significantly lower than a maximum level of comfort. Principals also indicated a need for additional training that differed from results that indicated no need.

Additionally, in response to the question, To what extent do you feel that your preparation/leadership program prepared you for your duties as a principal? 66% of the
principals responded somewhat and 8% responded with not very much. This would indicate that some principals do feel they could have been better prepared in their preparation/leadership programs. Overall, principals are comfortable in duties; however, they would like to have some additional training. According to Butler (2008), many principal preparation programs are beginning to fill the gap and are continuing to ensure that new and veteran principals are better prepared for today’s challenges. Effectiveness and retention of administrators could be increased when implementing intensive administrator training programs, in that principals may be better prepared to handle the many challenges associated with leading a school (Miller, 2003).

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Preparation programs should train principals to not only manage but to also give them the tools they need to deal with instructional leadership, community relationships, and time management (McNeese et al., 2009). Disapproval of schools has escalated in the past 15 years (Levine, 2005). Many of the concerns have focused on issues not the fault of these institutions; such as the quality of persons who apply, low performing schools and school systems, and schools that have not shown significant gains (Levine, 2005). Some researchers (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001; Creighton & Jones, 2001; Hale & Moorman, 2003; McNeese et al., 2009; Obama, 2010) have indicated that there should be a revamping of preparation programs so that principals can be adequately prepared for the job of leading students and staffs of tomorrow.

Lumsden (1993) contended that future leaders are saturated with theory while participating in graduate school programs and receive very limited exposure to real-world professional challenges. In the current study, it was found that principals who held a
doctorate degree felt more prepared than those who held a masters and specialist degree. Within doctoral programs, students are engulfed in applied research, rigor, and discipline. Participation in these studies may make principals with doctorates feel that they are better prepared for leadership. LaPointe et al. (2006) contended that a principal’s abilities are essential in building excellent teaching and learning for all students. When principals are engulfed in research and study, possibly this knowledge can be transferred to local school staffs to increase student achievement and to increase the confidence of the principal.

Twentieth-first century school leaders are being challenged by extraordinary economic, demographic, technological, and global changes (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2008). Colleges, universities, and school districts that provide leadership preparation should consider strengthening training for sitting principals as well as the masters and educational specialist programs to continue to prepare current and future principals for the real world of the principalship. Professional development for sitting principals should be differentiated by level: elementary, middle, and high school to meet identified needs. Specifically, future principals should participate in being student principals, a practice very similar to persons who are interested in becoming teachers. In this fashion, future principals can participate in authentic experiences where they would receive first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day responsibilities of a school principal. In having these on-going experiences, the future principal may be better prepared for the job’s duties and responsibilities. Assistant principals do not necessarily get these experiences, because they are responsible for specific daily duties and may not be a participant in all the other responsibilities that come with the principalship. Reiss (2009) considered this training to be leadership coaching. Butler (2008) stated that coaching is
not telling principals what to do but is about building the principals’ internal capacity. Hale and Moorman (2003) believed that strong working relationships with school districts can result in student principals being comfortable in making protected or mentored mistakes from which they can learn and develop.

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (2008) created a program for collaboration between the state and leadership preparation institutions in preparing individuals for certification in leadership. The school systems and the participating universities/colleges have state-mandated responsibilities. These mandates became the requirement for Georgia in September 2009. Within this plan, participants are pre-selected, assigned a coach, expected to collaborate closely with the school system and the university, and are required to demonstrate proficiency through performance in real environments. Candidate selection is also very rigorous and only done by the employing school system (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2008). Moreover, tracking the data of principal candidates will help to guide further trainings. As of this date, participants in this program have not yet graduated with the performance-based leadership (PBL) certification.

The current study found that principals are comfortable and there is a need for additional training. Additionally, a large number of principals indicated that they only felt somewhat prepared by their leadership program for the principalship. Even though sitting principals have already graduated from their leadership/preparation programs, this type of training is critical for future leaders. This type of program would enhance requirements and give future principals more experience with real-world issues and concerns. Furthermore, this researcher feels that programs like the performance based
leadership certification should be modeled in other states, universities, and school systems so that future principals can be prepared for their positions.

A further recommendation would be that principals should participate in collaboration. Collaboration is a systematic process where educators work together to analyze and impact professional practice for the improvement of individual and collective student results (DuFour, 2003). Continual, detailed, collaborative meetings should be planned and scheduled frequently for principals.

Limitations

Various limitations were noted in this study. The limitations are as follows:

1. The study was limited to one particular school district in the southern region of the United States.
2. The study was limited to principals only.
3. The study was quantitative and not qualitative, therefore limiting the authentic voice of the audience.
4. This study was limited by not identifying the balance of personal (family life) and professional aspects of the job of principal.
5. The study was limited by not identifying specific ethnicities.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should be conducted to reveal specific changes and improvements in leadership preparation programs. The results of this study could be significant for universities in preparing programs for future administrators. Additionally, the results could be used by future administrators in determining where to receive training to become certified as a school administrator. This study revealed that the principals feel
prepared, they are comfortable, and they need some additional training. However, principal perceptions regarding their leadership/preparation programs varied in responses. Barnett (2004) stated that there needs to be a stronger formation between public education and universities in giving future administrators more training in instructional leadership and school based experiences. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (2008) is requiring now that any person wanting to be certified as an administrator will have to participate in a performance-based program where participants will receive training required to lead in today’s schools. As a requirement, school districts and universities must work together.

It is recommended that multiple school districts be studied to look at their practices in training future principals. Of vital importance within these school districts is to determine how principals are trained and if that training helps them carry out their responsibilities. A small cadre of principals could be organized in a focus group. The group could have varied levels of experience (beginning to veteran principals) and begin the process of collaborating with what the true needs are in preparation programs. A number of possible issues could be discussed. What is the problem? What is the disconnect between the day-to-day responsibilities? What was previously learned in preparation programs? What is needed to be successful in the principalship?

The current study only surveyed principals. An additional study could look at all administrators to determine their current level of preparation and what is needed to prepare them better for the principalship. These administrators would consist of assistant principals and prospective teacher leaders.
A final recommendation for a study is to determine differences in preparation among ethnicities. In the present study, ethnicity was not considered. This type of study could possibly give more insight into preparation and leadership training. Persons in charge of preparing future school leaders must ensure they are sending the best people for the job. School districts deserve the best leaders in front of students, staffs, and parents each day. Principals want to do a good job, but they need to be prepared and comfortable in performing their duties as a leader in today’s high-stakes environment.

Summary

The knowledge one gains in theory classes is only a tiny part of the job. Sometimes it is not obvious what you need to know in the principalship; this is sometimes learned while doing. Therefore, one must be keenly aware of what is lacking and achieve mastery in those areas. Knowledge, skills, and abilities are good, but alone those things are not what makes a good principal; you must lead above the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be great at the principalship.

In the current study, the researcher developed five hypotheses and five research questions to determine if principals felt they were prepared to lead in a high-stakes environment. The literature review revealed how difficult the job of a principal can be. The job responsibilities change often and the principal has to be ready to change with whatever is expected at the time. A principal must keep learning because there will always be new mandates, expectations, new problems from parents, issues with teachers, student achievement issues, and student behavioral concerns. If a principal is not trained properly, all the nuances of the job can be overwhelming. School districts, colleges, and universities must ensure that principals receive the training needed to be successful in
their jobs. Students deserve to have a principal who is ready for the job. The principalship can be the best job in the world, but one must be ready for the job and all the challenges that come with it.
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building relationships</strong></td>
<td>Put first things first</td>
<td>Seek to understand the social and normative post of the school</td>
<td>Communicate with all stakeholders to promote student learning</td>
<td>Maintain a positive attitude</td>
<td>Maintain secure relationship</td>
<td>Develop close relationships with parents and other community partners</td>
<td>Open lines of communication</td>
<td>Surround yourself with great people</td>
<td>Genuine empathy and respect for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspire</strong></td>
<td>Seek human benefit in all interactions</td>
<td>Affirm values and shape rituals and traditions</td>
<td>Set direction by articulating a vision for a shared organizational purpose</td>
<td>Having a leader’s heart</td>
<td>Visionary leader</td>
<td>Encourage and motivate teachers to improve practices</td>
<td>Clear vision</td>
<td>Organize around a purpose</td>
<td>Reassure individuals of their importance to the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional leader</strong></td>
<td>Seek first to understand, then to be understood</td>
<td>Define the focused picture of the future of the school</td>
<td>Set high expectations and monitor performance</td>
<td>Having a leader’s heart</td>
<td>Instructional leader</td>
<td>Focus on strengthening teaching and learning</td>
<td>Support and encouragement</td>
<td>Develop and communicate strong beliefs</td>
<td>Create infinite possibilities and unlimited horizons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safe and orderly environment</strong></td>
<td>Be proactive, be responsible</td>
<td>Reinforce values and sustain school’s best image</td>
<td>Strengthen the school’s culture and modify organizational structures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare relentlessly</td>
<td>Collaborative leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Driven</strong></td>
<td>Begin with the end in mind</td>
<td>Probe the current set of norms</td>
<td>Build a collaborative process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review the school’s data and be accountable</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflect, then decide</td>
<td>Reflect on lessons learned and notice trends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Comparing Educational Mandates Across Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Nation at Risk&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt; (1983)</th>
<th>Goals 2000&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>NCLB&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>ISLLC&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt; (2007)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student expectations</strong></td>
<td>Identified educational programs which will result in notable student success.</td>
<td>United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.</td>
<td>States develop academic achievement standards and benchmarks.</td>
<td>An educational leader promotes a vision of learning shared by all stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher quality</strong></td>
<td>Assessed the quality of teaching and learning</td>
<td>Teachers will have access to professional development and opportunities to acquire knowledge needed to instruct students.</td>
<td>Expectation of differentiated classroom instruction to meet the identified needs of all student sub groups.</td>
<td>An educational leader provides ongoing staff professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Failing schools</strong></td>
<td>Compared American schools and colleges with those of other advanced nations.</td>
<td>Every school will promote the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.</td>
<td>Parents may transfer students out of low-achieving or unsafe schools to another public school.</td>
<td>An educational leader ensures resources for an efficient and effective learning environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Nation at Risk – this report examined the quality of education during the 1980’s (Lips, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Goals 2000 – established a framework to identify world class academic standards, measured student progress, and provided the support students needed to meet expected standards (Portin et al., 2006).

<sup>3</sup> NCLB – No Child Left Behind’s mandates provide principals to study student data.

<sup>4</sup> ISLLC – Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium Standards are used as a model for leader standards.
APPENDIX B

SURVEY

Principal’s Perceptions of Readiness for Their Evolving Role in Today’s Schools

1. What is your gender?
   _____ Male
   _____ Female

2. What is your highest degree?
   _____ Masters
   _____ Educational Specialist
   _____ Ed.D.
   _____ Ph.D.

3. What level of school do you presently work?
   _____ Elementary
   _____ Middle
   _____ High School

4. How many years of experience do you have as a principal?
   _____ 0-5 years
   _____ 6-10 years
   _____ 11-15 years
   _____ 16-20 years
   _____ 21-25 years
   _____ 26-30 years
   _____ More than 30 years

5. When did you complete your most recent leadership degree program? _____ year

6. In relation to question 5, where was that program completed?
   _____ College/University
   _____ Local school district
   _____ Metro Regional Education Services Agency (RESA)
   _____ Other, please specify: ______________

7. To what extent do you feel that your preparation/leadership program prepared you for your duties as a principal?
   (1) very much
   (2) somewhat
   (3) not very much
   (4) not at all
Please indicate the importance of these experiences in assisting you in being prepared for the principalship ranging from:

1. Very Important
2. Important
3. Moderately Important
4. Of Little Importance
5. Unimportant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. University program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Professional organization</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Peer/collegial conversations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. District professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. District leadership academy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Experience as a teacher</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Experience as an assistant principal</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Mentorship from a principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Duties and Responsibilities
Please indicate the level of importance of the following responsibilities as:

1. Very Important
2. Important
3. Moderately Important
4. Of Little Importance
5. Unimportant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. Budget/Financial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Developing relationships with teachers, parents, and students</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Managing student behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Fundraising</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Communication with stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Building community relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Personnel issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Teacher observations/evaluations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Monitoring student progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Integration of technology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Facilities/Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Facilitating school strategic plan</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the next section of the survey, a table is divided into five columns. The last three columns represent the following:

**Column A:** Percentage of your day spent on various duties and responsibilities. Percentages should equal 100.

**Column B:** Your current level of comfort in performing these duties and responsibilities.

**Column C:** Your need for additional training in these duties and responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Very comfortable</th>
<th>(2) Comfortable</th>
<th>(3) Neutral</th>
<th>(4) Uncomfortable</th>
<th>(5) Very uncomfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Feel untrained</td>
<td>(2) Need more training</td>
<td>(3) Need some training</td>
<td>(4) Need little training</td>
<td>(5) Need no additional training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duties and Responsibilities</th>
<th>A % of time spent (0 – 100)</th>
<th>B Current level of comfort</th>
<th>C Need for additional training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28. Budget/Financial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Developing relationships with teachers, parents, and students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Managing student behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Fundraising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Communication with stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33. Building community relationships with PTA/Foundation/School Council/Partners in Education</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Personnel issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Teacher observations/annual evaluations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Monitoring student progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Integration and promotion of technology use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Facilities/Operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Facilitating the school strategic plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
March 24, 2011

Ms. Angela M Huff
2675 Thornberry Place
Marietta, GA 30006

Dear Ms. Huff,

Your research project has been approved. Listed below are the schools where approval to conduct
the research is complete. Please work with the school administrator to schedule administration of
instruments or conduct interviews.

Acworth Intermediate School
Addison Elementary School
Argyle Elementary School
Austell Primary School
Baker Elementary School
Bells Ferry Elementary School
Belmont Hills Elementary School
Big Shanty Elementary School
Birney Elementary School
Blackwell Elementary School
Brown Elementary School
Bryant Intermediate School
Bryant Primary School
Bullard Elementary School
Chalker Elementary School
Cheatham Hill Elementary School
Clarkdale Elementary School
Clay Elementary School
Compton Elementary School
Davis Elementary School
Dowell Elementary School
Due West Elementary School
East Side Elementary School
EastValley Elementary School
Fair Oaks Elementary School
Forsyth Elementary School
Ford Elementary School
Frey Elementary School
Garrison Mill Elementary School
Green Acres Elementary School
Harmony Leland Elementary School
Hayes Intermediate School
Hayes Primary School
Hollydale Elementary School
Keheley Elementary School

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Allison Bartlett, Chair • Scott Sweeney, Vice Chairman
Lyndal Eagle • Timothy Stotz • David Morgan • Kathleen Anagnosti • David Banks
Kemp Elementary School
Kennesaw Elementary School
Kincaid Elementary School
King Springs Elementary School
LaBelle Elementary School
Lewis Elementary School
Mableton Elementary School
McCall Primary School
Milford Elementary School
Mount Bethel Elementary School
Mountain View Elementary School
Murdock Elementary School
Nicholson Elementary School
Nickajack Elementary School
Nortoe Park Elementary School
Pickett's Mill Elementary School
Pittner Elementary School
Powder Springs Elementary School
Powers Ferry Elementary School
Riverside Intermediate School
Riverside Primary School
Rocky Mount Elementary School
Russell Elementary School
Sanders Intermediate School
Sanders Primary School
Sedalia Park Elementary School
Shallowford Falls Elementary School
Sky View Elementary School
Sope Creek Elementary School
Still Elementary School
Teasley Elementary School
Timber Ridge Elementary School
Trott Elementary School
Varner Elementary School
Vaughn Elementary School
Awtrey Middle School
Barber Middle School
Campbell Middle School
Cooper Middle School
Daniell Middle School
Dickerson Middle School
Dodgen Middle School
Durham Middle School
East Cobb Middle School
Floyd Middle School
Garrett Middle School
Griffin Middle School
Hightower Trail Middle School
Lindley - 6th Grade Academy
Lindley Middle School
Lost Mountain Middle School
Lovinggood Middle School
Mabry Middle School
McCleskey Middle School
Palmer Middle School
Pine Mountain Middle School
Simpson Middle School
Smith Middle School
Tapp Middle School
Allatoona High School
Campbell High School
Harrison High School
Hillgrove High School
Kell High School
Kennesaw Mountain High School
Lassiter High School
McEachern High School
North Cobb High School
Osborne High School
Pebblebrook High School
Pope High School
South Cobb High School
Sprayberry High School
Wheeler High School

Should modifications or changes in research procedures become necessary during the research project, changes must be submitted in writing to the Office of Accountability and Research prior to implementation. At the conclusion of your research project, you are expected to submit a copy of your results to this office. Results cannot reference the Cobb County School District or any District schools or departments.

Research files are not considered complete until results are received. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact our office at 770-425-3407.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Judith A. Jones
Chief Accountability and Research Officer
APPENDIX D

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.266.6820
Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the “Adverse Effect Report Form”.
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.

Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 11040501
PROJECT TITLE: Principals’ Perceptions of Readiness for their Evolving Role in Today’s Schools
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 03/30/2011 to 12/24/2011
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Angela M. Huff
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & School Counseling
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 04/11/2011 to 04/10/2012

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D. 4-12-2011
HSPRC Chair  Date
APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The main purpose of the form is to provide information that may affect your decision about whether or not you want to participate in this research project. If you choose to participate, please sign in the space at the end of this form to record your consent.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH and WHAT IS IT ABOUT?
Angela M. Huff, a doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi, under the direction of Dr. Rose McNeese, in the School of Educational Leadership and School Counseling, is conducting a research study and is inviting you to participate in this study. The title of the study is “Principals perceptions of readiness for their evolving role in today’s schools.” The purpose of this research is to examine the many challenges facing principals today and to determine if principals are prepared for the job. Considering this information, are principal preparation programs equipping principals for their new roles? This study is significant because principals are expected to be multifaceted. To lead in today’s schools; principals must be prepared for more demands personally as well as prepared for the demands of government and local agencies. This study is also needed to determine if changes should be made in preparation programs. The researcher’s intention is to use this research to add to the body of literature for future use at universities in preparing programs for future administrators. These results could also be used by future administrators in choosing which program to receive training.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY INVOLVE?
Selected participants are asked to complete a survey which will take approximately twenty minutes.

WHY ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO PARTICIPATE?
You have been invited to participate because you are a principal in the Cobb County School District.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY?
Although no study is completely risk-free, we do not anticipate any risks to you if you decide to participate in this study.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATION?
The results of this study could provide beneficial information to university leadership preparation programs as well as school district leadership/academy programs.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE RESEARCHER GETS NEW INFORMATION DURING THE STUDY?
The researcher will contact you if she learns new information that could change your decision about participating in this study.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER PROTECT PARTICIPANTS’ CONFIDENTIALITY?
The results of the research study will be published; however, your name or identity will not be revealed. Surveys will be coded by their Cobb County school number. Participant responses will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s office. Only the researcher will have access to the participant responses, thus maintaining confidentiality and privacy. Additionally, the data will be destroyed after the selected period.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PARTICIPANT DOESN’T WANT TO CONTINUE IN THE STUDY?
Participation in the study is voluntary. Principals may choose not to participate and can choose to withdraw at any time from the study. Non participation in the study will not affect employment status or evaluation.
WILL IT COST ANYTHING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY? WILL I GET PAID TO PARTICIPATE?

No

WILL PARTICIPANTS BE COMPENSATED FOR ILLNESS OR INJURY?

No funds have been set aside to compensate you in the event of injury. If you suffer harm because you participated in this research study, you may contact, Angela M. Huff at 404-680-8440, or via email at adhuff@bellsouth.net

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

By signing this form, you, as a participant are stating that you have read this form or have had the form read to you and understand it and the research study. Furthermore, you understand that the researcher will keep a signed copy of this consent for her records. The researcher will be happy to answer any questions you have about the research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Angela M. Huff, the researcher at 404-680-8440 or via email at adhuff@bellsouth.net

By signing below, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Please keep one copy of this form for your records.

Your Name (please print): ____________________________________________

Your Signature:_______________________________________________________

Date:______________________________________________________________

INVESTIGATOR’S STATEMENT

I certify that this form includes all information concerning the study relevant to the protection of the rights of the participants, including the nature and purpose of this research, benefits, risks, costs, and any experimental procedures.

Angela M. Huff ______________________________________________________

Signature Date
APPENDIX F

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIENCES IN ASSISTING PRINCIPALS IN BEING PREPARED FOR THE PRINCIPALSHIP ($n = 109$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer/collegial conversation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>8.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District professional development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>3.68*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District leadership academy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>4.07*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience as a teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>3.51*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience as an assistant principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>15.63*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship from a principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>7.79*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates significant skew. Scale ranged from 1 (very important) to 5 (unimportant)
Level of Importance of Various Duties and Responsibilities \((n = 109)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget/financial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>6.61*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing relationships with teachers, parents and students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>25.35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing student behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>5.28*</td>
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*Indicates significant skew. Scale ranged from 1 (very important) to 5 (unimportant)
REFERENCES


Houston, P. D. (2000, June). Not a great job but a wonderful calling. *School Administrator.* Retrieved from [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JSD/is_6_57/ai_77336330/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JSD/is_6_57/ai_77336330/)


