A CASE STUDY ON THE SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF NOVICE ASSISTANT
PRINCIPALS' AND PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP ABILITIES BASED UPON THE
NORTH CAROLINA STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL EXECUTIVES

A Dissertation
by
LARRY L. PUTNAM

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Abstract

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This study was an investigation of novice principals' and assistant principals'
self-perceptions of their abilities to execute the eight North Carolina Standards for
School Executives. Results indicted the novice administrators felt, overall, that they
were only somewhat effective in implementing the eight standards, and felt they
could be supported by having scheduled collegial support and an assigned mentor.
They felt most prepared in the area of Cultural Leadership, while Micro-Political
Leadership and Academic Leadership were areas of expressed concern. In rating
their perceptions of their principal preparation programs, they felt the programs were
mostly somewhat effective. They indicated a need for a more structured internship
that allowed for a greater range of experiences at different levels of education. Results
indicated a need for increased professional development in the areas of school law,
time management, and the teacher evaluation process. The study results can be
utilized to implement a district-sponsored leadership academy for novice school
administrators. An even stronger partnership with local school districts and principal
preparation programs within institutes of higher learning is recommended.

Acknowledgments

Let me first express my gratitude toward my Winston-Forsyth cohort family, Heidi Ho friends and neighbors, Brooksie, Cheryl, Debra, Dossie, Fran, Joe, Keshia, Lee, Leslie, Patti, and Stacy. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude, to the person who shared many miles traveling with me up and down the road. Along the way, we shared many stories about our daily jobs, our doctoral journey, and our appreciation for our cohort brothers and sisters. For two years on Thursday afternoons, we consistently arrived at Forsyth Tech, set up the classroom, sat through class, and rewarded ourselves with Dunkin Doughnuts on the night drive back home. I am glad that I had this opportunity to share this experience not only with a cohort brother, but a longtime colleague, who I consider to be a best friend. Thank you, Bob Acord, for sharing the journey (even though I drove most weeks).

To my colleagues in western North Carolina who contributed to my research, I thank you. Your perspectives are forever valued and respected, as you continue the fight to uphold public education in North Carolina.

To Dr. Vachel Miller, I thank you for your leadership during my doctoral journey. The personal motivational reminders you would send helped me get started with the writing process, as did the writing sessions you held.

To my expert committee members, Dr. Les Bolt and Dr. Chris Osmond, I thank you for your guidance and professional insight in assisting me with this doctoral process. I recall the many edits and meetings that led to this moment of acknowledgement, and for this I am most appreciative.

Finally, I wish to thank the man who has been the cornerstone of this process for me. He was there when I first laid my doctoral groundwork, not to tear me down, but to provide

me with pillars of support. He always offered assistance to me, not only during his regular office hours, but anytime that was convenient for me. He shared his personal cell phone number with me early on in this process and encouraged and told me I could call him anytime. He soon realized that I would take him up on his offer, and I often wondered if he regretted that decision.

Not often in life do you meet individuals who are genuinely passionate about what they do. Dr. Bill Gummerson, not only cares about his students, but he cares about doing the job well. What separates Dr. Gummerson from others is his practical knowledge and ability to connect with students in a positive capacity.

Although he does not seek attention, he well deserves accolades for his wisdom and compassion in serving his students. I am forever grateful to Dr. Gummerson, *the practitioner*, for his assistance and helping me complete my journey.

Dedication

Here I am, further than the many who attempt this feat. I have often thought of this day and how easy it would be to dedicate one of the final pieces of my work to those who mean everything to me.

First, it is with bursting pride, that I dedicate this work to my children: my son, Kyle, and my daughter, Savannah. I have no doubt that both of you, too, will receive your doctorate or equivalent degree one day. And when you do, I hope you are able to look back at your life, your career, your family, and remember that your dad and mom were the first in their families to not only go to college, but to attain the highest level of education possible. This is the conversation that I hope you will be able to have with your own children someday. You too, will have the hope that you can provide a better life for your children, as your mother and I have strived to do for both of you.

And to the most significant human being in my life—to the woman who has not only been by my side but has been leading me for over twenty-seven years of marriage, I dedicate this work. To my rock, my partner, my best friend, and a wonderful mother to my children: my wife, Jennifer. I thank you for your unwavering support that came in the form of motivation, in correcting my grammar, and in a few well deserved tongue lashings when I deviated from the process of completing my research. It was painful at times, and I know as equally painful for you, but I always knew you were pushing me to reach my personal goal of also obtaining my doctorate degree. I can never repay you for how grateful I am. What I can and will do is be with you when our children and grandchildren receive their doctorates one day.

Thank you, Jennifer, my wonderful wife.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

The principalship has become a complex leadership position that is constantly changing. In the past, principals were considered the sole instructional leader: superheroes, who singlehandedly and autocratically led the school (Wallace Foundation, 2008). However, according to the *North Carolina School Executive: Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process*, to be successful, today's North Carolina principal must be a different kind of leader who possesses multiple leadership skills. Principals are no longer thought of as administrators who only manage schools and keep everything running smoothly. Instead,

> The successful work of the new principal will only be realized in the creation of a culture in which leadership: is distributed among all members of the school community; consists of open, honest communication; is focused on the use of data, teamwork, researched-based practices; and, uses modern tools to drive ethical and principled, goal-oriented action. (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction 2015, p. 5)

Alvoid and Black (2014) contended the changes in the ideas surrounding the principalship have been fostered by an ever-increasing number of new challenges that promote the need for a new model for school principals. The expanding responsibilities of principals as consensus builders, data analysts, and visionaries have taken over the faded memory of the principal being the building manager. With an emphasis on shared responsibilities within the school, today's principals rely more than ever on their school staff to work collaboratively as a team. This change in perspective has led to efforts at reforming the nation's ideas of the principal role as well as the preparation programs leading to principal licensure.

Accountability

One factor that influenced efforts to revision the role of the principal was a new focus on culpability. Following the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in the mid-1980s, government officials called for greater accountability and school reform. This accountability led to increased testing of student achievement, which placed great pressures on students and teachers (Hayes, 2004). School leaders were also targeted as school reform took center stage. Policies at the state and district levels focused primarily on student test scores as a way to measure educator effectiveness, and the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (EASA), also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), brought principal accountability to the forefront. Under this federal legislation, principal leadership was called into question if a school had a consistently poor record of student success. Noting that strong school leadership had a significant impact on student achievement, some principals of low performing schools were removed from their positions of leadership (Cotton, 2003). Hargreaves and Fink (2006) suggested that this act, all too often, "created a carousel of leadership succession as principals have been rotated in and out of schools with an increasing sense of desperation and panic, along with early exits of more and more disheartened principals from the profession altogether" (p. 8).

The recent Race to the Top (RTTT) legislation continued this trend of increased accountability for principals (Jacques, Clifford, & Hornung, 2012). Identifying what, exactly, constituted strong school leadership has been a focus of most states across the nation. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, in its 2012 brief, *State Policies on Principal Evaluation: Trends in a Changing Landscape* highlighted the fact that following RTTT, at least 34 states passed legislation on principal preparation (Jacques et al., 2012, p.

13) As noted in the Wallace Foundation Report (2008), "If there is a national imperative to improve our failing schools, then there is also a national imperative to strengthen the preparation of school leaders" (p. 11). DeVita (2007) explained, "States and districts need to work much more closely together in creating more supportive leadership standards, training and conditions" (p. 3).

Improving the leadership of public schools in the 21st century was viewed as a critical component to the improvement of student performance. Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) emphasized the importance of leadership as a transformational force, which, if absent, is an impediment to improved academic achievement (p. 9). These same sentiments were echoed by Balls, Eury, and King (2011). In summation, a new era of accountability has placed the emphasis of student learning squarely on the shoulders of principal leaders. With this idea at the forefront, principal preparation programs have chosen to revision their programs to meet the changing needs of the principalship.

Competing Paradigms of Leadership

One issue facing school principals and higher education is the plethora of theories associated with school leadership. English (2003) noted that there is no one theory of leadership accepted by all. As such, the multi-dimensional role of leadership makes it difficult to determine what the focus of training should be and how school leaders can best be trained. English argued that in order to shape effective leaders, institutes of higher learning must focus on decision making grounded in morality. English further indicated the need for schools of education to address the theory-practice gap that existed between the theorists and practitioners. He espoused the postmodern position, recognizing that there is never a single answer to a question. He further challenged the accepted status quo in order to promote

anticipatory thinking about school leadership practices. He explained, "It is about challenging and opening up the central premise that only one set of borders are possible to define and support professional practice" (p. 3).

Similarly, Eli Broad, venture philanthropist and founder of the Broad Center for the Management of School Systems, espoused the idea that school leaders should be managers with or without teaching experience. In *Better Leaders for America's Schools,* The Broad Foundation (2003) stated that "public education should focus on the only measure worth considering—results in the classroom." (p. 20) The Broad Foundation disparaged the traditional role of higher education in the training of educators to be effective school leaders, choosing instead to promote the idea that leaders from the business world might be more successful in accomplishing educational goals. The Foundation called for a widening of qualified candidates for the principalship and included the idea of recruiting experienced leaders from the military, business, and community organizations to run schools.

Due to the complex nature of school leadership, some researchers have advocated incorporating successful leadership principles and practices from business and the military with principles of educational leadership (Gummerson, 2013). Such principles could provide school leaders with the tools to address issues they face in the rapidly changing environment of public education. Freedman (2000), for example, highlighted four principles of Marine Corps leadership. The first of these principles is the *Seventy Percent Solution*. In this principle, Marines are taught to make decisions quickly, even without complete data. There are always unanticipated threats and opportunities associated with any problem, but inefficiency in making a decision leads to greater problems. The second principle, *Make Every Team Member a Problem Solver*, emphasizes the importance of collaborative

leadership. The third principle, *Reward Failure*, puts the focus on leadership accountability and a tolerance of mistakes. The last principle, *Seek Outside Perspectives*, leads to seeking diverse opinions so that the organization does not become stagnant.

Similarly, Haberman (2011) concurred that leaders from outside the realm of educational leadership have similar responsibilities: managing budgets, hiring talented staff, improving performance, developing a vision, and implementing strategic plans.

Controversy and Reform

However, the tenets of school leaders set forth by the Broad Foundation (2003) and others who look outside of education for answers are steeped in controversy. Miller (2012) observed that the Foundation's definition of successful leadership was singular in focus, and based solely on achieving higher student test scores, tending to impose "managerial authority rather than the creation of dialogic and democratic space" (p. 8). Scott (2009) warned that venture philanthropists like Broad have become too influential in shaping educational policy at the state level. Weiner and Kaplan (2014) further contended that billionaires are pushing the policy pendulum to sway the federal government. They argued that parents and citizens have been misled and only the wealthy elite are benefiting from this reform movement. In the same vein, Ravitch (2013) similarly railed against venture capital and philanthropic foundations like the Broad Foundation, the Gates Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation whose purposeful three-fold attack on public education is to: "first, proclaim that traditional institutions are failing; second, declare a crisis; third, propose market-based solutions accompanied by grandiose promises" (para. 3). Likewise, Kumashiro (2012) contended that even though the public educational system has always been connected to the business community, now more than ever, it is the millionaires and billionaires who believe that their

success is transferable to public education, and in many instances are financing reform are pushing to outsource leadership to non-educators.

In contrast, Cuban (2006) argued that while school principals do perform similar functions as businesses leaders, such as managing people, budgeting, and planning, he opposes the idea that schools should operate like businesses. Unlike businesses, schools are expected to meet public demands from taxpayers, community organizations, and legislators, while being held politically responsible. Cuban (2014) has warned that principal roles are too diverse to be held to an ever-increasing set of reform standards that are impossible for any school leader to meet.

Other Responsibilities versus Instruction

Assistant Principals and Principals are faced with an ever-increasing number of responsibilities. The avalanche of federal and state standards driven by ongoing reform has forced principals to become more involved in legislative and community activities outside of the schools (Ravitch, 1985). The application of the Bill of Rights to public schools, a result of selective incorporation via the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution by the Supreme Court, along with a plethora of civil rights and special education laws, requires the principal to be knowledgeable at a much deeper level of the intricacies and subtleties of school law (Essex, 2016). Decreased funding, juxtaposed against the backdrop of increasing responsibilities outside of instruction, has also forced principals to become more informed about the management of budgets (Crampton, Wood, & Thompson, 2015).

Historically, there has been a tension between those who believe that school leaders should focus their efforts on student instruction and those who believe that the nature of the principalship requires the focus to be spread among a wide variety of responsibilities.

Traditionally, supervision of instruction was recommended as being the most important role of the principal (Oliva, 1984), but the questions remains: Can principals do it all (Finkel, 2012)? Lunenburg (2010) argued that it was imperative for principals to be the instructional leader of the school, and that in fact, it was their main responsibility. Portin (2003) disagreed, arguing that:

> Given all the demands on principals, is it reasonable also to expect them to spend hours in the classroom? Should principals be real instructional leaders even if other problems, like student safety, parental relations, or declining enrollment threaten the existence of their schools? Is it reasonable to expect principals to know more about instruction than teachers who have done it longer (and who might have passed up opportunities to become principals because of their dedication to the classroom)? Does it make sense to expect high school principals to lead disciplinary instruction in mathematics, history, English, physics, or biology? (p. 7)

Despite the disagreement on the proper emphasis of instructional leadership, the more traditional managerial role of the school principal continues to be alive and well. School administrators continue to balance such managerial tasks as grounds, building operations, and communicating with stakeholders (Alvoid & Black, 2014). Cuban (2014) asserts that the principal really has three discrete, yet equally important and overlapping roles: the managerial, the political, and the instructional, and that all three roles should be at the forefront of reform efforts for preparation of effective school leaders.

Problem Statement

Alvoid and Black (2014) noted that reform efforts have left new principals feeling unsupported and unprepared for the job. In a 2011 survey of American educators, almost 70% of principals reported that their job responsibilities are much different than they were just 5 years before. As new principal recruits assume positions of leadership, the difficulty of the job has often proved overwhelming. Nearly 20% of newly minted principals leave their positions within 2 years (Changing role of the principal, para. 5).

Hess and Kelly (2005) concluded from a study of over 56 university programs across the United States that more than 42% of the programs focused on technical knowledge in the areas of school law, facilities, and finance. Surprisingly, however, they discovered that none of the programs had a final assessment to determine student mastery. Levine (2005) indicated most principal preparation programs focused on law and finance, but were lacking in developing the leadership abilities needed in the ever-changing role of the 21st century principal. Given their potential impact to the success of schools and given the fact that many principals do not currently have the skills or supports to realize that impact, ensuring every school has an excellent principal should be central to every state's strategy (New Leaders, 2012).

Many novice principals and assistant principals believe they lack the necessary skills needed to be an effective school leader, despite their university training. Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007) noted that all too often, "aspiring and practicing principals are frequently ill-prepared and inadequately supported to take on the challenging work of instructional leadership and school improvement" (p. 4). These sentiments are echoed by Alvoid and Black's (2014) assertion that unsupported principals leave the

profession quickly: "A lack of continuity in leadership bodes poorly for schools and underscore the importance of districts having well-designed plans for recruitment, training, and ongoing support of their principals" (Para. 6).

The role of the principal continues to change. With those changes comes a need for preparing novice North Carolina principals and assistant principals to understand and implement the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives (Appendix A), which are intended to guide effective principal practice. In recent years, many school districts have implemented their own district principal preparation programs to address the multiple challenges faced by principals. One significant benefit to developing local principal support programs in individual school districts is the ability to tailor instruction based on the identification of specific needs that novice assistant principals and principals face. To this end, a study of novice principal's perceptions of their strengths, weaknesses, and needs within a single North Carolina school district was conducted, based upon the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, to determine the kinds of support that might enhance and improve their leadership skills.

Background. In order to better prepare principal candidates, the North Carolina Standards for School Executives were developed in 2006. The new standards were based primarily on two research studies, *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the Principalship* (Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003) and *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results* (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). *Making Sense* identified common leadership practices that principals across the United Stated routinely employed regardless of the type of school: urban, rural, or suburban. *School Leadership that*

Works identified specific types of changes and principal behaviors that promoted student achievement. These findings are detailed next.

      Portin study findings. Portin et al. (2003) detailed findings on what school principals actually did as part of their leadership roles. His research focused on understanding the role of a principal, how to combat the administration shortage across the U.S., perceived principal training deficits, and a determination to rectify the lack of quality leaders coming to the field. The Portin (2003) study was significant because it was broadened to include parochial, charter, and private schools, along with the traditional public schools. Furthermore, the study sought feedback from educators of various levels, including teachers, assistant principals, and principals. The results indicated that principals felt on-the-job training was more significant than the preparation program they attended and that they wished they had more preparation in the areas of conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, problem diagnosis and solving, organizational theory, and school finance. It was also determined that principals who had the additional support of mentors were more confident in handling the complexities of the principalship.

      Portin et al. (2003) called attention to the following findings:

1. The basis of the principalship is in the act of diagnosing needs and deciding what resources are needed to meet those needs.

2. All schools require seven critical areas of school leadership: strategic leadership, cultural leadership, instructional leadership, managerial leadership, human resources leadership, external development leadership, and micro-political leadership.

3. The principalship requires that all seven of the critical areas of leadership must be addressed, but the principal cannot do it alone and must learn to lead with the help of others.

4. A school's governance structure affects the ways key leadership functions are performed. And extremely important,

5. *Principals learn the most by being in the principal role* [emphasis mine].

McREL study findings. The *School Leadership that Works* study (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005), sponsored by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) Group provided a meta-analysis of leadership practices that affected student achievement. Ultimately, 69 of 5,000 studies were included in their meta-analysis. The researchers developed a Balanced Leadership Framework based on their determination that student achievement was directly linked to effective leadership. They identified 21 responsibilities and 66 practices of effective school leaders (Waters & Cameron, 2007). Particular emphasis was placed on the kinds and timing of change that principals should employ to successfully implement school reforms.

Implications of the Portin and McREL studies. In order to promote the quality standards of leadership for administrators, the North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction adopted eight essential standards of leadership for principals and assistant principals. These eight standards were developed directly from the Portin and McREL research. In addition, the *North Carolina School Executive: Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process*, adopted in 2010, included a priority focus on 21 competencies. These competencies mirrored the 21 responsibilities

highlighted in the McREL study. The Balanced Leadership Framework, developed by McREL was

> predicated on the notion that effective leadership means more than simply knowing what to do—it's knowing when, how, and why to do it. Effective leaders understand how to balance pushing for change while at the same time, protecting aspects of culture, values, and norms worth preserving. *They know which policies, practices, resources, and incentives to align and how to align them with organizational priorities. They know how to gauge the magnitude of change they are calling for and how to tailor their leadership strategies accordingly. Finally, they understand and value the people in the organization* [emphasis added]. They know when, how, and why to create learning environments that support people, connect them with one another, and provide the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to succeed. This combination of knowledge and skills is the essence of balanced leadership. (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003, p. 2)

The North Carolina Standards for School Executives and the revisioning of university leadership programs. The Globally Competitive Students, Policy ID Number: GCS-L-004, issued by the North Carolina State Board of Education (2008), required all North Carolina colleges and universities with principal degree and licensure programs to revision their leadership programs based on the newly created North Carolina Standards for School Executives and the North Carolina School Executive Evaluation Rubric for Preservice Candidates (See Appendix A & B). The intent was to develop principals capable of bringing research to practice in hopes of filling many of the gaps that critics of traditional school leadership programs had warned about (Gummerson, 2011). These standards

reflected the expectations for novice as well as seasoned principals. In 2010, the NC State Board of Education implemented the North Carolina School Executive: Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process, which mirrors both the North Carolina Standards for School Executives and the North Carolina School Executive Evaluation Rubric for Preservice Candidates (See Appendix C). Each school year, a required orientation and a pre-evaluation planning meeting takes place between principals and the system superintendent or designee. Additionally, principals are mandated to create preliminary performance goals. In this way, principals are annually required to think about the way they are evaluated on their ability to implement the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2010).

Purpose

Many principals eventually become strong educational leaders within their buildings, their communities, and within their districts. However, effective leadership does not happen overnight. Even the most experienced district leaders start their school leadership profession as novice principals who are faced with problems they may or may not have foreseen as aspiring administrators. How these problems are solved may be a determining factor in the successes that potentially await their professional careers.

This case study stems from anecdotal data initially collected in 2012 from a small group of novice principals employed by a medium-sized North Carolina school system. The pilot study focused on challenges faced by these novice principals, and it was determined that the participants' perceptions shared some commonalities. Initial themes included challenges with finances, policies, and curriculum. Although the preliminary study was quite small, its potential implications were far reaching. Consequently, a new, larger formal research study

was conducted in order to delve deeper into the overarching patterns related to the problems and successes faced by novice principals in a small, rural school district in western North Carolina.

The overall purpose of the study was to investigate novice principals' and assistant principals' self-perceptions of their abilities to become effective school leaders by executing the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives. It is this researcher's desire that the results of this case study be used to develop topics for exploration and education for novice principals within a local school district-sponsored leadership academy. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the school executive leadership capabilities of the practicing novice principals and assistant principals in order to increase student achievement. In addition, it is important to contribute to the culture of sustainable leadership practices that promote continued success within school districts.

Research Questions

In order to determine the broad themes related to novice principal and assistant principal perceptions on the eight leadership standards, the preliminary research has been expanded to a larger group of administrators from a small, rural school district located in western North Carolina. The guiding question for this study was:

How are novice principals' perceptions of self-efficacy influenced by their understanding and implementation of the NC School Executive Standards Framework**?** Specifically:

- **RQ 1** How do novice principals and assistant principals perceive their leadership effectiveness in relation to eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives?

- **RQ 2** How effective do novice principals and assistant principals rate the School Executive Leadership training they received from their college or university program?

- **RQ 3** What professional development needs, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, can be identified for novice principals and assistant principals?

Setting of the Study

The study took place in a small school district located in the foothills of western North Carolina. The district contains approximately 6,500 students ranging from K-12th grade, and consists of 13 schools (one high school, one early college, one alternative education center, two middle schools, and eight elementary schools). In addition, it contains nine preschool sites. The population of the study consisted of principals and assistant principals with less than 5 years of experience as a licensed North Carolina school executive. For the purposes of this study, the term novice principal was used for school leaders with less than 5 years of administrative experience. Rehrig (1996) defined novice principal as one in the first five years in the role. This definition was utilized in this study, and a convenience sampling of novice principals and assistant principals from the participating district was employed.

Significance of the Study

This qualitative research case study, grounded in a model of the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, explored the perceptions of novice principals and assistant principals to determine emerging themes that school systems and institutions of higher learning might use to better understand the strengths and deficiencies of novice school

leaders. This information may help superintendents, school systems, and institutions of higher learning in North Carolina to develop professional content for aspiring administrators and strengthen existing programs. In addition, it could be used to create a dialogue to foster a strong mentoring relationship between school superintendents and principals. It might also instill in novice principals the importance of ongoing self-evaluation and leadership training in the years that follow, in order to adapt and improve their leadership skills in a profession that continues to evolve in response to a rapidly changing world. Equally important, college and university leadership programs could use the information to revise and augment their training programs to help candidates be better prepared to lead.

Ultimately, this study can provide insight and knowledge to not only the school district being studied, but also to school districts throughout North Carolina that desire to better prepare novice assistant principals and principals. Because the needs of a novice leader differ, based on the education they received during their leadership program, their personal experiences, and the context of the district in which they serve, each district's approach to providing support must be tailored to the different needs of individual novice leaders. In essence, this study can become a blueprint for how school districts in North Carolina can determine those needs in order to develop support systems like mentoring programs and leadership academies to help their school executives become better leaders based on the North Carolina Standards for School Executives.

Critical Perspective

My personal interest in this action research study lies in the fact that I have been in the field of education for over 20 years. I vividly recall my first principal assignment, and the overwhelming uncertainty I had regarding my decision-making with every single problem

encountered. At times, I felt unprepared for some aspects of the job. I was often forced to make decisions to the best of my ability, despite a lack of knowledge.

The purpose of this research was not to critique the eight NC School Executive Standards, but to examine novice principals' perceptions of their abilities to perform in each of the standards. In examining these perceptions, a focus on novice principals' and assistant principals' preparation and needs naturally unfolded.

Although the eight NC leadership standards are now legislatively mandated, it is important to note that other motives for the standards might exist. For example, it might be that the standards were initiated in order to draw attention to the academic achievement results of public schools. It is worth mentioning that during the focus on academic achievement in recent years, many public schools have been described as failing our children. Disguised under the cloak of choice and charter schools, public schools are now battling with legislators over privatizing education. One could conclude that with the proclamation of failing public schools, that the North Carolina School Executive Leadership instrument has been a tool legislators have used to fuel the pro charter school movement to push their ideological belief of privatization.

Increasingly, it is important for the staff and community to be supportive of the principal, because the relationships between the principal and stakeholder groups are one factor in the success of the school. Gathering and analyzing data on specific problems principals encounter was a beneficial process, not only for me personally but also for the school district. The conclusions drawn from this research may inform future trainings for aspiring and experienced administrators.

Effective, successful principals are an integral factor in increasing student achievement. "Leadership is a concept we often resist. It seems immodest, even self-aggrandizing, to think of ourselves as leaders. But if it is true that we are made for community, then leadership is everyone's vocation, and it can be an evasion to insist that it is not. When we live in the close-knit ecosystem called community, everyone follows and everyone leads" (Palmer, 2000). The eight NC School Executive Standards, taken as a whole, is one measure of effective school leadership. However, another leadership standard that could also be beneficial for aspiring administrators is in the area of social justice. At the district level, a tailored program directed toward specific problems such as student achievement and equity has the potential to give novice and aspiring administrators the background they need to feel more successful during their first principalship appointment.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are to provide clarity and ensure understanding throughout the study.

Academic achievement leadership. The process by which effective principals meet measurable progress for students based on established performance expectations (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Cultural leadership. The process when effective principals work toward developing a positive school culture that promotes student achievement and a sense of community pride (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

External leadership. The process when effective principals comply with all local, state, and federal mandates (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Human resource leadership. The process when effective principals recruit, hire, mentor, evaluate, and support staff in meaningful ways (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). A program of six standards released in 1996 of the council of Chief State School Officers designed to model standards of disposition, knowledge and performance for school administrators (Murphy, 2005).

Instructional leadership. The process when effective principals collaborate with teachers on curriculum (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Leadership. Bass (1990) noted that leadership is the one factor that determines if an institution is successful or not.

Managerial leadership. The process when effective principals communicate with students, staff, and community stakeholders (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Micro-political leadership. The process when effective principals build partnerships among diverse groups in order to help meet school goals and a sense of cohesion within the school (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Moral purpose. Leadership that creates equitable opportunities for all students to learn (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Novice principal. A principal who has 1 to 5 years of experience in the principalship.

Revisioning. A process required by state statute that all college and university school leadership programs in North Carolina be revised to cultivate in school leaders the ability to integrate research and best practices to improve public schools based on the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (General Assembly of North Carolina, S.L. 2007-517).

Strategic leadership. The process by which effective school principals lead schools to improved student achievement by focusing on school mission and vision statements, and leading positive change (North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Sustainable leadership. "Sustainable educational leadership and improvement preserves and develops deep learning for all that spreads and lasts, in ways that do no harm to and indeed create positive benefit for others around us, now and in the future" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 224).

Summary

The role of the principal is no longer one-dimensional. Leading a school in the 21st century requires a unique set of skills, including a shared vision and responsibility with school staff. With a greater emphasis placed on increased student performance, it is imperative that novice principals in North Carolina have a clear understanding of the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives and develop the ability to implement them

within their respective schools. A new trend emerging from local educational agencies is the development and implementation of supplemental district principal preparation programs. By implementing such programs in the form of mentoring or district leadership academies, school districts can better serve novice principals in specific areas to enhance their leadership development. For this purpose, an in-depth study of novice principal self-perceptions of their needs and strengths, based on the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, was conducted.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This review of the literature will provide a historical perspective of the role of the principal, principal academies, what constitutes effective leadership, and why there appear to be some deficiencies in the ability of novice assistant principals and principals to perform as effective leaders in schools. The review will provide insight on what states, universities, and local districts have done to strengthen the skill set of principals and assistant principals. Additionally, the literature review will identify some characteristics principals need to internalize and be able to employ if they are to adequately lead a school and improve student achievement.

History of the Principalship

The concept of the school principalship, although not named as such until the 1900s, was established in the early 1800s. From the Colonial period and through the Civil War, principals were known by many different names, including preceptors, head teachers, and principal teachers. Initially, "most educators were male" (Rousmaniere, 2013, p. 9). Although both men and women were eventually hired as teachers, local community members often based teacher selections on their political and religious affiliations.

> As schools became larger in the early 1800s, and grade-level classes were established, the position of "principal teacher" was created. This person, almost always a man, was a teacher who also carried out 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. (Kafka, 2009, p. 321)

Overall, it was a title that wielded little influence on the culture of schooling. It took until the 1920s before principals were no longer expected to regularly teach as part of their duties. Even then, the principal's duties mostly consisted of mentoring less experienced teachers, taking attendance, and completing reports. The role carried little authority (Kafka, 2009). Superintendents appointed principals, although no standardized criteria had been developed to promote excellence in the position. Prior to the development of local and state school systems, the school principal reported to members of the community, who served as what would later become Boards of Education (Glanz, 2004).

Following the post-war economic boon of the 1950s, which spurred massive urban and rural population growth throughout the United States, school districts similarly started to grow in size (Cremin, 1990). Consequently, the authority and responsibilities of the school principal began to increase exponentially. Few principals taught in the classroom, but were considered to be the teacher of teachers. In fact, due to student population growth, superintendents, in order to lessen their own duties, began giving principals more authority. Principals also gained additional power by promoting educational administration as a profession, which later led to the establishment of professional organizations like the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NASEP). The principalship evolved to a position of power, in part due to greater participation in community organizations and the extension of invitations to parents to take part in school functions. More and more, principals were perceived as community leaders and authorities on education. Their primary duties, however, continued to focus primarily upon directing teachers ahead of all other duties (Kafka, 2009).

However, Kochan, Jackson, and Duke, (1999) noted there was a shift in the principal role at the end of the twentieth century: Principals went from merely managing a school to becoming the leader of the school.

Principals are currently expected to lead teachers, be responsible for students, and communicate effectively with community stakeholders. Stein and Nelson (2003) suggested that principals need some level of experience in every subject area to broaden their pedagogical knowledge, and that principals should be able to identify the best possible instructional methods to implement for a particular subject. One of the problems some novice principals face is the cynicism of their staff, whose members have seen a revolving door of principals and change initiatives. To this point, Fink and Brayman (2006) explained that quality leaders cannot emerge unless their roles allow them to directly make a difference in student learning, yet, principals of the 21st century are required to be much more than the instructional leaders of the school. Today's leaders face a myriad of new challenges: governmental regulations at the local, state, and federal levels, increased accountability, limited resources, and the many demands from parents and the public (Portin, Alejano, Knapp, & Marzoff, 2006).

Principal Preparedness

    History. Compared to other professions, the history of graduate programs preparing school leaders is relatively short (Jackson, 2001). Button (1966) noted that the need for principal preparation programs followed on the heels of urban expansion after the Civil War and Reconstruction. Higher education programs began to develop school administration offerings for aspiring principals in the 1920s. However, initially, only men were allowed to enter the programs (Rousmaniere, 2007).

Historically, school leadership preparation programs can be categorized into four eras: Ideology Era, Prescriptive Era, Behavioral Science Era, and Dialectic Era. The Era of Ideology (1820-1900) mirrored the teaching strategies taught. Formal programs of study were rare. The Prescriptive Era (1900-1946) introduced the field of school administration. Principal preparation programs modeled their teachings after the management model from business schools. The Behavioral Science Era (1947-1985) sought definitive administrative practices. Democratic ideologies were valued, while the science of administration was taught. Finally, the Dialectic Era (1986-present) emphasized a renewed focus on student performance, and the principal's role in that juncture (Donmoyer, Imber, & Scheurich, 1995).

Over the past several years, colleges and universities have come under increasing scrutiny in regards to their teacher and principal preparation programs. Until recently, these programs have been the sole venue for formal training for principals. Local Educational Agencies are now exploring the idea of growing their own district building principals. The Wallace Foundation (2008), in *Becoming a Leader: Preparing School Principals for Today's Schools*, notes, "A growing number of states, districts and universities have begun a process of reimagining leader development as a well-connected, standards-based, career-long process" (p. 8). For the past three decades, public education has experienced a plethora of school accountability reforms involving additional testing at local, state, and federal levels. School leaders are increasingly tasked with being better prepared to take on the principalship in the same way a veteran CEO would take on an organization. Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, and Orr (2009) assert, "it is possible to create systematic learning opportunities for school leaders that help them develop the complex skills needed to lead and transform contemporary schools" while they are on the job (p. 153).

Lawmaker perceptions. Nevertheless, many lawmakers believe that higher education and local school district preparation programs are not turning out high-quality principals who are ready to lead:

> All too often, training has failed to keep pace with the evolving role of principals. This is especially true at most of the 500-plus university-based programs where the majority of school leaders are trained. Among the common flaws critics cite: curricula that fail to take into account the needs of districts and diverse student bodies; weak connections between theory and practice; faculty with little or no experience as school leaders; and internships that are poorly designed and insufficiently connected to the rest of the curriculum, and lack opportunities to experience real leadership. (Wallace Foundation, 2008, p. 8)

Mirroring this attitude, the North Carolina State Legislature (2015) passed H.B. 902: *A Bill to Establish a Competitive Grant Program to Elevate Educators in North Carolina by Transforming the Preparation of School Principals.* It was intended to force public university and college leadership preparation programs to compete with programs created by private corporations. The driving force of accountability continues to be primarily legislatively driven and focused on student achievement. Such accountability is evidenced by The North Carolina State Board of Education's 2013 approval of the addition of the eighth Standard for School Executives: Academic Achievement Leadership. The standard states, "The school executive will contribute to the academic success of students. The work of the school executive will result in acceptable, measurable progress for students based on established performance expectations using appropriate data to demonstrate growth" (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015, Standard 8).

Barnett (2004) posed the question, "Are today's administrators prepared to be the instructional leaders that are required to bring about improved student achievement" (p. 122). Although many researchers and practitioners are asking the same question, developing effective leaders has long been a concern among policymakers, scholars, and institutions with preparatory principal programs (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Practice vs. theory. There remains a growing perception that a disconnect exists between the practical knowledge necessary to perform the duties of a school administrator and the theoretical knowledge required by higher education. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) and Young (2009), exemplary preparation programs share a set of common components that include research-based content, curricular coherence, and problem-based learning strategies that integrate theory and practice. The recent Race to the Top (RTTT) federal initiative sought continuity in principal preparation programs, the quality of the programs, and their impact on principals, teachers, and students. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) displayed seven key elements aligned with five model university preparatory principal programs:

1. Clear focus and values about leadership and learning around which the program is coherently organized,

2. Standards-based curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management,

3. Field-based internships with skilled supervision,

4. Cohort groups that create opportunities for collaboration and team- work in practice-oriented situations,

5. Active instructional strategies that link theory and practice, such as problem based

   learning,

6. Rigorous recruitment and selection of both candidates and faculty, and

7. Strong partnerships with schools and districts to support quality field- based

   learning. (p. 12)

Yet, Sackney and Walker (2006) confirmed that no leadership program could fully prepare novice principals for the principalship. In fact, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) contended that novice principals are not adequately prepared to be instructional or improvement leaders for schools, despite their higher education experiences. According to Oplatka (2009), pre-service principals lack the practical skills and knowledge necessary to make connections between theory and practice. Before taking on the role of a school executive, pre-service principals have "no sufficient expertise to lead people and initiate changes, or a sense of what a managerial function is" (Oplatka, 2009, p. 4). Peterson (2002) explained that in order for institutions of higher learning to support local school districts, their principal-preparedness programs need a pool of diverse leaders to tackle the issues facing school districts. Shields (2013) suggested,

> Instead of being prepared to address such significant issues, educational leaders and
> their preparation programs are still frequently and too narrowly focused on principles
> of scientific management, reacting to forces that too often overwhelm them rather
> than being proactive in terms of promoting reflection and creating understanding. (p.
> 8)

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2009), a high-quality leadership preparation program should include a strong conceptual foundation with rigorous and coherent curriculum focused

on leadership for learning. It is equally important that higher education institutions have a complete understanding of school district needs, so they can better arm aspiring principals with the tools they will need to be successful. To this end, preparation programs from universities and colleges should form partnerships that help one another become better educators of school leaders. Fortunately, North Carolina S.L. 2007-517, which required the revisioning of university principal leadership programs, made such partnerships a requirement for all leadership programs as of 2009.

Principal Mentoring

In some school districts, mentoring has been employed as a strategy to help fill the gaps in knowledge of novice school leaders. According to Robinson, Horan and Nanavati, (2009), mentoring accelerates learning, reduces isolation, and promotes confidence in newly appointed principals. Additionally, it helps new principals adapt to the social norms in a school, community, and district (Peters, 2010). Mentoring has been shown to have positive reciprocal effects for both the mentor and mentee when educational sharing takes place. Veteran principals have validated the mentor process as a positive experience because they appreciate that new principals valued their experience as a principal (Robinson et al., 2009). However, Daresh (2001) pointed out that veteran principals do not always have positive and supportive relationships with novice principals. Ineffective mentor programs can result from lack of district commitment, financial support, ineffective mentors, and uncommitted mentees (Peters, 2010). Alsbury and Hackmann (2006) confirmed that poorly designed mentor programs can cause mentees to depend too much on mentors, leading to limited success, whereas effectively structured mentor programs have the potential to shape novice leaders into effective communicators and problem solvers who resonate a professional

confidence.

For the principal mentoring to be successful, there must be buy-in from both parties. Research completed by Crow and Matthews (1998) concluded that mentors have a larger impact on successful leaders than course work and interactions from institutions of higher learning. However, working collaboratively, school districts and institutions of higher education could have a stronger impact on developing and continuously improving principal mentor programs (Daresh, 2001). Having a positive and motivating relationship with a variety of stakeholder groups is essential to be able to create a school climate that enables success for all groups. Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010) pronounced that when principals had a trusting relationship with parents, students, community stakeholders, and teachers, together the groups could be change agents for the school community.

Principal Academies

Often the school system's central office personnel are considered to be the lead authority when it comes to helping new principals develop into effective leaders. However, Honig (2012) reported professional development embedded into the framework of the job is a more effective way to help novice principals. One way local districts develop the future leaders of their schools is by conducting their own principal academies. This method of preparation can help local school districts meet the specific needs of both the principal and the school district in regard to developing better principal leaders. It is essential that local school districts provide opportunities for principals to learn through authentic practice as opposed to just learning through simulations or case studies (Walker, Bryant, & Lee, 2013). Leadership academies based on authentic self-assessment and district assessment, as well as

authentic leaderships activities conducted within the school district, may enhance the leadership skills of novice principals who lack the skills necessary for effective leadership.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) concluded that an important element for pre-service principal training programs was the alignment of state and professional standards to the curriculum being taught. Gummerson (2011) noted that North Carolina may already have some of the necessary supports in place with the alignment of its Standards for School Executives, School Executive Evaluation Rubric for Pre-service Candidates, and School Executive: Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process. Each of these instruments mirrors the other in their inclusion and alignment of the state standards. Davies and Darling-Hammond (2012) contended that successful programs supported pre-service and novice principals by focusing on practical applications, integrated curriculum organized thematically, with an emphasis on problem based instruction and stronger partnerships between school districts and institutes of higher learning. Additionally, Duncan, Range, and Scherz, (2011) noted that the cohort model was an especially effective means for developing principal leadership skills.

Effective Principal Leadership Practices

The recent literature focuses on multiple theories defining effective school leadership. The ever-increasing demands on developing principals in the 21st century make the job more difficult than ever. Within the literature, there are conflicting schools of thought about what constitutes effective characteristics within the principal leadership role. However, increasingly, the importance of moral and sustainable leadership practices is being emphasized. According to Bruggencate, Luyten, Scheerens, and Sleegers (2012), leaders achieve positive effects on school outcomes through indirect paths such as ongoing

stakeholder communications, specific school improvement plans, and clear mission and vision statements.

Goal oriented leadership. Lussier and Achua (2007) declared that leadership is a process of influencing both leaders and followers to obtain the same organizational goals. Davies (2009) distinguished between leadership and management:

> Leadership is about direction-setting and inspiring others to make the journey to a new and improved state for the school. Management is concerned with efficiently operating in the current state of circumstances and planning in the shorter term for the school. Leadership is not the provenance of one individual but of a group of people who provide leadership in the school, and by doing so, provide support and inspiration to others. (p. 2)

Moral leadership. One commonality in many of the educational leadership theories is the idea that leaders should be grounded in morality. Sergiovanni (1992) noted, "Servant leadership is more easily provided if the leader understands that serving others is important but that the most important thing is to serve the values and ideas that help shape the school as a covenantal community" (p. 125). Fullan (2005b) argued that moral purpose necessitates an individual to direct the priority to "raising the bar and closing the gap of student learning; treating people with demanding respect (caring within a framework of high expectations); and altering the social environment (making schools aware that all schools in the district must improve" (p. 16). Echoing this belief, Larsen and Derrington (2012) suggested, "the most reliable guide at the principal's disposal may be the 'Moral Compass' upon which the individual has learned to rely" (p. 12).

Sustained leadership. Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey's (2007) examination of previous leadership models identified important points associated with the need for a shift in understanding how effective principals should lead in a way that sustains educational reforms. They argue against top down bureaucratic paradigms in favor of a different paradigm of leadership based on complexity science, which "frames leadership as a complex interactive dynamic from which adaptive outcomes (e.g., learning, innovation, and adaptability) emerge. (p. 298)

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) emphasized that many educational leadership practices create small bursts of activity, but rarely result in long-term positive results. For them, sustainability "does not simply mean whether something can last. It addresses how particular initiatives can be developed without compromising the development of others in the surrounding environment, now and in the future" (as cited in Blankstein 2013, p. 200). Similarly, Davies (2009) outlined 10 statements crafted by Hargreaves to further explain the concept of sustainable leadership. These statements include

1. It creates and preserves sustaining learning;

2. It secures enduring success over time;

3. It sustains the leadership of others;

4. It is socially just;

5. It develops rather than depletes human and material resources;

6. It develops environmental diversity and capacity;

7. It is activist;

8. It is vigilant and avoids decline;

9. It builds on the past for a better future;

10. It is patient in seeking long-term results.

Fullan (2005a) noted that an important aspect of positive change in the educational landscape is the notion that school leaders need to understand the nature of change and the importance of employing sustainable leadership practices. His Eight Elements of Sustainability were similar to the work outlined by other researchers. Gummerson (2013) synthesized the work of Fullan, Davies, Hargreaves, and Fink to create five commonalities of sustainable leadership practices. These five practices included: understanding moral purpose, setting short and long-term goals, recognizing the impact of decision making on all stakeholders, conserving resources, and creating lifelong learners.

Principal Responsibilities

Goodwin, Cameron, and Hein (2015), in Balanced *Leadership for Powerful Learning*, reiterated the relationship found in the McREL study between effective leadership and 21 responsibilities of principals. They identified 66 practices associated with the responsibilities, and reported the strength of the relationship between the associated practices and responsibilities to student achievement (Appendix D). The five most effective of the 21 responsibilities were deemed to be situational awareness, flexibility, outreach and monitoring, and evaluation. Goodwin et al. (2015) also noted that each of the 21 leadership responsibilities fall into one of three broad categories of effective leadership: establishing a clear focus, managing change, and creating a purposeful community.

Conceptual Framework

The development and application of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives are intended to provide research based standards that better define and broaden the focus of leadership practices that a principal must master and employ, if they are to

become an effective leader. Rooted in the research of Portin's (2003) *Making Sense* study

which focuses on what principals actually do on a daily basis and McREL's Balanced

Leadership Framework (Marzano et al., 2005), which identifies 21 responsibilities and 66

practices of principals who effectively improve academic achievement, the eight standards

provide a screen through which to observe the effectiveness of novice principals and their

preparation programs based on their self-perceptions. The North Carolina Standards for

School Executives provide novice principals with many of the seminal principles and

practices that much of the academic literature currently considers as being important to

effective school leadership. Additionally, because the North Carolina Standards for School

Executives, the North Carolina School Executive Evaluation Rubric for Pre-service

Candidates, and the *North Carolina School Executive: Principal and Assistant Principal*

Evaluation Process are almost identical in content and focus, they provide assistant

principals and principals with a solid theoretical and practical understanding of the best

practices leading to excellence in the schools. That understanding can be helpful to novice

principals and assistant principals as they seek to meet the many demands of school

accountability and continue to self-assess their personal effectiveness throughout their

careers.

Synthesis of the Literature

In North Carolina, changes in the title from lead teacher, to school principal, to school

executive reflect the widening scope of the responsibilities of the principalship. The role of

the principal is much more than a building manager or a curriculum leader; it requires

consensus building and the development of a shared vision, as well as successful student

achievement. Federal, state, and local accountability from various stakeholders add to the

weight and responsibility of the position. Unfortunately, once on the job, many principals and assistant principals have stated that they feel unprepared for the role (Beam, Claxton, & Smith, 2016).

With a renewed interest on increasing student learning, North Carolina lawmakers have heightened accountability requirements for assistant principals and principals and required the revisioning of all university principal preparation programs. There is now urgency among legislators and the public to address the need for better-prepared principals. Using the North Carolina Standards for School Executives and the North Carolina School Executive Evaluation Rubric for Preservice Candidates, schools and educational institutions of higher education in North Carolina are now required to work collaboratively to develop better prepared school administrators. A central purpose of the Standards for School Executives has been to apply research to practice. With these increased accountability measures for novice school leaders and their collective cry for help based in part on gaps left unfilled by higher education preparation programs, there is an urgency to help novice assistant principals and principals self-identify those gaps in order to develop in-district support via mentorship programs or leadership academies that can enhance their leadership skills.

Summary

This chapter presented a review of the literature associated with the history of the principalship, principal preparedness, principal mentoring, effective leadership characteristics, as well as the importance of moral and sustainable leadership practices. The literature shows that the responsibilities of the principalship have grown significantly over the past fifty years. The principal, who was once referred to as preceptor, head teacher, or

the teacher of teachers, has evolved into a school executive. That title carries with it a myriad of responsibilities. The literature highlights the fact that many novice principals are not ready to lead when they begin the profession and there is a great need to provide in-district support by either mentorships or leadership academies to enhance their leadership skills. In Chapter 3, a rationale will be provided for employing a case-study methodology to study perceptions of assistant principals and principals about their ability to effectively lead their schools based upon the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. Specific details related to this study will also be outlined.

Chapter 3: Research Method and Design

Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology will be explained. The guiding question for this study was:

How are novice principals' perceptions of self-efficacy influenced by their understanding of the NC School Executive Framework**?**
Specifically:

- **RQ 1** How do novice principals and assistant principals perceive their leadership effectiveness, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives?

- **RQ 2** How effective do novice principals and assistant principals rate the School Executive Leadership training they received from their college or university program?

- **RQ 3** What professional development needs, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, can be identified for novice principals and assistant principals?

In order to answer these research questions, a qualitative methodology was conducted. Creswell (2005) explained qualitative researchers rely on participant perceptions and collect data that are steeped in participant words or text. Qualitative research is appropriate when the researcher identifies a complex problem that requires deep exploration through qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data allow researchers to garner a deeper understanding of the various aspects of a particular problem and to analyze these data through both description and theme.

Case Study

A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., an activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2005). Educational case studies frequently focus on the comparative experiences of individuals that result in rich, thick description (Creswell, 2005). Breslin and Buchanan (2007) noted that case studies and the use of qualitative data have a "rich history for exploring the space between the world of theory and the experience of practice" (p. 36). Further, the gathering of qualitative data allows researchers to examine complex situations by looking at the *how* and *why* of individual circumstances (Yin, 2003). Creswell reported that qualitative research depends on the myriad of viewpoints of the participants. The researcher asks "broad, general" questions, records the data, and then subjectively analyzes the responses for themes (Creswell, 2005, p. 39).

However, there is controversy surrounding the case study and qualitative research. As Flyvbjerg (2006) noted, qualitative research has been called too subjective, and results from shared case studies have been questioned. In response, Flyvbjerg issued a counterargument:

> For researchers, the closeness of the case study to real-life situations and its multiple wealth of details are important…for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behavior cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process and in much theory. (p. 223)

Stake (1995) also advocated for the very subjectivity that other researchers felt was a downfall of the case study methodology. He believed that rich descriptions and personal

interpretations allowed for a more complete understanding of the case. He explained that multiple sources of data allowed readers to recognize the myriad paths to the researcher's conclusions. Similarly, The Panel on Research Ethics noted,

> A researcher may rely on multiple sources of information and data gathering strategies to enhance data quality. Researchers use a variety of methods for data gathering, including interviews, participant observation, focus groups and other techniques. In some cases, gathering of trustworthy data is best achieved by closeness and extended contact with participants. ("Qualitative research," 2012)

Keegan (2009) explained,

> Good qualitative research practice is based on a combination of practical skill and theory (either implicit or explicit). Practice and theory feed one another so that they become more than the sum of their parts; neither is "superior" to the other. (p.22)

In order to gather the rich data needed to answer the guiding research questions of this research, a case-study approach was deemed appropriate and necessary. To drill down to common themes associated with the perceptions of novice principals and assistant principals, the multi-faceted components of the principalship were meaningfully explored. Case study methodology led to a more complete picture in determining the perceived strengths and deficits of principals in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives.

Concerns

For this research, the small pilot study completed within the researcher's own school district was expanded. In the pilot study, novice principals were interviewed and data were gathered. However, it quickly became apparent that the researcher's role as district superintendent intimidated some participants. They were concerned that their responses were

not "correct," and they continually sought validation for their answers. The pilot study, while beneficial, may not have provided valid results because the novice principals appeared to be concerned that their answers might make them seem unprepared for their new roles. It should be noted that the principals who participated in the pilot study had been in their roles for less than three months. It may be that they were so new to the position that intimidation played a larger role.

To alleviate concerns over intimidation factors, this study was conducted in a district in which the researcher had no authority. Permission was garnered from the superintendent of that district, and all research was conducted outside of the researcher's authority.

The College of St. Elizabeth, a small, private college in New Jersey, published a document that outlined potentially problematic research scenarios. The document listed several steps to minimize the risk of harm to participants who were subordinates of the researcher. One suggestion was to use anonymous questionnaires. This strategy was employed. The initial survey questions did not ask for identifying information, keeping survey respondents anonymous. In this way, the initial survey data could be analyzed in order to determine themes that would drive focus group questions, but participants did not have to fear that their individual responses about self-efficacy could be traced to them (College of Saint Elizabeth, n.d.).

The next phase of the research process was participation in an interview. Following the guidelines set forth by the College of St. Elizabeth, specific measures were utilized to separate the researcher role from the supervisor role. These measures included: only using Appalachian State University email as opposed to school district email to communicate with all participants, avoiding the use of the title superintendent in any correspondence, and

clearly informing potential participants of the voluntary nature of taking part in the study. In addition, the researcher explained how the topics of the study had the potential to assist in the development of a future principal academy. Informing participants was crucial for the success of this type of research. Uhlmann (1995) explained that participants should be "familiar with the situation under research so they are able to identify the initial presenting issues" (para. 2).

Participants

Thirteen principal and assistant principal participants from within the selected school district were asked to participate in this qualitative research study. It is important for qualitative researchers to focus on depth, not breadth, of information (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). For this reason, a small sample size allowed the researcher to be more focused on a deeper understanding of the challenges novice principals face. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has not defined the term "novice principal." However, Rehrig (1996) specifically defined a novice principal as an elementary or secondary school principal who is in the first five years of the principalship. For this research, the term "novice principals" was defined using the same criteria. Participants in this study were principals or assistant principals with less than 5 years in the role.

In order to gain access to these participants, permission from the researcher's chair and committee was requested. In addition, permission to conduct research from the district superintendent was obtained. This permission can be found in Appendix E. Upon gaining permission from the IRB committee, a list of principals from the district who met the specified criteria was generated. Next, these principals were asked to take part in this study. Before taking part, they were asked to sign the consent form found in Appendix F.

Participants were assured of their anonymity and were informed of their right to withdraw

from the study at any time. Participants were wholly informed of the scope of the study and

were given the opportunity to preview data conclusions as part of member checking.

According to Krefting (1991),

>Central to the credibility of qualitative research is the ability of informants to
>
>recognize their experiences in the research findings. Member checking is a technique
>
>that consists of continually testing with informants the researcher's data, analytic
>
>categories, interpretations, and conclusions. (p. 219)

Allowing participants to review conclusions helped ensure participants' viewpoints were

accurately transferred into data.

Data Collection

The research took place during the 2015-2016 school year, and took a three-pronged

approach to data collection in order to triangulate information. Creswell (2005) defined

triangulation as "the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of

data, or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research" (p.

252). For this study, data were collected from an online survey, a focus group, and

individual interviews. Following protocol set forth by Creswell (2005), each information

source was thoroughly examined in order to find "evidence to support a theme" (p. 252).

These themes led to a greater understanding of the novice principals and assistant principals'

perceptions of their own leadership. Glesne (1999) reported that triangulation of data is

necessary to create a larger picture of complicated stories.

Initially, online surveys containing both selected response and open-ended items were

given to participants using Survey Monkey application software. Next, novice principals and

assistant principals were invited to be a part of a focus group. Finally, participants who were not part of the focus group were invited to take part in individual interviews. The rationale and data collection methods are further outlined in the sections that follow.

Surveys. A comprehensive survey was used as part of the research design. The survey was divided into two distinct sections. Survey questions in Part I were designed to gather insight into participants' perceptions of their effectiveness related to the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (Appendix G). Survey questions in Part II were designed to gather insight into participants' perceptions of their college or university programs' roles in preparing them to be effective in each of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (Appendix H).

To begin this research, survey questions were pilot tested with three novice principals who were not a part of this study. Creswell (2005) indicated that good research design involves the use of the pilot questionnaire in order to clarify time allotment, ambiguously worded items, or questions that lead to poorly worded responses. Pilot study results indicated that the survey took between 30-45 minutes to complete. None of the pilot study participants indicated that they were confused by survey items, and in member checking, the items were determined to be valid. Due to the results of the pilot test, surveys were sent to the 13 participants whose responses were included in this study.

It is important to note that demographic information was not be asked in these surveys, and that unique identifiers were turned off of Survey Monkey in order to protect respondents' anonymity. Due to the limited number of participants in this study, asking identifying information might have caused some respondents to be reluctant to answer survey questions honestly. For this reason, the survey respondents remained anonymous. This

anonymity is seen as a strength of survey instruments (Creswell, 2005).

Likert and open response survey questions relating to the North Carolina Standards for School Executives were given to all participants. According to Creswell (2012), including selected responses in a survey is "practical because all individuals will answer the questions using the response options provided. This enables a researcher to conveniently compare responses" (p. 386). Responses were analyzed for frequency of response rate and for themes related to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives.

Validity measures. During the pilot testing of the online survey questions, it was necessary to validate the preliminary results to determine if the answers given matched the intended responses of the participants. Evergreen, Gullickson, Mann, and Welch (2011) contended that a follow-up interview after the initial survey is one way to validate responses. Survey Monkey allows for an automated email notification when a survey is completed. In order to check the validity of the questions and responses, a follow up phone call was made to each pilot survey respondent to review the answers given to the survey questions. In this way, the survey instrument itself was checked for validity before being used for the larger study.

Analysis and validity of survey data. In order to determine themes, it was important that qualitative data from the online survey were coded and analyzed. The first step in the process was to employ the use of the text analysis feature of the Survey Monkey online software. This feature identified words that appeared most often in responses. This process identified some initial themes. The next step was to revisit the data to identify additional themes and to place all responses into an appropriate category. Survey Monkey allows color-coding of responses. This color-coding made categories easier to organize. The

third step was to revisit the identified themes to determine if any of them needed to be combined or separated. All qualitative answers from the survey were coded, in order to determine initial strengths and weaknesses related to these practices. Somekh and Lewin (2005) refer to this method as open coding, the process of recognizing connections by defining and organizing data into categories. Finally, an outside researcher read the responses and identified themes to validate the coding process. The outside researcher holds a doctorate and is familiar with the coding process. Categorized themes informed the next phase of the research process.

Focus groups. The second phase of the research involved conducting a focus group. According to Wilkinson (2004), a focus group is a non-formal conversation among individuals from a select group about a specific topic. Liamputtong (2011) reported that "the primary aim of a focus group is to describe and understand meanings and interpretations of a select group of people to gain an understanding of a specific issue from the perspective of the participants of the group" (p. 3). Following accepted focus group methodology, the focus groups consisted of six participants. The focus group interview lasted for 90 minutes. Snacks were provided to help alleviate participant fatigue, and the focus group members were situated around an oval table to facilitate interaction and discussion (Guidelines, 2005). Questions for focus group participants were determined after survey data were analyzed and coded. Questions attempted to drill down into the responses given in the surveys so a richer picture of novice principals might emerge, and a deeper understanding of problems they face could occur. Liamputtong explained, "The strengths of the focus group method are that the researchers are provided with a great opportunity to appreciate the way people see their own reality" (p. 4). This information was critical in understanding how novice principals viewed

themselves in their leadership roles, their ability to use the practices of sustained leadership, and their perceptions of the problems they faced.

The focus group meetings were held away from the participants' own schools. It was hypothesized that conducting focus group interviews in a neutral location alleviated fears of appearing unprepared for the principalship. Since the interviews were in a different location, it was hoped that participants would be more apt to give honest answers. In fact, Madriz (2003) pointed out that focus groups offer participants "a safe environment where they can share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of people from the same…backgrounds" (p. 364).

Analysis and validity of focus group data. In order to collect accurate data, focus group interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. From the transcriptions, responses were further coded, and themes were identified and consolidated. Once again, an outside researcher was used to validate coded themes. Analysis of coded themes was used in determining further questions for the individual interviews.

Individual interviews. To fully triangulate the data, a third phase of data collection began after focus group data were analyzed. This phase included individual interviews conducted to mine the data collected and to drill even deeper into the comments made by survey respondents. In the same way that a pilot test is recommended for survey administration, Kvale (2007) advocated for a pilot test in the interview process. In this case, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of novice principals in the fall of 2012. Lessons learned from that experience were incorporated into the methodology of this research study. Specifically, time parameters were explained and incorporated into the interview to help participants feel more relaxed before the actual interview takes place. In

fact, McNamara (2009) explained that there are eight principles that should be followed before a formal interview begins. These principles include conducting the interview in a setting with few distractions; explaining to the participants the purpose of the interview; explaining the confidentiality terms; detailing the format of the interview; giving the time parameters of the interview; providing the participants with the contact information of the researcher; allowing participants to ask questions before the interview begins; and recording the interview so that there is a record of the conversation. All of these guidelines were followed.

Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008) pointed out that three fundamental types of interviews are used with qualitative research: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. For this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with six participants. This approach allowed flexibility while still being somewhat structured. A list of guiding questions was developed after the survey data were coded and analyzed. It is important to note that these questions remained unknown until themes were generated from the analyzed data. In addition, follow-up questions to clarify points were asked during the interview. This approach allowed interviewees to elaborate on topics that might be very important to the interviewees but might not have occurred to the researcher (Gill et al., 2008).

Analysis and validity of individual interview data. In order to accurately work with the data from individual interviews, an audio recorder was utilized. A transcript was created from the audio data, and the transcript was analyzed and coded for recurring themes within the individual interviews and within the larger research study. Questions generated for the individual interviews were based on themes discovered during the first and second

phases of the study, and were aligned to the eight North Carolina Standards for School

Executives. An outside researcher, once again, was used to validate the coding process.

Alignment table. Each of the components of this case study was designed to help

answer the initial research questions. Table 1 presents a summary of each component, its

estimated completion time, and its alignment to the study's research questions.

Table 1

Description of Study Components

Research Component	Estimated Completion Time	Alignment to Research Questions
Survey: Part I	15 minutes	RQ 1; RQ 3
Survey: Part II	15 minutes	RQ 2
Focus Group	90 minutes	RQ 1; RQ 2; RQ 3
Individual Interviews	30 minutes	RQ 2; RQ 3

Limitations and strengths. Anderson (2010) noted that all qualitative research has

certain limitations. Among the limitations cited are researcher bias, researcher influence on

participants, researcher skill, and concerns over anonymity. Although specific steps were

taken to counter these limitations, it is still possible that the study is limited by these factors.

In addition, although it is hoped that the results obtained will be generalizable to other school

districts, it is not possible be certain that the information will be useful for other principal

academies.

Strengths of qualitative data cited by Anderson (2010) include the depth of research

results; the ability of the researcher to revise the research framework as the need arises; the

ability of the researcher to discover powerful, subtle points that might be missed by other research approaches; and the ability of the researcher to transfer findings to another setting.

Audiences. Although this research was derived from novice school administrators, the impact of the findings could be beneficial to multiple groups of educators. The conclusions from this research will be shared with administrators, superintendents, surrounding school districts, and institutions of higher education. It is hypothesized that these groups will be especially interested in the research findings and will use the data to strengthen programs geared toward developing novice principals. In the next chapter, the results are discussed in detail.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

School leadership in the 21st century requires a broader skillset than ever before. In North Carolina, this skillset is evaluated through the lens of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. This study took place in a small, rural, western North Carolina school district. Thirteen novice principals and assistant principals first completed an anonymous survey, which was divided into two parts. Next, six of the survey respondents took part in a focus group. Finally, out of the remaining seven participants, six were interviewed individually. This chapter reviews the research questions and reports the results from the survey, focus group, and individual interviews.

The results are reported in distinct sections, in the order that the data were collected. First, the results of Part I and Part II of the survey are reported and organized around the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives. The initial themes discovered through the qualitative analysis of survey data are reported and organized in subheadings. This qualitative analysis led to a more in-depth exploration of topics during the next phase of the study, the focus group.

The focus group data are also organized around the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives. Within each of these standards, data surrounding three general subheadings: Practices Implemented, Principal Preparation Programs, and Professional Development Needs, are reported. Themes found during analysis of the focus group data led to specific topics explored in the individual interviews.

The results from the individual interviews are recorded last. These results are organized into two headings: Principal Preparation Programs and Professional Development

Needs. Finally, an overall summary is reported. The summary gives an overview of the themes discovered during this study in reference to each of the research questions.

Research Questions

The guiding question for this study was:

How are novice principals' perceptions of self-efficacy influenced by their understanding of the NC School Executive Framework**?** Specifically:

- **RQ 1** How do novice principals and assistant principals perceive their leadership effectiveness, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives?

- **RQ 2** How effective do novice principals and assistant principals rate the School Executive Leadership training they received from their college or university program?

- **RQ 3** What professional development needs, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, can be identified for novice principals and assistant principals?

Participants

Thirteen novice principals and assistant principals took part in this study. Novice principal or assistant principal was defined as having five or less years of experience as a school leader. Table 2 reports the participants' current roles.

Table 2

Participants' Roles

Participant	Role	Location
P1	Principal	Elementary School
P2	Assistant Principal	Elementary School
P3	Principal	Elementary School
P4	Principal	Elementary School
P5	Principal	Elementary School
P6	Assistant Principal	Middle School
P7	Principal	High School
P8	Assistant Principal	Middle School
P9	Assistant Principal	High School
P10	Assistant Principal	High School
P11	Assistant Principal	High School
P12	Assistant Principal	High School
P13	Assistant Principal	Elementary School

Survey Findings: Part I

In Part I of the initial anonymous survey, study participants were asked to rate, on a Likert Scale, their perceived effectiveness related to each of the eight North Carolina Executive Leadership Standards. Part I of the survey was aligned with the following research questions:

- **RQ 1** How do novice principals and assistant principals perceive their leadership effectiveness, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives?

- **RQ 3** What professional development needs, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, can be identified for novice principals and assistant principals?

Table 3 summarizes the results of Part I of the survey.

Table 3

Summary of Survey Responses: Novice Principal and Assistant Principals' Perceptions of their own Effectiveness, as Related to the North Carolina School Executive Standards

	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective
Strategic Leadership	0 (0%)	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	0 (0%)
Instructional Leadership	1 (8%)	5 (38%)	6 (46%)	1 (8%)
Cultural Leadership	1 (8%)	4 (31%)	8 (62%)	0 (0%)
Human Resource Leadership	0 (0%)	7 (54%)	5 (38%)	1 (8%)
Managerial Leadership	1 (8%)	9 (69%)	3 (15%)	0 (0%)
External Development Leadership	0 (0%)	8 (62%)	5 (38%)	0 (0%)
Micro-Political Leadership	1 (8%)	8 (62%)	3 (23%)	1 (8%)
Academic Achievement Leadership	1 (8%)	10 (77%)	2 (15%)	0 (0%)
Total	5 (5%)	57 (55%)	39 (38%)	3 (3%)

According to the data collected, the majority of novice principals and assistant principals in this study indicated they were not confident in their overall leadership effectiveness. Sixty percent of the responses fell in either the *not effective* or only *somewhat effective categories.* Of the eight leadership standards, only three (*strategic leadership, instructional leadership, and cultural leadership)* had responses indicating that the majority of the participants felt *effective* or *very effective.* Of those three, only *cultural leadership* had a difference of more than one response. It is interesting to note that although 54% of respondents indicated that they were *effective* or *very effective* in the area of Instructional Leadership, 85% of the participants rated themselves as either *not effective* or only *somewhat effective* in the area of Academic Achievement Leadership. In addition, 77% of respondents felt they were *not effective* or only *somewhat effective* in Managerial Leadership, and 70% of the participants rated themselves as *not effective* or only *somewhat effective* in Micro-Political Leadership.

In addition to Likert Scale items, Part I of the survey also contained open-ended items, designed to allow participants to expand on the ratings they gave themselves on each area of leadership by clarifying their answers. Several themes emerged from the analysis of the qualitative portion of the survey. These themes gave insight into what practices the novice principals felt were important and those with which they struggled. These themes are reported next.

Distributed leadership. The theme of using teams of educators as a part of effective leadership practices occurred frequently in participants' open-ended responses. Participants noted the importance of School Improvement Teams (SITs) and the practice of utilizing staff input as effective leadership behaviors. One respondent explained that at his (or her) site,

"the School Improvement Team is seen as a decision making body." Another contributor expressed the value of the team's actions in regard to goal setting:

As a school improvement team, we evaluate what we are doing and how it affects the future of our students. We took surveys from the students and parents to evaluate school climate and quality of instruction. The SIT team used this data to write our goals for the School Improvement Plan.

Similarly, "Recruiting of staff is always a team process. I invite a team pertinent to the selection and decision, to make the recommendation to the board," explained one respondent. Another person surveyed wrote about how teachers are used to make shared decisions: "All financial decisions are made by the School Improvement team. Staff input is sought when making schedules, school goals, etc." This same sentiment was seen in the following response: "All decisions are made cohesively as a school. The principal and I seek input from the staff and all decisions that affect the school are never made without input from others." From their responses, it was evident that shared decision-making was a trait valued by the majority of the participants.

In addition to SITs, the practice of fostering teacher leadership was mentioned frequently. As one novice administrator explained, "100% of staff feel empowered to lead and 100% felt they had the resources needed to do their daily tasks." Other respondents explained, "Staff are given multiple opportunities to take on leadership positions or serve as leaders within their setting" and teachers "are encouraged to lead and are empowered to be teacher leaders. They are behind the shift to meet in PLCs to analyze data." The emphasis on the importance of distributed leadership practices indicated participants felt it was a

priority in regard to their school leadership practices, and an area in which they felt confident.

Community relationship. Comments that centered on the importance of engaging members from the school community appeared often in the open-ended responses. One comment read, "Providing opportunities for the school community to come together for the benefit of all stakeholders is a priority." Another respondent wrote, "I build relationships with people that use our facilities to have more outside people come in and see what is happening at our school." Another explained, "This year, I've worked to contact all parents for the student disciplinary infractions, parent nights, sporting events, Academy Newsletters, etc." Some answers explained advantages of knowing the rural community so well. "Having grown up in the community and understanding the way of life yielded many opportunities to promote and engage the stakeholders in the school community." The participants' knowledge and confidence of building relationships within the community was illustrated by their many responses surrounding this idea. However, participants' responses also showed areas of leadership in which they had less confidence.

Difficulty in leading instruction and academic achievement. The challenges associated with leading instruction and fostering academic achievement was another emerging theme. Participants' qualitative answers focused on the varying aspects of this difficulty, including the feelings of fearfulness associated with the grading of schools. One respondent shared,

> The school has been in "the red" and rated as "Not Making Adequate Progress." We have been a D school the last two years and I am most fearful we will be an F this year, and this is the year there was a strong feeling we would hit a C.

Another novice school leader noted, "The EOG scores just received last week have put a dark cloud of despair and hopelessness over the building. We were identified as a 'Low Performing School' in 2015-2016."

Some of the survey quotes brought attention to the frustration that some novice principals felt over the lack of success their schools had experienced, despite their personal interventions.

Our scores on EOGs continue to put us at the bottom and we do not seem to be closing any more instructional gaps than when I first became the principal. How can so much work and effort be put into the framework with so many research based shifts in practice and we are no further along?

Another respondent reiterated this idea. "Our county struggles with low socioeconomic areas and we are a full Title I county. Our parents send us the best they have. We are working hard to create individualized differentiated relationships with students."

Some participants reinforced the idea that leading instruction is multi-faceted. "I am still pecking away at alignment——I want to ensure everything we do (academically) is aligned to standards, based on student need (determined by assessment, not gut feelings), in place to ensure all students have an opportunity to grow." A third person concluded, "No one right-way to serve students. It is a constant exploration to find innovative ideas for student achievement."

Others indicated that the key to leading instruction was academic facilitation, whether from a school administrator or from the person at their sites who had that role: "We have strived to utilize our new Academic Facilitator to improve instruction from our teachers. Our

teachers completed a book study and implemented Daily 5 and CAFE. Our AF oversaw and guided this implementation. In addition, another respondent explained,

> We protected teacher-planning times and gave additional planning times on days when teachers met with the AF. Mid-year, the principal and I met with teachers, without the AF, to assess the effectiveness of PLC times with the AF and to determine the direction of PLCs for the remainder of the year.

Comments from the open-ended portion of the survey show that these novice school leaders were still trying to find their way to provide effective leadership that promoted instruction and academic achievement.

Building relationships. The importance, as well as the difficulty, of building school-based relationships was evident in the open-ended responses. One commenter wrote, "I feel like I am good at building/fostering a healthy culture. We recognize failures but celebrate accomplishments and rewards." Another noted, "We have a culture of collaboration within our school. Collaboration between special area teachers, classroom teachers, instructional assistants, students, and parents." Some answers indicated that this topic is much more difficult than it appears to the naked eye:

> This year, I truly perceived to have the "dream team" of a staff and thought morale and climate was unified and the highest it had been in a long time for the school. Again, according to the NCTWCS results, I only have 78% of 32 staff that feel our school is a good place to work. That means 6-8 people still disagree our school is a good place to work; that is a high number of still unhappy staff. Although 96% did feel they are recognized and rewarded for their efforts.

The use of capital letters and the acknowledgement that the effort is ongoing underscored one respondent's strong belief that building relationships is an essential leadership trait, "I work on building relationships with not only students but with staff. Teachers and administration MUST work closely together." A different novice school leader's choice of verb tense also indicated that building relationships is an ongoing process, rather than something that has already been accomplished. "I am working on building systems and relationships that utilize the staff's diversity." Comments indicated that the participants recognized the importance of building school-based relationships, but also demonstrated that this practice was not as easy as it appeared.

Limited opportunities for assistant principals. Several responses were related to the idea that assistant principals do not have the same opportunity to engage in all leadership practices as principals. "I have been a part of several interviews and hiring discussions, but I don't deal directly with the most serious issues." Another leader wrote, "AP does not deal directly with the most serious of issues." One open-ended answer seemed to indicate that with more opportunity, novice assistant principals could grow in their understanding of effective leadership. "The roles I fill in the school limit my ability to participate in this area as much as I would need to be more proficient." These comments indicated that the assistant principal role, while designed to give novice school leaders experience to help them move to the principal position, still lacked adequate opportunities of exposure to all of the standards.

Survey Findings: Part II

In Part II of the survey, study participants were first asked to rate, on a Likert Scale, their perceptions of the effectiveness of their graduate coursework in preparing them for each

of the eight North Carolina Executive Leadership Standards. Part II of the survey was aligned

to the following research question:

RQ 2: How effective do novice principals and assistant principals rate the School

Executive Leadership training they received from their college or university program?

Table 4 summarizes the results.

Table 4

Summary of Survey Responses: Novice Principal Perceptions of their Graduate Coursework Preparation, as related to the North Carolina School Executive Standards

	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective
Strategic Leadership	1 (8%)	8 (62%)	4 (31%)	0 (0%)
Instructional Leadership	1 (8%)	7 (54%)	5 (38%)	0 (0%)
Cultural Leadership	0 (0%)	9 (69%)	4 (31%)	0 (0%)
Human Resource Leadership	4 (31%)	7 (54%)	2 (15%)	0 (0%)
Managerial Leadership	0 (0%)	10 (77%)	3 (23%)	0 (0%)
External Development Leadership	1 (8%)	9 (69%)	3 (23%)	0 (0%)
Micro-Political Leadership	2 (15%)	9 (69%)	2 (15%)	0 (0%)
Academic Achievement Leadership	5 (38%)	5 (38%)	3 (23%)	0 (0%)
Total	14 (13%)	64 (62%)	26 (25%)	0 (0%)

According to the data collected, only 26 % of the novice principals and assistant

principals taking part in this study indicated that their principal preparation programs were

effective, overall. None of the respondents indicated that their preparation programs were

very effective in preparing them for any of the eight leadership standards. At 38 %,

Instructional Leadership had the most frequent *effective* response.

In addition to Likert Scale Items, participants were next allowed to expand on their

responses by answering an open-ended item regarding the effectiveness of their graduate

coursework in preparing them for effective leadership. Analysis of the open-ended

questioned revealed themes within each of the eight standards. Out of 104 responses, the

theme *Learned on the Job* appeared 63 times. Table 5 indicates the frequency that the theme

Learned on the Job appeared within each of the eight standards.

Table 5

Number of Associated responses to the theme: Learned on the Job

Standard	Number
Strategic Leadership	6 (46%)
Instructional Leadership	6 (46%)
Cultural Leadership	9 (69%)
Human Resource Leadership	10 (77%)
Managerial Leadership	11 (85%)
External Development Leadership	8 (62%)
Micro-Political Leadership	7 (54%)
Academic Achievement Leadership	6 (46%)
Total	63 (61%)

Learned on the job. The majority of the participants in this study indicated that their graduate coursework was not effective or only somewhat effective in preparing them in the eight North Carolina School Executive Standards. Overwhelmingly, the novice principals and assistant principals remarked that experience was more beneficial than actual coursework. In fact, the theme of *Learned on the Job* was identified in relationship to every standard, and was the most frequently coded theme within each standard.

Several novice administrators wrote about the lack of relevant experiences within their courses, "My graduate coursework seemed more focused on theory and research than practical day to day work in the school. This area requires hands on experience." Another quote echoed this feeling. "Paper-based training and learning were adequate for coursework, but lacking in real world applications." Two more responses noted that one could do well in coursework without gaining the skills necessary to be an effective leader.

> I honestly think that after my first or second year as an administrator, I should have gone back and redone grad school—I would have admin experiences to hook the knowledge to. I was a great grad school student (all A's) but I have learned more on the job than I did in grad school.

"I feel that I was taught all that can possibly occur in a classroom setting to be prepared for the principalship. However, on the job training has been the most eye opening and realistic."

A final quote from a participant in the study sums up this theme: "In our coursework, we discussed staff conflicts and teacher problems, but like most jobs, you are not truly prepared until you experience it firsthand."

Focus Group Findings

Six of the novice principals and assistant principals agreed to participate in a focus group. Questions presented to the focus group were centered on the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, and were created based on themes identified through initial survey responses. Focus group data were audio recorded and then transcribed. Transcripts were read and themes were identified for each of the eight standards, and categorized by each of the research questions:

- **RQ 1** How do novice principals and assistant principals perceive their leadership effectiveness, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives?

- **RQ 2** How effective do novice principals and assistant principals rate the School Executive Leadership training they received from their college or university program?

- **RQ 3** What professional development needs, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, can be identified for novice principals and assistant principals?

The focus group session took place in the lower level of the central office building. The participants had just come from a monthly administrator meeting. Everyone knew each other well, due to the small size of the school district. As the focus group session began, participants were asked to identify practices they associated with effective leadership in each of the eight standards. As the conversation developed, themes associated with principal preparation programs and needed professional development sessions were also identified. For the purposes of reporting, the focus group participants are identified as Particpant1 (P1),

Participant 2 (P2), Participant 3 (P3), Participant 4 (P4), Participant 5 (P5), and Participant 6

(P6).

        As the first question was asked, it was met with silence, and then nervous laughter.

However, no one volunteered to answer. From the sideways glances, it appeared as if the

participants were looking for guidance and leadership. Finally, P4, the most veteran principal

at the table, with five years of experience, broke the ice. P5, the second most experienced

principal, followed with a response. After the first round of responses, participants'

nervousness receded and questions were readily answered, although P5 clearly took the lead

in some answers.

        As analysis of the focus group responses took place, initial themes were first

identified. Table 6 summarizes the initial identified themes, in relation to each of the research

questions.

Table 6

Topics Identified from Focus Group Responses

Standard	Theme Associated with RQ 1 (Practices Implemented)	Theme Associated with RQ 2 (Preparation Program)	Theme Associated with RQ 3 (PD Needs)
Strategic Leadership	Developing Teacher Leadership	Steep Learning Curve; Rich Internship Experiences Needed	Mentoring
Instructional Leadership	Classroom Walkthroughs; Technology Integration; PLCs; Utilization of Academic Facilitators; Relationship Building	Rich Internship Experiences Needed	Time Management
Cultural Leadership	Understand the Community's Priorities; Listening	Rich Internship Experiences Needed; Study of How Poverty Affects Students	(No additional themes noted)
Human Resource Leadership	Utilize Interview Teams; Assign Mentors to Beginning Teachers; Prioritizing	Steep Learning Curve Real Life Scenarios	Principal Support Group;
Managerial Leadership	Scheduling; Communication	Budgeting	Building & Grounds Management
External Development Leadership	Making Student/Business Connections; Communicating with Agencies	(No additional themes noted)	Industry Visits
Micro-Political Leadership	Shared Vision	Basic Beliefs	(No additional themes noted)
Academic Achievement Leadership	Partnering with Families; Incorporating Embedded Professional Development	Sustainable Leadership	LEA Training

Through deeper analysis, it became clear that several themes were repeated and were

obviously important to the focus group participants. It then became apparent that some of the

initial themes were actually subthemes of larger ones. These larger themes are reported next

within categories that match the research questions: Practices implemented, Principal

preparation programs, and Professional development needs.

Practices implemented. As participants discussed effective leadership practices, four

main themes came to light. Those themes were identified as distributed leadership,

community awareness, strong communication skills, and relationship building.

Distributed leadership. Participants' comments once again identified distributed

leadership as a dominant theme. P5 confidently noted, "Our faculty meetings are now all

teacher led. They do rotation sessions where they share some best practices." P3, who had

been a principal for seven months, nodded and agreed with P5 that they, too, utilize this

practice at their school. P3 continued,

> We found when we met with our Leader in Me team that we needed to push this also
>
> into developing stronger leaders by giving more leadership to the staff. So this is one
>
> of our goals this coming year: Have our staff completely immerse themselves in
>
> leadership roles.

> P2 spoke for the group, amid nods of affirmation, "We all have an interview team,

where we pull teachers or support staff in, and we use them for shared decision making."

These explanations related directly to the idea of *Distributed Leadership,* first emerging from

the survey data, and highlighted the value participants placed on shared governance.

Community awareness. Participants also noted the importance of understanding the

community's priorities. P2 stated,

> I live in this same community, so I feel like I have a good grasp on what our
>
> community is like. I know the students; I know the parents. I know the teachers. We
>
> have successes because we know and understand each other.

P4 went on to say, "What our community values is family. That's a big thing. It's getting in that community and learning and knowing what the values are within the community." P3 explained the relationship of understanding the community and instructional leadership, "It's about trust. I think that's where you earn your stripes as an instructional leader is in cultural leadership. Because if they don't trust you, it's not going to work for you there."

P3 pointed to the importance of students making connections with businesses and vice versa. She described, "Trying to get the community and our school system to see that graduation is not just a senior high issue, it's something that we start in kindergarten, or pre-K." P4 further contended, "We have business partners who come into our school and mentor our students. I think knowing where to go in the community to get support is key." P1 passionately described the process, "We are trying to get our students to see the big picture. We try to connect our students with the businesses that are in the area, making them know where they are headed."

Strong communication skills. Several participants explained the importance of communicating with staff and other school stakeholders. P2 eagerly reported, "Your staff wants to be informed. It is very time consuming, but it is very important." P3 backed up this idea, saying, "I give a weekly observer. Teachers always know what is going on. And we do a two-month calendar, so they are aware of what is going on in the building. I think communication is huge in this standard." P4, businesslike, agreed. "I send out daily announcements each morning and just list what's happening in the building. People just want you to listen. I think a big part of cultural leadership is listening to parents, listening to kids, listening to teachers." P5 explained,

Academic achievement is more difficult now than ever before with the new standards. When you look at academic achievement, you have to look at partnering with parents to help them help their kids at home. We have to build some bridges at home to have some academic achievement at school." P4 expanded on this idea. "I think we also have to show parents that we are not working against them, we want to work together to help their children succeed."

P4 expressed the importance of communicating with agencies as well, "We set up a support team every Wednesday morning. The nurse, the counselor, the DSS worker, and the homeless coordinator to talk about ways to support kids." P5 agreed, "You have to know who to go to for agencies to help with advocating for kids. You know, like the mental health agencies, external counseling, DSS."

Relationship building. Another theme identified as an implemented practice was Relationship Building. P5 spoke of the significance of this practice,

I was an instructional coach. And that coach piece prepares you not to be confrontational or judgmental of the teacher. You're there to support them with instruction, and so if you have that background, I think that that's good for a principal to be able to have that force, instructional leadership, some of those same little skills you learned as a coach in supporting teacher, transferred into administration into the schools.

P2 elaborated, "[Instructional Leadership] comes from tenure in your building, and knowing the staff, knowing the strengths and weaknesses of your staff. I think that's something that's established. P4 declared, "I think your teachers have to view you as not just someone who dictates what needs to be done, but someone who's going to be in there with them." P5

conceded, "Leadership is about building that relationship among your staff. Developing a common mission and vision is important to foster those relationships." P3 echoed the significance of a shared vision, "I just think that transparency is very important, that teachers understand, or they're making those decisions with you."

Preparation programs. As focus group participants explained their perceptions on effective leadership, four themes emerged: Steep Learning Curve, Rich Internship Experiences Needed, Real Life Scenarios, and Sustainable Leadership.

Steep learning curve. Ideas related to the theme of *Steep Learning Curve* were mentioned immediately in the category of preparation programs. These findings echoed the theme of *Learned on the Job*, first identified from the survey data. P5 expanded on this concept,

> I feel like there was a lot of great information in my college courses, a lot of logistical stuff that prepared you, but some of the face to face stuff that happens, you just have to have a learning curve. You have to go through it and experience it, and have a learning curve to evaluate.

P6, who was nodding strongly, expanded on that point, "I felt somewhat prepared coming out of prep classes, but being able to know how that mix continues after I hit the ground…it's not as easy to make that happen." P5 excitedly interrupted,

> The first irate parent…the first bus mishap…the first counseling session with a staff member…you know, those first things that you can get all of the content knowledge you want, but until you actually go through it...this is where the learning curve comes in.

P2 explained the extent, to which he/she was unprepared for the standard,

I think this is the area that I'm most troubled with, because when I was in the

classroom, I did my job, and I didn't know about all the drama and the issues that

went on with staff and teachers and conflicts. And I don't think any of my

preparations prepared me for that.

P2 further interjected, followed by group laughter, "I don't think a preparation course could

dream of the scenarios that we have dealt with." P2 was asked to further elaborate on this

comment:

For instance, when a staff member cheats on a spouse and then moves in with the

other staff member and they all work in the same building. This brings conflict almost

on a daily basis. I didn't realize how much drama and those issues took place outside

the classroom because as a teacher I did my job and I was not involved in that drama.

P1 quickly followed with a response, "And these are the things that you won't see in an

interview—of course people are going to tell you what you want to hear."

Rich internship experiences needed. In order to combat the steep learning curve,

several participants suggested that richer internship experiences were needed during the

principal preparation program. P3 noted, "We did an internship. I was able to see different

situations throughout the day. That to me was one of the best experiences that I could have."

P1, a principal of two years, validated his own internship experience, with a caveat, when he

said,

There is nothing like being thrown to the wolves. The school prep is still okay and the

professors can teach us what they teach us in class, but being on the ground is what

made the difference. And often that internship, it depends on what time you go in.

Like I didn't learn anything about how to prepare a school.

P4 recommended a singular focus while participating in the internship in order for it to be of most value. "If we are training future administrators, that internship almost needs to be where there are no other responsibilities, but that internship."

> I feel like I'm saying the same thing, but it's going to be seeing it in action. I mean you can talk about theories, and you can talk about how it should look, and that rich conversation is important, but you have to see that action in order to think to yourself, 'How would I handle this?'

P5 elaborated on the theme by suggesting that the internship should have a specific focus, "And if principal preparation could include some type of… in that internship component, you know, at the graduate level, some type of component of [instructional] coaching, I think that would be ideal for preparing them for Standard II." According to the focus group participants, the rich internship experience should also include experiences at different levels. P1 added,

> What I'm trying to say is that I benefited from being at three different levels. As far as being an instructional leader…when I was at middle school, I really didn't understand; I really didn't know what I was doing. And then when I went to Early College, I learned a lot in staff development. Then, I had elementary and didn't know anything about elementary. And it takes a while when you're doing that, as an instructional leader.

P6 stated, "You can't just sit back and look at it on paper and see what a school culture is. You have to be involved in it before you know what the school culture is."

Participants' responses underscored their belief that a properly designed internship experience would benefit pre-service school executives and assist with the steep learning curve experienced by all of the novice school administrators in the focus group.

Real life scenarios needed. P4 commented that taking part in discussions surrounding scenarios in the internship was beneficial.

One thing in our program that we did was having different scenarios we discussed. We were asked what we would do, or what would be our first steps. To me, that was one of the most helpful things because we were able to network and talk together to hear what other people were doing in different situations based on culture in different

P1 suggested that preparation programs spend time on this aspect through role-play.

But kind of like what [P2] said, if we could have role-playing or scenarios on dealing with staff conflict, where you really don't know what to do, just kind of playing that out and seeing what you would do in those situations.

P3 agreed. "I think that whole scenario thing you talked about would be helpful, especially with the human resource standard." P5 had an idea for an entire course.

Somebody needs to publish, as part of the principal prep program, a real life book. The title should be *Behind the Office Door*. Someone should write down what happened in Situation 1, Situation 2, Situation 599, you know, and what that situation was, how it was dealt with, and whether that [decision] was a good thing or not.

Comments from the focus group participants underlined a need for scenarios that mimicked the experiences they would encounter as novice school administrators. Both P1 and P5 stressed the importance that preparation programs needed an additional concentration on

getting involved with local business and industry for both students and staff to make those real world connections.

   Sustainable leadership*.* Finally, Sustainable Leadership emerged as a theme in regards to preparation programs. P5 explained,

   Sustainable practices probably need to be a more reoccurring theme in the preparation

   programs. There are a lot of chunked courses. There's a chunked course on PLCs.

   There is a chunked course on testing or law. But I think rather than looking at

   chunked courses it would be more beneficial to do something that helps principals

   understand true sustainability. You know, putting something in practice and making

   sure there is follow through and it keeps going.

P4 echoed these sentiments,

   Sustainability is the most important thing. I feel like in education, we try one or two

   years and if it doesn't work we throw it out. You have to steady the course and you

   can't keep going off on new and different directions.

P3 elaborated,

   I think sustainability is the key. You look at programs, but really what you want to do

   is to build sustainability within your staff. You want them to understand how students

   learn to read not how to teach this program or that program. You want them to

   understand what things need to be present in that environment for students. When I

   was in leadership classes there was a lot of talk about different programs, so we never

   really got to the meat and potatoes of what teachers need.

   Professional development needs. Focus group participants noted several professional development needs. After analysis, five themes emerged as the strongest: Mentoring and

Support Groups, Instructional Leadership, LEA Support, Building and Grounds Management, and Industry Visits.

Mentoring and support groups. The theme mentoring and support groups emerged with regard to professional development needs. Participants noted that there was a need for extra guidance and support during the first few years as a school administrator. Although none of the participants were actually assigned a mentor when they took their first leadership positions, they all agreed that it would be incredibly valuable to their professional growth. P2, an assistant principal of two years, expressed the value of having a mentor,

> It's when you are actually in those situations, and that's what I mean by having a mentor to be able to go to…to see how other people handle it, so that you can be thinking about how you are going to handle it when that is you.

P4 explained passionately,

> This is a lonely position. You are the only one of you in the building, and you are the middleman with everybody. You're the middleman with parents; you're the middleman with teachers; you're the middleman with the central office. You get it from all sides, and there's only one of you. It's hard. You have to be able to rely on your colleagues, and you have to be able to have some kind of outlet to be able to deal with the everyday issues that come up.

P3 felt the same way,

> Middleman is probably the best way to describe it, because it's kind of the mindset that whoever gets to me first is best or wins. It _is_ a lonely job, and I didn't realize that as an Instructional Coach. Then, everybody loved to see me come. And I went from that to a principal, and it was hard. One of the things that is supportive here is the

Principal PLC. We meet with our colleagues, and we're able to talk about these things.

We have an agenda that we add to, things we might need to talk about. And usually,

someone else has either dealt with it or they are dealing with it. So we can navigate

that together as a principal team, rather than having that island feeling that we often

feel as principals.

P4 added one last comment, "This job isn't fame and glory. We are all here because we

worked hard and this is our passion, our goal that we want and not everybody has that same

work ethic, or has that same drive."

Instructional leadership. Paradoxically, in the survey, 54% of the participants felt

that they were effective or very effective in the area of instructional leadership, despite the

fact that only 38% rated their principal preparation programs were as effective in this area.

However, this theme reoccurred in the focus group in relation to professional development

needs. P3 explained,

Some things take a lot of time away from where I would like to be filling that role in

instructional leadership. Discipline is huge. We also have students that have just a

tremendous amount of trauma, and sometimes it's not just one issue.

P1 concurred. "We go 100 miles per hour all day, every day, and we're still in water

above our head. There are a lot of variables that come into play with taking care of

instructional leadership." P2 commented, "I wish I had more time to really spend working

with teachers individually in instructional leadership."

Utilization of academic facilitators. As in the surveys, *Utilization of Academic

Facilitators* was mentioned several times in relation to instructional leadership. P2 explained,

"I feel like [Academic Facilitators] are reall[y] important in my building." P3 clarified,

"Having another person is definitely a benefit, like I don't know where I would be without her, but there's still so much more that we have to look at that is holding us back."

LEA support. The data analysis revealed a need for participants to better understand the role and responsibility of what it means to be the Local Educational Agency (LEA). The principalship role brings with it accountability to allocate resources to better serve students and to make sure their academic needs are differentiated. P2 explained,

> I was never trained on how to be an LEA. When I went to my first IEP they said, "You're the LEA." I had no understanding of what that meant. When I learned that I was basically liable for what takes place in that meeting, then I was really afraid of what I was doing. It would be really wonderful if we could learn more about the laws and what DEC 7, DEC 5, and DEC 4's are. Understanding what all has to be completed in a meeting is important, and what parents' and schools' rights are.

Building and grounds management. One need identified through the focus group was a specific staff development need on building and grounds management. P4 earnestly noted that novice principals don't have the knowledge of procedural issues related to this topic.

> The yard, the grounds, whose responsibility is that? Who does the weeding? Is that the custodian's responsibility? Is it a community advocacy group's responsibility? And oh, does anybody know how to load the flag on the flagpole, and do you know how to fold it up properly? There is a lot that needs to be communicated out in a prep program about all the fine little details.

P4 interrupted amidst group laughter,

We had the facilities course, but it didn't cover all the details about toilets that may

have not been cleaned in three days or managing a lunch schedule with 550 students

with the smallest cafeteria in the school system, especially when you have to start

serving students lunch at 10:15 a.m.

Industry visits. The focus group recognized a need for specific connections to

industries, and recommended that industry visits be incorporated as a part of professional

development. P1 recounted how the experience of visiting local industries made an impact.

I grew up here and lived around the world, but there were a lot of things I saw visiting

the local industries that I had never seen in my life. It makes you put the picture

together and see that we are connected with so many different places in the world.

Some of the only things that are produced are produced here in our county. Knowing

that we are sending our students to either the industries or the colleges around has just

made all the difference in the world.

P5 weighed in, "We can create a partnership in making sure that our kids are ready

beyond our school house doors for what our community can offer them.

Summary of Focus Groups Findings

Principals are continuously shaping the vision of academic success by improving

instruction and creating a positive climate within the school and community. From the focus

group, a number of themes emerged including: the steep learning curve experienced by

novice principals, a need for mentoring of novice principals, the importance of having a rich

internship experience, and that some needed skills are only learned after taking the role of

novice school administrator. The participants repeatedly pointed out the numerous skills that

they learned by doing the job that unfortunately were not taught or experienced in their

preparation programs. It is important to note that the participants all participated in a face-to-face preparation program and were complimentary of their respective programs, but felt they were not adequately prepared enough to successfully implement all of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives.

Additionally, the participants unanimously agreed that having a collegial support group within the school district was imperative. They felt this opportunity to share, learn, and network from other school administrators, who might be experiencing some of the trials and tribulations they encountered, was imperative for success.

Individual Interview Findings

Following the focus group data analysis, the remaining seven participants, who had not taken part in the focus group, were invited to participate in individual interviews. Six of the novice principals and assistant principals agreed to be interviewed. Questions presented during the interview were aimed at answering the following two research questions:

- **RQ 2** How effective do novice principals and assistant principals rate the School Executive Leadership training they received from their college or university program?

- **RQ 3** What professional development needs, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, can be identified for novice principals and assistant principals?

For the purposes of reporting, the interview participants are identified as Participant 7 (P7), Participant 8 (P8), Participant 9 (P9), Participant 10 (P10), Participant 11 (P11), and Participant 12 (P12), To preserve anonymity, the phrase 'his or her' is used intentionally, where necessary.

Principal preparation programs. In regard to principal preparation programs, responses were categorized into two themes: The North Carolina Standards for School Executives and the Internship.

NC standards for school executives. During interviews, all six participants indicated that the North Carolina School Executives were emphasized in their respective graduate programs. However, as in the initial survey and the focus group, the subtheme of needing additional experience to fully grasp the meaning of the standards reoccurred. P7 said,

>We spent some time discussing the standards. But like anything, I think once I had
>
>the position, they made more sense to me at that point. They were meaningful to me.
>
>So we discussed them when I was in grad school. We did projects that were aligned
>
>to them, research that was aligned to them, but did I connect with them personally?
>
>Not really, until I had my role.

P11 made a similar statement, "Until you go through it, I think there are some things that you just can't…you can talk about them, but you can't really live them until you have that experience." P10 further contended,

> I think the things I probably wasn't prepared for as much is dealing with the adult
>
>problems. You know you always envision, you become an administrator, and you
>
>deal with the students' issues. I mean it was brought up a couple of times, but I don't
>
>think the depth…I don't know if you can be prepared for the amount of time you'll
>
>spend dealing with adult problems.

Internship. In many school executive leadership programs, the internship is designed to give candidates valuable experiences. During interviews, participants' responses related to their internship were coded as *Disadvantages* and *Benefits*.

Disadvantages. P8 explained a disadvantage of the internship,

I think that it's intended to do exactly what it's supposed to do, but I think a lot of times that the hours that I put down in my log were just ridiculous. Some of the stuff that I put down that I did actually wasn't administrative stuff, but I don't think it was looked over too well. My administrative internship was pretty much just busy work. I mean I hung out there, but it was during the summer, so it wouldn't have been the same. So my internship was not that great.

P7 expounded on the disadvantages of his or her internship,

The day-to-day things that I do now, I didn't have the opportunity to practice them in an internship. I mean just little things, when you think of running a school, like, you know, dismissal, and traffic flow, and those kinds of things. I didn't have an opportunity to experience. I got a bigger picture of building a program from the ground up, which was great, and I'm not complaining about it. I just feel the everyday details maybe took me by surprise. Like I've had a huge learning curve.

Benefits. P9 discussed the benefits of the internship, "I learned how to use a lot of the stuff, our school stuff, input discipline, and like that, and so I didn't have to be trained on that here." P10 supported the benefits of participating in a lengthy internship,

I was there for an entire school year, so I got to see like from summer to summer. It afforded me practice, without it really being, you know, solely up to me to determine what the discipline is or observation…that kind of thing.

Additionally, P11 felt like the internship provided him or her with valuable experience.

Until you get in and you meet with the parents, and you have the experiences, do the

searches and paperwork, I think there are some things that you just can't…you can

talk about them, but you can't really understand them until you have that experience.

P12 explained how diverse experiences were beneficial,

I had a fantastic internship. I had experience doing testing. I had experience doing

registration, and I had experience doing discipline, master schedule, changing

schedules during the summer. I was involved with new teachers' support, school

improvement team.

Professional development needs. During analysis of interview responses, multiple

topics regarding the novice principals' and assistant principals' professional development

needs were recorded. It is important to note that no new topics appeared. Rather, each topic

was a repeat of a theme first identified through analysis of survey or focus group data.

Colleague support. As novice principals and assistant principals, the interview

participants indicated they received only minimal support from the district. However, they

sought out guidance from their colleagues. P8 recalled, "Most of my support has come from

my immediate supervisor, which is the principal here. That's where the majority of my

support comes." P9 also explained, "The support I got was from the other administrators,

which you know, they helped me out a lot." P12 elaborated, "

Whenever I first came into administration, our district had PLT's for us assistant

principals, and I loved that; our world is kind of different from the principal world.

And for us to communicate with each other, and to find time to do that is rare. So it

was nice for us to sit down and grow together but we don't have that any more.

P10 further contended,

It would be nice if we were given the opportunity to participate in the PLC with other assistant principals or with a principal, maybe not necessarily from our building, just rotate to ones about the county. There are some situations as an assistant principal, you're just not going to deal with, and it doesn't happen very often. So I think it would be good to have a group of people that you knew that you could rely on as your peers in that role.

School law. The topic of school law was identified as one that participants recognized as needing more support. P7 recalled, "As a new administrator, school law was something I wanted a lot of training in, and it was from things like discipline to records and social media, and any kind of oddities that come up." P11 echoed this sentiment. "I need some refreshers on school law." P10 was more specific, "I think the exceptional children's area would be very beneficial to learn. I mean I've just learned trial by fire, for instance, manifestation determination. That would definitely be one area that I could see being useful."

Need diverse experiences at different levels. Participants noted, once again, the importance of districts requiring diverse experiences for novice school executives. P8 explained,

Well, elementary is completely different from middle of course, and middle is completely different from the high school. The high school is the polar opposite of the elementary as far as how the teachers think, how the teachers view their jobs, how the teachers view the students, and me personally, that's been a struggle transitioning from an elementary teacher to a middle school administrator.

P12 backed up this idea. "And I feel like for me, it would have been nice to see the inner workings of different levels."

Budgeting. The topic of budget information as a professional development idea also reappeared. P11 stated, "I think some more information on budgeting would be helpful." P9 suggested, "There are a lot of things that we as an assistant that you don't get to see, like money-wise and things like that. You don't get a lot of insight on budgeting until you're like a principal. So I think that's one thing that would help out." P12 explained the reason for increased professional development on budgeting. "As an AP, It's hard, because we don't work with budgets."

Communication*.* Interview participants brought up the topic of needing additional professional development on how to communicate as a school executive. P9 outlined this idea. "I would say we need PD on dealing with teachers as someone who is in an administrative role. You know, like how to talk to them. I would say communication." P10 explained,

> I can't overemphasize the importance of communicating at your job. I mean someone
> is still going to say you don't communicate enough, but at least you can know in
> yourself that you've tried every method you can possibly make. And that's not just a
> situation of communicating with teacher, it's also communicating with parents,
> students, the community.

Teacher evaluation procedures*.* Interview participants also indicated that they needed additional support in conducting teacher evaluations. P7 stated,

> I could use help with how to conduct teacher evaluations, and dealing with teachers
> who are sup-par, and need to be put on an action plan or moved out the door…how to
> do that, and do that well.

P10 further noted,

Also, teacher observations, because as a teacher, you know you may not have the opportunity to do peer observations. I think also providing teachers useful feedback when it comes to observation, because a lot of times it's a hurried thing. We are up against a deadline and have to get it done, and we don't take the time to really give meaningful feedback. So I think that would be an area that would be useful for an assistant principal or any administrator.

Curriculum. Another topic mentioned by the novice administrators was curriculum. P11 further explained curriculum, "I mean usually you have one person who does curriculum, so curriculum is another area for professional development." P12 echoed this idea. "We need the basics and like curriculum."

Summary of Individual Interview Findings

Participants who took part in individual interviews reiterated themes found in the survey results and the focus group. Specifically, they discussed the importance of the internship, and the fact that they did not feel fully prepared as novice school executives. They identified specific areas of professional development needs such as collegial support, additional information on school law and budgeting, the need for diverse experiences before taking the role of novice school administrator, and more support with curriculum and instruction.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from a case study centered on examining novice principals' and assistant principals' perceptions of their own effectiveness related to the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. In addition, it presented findings related to

their perceptions of their principal preparation programs and their perceived professional

development needs. In the next chapter, these findings will be more fully analyzed.

Chapter 5: Analysis, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Superheroes

The role of the principal has changed, as has the way principals are evaluated**.** The complexities of this paradigm shift have not been lost on either researchers or practitioners. Wallace (2008) described principals as those who are expected,

> to behave as superheroes or virtuoso soloists. But if the job of leading schools is really about single-handed heroism, then how do we even approach the question of what an appropriate professional education for such a preternatural role should look like? (p. 2)

North Carolina principal preparation programs have sought to keep up with this changing role, and by law, since 2007, have been required to integrate the North Carolina Standards for School Executives into their coursework (North Carolina General Assembly, S.L. 2007-517; Standards for School Executives, 2008). Novice principals and assistant principals, once hired, are evaluated based on these standards. Despite being grounded in the School Executive Standards taught in educational leadership programs in North Carolina, many responses from the novice leaders in this study indicate that their programs did not prepare them adequately for many facets of the principalship.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to investigate novice principals' and assistant principals' perceptions of their abilities to execute the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives. The guiding question for this study was:

How are novice principals' perceptions of self-efficacy influenced by their understanding of the NC School Executive Framework?

Specifically:

- **RQ 1** How do novice principals and assistant principals perceive their leadership effectiveness in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives?

- **RQ 2** How effective do novice principals and assistant principals rate the School Executive Leadership training they received from their college or university program?

- **RQ 3** What professional development needs, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, can be identified for novice principals and assistant principals?

This chapter will analyze the findings of this study within the conceptual framework of the North Carolina School Executive Leadership Standards, connect those findings to existing literature, make recommendations for future research and provide recommendations for school districts and institutions of higher learning that train school leaders.

Analysis of Findings

Research question 1. *What leadership practices, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, do novice principals and assistant principals feel they are most and least prepared to implement successfully?* The North Carolina Standards for School Executives, as well as the NC Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Rubric list recommends practices related to each of the eight standards. To answer Research Question1, data from Part I of the survey and the focus group were analyzed to determine how well participants understood each standard, their feelings of efficacy related to each standard, and the practices they associated with implementation of the standard.

Strategic leadership. Survey responses indicated that participants were mixed in their perceptions of their abilities to implement this standard. When rating their own effectiveness, responses were split nearly evenly between *somewhat effective* and *effective.* In focus group and surveys, fostering teacher leadership through the development of the school mission/vision statement, PLCs, and SITs were identified as practices important to this standard. According to the NC Standards for School Executive Leaders, all of the practices mentioned are components of effective implementation of Standard I. However, it is important to note that the study participants did not mention some practices deemed as equally necessary for school leaders to be effective strategic decision makers. Such practices included challenging the status quo by leading change through new initiatives and having high expectations for all staff and students. Porter, Murphy, Goldring, Elliott, Polikoff, and May (2008) explained,

> The research literature over the last quarter century supported the notion that having high expectations for all, including clear and public standards, is one key to closing the achievement gap between advantaged and less advantaged students and for raising the overall achievement of all students. (p. 38)

It may be that, as novice school executives, these participants focused less on intangible practices that required a higher level of expertise, which as novices, they had not had the time to develop. Beam, Claxton, and Smith (2016) found that novice principals' concerns and challenges were quite different than experienced school leaders' concerns. Novice principals tended to focus on concrete, day-to-day operations, while more experienced principals were challenged by more abstract situations, like accreditation or leading professional development opportunities.

Instructional leadership. Once again, participants were split nearly evenly in their perceptions of their abilities to implement instructional leadership. Interestingly, the importance of utilizing assigned Academic Facilitators was an identified theme in both the surveys and in the focus groups. The leaders' reliance on the Academic Facilitators underscores their perceived difficulty in implementing this standard. However, their inability to implement instruction was not based on a lack of understanding how to manage instruction or implement pedagogy. Rather it was due to having many other responsibilities in the principalship that took their focus away from instruction.

Additional practices mentioned that were associated with this standard included data analysis, meeting teacher needs, classroom walkthroughs, technology integration, lesson and standards alignment, using PLCs, and relationship building. The Wallace Foundation (2013) supported the importance of these ideas,

> Whether they call it formal evaluation, classroom visits or learning walks, principals' intent on promoting growth in both students and adults spend time in classrooms (or ensure that someone who's qualified does), observing and commenting on what's working well and what is not. Moreover, they shift the pattern of the annual evaluation cycle to one of ongoing and informal interactions with teachers. (p.14)

It should be noted that each of the ideas expressed by the Wallace Foundation require dedicated time, something that principals are increasingly unable to find, due to time constraints created by the multiple responsibilities brought about by a plethora of accountability measures created by federal, state, and local entities.

Cultural leadership. Survey and focus group responses indicated that these novice school administrators perceived their strongest level of comfort to be in the area of Cultural

Leadership. Focus group participants did not indicate a need for further professional development in this area. The novice school leaders expressed that several practices related to Cultural Leadership, were important: understanding the community's priorities while engaging stakeholders; listening to staff and the community; fostering teacher morale, and collaboration. Barth (2002) noted that understanding school culture is extremely important.

A school's culture has far more influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse than the president of the country, the state department of education, the superintendent, the school board, or even the principal, teachers, and parents can ever have. (p. 6)

Several of the participants indicated that they had grown up in the community, and felt that they had a deep understanding of their community values. This knowledge may have led to their perceived comfort level with this standard. The participants' self-efficacy in this standard was borne out in their responses. The participants mentioned all of the practices included in the Cultural Leadership standard. Perhaps due to their own self-efficacy it was not a standard for which they indicated a need of additional support. Beam, Claxton, and Smith (2016) reported similar results in a study of challenges faced by novice school leaders. None of the participants in their study noted cultural leadership as a challenge they faced. However, it is interesting to note that more experienced leaders, looking back at their first few years in the principal or assistant principal role, listed cultural leadership as a significant challenge.

Human resource leadership. Survey results indicated that 54% of the participants chose only *somewhat effective* as their self-perception of the effectiveness of implementing human resource leadership, indicating that this area was one that they were very concerned about. In both the surveys and the focus groups, participants revealed several practices they

felt were necessary for successful implementation of this standard. They mentioned the use of interview teams, assignment of mentors to beginning teachers, understanding how to prioritize, allowing staff input through team opportunities, and providing professional development as practices associated with human resource leadership.

Although participants clearly understood some of the practices associated with Human Resource Leadership, there were notable omissions to the practices they named. Some participants warned that assistant principals did not have the same opportunity as principals to practice human resource leadership. Searby, Browne-Ferrigno, and Wang (2016) found that many novice assistant principals reported that they only had informal meetings with their principals. Informal meetings void of substance cannot prepare novice assistant principals for the next level of leadership.

Missing from their responses was any mention of practices identified in the North Carolina Standards for School Executives as effective ways to implement Human Resource Leadership. Among the more notable omissions were: modeling continued adult learning, a positive attitude toward staff efficacy, best placement of staff based on their strengths, and the need to be personally involved in the school's professional activities. These omissions indicate a need for additional emphasis and in-district training on these concepts.

Managerial leadership. Participants perceived their abilities in this standard to be mostly *not effective* or only *somewhat effective*. Their responses indicated that scheduling**,** communication, and allowing staff input through team opportunities, were practices they associated with managerial leadership. Once again, participants emphasized their belief that assistant principals did not have the same opportunity as principals to practice managerial leadership. Notably, participants did not mention budgeting as an effective practice they

associated with their ability to implement managerial leadership, although it is a listed practice in the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. Another missing practice included creating processes to identify and resolve school-based conflicts. However, both of these topics later appeared as themes in relationship to perceived needs of these novice school leaders. These findings mirror those of Riekhoff (2014) who found that novice principals were concerned about their lack of understanding of finance, managing people and navigating the in-school political climate.

External development leadership. Most participants indicated that they were only *somewhat effective* in this standard. Practices mentioned in the individual surveys were mirrored in the focus group responses. These practices can be summarized as making connections in the community, involving parents in the school, and utilizing volunteers. All of these are listed as a part of the effective practices associated with the standard of External Development Leadership. Omitted from the participants' responses was the practice of creating opportunities to advocate for the school. It takes time to forge partnerships with businesses and members of the community. It may be that the novice school leaders had not been in their roles for long enough to have made the necessary connections to feel confident in this standard (Saidun, Tahir, & Musah, 2015).

Micro-political leadership. The majority of the novice principals and assistant principal rated themselves as *not effective* or only *somewhat effective* in regard to this standard. Participants repeated the ideas of involving staff to create a shared vision, teacher leadership, and cultivating relationships. This standard had the greatest number of omitted practices rated effective in the NC School Executive Leadership Standards document. The practices not mentioned included: creating processes and protocols to buffer and mediate

staff interests; being easily accessible to teachers and staff; demonstrate sensitivity to personal needs of staff; demonstrate awareness of informal groups and relationships among school staff, and utilize them as positive resources; demonstrates awareness of hidden and potentially discordant issues in the school; encourages people to express opinions contrary to those of authority; demonstrates ability to predict what could go wrong from day to day; uses performance as the primary criterion for reward and advancement; and maintains high visibility throughout the school. The fact that so many of the identified practices were left out of participant responses highlights their lack of confidence in their own effectiveness in this standard. These findings are consistent with Saidun, Tahir, and Musah (2015) who found that

> …novice principals also felt uncomfortable when confronted with situations that require them to make decisions to solve the problems associated with staff, students, community, and stakeholders. This condition can become more serious due to lack of experience. (p. 567)

> ***Academic achievement leadership.*** Overwhelmingly, participants rated themselves as *not effective* or only *somewhat effective* in implementing this standard. The practices noted were the importance of partnering with families and incorporating embedded professional development. The term *difficult to achieve* emerged as a theme of this standard. There is only one practice included in the list of effective practices associated with Academic Achievement Leadership. This practice reads: *Demonstrate acceptable school-wide growth as calculated by the statewide growth model for educator effectiveness*. The ambiguity of this listed practice may be the underlying cause of the participants' self-ratings and belief that this standard was difficult to achieve.

Overall findings for research question 1. The majority of the novice principals and assistant principals in this study perceived Academic Achievement Leadership, Managerial Leadership, Micro-political Leadership, and External Development Leadership as the most difficult. They perceived themselves most effective in implementing Cultural Leadership. Several practices were mentioned in relationship to more than one standard, perhaps indicating the level of importance these participants placed on these practices. These practices include: fostering teacher leadership, shared governance through the use of leadership teams and PLCs in order to communicate a shared vision, facilitating professional development, and cultivating positive relationships with the staff and the community. These leaders also noted that assistant principals did not always have the same opportunities to engage in practices related to all the standards. As important as the mentioned practices, were the ones identified in the North Carolina Standards for School Executives, but not identified by the novice school leaders. Unmentioned practices might indicate a lack of complete knowledge of the standard. Saidun, Tahir, and Musah (2015) indicated that a lack of principalship knowledge was a major problem with novice principals.

Research question 2. *How effective do novice principals and assistant principals rate the School Executive Leadership training they received from their college or university program?* This question was answered by examining data from Part II of the survey, and from analysis of the focus group and individual interview data.

Comprehensive rating. Overall, participants indicated that their principal preparation programs were mostly *somewhat effective.* Results from the initial survey indicated that 75% of the participants' ratings fell in either *not effective* or *somewhat effective* in relation to how well the standards, as a whole, were taught in their respective principal preparation programs.

Although the standards were a focus of their respective programs, the novice school administrators felt they did not have the knowledge necessary to implement all the standards effectively. Saidun, Tahir, and Musah (2015) noted that novice principals had difficulty in integrating theories with practical applications. Beam, Claxton, and Smith (2016) similarly found that novice principals had difficulty in applying pre-service training to the realities of the principalship.

Proposed coursework. Study participants were unified in their belief that taking on a school leadership role included a steep learning curve. This theme appeared multiple times throughout the study. Participants noted that the North Carolina Standards for School Executives were covered in their coursework. However, overwhelmingly, participants explained that their knowledge came from on the job training rather than coursework. In fact, they disclosed that more structured internships allowing for more diverse experiences were needed. They felt that they also needed additional coursework incorporating real life scenarios so that they could practice the skills needed to be successful. More information on budgeting, sustainable leadership, poverty in school, and personal leadership philosophies would have also benefitted them before they took a leadership role. Participants felt unprepared for the totality of the responsibility of the principalship. Spillane (2015) called this phenomenon, "responsibility shock" (para. 3).

Overall findings of research question 2. Novice principals and assistant principals were cognizant of the fact that the North Carolina Standards for School Executives were emphasized in their respective preparation programs. However, the degree to which the school leaders were able to apply those standards was considered an opportunity for improvement.

Research question 3. *What professional development needs, in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives, can be identified for novice principals and assistant principals?* This question was answered by examining data from the survey, the focus group, and the individual interviews.

Overall needs. In general, the study participants indicated that once hired, they had received some district support, but that they needed more. A frequent theme in all three phases of this study was a desire for increased understanding of school law. Although they admitted school law had been taught within their preparation coursework, they still felt they were not as prepared in this area as they should be. Beam, Clayton, and Smith (2016) found that being unprepared on policy and legal issues were among the most frequent fears of novice principals.

The novice school leaders involved in this study also suggested multiple times that they felt they needed diverse experiences at different levels to give them a fuller picture of the educational system. In addition, they specifically expressed the need for regular meetings designed to provide collegial support to one another. These meetings might be especially beneficial to novice assistant principals, who do not always have the opportunity to experience all aspects of the principalship. The need for a more structured internship was also recorded as a frequent theme. While this need does not necessarily fall under the heading of professional development, it does indicate a need for a closer university-district partnership, which the current research mirrors. Such partnerships, when taken seriously and developed properly, have the potential of lessening the novice school leader's learning curve by providing more meaningful experiences in coursework and the internship. The Wallace Foundation (2012) noted that

The Southern Regional Education Board identifies the following characteristics of

high-quality pre-service principal internships: Collaboration between the university

and school districts that anchors internship activities in real-world problems

principals face, provides for appropriate structure and support of learning experiences,

and ensures quality guidance and supervision. (p.18)

Portin et al. (2003) had previously supported this same notion, "Preparation for being a

successful principal is a collection of experiences and opportunities, rather than simply a

credentialing program" (p.43).

In addition to these overall needs, specific needs related to each of the North Carolina

Standards for School Executives are reported next.

Strategic leadership. Study participants indicated they had a strong need for a

principal mentor. Participants also noted it was their peers, rather than district leadership,

who they turned to first when they encountered problems. However, they had not been

assigned a specific mentor, and their responses indicated a strong desire for a mentor/mentee

relationship. Rieckhoff (2014) espoused the benefits of principal mentoring, and explained

that the idea of mentoring novice principals has taken center stage in 32 states, where it is

now required. Beam, Claxton, and Smith (2016) also noted that novice school leaders were

in additional need of structured support.

Instructional leadership. Study participants indicated they needed additional

professional development on the teacher evaluation process, specifically on how to

communicate with teachers after an observation. They also noted a need for more training on

specific curriculum related to school level placement. Participants frequently mentioned not

having enough time to be effective instructional leaders. For this reason, time management is

also considered a professional development need. This need is echoed in other research

concerning novice principals. Saidun, Tahir, and Musah (2015) noted that difficulty in

managing time was a consistent problem for new school leaders.

  Cultural leadership. Participants' responses indicated they were comfortable

implementing cultural leadership. Survey, focus group, and individual interview data backed

up their ratings. The novice leaders reported using practices associated with effective cultural

leadership, and none of the responses led to an identified theme for needed professional

development. This finding is contrast to other studies on novice principals. Saidun, Tahir,

and Musah (2015) noted that novice principals frequently listed the inability to adapt to

school culture as a problem. The difference in findings may be due to the fact that the

participants in this study had a connection to the small, rural community already. Three of

the novice principals had attended the school at which they now worked.

  Human resource leadership. Novice school leaders again reported that they were in

need of additional training in teacher evaluation procedures. Although it is North Carolina

state law that the teacher evaluation instrument is reviewed with all principals on a yearly

basis, the study participants felt they could use even more instruction on the procedures

surrounding teacher evaluation.

  Managerial leadership. Within this standard, novice school executives felt they

needed specific training on procedures surrounding building and grounds management*.* In

addition, having more training on the IEP process, specifically about the role of the LEA was

mentioned. DiPaola and Walter-Thomas (2003) explain that "the principal's role is pivotal in

the special education process; however, few school leaders are well prepared for this

responsibility" (p.4).

External development leadership. Study participants were very specific in their needs surrounding this standard. They indicated that requiring group visits to local industries was beneficial. They indicated a need to continue this practice and to visit even more industries.

Micro-political leadership. As in the case with cultural leadership, no theme for professional development was noted for micro-political leadership. However, the reason may be because the participants do not fully comprehend the intricacies of this standard, or it may be that in the early stages of either the assistant principalship or principalship they have not had the opportunity or need to navigate political waters. Study participants failed to mention essential practices related to effective micro-political leadership, perhaps underscoring their lack of understanding. In other words, "they don't know, what they don't know."

Academic leadership. Participants relayed that academic achievement was a difficult standard to accomplish. Their only expressed need specific to this standard was in relation to needing more training on the LEA role of conducting IEPs. However, it is important to note that professional development related to instructional leadership is closely related to this standard.

Overall findings of research question 3. Professional development needs were closely aligned to participants' perceptions of their effectiveness in implementing the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. In addition, areas of weaknesses within their principal preparation programs led to specific professional development needs. Prothero (2015) stressed the importance of professional development that allowed an exchange of ideas about problematic situations to help avoid the feeling of isolation. Having such opportunities provides novice principals and assistant principals the needed collegial support

expressed in these research findings.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (2015) has concluded, "All educators should receive a stair-stepped induction into the profession, time to reflect and refine their practice, and personalized professional development that recognizes their strengths and enhances their growth" (para.13). The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2003) contended that school districts needed to put practices in place to ensure novice principals are not isolated from more knowledgeable colleagues, who could help with solving more in-depth problems. The novice principals in this study reiterated these same sentiments. Mentoring, budget information, principal support groups, and exposure to diverse experiences were professional development needs repeated by the research participants. These findings indicate that having structured internships, quality mentors, a better understanding of micro-political leadership, diverse experiences, collegial support groups, and additional support to improve academic achievement would enhance the overall effectiveness of novice assistant principals and principals.

Additional Connections to the Literature

Mentoring. Participants' responses indicated that a mentor would be beneficial to novice school leaders. Current research backs up this belief. Mentoring's effects on both the novice and experienced principals has been shown to be positive (Robinson et al., 2009). Portin et al. (2003) found that novice principals who had a mentor felt more confident in their leadership positions and more prepared to handle difficult situations. In fact, Robinson et al., (2009) discovered that novice principals who had the benefit of a mentor's seasoned advice were considered more successful in their positions than principals without a mentor. However, this advice comes with a caveat: The National Association of Elementary School

Principals (2003) stipulate, "To be effective, mentoring relationships must be authentic, meaning that the mentor is credible and qualified to comment on performance and the protégé is willing and able to accept the mentor's feedback and incorporate it into his or her practice."

Theory and practice. Participants consistently reiterated the belief that their leadership roles required a steep learning curve. They explained that they learned how to apply the North Carolina Standards for School Executives on the job rather than in principal preparation coursework, and they frequently discussed the difference between theory and practice. These perceptions mirror those found in the literature. Portin (2003) shared that principals felt that on the job training was more important than their preparation programs. English (2003) indicated that higher education had difficulty making connections between theory and the actual practice of principals, and called for concerted efforts to close the theory-practice gap. Levine's (2005) work noted that because the principal role was constantly changing, institutes of higher learning were not effectively preparing future school leaders for the real demands of the job. Oplatka (2009) recognized that many pre-service administrators simply lack the skills necessary to connect theory to practice. Study participants mentioned a need for real-life scenarios allowing them to practice problem-solving issues related to the principalship. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) and Young (2009) found exemplary preparation programs integrate theory and practice through problem-based learning strategies.

Internship. Another frequent theme emerging from this study was the need for a more structured internship. Levine (2005) indicated that many novice principals might not have experienced situations that would develop their leadership abilities before taking on the

role. A structured internship could give the pre-service principals this experience. Portin (2003) found that novice principals learned the most by actually experiencing situations related to administration. Backing up the participants' belief that their internships could have been structured differently in order to be more beneficial, the Wallace Foundation (2008) reported that frequently, principal preparation internship opportunities were not well designed, lacked a connection to the rest of the curriculum, and did not allow for authentic leadership practice. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe and Meyerson (2005) explained that effective internships must involve a strong university-school district partnership and included skilled supervision. In addition, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) and Young (2009) reported that novice principals benefitted from being involved in comprehensive internship opportunities that resulted from active partnerships between principal preparation programs, school systems, and business entities.

Implications

The findings from this study, grounded in the eight North Carolina School Executive Standards, may contribute to the overall development of school administrators. This research highlights areas novice school-based administrators perceive to be most and least effective. Additionally, the results may allow school districts and institutions of higher education in conjunction with local school districts to identify and address specific standards for which school administrators need additional support and professional development. The challenges novice school leaders repeatedly identified in this study: needing more diverse experiences, needing more structured internships, needing collegial support groups, needing mentors, needing a better understanding of Micro-political leadership, and the difficulty of leading academic achievement are also supported in the literature. The findings of this study suggests

the need for school districts to fill the gaps identified by the participants through the development of purposeful mentorships and leadership academies developed within the school districts while they are simultaneously learning on the job.

Limitations

The findings from this study are unique to North Carolina because the conceptual framework is grounded in the eight North Carolina School Executive Leadership standards. This study specifically focused on assistant principals and principals with five or less years' experience in their roles as school administrators. While only 13 participants from within one western North Carolina public school system were studied, their perspectives provided a broader understanding of the needs of school-based administrators in rural North Carolina. It should be noted that the findings from a small study of this nature cannot automatically be generalized to other districts.

While efforts were put into place to eliminate the authority of the researcher, there are no guarantees that the researcher's role as a district superintendent, although from a different county, did not affect some of the responses of the participants.

The results of this study do have the potential to generate improvements in how school based administrators are developed in the future, in spite of the study's limitations.

Future Research

This study presents an opportunity for further research by being replicated with a larger pool of participants. Replicating this study in North Carolina in a larger, more urban district might provide the ability to compare results to determine if themes identified in this study are unique, or if they are transferrable to other novice school leaders. An additional consideration for a further study would be to compare rural and urban school districts to

determine if novice school administrators' effectiveness varies, or to determine overall professional development needs.

Some of the themes explored in this study are supported by previous research on the needs of novice principals'. Additional studies using a larger sample size, across multiple school districts, might find some common training needs in specific standards for school leaders throughout the state. Replicating this study in other states, based on the standards that they use, may add to the body of knowledge concerning challenges faced by novice principals, nation-wide. However, whether there will be common themes identified across school districts remains to be seen. Future researchers may want to explore the idea of a longer period of time to conduct research, which could also include the internship.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Clearly, assistant principals and principals are important catalysts for improving student academic achievement. However, novice school administrators may not be fully aware of the all areas in which may be deficient. The North Carolina Standards for School Executives, grounded in research, provide administrators guidance in eight specific areas. This study contained a detailed exploration of the standards and practices that, if followed, can improve a novice school administrator's effectiveness. This study has identified some areas of leadership in which school administrators are not being adequately prepared during their graduate programs. It also found that some novice principals and assistant principals perceived a lack of sustained support from their local districts.

An opportunity exists for local districts and institutions of higher learning to work together to improve the overall quality of novice district leaders. One way that school districts can create systemic improvement is by creating district leadership academies. This

recommendation would help local educational agencies to address specific areas of concern for individual administrators while developing strategies to fill gaps missing from their preparation programs. Leadership academies would also provide novice administrators with the necessary information to improve upon their leadership skills in regards to self-identified needs as well as needs identified by the local school district. As part of the leadership academy offerings, it is recommended that specific time be set aside for novice principals to spend time together discussing issues dealing with their roles. Recommended topics for professional development based on the findings of this study to be included as part of a district leadership academy, are: local budgeting, school law, practices surrounding micro-political and academic achievement leadership, and specific procedures for managing the building and grounds. In addition to leadership academies, an equally important recommendation is for districts to assign all novice principals and assistant principals a mentor from within their district.

Findings from this study indicate that novice principals perceive that much of their learning about how to properly implement the North Carolina Standards for School Executive occur during on the job training. In order to improve administrator effectiveness, universities must place a renewed focus on the internship during principal preparation programs. Universities and school districts must also work more closely together. Such collaboration can address many of the deficiencies identified by novice administrators in this study. By working collaboratively with local districts, the structure of university school leadership programs and the duration of the internship can be modified to better meet the needs of school leaders and their local school districts. In the end, university leadership programs and school districts want the same thing—to develop and promote confident

assistant principals and principals, capable of leading and sustaining successful public schools.

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APPENDIX A:

North Carolina School Executive Standards

The Eight Standards of Executive Leadership and Their Connections

Relevant national reports and research in the field focused on identifying the practices of leadership that impact student   achievement were considered in the development of these standards. Particularly helpful were the Maryland Instructional   Leadership Framework, and work by the Wallace Foundation, the Mid-continental Regional Education Laboratory, the Charlotte   Advocates for Education and the Southern Regional Education Board. Work by the National Staff Development Council, the   National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Middle School Association, the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium, and the National Policy Board for Educational   Administration Education Leadership Constituent Council were also considered in the development of these standards.

Additionally, input was solicited from stakeholders and leaders in the field.

The first seven critical standards used as the framework for the North Carolina School Executive Standards are borrowed from a   Wallace Foundation study, *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principalship* (2003). Unlike many current efforts that   look at all of the things principals "might" or "should" do, this study examined what principals actually do. As such, it is grounded in practice, exploits story and narrative, and supports the distribution of leadership rather than the "hero leader."

North Carolina's Standards for School Executives are interrelated and connect in executives' practice. They are not intended to isolate   competencies or practices. Executives' abilities in each standard will impact their ability to perform effectively in other standard areas. For   example, the ability of an executive to evaluate and develop staff will directly impact the school's ability to reach its goals and will also   impact the norms of the culture of the school. School executives are responsible for ensuring that leadership happens in all seven critical   areas, but they don't have to provide it.

The Standards and Their Practices

Standard I: Strategic Leadership

Summary: School executives will create conditions that result in strategically re-imaging the school's vision, mission, and goals in the 21st century. Understanding that schools ideally prepare students for an unseen but not altogether unpredictable future, the leader creates a climate of inquiry that challenges the school community to continually re-purpose itself by building on its core values and beliefs about its preferred future and then developing a pathway to reach it

Practices: The school executive practices effective strategic leadership when he or she

- Is able to share a vision of the changing world in the 21st century that schools are preparing children to enter;
- Systematically challenges the status quo by leading change with potentially beneficial outcomes;
- Systematically considers new ways of accomplishing tasks and is comfortable with major changes in how processes are implemented;
- Utilizes data from the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey in developing
- the framework for continual improvement in the School Improvement Plan;
- Is a driving force behind major initiatives that help students acquire 21st century skills;

Source: North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2015). *North Carolina school executive: Principal and assistant principal evaluation process*. Raleigh, NC. McREL.

- Creates with all stakeholders a vision for the school that captures peoples' attention and imagination;
- Creates processes that provide for the periodic review and revision of the school's vision, mission, and strategic goals by all school stakeholders;
- Creates processes to ensure the school's identity (vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals) actually drive decisions and inform the culture of the school;
- Adheres to statutory requirements regarding the School Improvement Plan;
- Facilitates the collaborative development of annual school improvement plans to realize strategic goals and objectives;

- Facilitates the successful execution of the school improvement plan aligned to the mission and goals set by the State Board of Education;
- Facilitates the implementation of state education policy inside the school's classrooms;
- Facilitates the setting of high, concrete goals and the expectations that all students meet them;
- Communicates strong professional beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning that reflect latest research and best practice in preparing students for success in college or in work; and
- Creates processes to distribute leadership throughout the school.

Artifacts:

- Degree to which school improvement plan strategies are implemented, assessed and modified
- Evidence of an effectively functioning, elected School Improvement Team
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- School improvement plan, its alignment with district and state strategic priorities, and a plan for growth on items of concern as evidenced in the NC TWC Survey
- The degree to which staff can articulate the school's direction and focus
- Student testing data

Standard II: Instructional Leadership

Summary: School executives will set high standards for the professional practice of 21st century instruction and assessment that result in a no nonsense accountable environment. The school executive must be knowledgeable of best instructional and school practices and must use this knowledge to cause the creation of collaborative structures within the school for the design of highly engaging schoolwork for students, the on-going peer review of this work and the sharing of this work throughout the professional community.

Practices: The school executive practices effective instructional leadership when he or she

- Focuses his or her own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals;
- Creates an environment of practiced distributive leadership and teacher empowerment;
- Demonstrates knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents where these topics are discussed, and/or holding frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff and parents around these topics;
- Ensures that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program;
- Creates processes and schedules that facilitate the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge;
- Challenges staff to reflect deeply on and define what knowledge, skills and concepts are essential to the complete educational development of students;
- Creates processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction;
- Creates processes for identifying, benchmarking and providing students access to a variety of 21st century instructional tools (e.g., technology) and best practices for meeting diverse student needs;
- Creates processes that ensure the strategic allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs;
- Creates processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction;
- Creates processes that protect teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their instructional time; and
- Systematically and frequently observes in classrooms and engages in conversation with students about their learning

Standard III: Cultural Leadership

Summary: School executives will understand and act on the understanding of the important role a school's culture contributes to the exemplary performance of the school. School executives must support and value the traditions, artifacts, symbols and positive values and norms of the school and community that result in a sense of identity and pride upon which to build a positive future. A school executive must be able to "reculture" the school if needed to align with school's goals of improving student and adult learning and to infuse the work of the adults and students with passion, meaning and purpose. Cultural leadership implies understanding the school as the people in it each day, how they came to their current state, and how to connect with their traditions in order to move them forward to support the school's efforts to achieve individual and collective goals.

Practices: The school executive practices effective cultural leadership when he or she

- Creates a collaborative work environment predicated on site-based management that supports the "team" as the basic unit of learning and decision-making within the school and promotes cohesion and cooperation among staff;
- Communicates strong ideals and beliefs about schooling, teaching, and professional learning communities with teachers, staff, parents, and students and then operates from those beliefs;
- Influences the evolution of the culture to support the continuous improvement of the school as outlined in the school improvement plan;
- Systematically develops and uses shared values, beliefs and a shared vision to establish a school identity that emphasizes a sense of community and cooperation to guide the disciplined thought and action of all staff and students;
- Systematically and fairly acknowledges failures and celebrates accomplishments of the school and staff;
- Visibly supports the positive, culturally-responsive traditions of the school community;
- Promotes a sense of well-being among staff, students and parents;
  Builds a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff that result in a "can do" attitude when faced with
  challenges; and
- Empowers staff to recommend creative 21st century concepts for school improvement.

Artifacts:

- Work of Professional Learning Communities within and tangential to the school
- Documented use of the SIT in decision making throughout the year
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- School improvement plan
- Teacher retention data
- Student achievement data
- Awards structure developed by school

Standard IV: Human Resource Leadership

Summary: School executives will ensure that the school is a professional learning community. School executives will ensure that processes and systems are in place that results in the recruitment, induction, support, evaluation, development and retention of a high performing staff. The school executive must engage and empower accomplished teachers in a distributive leadership manner, including support of teachers in day-to-day decisions such as discipline, communication with parents, and protecting teachers from duties that interfere with teaching, and must practice fair and consistent evaluation of teachers. The school executive must engage teachers and other professional staff in conversations to plan their career paths and support district succession planning.

Practices: The school executive practices effective human resource leadership when he or she

- Provides structures for the development of effective professional learning communities aligned with the school improvement plan, focused on results, and characterized by collective responsibility for instructional planning and for 21st century student learning;
- Models the importance of continued adult learning by engaging in activities to develop personal knowledge and skill along with expanded self – awareness;
- Communicates a positive attitude about the ability of staff to accomplish substantial outcomes to improve their efficacy;
- Creates processes for teachers to assume leadership and decision making roles within the school that foster their career development;
- Creates and monitors processes for hiring, inducting and mentoring new teachers and other staff to the school;
- Uses the results of the Teacher Working Conditions Survey to create and maintain a positive work environment for teachers and other staff;
- Evaluates teachers and other staff in a fair and equitable manner and utilizes the results of evaluations to improve performance;
- Provides for results-oriented professional development that is aligned with identified 21st century curricular, instructional, and assessment needs, is connected to school improvement goals and is differentiated based on staff needs;
- Continuously searches for the best placement and utilization of staff to fully benefit from their strengths; and
- Is systematically and personally involved in the school's professional activities.

Artifacts:

- School improvement plan
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey – with special emphasis on the leadership and empowerment domains
- Copy of master school schedule documenting the time provided for individual and collaborative planning for every teacher
- Number of National Board Certified teachers
- Teacher retention data
- Number of teachers pursuing school executive credentials, National Board Certification, or advanced licensure in their teaching areas
- Records of school visits for the purpose of adult learning
- Record of professional development provided staff and an assessment of the impact of professional development on student learning
- Mentor records, beginning teacher feedback, and documentation of correlation of assignment of mentor to mentee
- Copies of professional growth plans
- Student achievement data

Standard V: Managerial Leadership

Summary: School executives will ensure that the school has processes and systems in place for budgeting, staffing, problem   solving, communicating expectations and scheduling that result in organizing the work routines in the building. The school   executive must be responsible for the monitoring of the school budget and the inclusion of all teachers in the budget decisions so   as to meet the 21st century needs of every classroom. Effectively and efficiently managing the complexity of everyday life is critical   for staff to be able to focus its energy on improvement.

Practices: The school executive practices effective managerial leadership when he or she

- Creates processes to provide for a balanced operational budget for school programs and activities;
- Creates processes to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce in the school that meets the diverse needs of students;
- Creates processes to identify and solve, resolve, dissolve or absolve school-based problems/conflicts in a fair,   democratic way;
- Designs a system of communication that provides for the timely, responsible sharing of information to, from, and   with school and district staff;
- Designs scheduling processes and protocols that maximize staff input and addresses diverse student learning needs;
- Develops a master schedule for the school to maximize student learning by providing for individual and on-going   collaborative planning for every teacher; and
- Collaboratively develops and enforces clear expectations, structures, rules and procedures for students and staff.

Artifacts:

- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- School Improvement Plan
- External reviews, such as budget
- Copies of master schedules/procedures
- Communication of safety procedures and behavioral expectations throughout the school community

Standard VI: External Development Leadership

Summary: A school executive will design structures and processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership.   Acknowledging that schools no longer reflect but in fact build community, the leader proactively creates with staff opportunities   for parents, community and business representatives to participate as "stockholders" in the school such that continued   investments of resources and good will are not left to chance.

Practices: The school executive practices effective external development leadership when he or she

- Implements processes that empower parents and other stakeholders to make significant decisions;
- Creates systems that engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success;
- Designs protocols and processes that ensures compliance with state and district mandates;
- Creates opportunities to advocate for the school in the community and with parents;
- Communicates the school's accomplishments to the district office and public media in accordance with LEA policies;
- Garners fiscal, intellectual and human resources from the community that support the 21st century learning agenda   of the school; and

- Builds relationships with individuals and groups to support specific aspects of the learning improvement agenda and also as a source of general good will.

Artifacts:

- PTSA participation
- PTSA meeting agendas, bulletins, etc.
- Parent attendance at school improvement team meetings
- Survey results from parents
- Evidence of visible support from community
- Booster club participation
- Number of school volunteers
- Plan for shaping the school's image throughout the community
- PTSA membership
- Evidence of business partnerships and projects involving business partners

Standard VII: Micro-political Leadership

Summary: The school executive will build systems and relationships that utilize the staff's diversity, encourage constructive ideological conflict in order to leverage staff expertise, power and influence to realize the school's vision for success. The executive will also creatively employ an awareness of staff's professional needs, issues, and interests to build social cohesion and to facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making.

Practices: The school executive practices effective micro-political leadership when he or she:

- Uses the School Improvement Team to make decisions and provides opportunities for staff to be involved in developing school policies;
- Creates an environment and mechanisms to ensure all internal stakeholder voices are heard and respected;
- Creates processes and protocols to buffer and mediate staff interests;
- Is easily accessible to teachers and staff;
- Designs transparent systems to equitably manage human and financial resources;
- Demonstrates sensitivity to personal needs of staff;
- Demonstrates awareness of informal groups and relationships among school staff and utilizes these as a positive resource;
- Demonstrates awareness of hidden and potentially discordant issues in the school;
- Encourages people to express opinions contrary to those of authority;
- Demonstrates ability to predict what could go wrong from day to day;
- Uses performance as the primary criterion for reward and advancement;
- Maintains high visibility throughout the school; and
- Maintains open, vertical and horizontal communications throughout the school community.

Artifacts:

- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- Teacher retention data
- Dissemination of clear norms and ground rules
- Evidence of ability to confront ideological conflict and then reach consensus
- Evidence of shared decision making
- Evidence of use of a decision matrix
- Evidence of a school that operates through teams
- Evidence of distributed leadership

Standard VIII: Academic Achievement Leadership

Summary: The school executive will contribute to the academic success of students. The work of the school executive will result   in acceptable, measurable progress for students based on established performance expectations using appropriate data to   demonstrate growth.

Practice: The school executive practices effective academic achievement leadership when he or she:
- Demonstrates acceptable school-wide growth as calculated by the statewide growth model for educator   effectiveness.

Artifacts:
- Student growth values generated through a method approved by the State Board of Education.

APPENDIX B
North Carolina School Executives Evaluation Rubric
Preservice Candidates

NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL EXECUTIVE EVALUATION RUBRIC
Preservice Candidates

Standard 1: Strategic Leadership

School executives will create conditions that result in strategically re-imaging the school's vision, mission, and goals in the 21ˢᵗ century. Understanding that schools ideally prepare students for an unseen but not altogether unpredictable future, the leader creates a climate of inquiry that challenges the school community to continually re-purpose itself by building on its core values and beliefs about its preferred future and then developing a pathway to reach it.

1a. School Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals: The school's identity, in part, is derived from the vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals of the school, the processes used to establish these attributes, and the ways they are embodied in the life of the school community.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands the attributes, characteristics, and importance of school vision, mission, and strategic goals; and can apply this understanding to the analysis and critique of existing school plans.	AND	Develops his/her own vision of the changing world in the 21ˢᵗ century that schools are preparing children to enter.	AND	Works with others to develop a shared vision and strategic goals for student achievement that reflect high expectations for students and staff. Maintains a focus on the vision and strategic goals throughout the school year.	AND	Designs and implements collaborative processes to collect and analyze data, from the *North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey* and other data sources, about the school's progress for the periodic review and revision of the school's vision, mission, and strategic goals.	

1b. Leading Change: The school executive articulates a vision, and implementation strategies, for improvements and changes which result in improved achievement for all students.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Is knowledgeable of research and theory associated with school change particularly the relationship between school vision, student achievement, and organizational change.	AND	Identifies changes necessary for the improvement of student learning.	AND	Works with others to systematically consider new and better ways of leading for improved student achievement for all students and engages stakeholders in the change process.	AND	Adapts/varies leadership style according to the changing needs of the school and community. Effectively communicates the impact of change.	

1c. School Improvement Plan: The school improvement plan provides the structure for the vision, values, goals and changes necessary for improved achievement for all students.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands statutory requirements regarding the School Improvement Plan.	AND	Works with others to facilitate the collaborative development of the annual School Improvement Plan to realize strategic goals and objectives. Uses the *North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey* and other data sources to develop a framework for the School Improvement Plan.	AND	Works with others to incorporate principles of continuous improvement and 21st century concepts into the School Improvement Plan. Works with others to systematically collect, analyze, and use data regarding the school's progress toward attaining strategic goals and objectives.	AND	Works with others to facilitate the successful implementation of the School Improvement Plan aligned to the mission and goals set by the State Board of Education and the local Board of Education.	

1d. Distributive Leadership: The school executive creates and utilizes processes to distribute leadership and decision-making throughout the school.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands the importance of providing opportunities for teachers to assume leadership and decision-making roles within the school.	AND	Works with others to plan and provide leadership development activities for staff members.	AND	Works with others to create opportunities for staff to demonstrate leadership skills by empowering them to assume leadership and decision-making roles. Works with others to encourage teachers and support staff to assume leadership and decision-making roles in the school.	AND	Works with others to encourage staff members to accept leadership opportunities beyond the school.	

Standard 2: Instructional Leadership

School executives set high standards for the professional practice of 21st century instruction and assessment that result in a no nonsense accountable environment. The school executive must be knowledgeable of best instructional and school practices and must use this knowledge to cause the creation of collaborative structures within the school for the design of highly engaging schoolwork for students, the on-going peer review of this work, and the sharing of this work throughout the professional community.

2a. Focus on Learning and Teaching, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: The school executive leads the discussion about standards for curriculum, instruction and assessment based on research and best practices in order to establish and achieve high expectations for students.							
Emerging Candidate		**Developing Candidate**		**Proficient Candidate**		**Accomplished Candidate**	**Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)**
Comprehends literature, research, and theory associated with learning, teaching, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Is knowledgeable of: the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*, state and federal standards for accountability, and best instructional practices.	AND	Draws from a variety of data, including student assessment data, to identify areas of strength and weakness in learning, teaching, curriculum, and instruction.	AND	Works with others to systematically focus on the alignment of learning, teaching, curriculum, instruction, and assessment to maximize student learning. Helps organize targeted opportunities for teachers to learn how to teach their subjects well with engaging lessons. Utilizes multiple sources of data, including the *Teacher Working Conditions Survey*, for the improvement of instruction.	AND	Works with others to ensure that the alignment of learning, teaching, curriculum, instruction, and assessment is focused to maximize student learning. Works with others to create a culture in which it is the responsibility of all staff to make sure that students are successful. Works with others to reflect on data including the *Teacher Working Conditions Survey*, IGPs, student achievement, and other appropriate sources to create staff development through professional learning communities. Works with others to ensure that students are provided opportunities to learn and utilize best practices in the integrated use of 21st century instructional tools, including technology, to solve problems.	

2b. Focus on Instructional Time: The school executive creates processes and schedules which protect teachers from disruption of instructional or preparation time.							
Emerging Candidate		**Developing Candidate**		**Proficient Candidate**		**Accomplished Candidate**	**Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)**
Understands the need for teachers to have daily planning and duty-free lunch periods. Is knowledgeable of legal requirements regarding teacher planning time and duty-free lunch periods. Is knowledgeable of designs for age-appropriate school schedules which address the learning needs of diverse student populations.	AND	Analyzes/evaluates a master schedule to maximize student learning by providing for individual and on-going collaborative planning for every teacher.	AND	Adheres to legal requirements for planning and instructional time. Reviews scheduling processes and protocols that maximize staff input and address diverse student learning needs.	AND	Works with others to ensure that teachers have the legally required amount of daily planning and lunch periods. Works with others to routinely and conscientiously implement processes to protect instructional time. Works with others to develop schedules that provide teachers with collaborative time to promote student learning.	

Standard 3: Cultural Leadership

School executives will understand and act on the understanding of the important role a school's culture plays in contributing to the exemplary performance of the school. School executives must support and value the traditions, artifacts, symbols and positive values and norms of the school and community that result in a sense of identity and pride upon which to build a positive future. A school executive must be able to "re-culture" the school if needed to align with school's goals of improving student and adult learning and to infuse the work of the adults and students with passion, meaning and purpose. Cultural leadership implies understanding the school and the people in it each day, how they came to their current state, and how to connect with their traditions in order to move them forward to support the school's efforts to achieve individual and collective goals.

3a. Focus on Collaborative Work Environment: The school executive understands and acts on the understanding of the positive role that a collaborative work environment can play in the school's culture.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Comprehends literature, research, and theory associated with organizational climate, particularly as it is manifested in schools.	AND	Identifies characteristics of a collaborative work environment within the school. Analyzes data from the *Teacher Working Conditions Survey* and other data sources from parents, students, teachers, and stakeholders to diagnose and evaluate the teaching and learning environment within the school.	AND	Designs strategies for achieving a collaborative and positive work environment within the school. Seeks input from the School Improvement Team and other stakeholders to make decisions. Utilizes data gained from the *Teacher Working Conditions Survey* and other sources to identify perceptions of the work environment.	AND	Utilizes a collaborative work environment predicated on site-based management and decision-making, a sense of community, and cooperation within the school. Works with others to monitor the implementation and response to school policies and provide feedback to the School Improvement Team for their consideration. Works with others to initiate changes resulting from data gained from the *Teacher Working Conditions Survey* and other sources.	

3b. School Culture and Identity: The school executive develops and uses shared vision, values and goals to define the identity and culture of the school.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands research and scholarship on school culture and its relationship with meaningful school vision, values, and goals. Understands the many aspects of diversity as they apply to schools and their missions.	AND	Articulates how a shared vision, mission, values, beliefs, and goals have defined the identity and culture of the school. Articulates the influences of school demographics, equity, and diversity in determining the schools' mission, vision, and goals.	AND	Uses shared values, beliefs and a shared vision to promote a school culture of learning and success. Works with others to address diversity and equity as the school develops, monitors, and adjusts the school improvement plan.	AND	Works with others to establish a culture of collaboration, distributed leadership, and continuous improvement in the school which guides the disciplined thought and action of all staff and students. Works with others to foster a commitment to diversity and equity in the instructional program.	

3c. Acknowledges Failures; Celebrates Accomplishments and Rewards: The school executive acknowledges failures and celebrates accomplishments of the school in order to define the identity, culture and performance of the school.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Can identify a range of criteria by which school success may be judged and with techniques that have been shown to be effective in recognizing and acknowledging both successes and failures within a school.	AND	Works with others to recognize the importance of acknowledging failures and celebrating accomplishments of the school and staff.	AND	Works with others to use established criteria for performance as the primary basis for reward and recognition.	AND	Works with others to recognize individual and collective contributions toward attainment of strategic goals.	

3d. **Efficacy and Empowerment:** The school executive develops a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff which influences the school's identity, culture, and performance.							
Emerging Candidate		**Developing Candidate**		**Proficient Candidate**		**Accomplished Candidate**	**Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)**
Understands the importance of building a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff. Understands the importance of developing a sense of well-being among staff, students, and parents/guardians.	AND	Analyzes school contexts and cultures and identifies areas of both high and low levels of staff efficacy and empowerment.	AND	Identifies strategies for building a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff. Identifies strategies for developing a sense of well-being among staff, students, and parents/guardians.	AND	Works with others to utilize a variety of activities, tools and protocols to develop efficacy and empowerment among staff. Works with others to actively model and promote a sense of well-being among staff, students, and parents/guardians.	

Standard 4: Human Resource Leadership

School executives will ensure that the school is a professional learning community. School executives will ensure that processes and systems are in place which result in recruitment, induction, support, evaluation, development, and retention of high performing staff. The school executive must engage and empower accomplished teachers in a distributive manner, including support of teachers in day-to-day decisions such as discipline, communication with parents/guardians, and protecting teachers from duties that interfere with teaching, and must practice fair and consistent evaluations of teachers. The school executive must engage teachers and other professional staff in conversations to plan their career paths and support district succession planning.

4a. Professional Development/Learning Communities: The school executive ensures that the school is a professional learning community.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands the importance of developing effective professional learning communities and results-oriented professional development. Understands the importance of continued personal learning and professional development.	AND	Analyzes a school context/community, drawing from sources including the *North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey* and student achievement data, to develop concrete suggestions or strategies for professional development that reflect characteristics of, and promote the use of, professional learning communities.	AND	Works with others to provide structures for and implement the development of effective professional learning communities and results-oriented professional development. Routinely participates in professional development focused on improving instructional programs and practices.	AND	Works with others to facilitate opportunities for effective professional learning communities aligned with the school improvement plan, focused on results, and characterized by collective responsibility for instructional planning and student learning.	

4b. Recruiting, Hiring, Placing and Mentoring of staff: The school executive establishes processes and systems in order to ensure a high-quality, high-performing staff.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands theories and research on the recruitment, placement, and mentoring of school staff at all levels. Comprehends state and federal laws or regulations related to the recruitment, placement, and mentoring of school staff.	AND	Using a variety of data at the school level: • Identifies school needs in recruiting new teachers and staff. • Identifies school needs in hiring new teachers and staff • Identifies school needs in placing new teachers and staff • Identifies school needs in mentoring new teachers and staff.	AND	Supports, mentors, and coaches staff members and emerging teacher leaders.	AND	Works with others to guide the learning community in establishing and implementing data-based goals for enhancing recruitment, employment, retention, mentoring, professional development, and support of all teachers and staff	

4c. Teacher and Staff Evaluation: The school executive evaluates teachers and other staff in a fair and equitable manner with the focus on improving performance and, thus, student achievement.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands multiple tools and approaches to the evaluation of school staff.	AND	Demonstrates ability to adhere to legal requirements for teacher and staff evaluation.	AND	Works with others to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction and ways to improve their instructional practice. Works with others to implement district and state evaluation policies in a fair and equitable manner.	AND	Works with others to utilize multiple assessments to evaluate teachers and other staff members. Works with others to evaluate teachers and other staff in a fair and equitable manner and utilize the results of evaluations to improve instructional practice.	

Standard 5: Managerial Leadership

School executives will ensure that the school has processes and systems in place for budgeting, staffing, problem-solving, communicating expectations, and scheduling that result in organizing the work routines in the building. The school executive must be responsible for the monitoring of the school budget and the inclusion of all teachers in the budget decision so as to meet the 21st century needs of every classroom. Effectively and efficiently managing the complexity of every day life is critical for staff to be able to focus its energy on improvement.

5a. School Resources and Budget: The school executive establishes budget processes and systems which are focused on, and result in, improved student achievement.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Is knowledgeable of ethical budgeting and accounting procedures. Understands the school-based budgeting process as it relates to district, state, and federal guidelines.	AND	Works with others to utilize input from staff to establish funding priorities and a balanced operational budget for school programs and activities.	AND	Works with others to incorporate the input of the School Improvement Team in budget and resource decisions. Works with others to use feedback and data to assess the success of funding and program decisions.	AND	Works with others to design transparent systems to equitably manage human and financial resources.	

5b. Conflict Management and Resolution: The school executive effectively and efficiently manages the complexity of human interactions so that the focus of the school can be on improved student achievement.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands factors that affect conflict and conflict resolution, and is aware of multiple strategies that can be used to resolve or manage conflict in a school setting.	AND	Demonstrates awareness of potential problems and/or areas of conflict within the school that affect students' learning and achievement.	AND	Works with others to resolve problems and/or areas of conflict within the school in ways that improve student achievement.	AND	Works with others to provide opportunities for staff members to express opinions contrary to those of authority or in relation to potentially discordant issues, particularly those that affect student achievement. Works with others to discuss with staff and implement solutions to address potentially discordant issues.	

5c. Systematic Communication: The school executive designs and utilizes various forms of formal and informal communication so that the focus of the school can be on improved student achievement.							
Emerging Candidate		**Developing Candidate**		**Proficient Candidate**		**Accomplished Candidate**	**Not Demonstrated** (Comment Required)
Understands the importance of open, effective communication in the operation of the school.	AND	Works with others to routinely involve the school improvement team in school wide communications processes. Works with others to design a system of open communication that provides for the timely, responsible sharing of information to, from, and with the school community.	AND	Works with others to utilize a system of open communication that provides for the timely, responsible sharing of information within the school community. Works with others to provide information in different formats in multiple ways through different media in order to ensure communication with all members of the community.	AND	Works with others to ensure that all community stakeholders and educators are aware of school goals for instruction and achievement, activities used to meet these goals, and progress toward meeting these goals.	

5d. School Expectations for Students and Staff: The school executive develops and enforces expectations, structures, rules, and procedures for students and staff.							
Emerging Candidate		**Developing Candidate**		**Proficient Candidate**		**Accomplished Candidate**	**Not Demonstrated** (Comment Required)
Understands the importance of clear expectations, structures, rules, and procedures for students and staff. Understands district and state policy and law related to student conduct, etc.	AND	Works with others to collaboratively develop clear expectations, structures, rules, and procedures for students and staff through the School Improvement Team.	AND	Works with others to communicate and enforce clear expectations, structures, rules, and procedures for students and staff. Works with others to effectively implement district rules and procedures.	AND	Works with others to systematically monitor issues around compliance with expectations, structures, and rules. Uses staff and student input to resolve issues related to expectations, structures, and rules. Works with others to regularly review the need for changes to expectations, structures, and rules.	

Standard 6: External Development Leadership

A school executive will design structures and processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership. Acknowledging that schools no longer reflect but, in fact, build community, the leader proactively creates with staff, opportunities for parents/guardians, community, and business representatives to participate as "stockholders" in the school such that continued investment of resources and good will are not left to chance.

6a. Parent and Community Involvement and Outreach: The school executive designs structures and processes which result in parent and community engagement, support and ownership for the school.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands theory and research on parental and community engagement in schools, and can apply this both to the analysis/examination of school settings and to development of concrete strategies for improving involvement.	AND	Interacts with, and acknowledges that parents/guardians and community members have a critical role in developing community engagement, support, and ownership of the school. Identifies the positive, culturally-responsive traditions of the school and community.	AND	Works with others to engage parents/guardians and all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success reflecting the community's vision of the school.	AND	Works with others to implement processes that empower parents/guardians and all community stakeholders to make significant decisions.	

6b. Federal, State and District Mandates: The school executive designs protocols and processes in order to comply with federal, state, and district mandates.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Is knowledgeable of applicable federal, state, and district mandates. Understands district goals and initiatives directed at improving student achievement.	AND	Works with others to design protocols and processes to comply with federal, state, and district mandates. Works with others to develop strategies for implementing district initiatives directed at improving student achievement.	AND	Works with others to ensure compliance with federal, state, and district mandates. Continually assesses the progress of district initiatives and reports results to district-level decision-makers. Works with others to implement district initiatives directed at improving student achievement.	AND	Explains federal, state, and district mandates for the school community so that such mandates are viewed as opportunities for improvement within the school. Works with others to develop district goals and initiatives directed at improving student achievement.	

Standard 7: Micro-political Leadership

School executives will build systems and relationships that utilize the staff's diversity, encourage constructive ideological conflict in order to leverage staff expertise, power and influence in order to realize the school's vision for success. The executive will also creatively employ an awareness of staff's professional needs, issues, and interests to build cohesion and to facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making.

7a. School Executive Micro-political Leadership: The school executive develops systems and relationships to leverage staff expertise and influence in order to affect the school's identity, culture, and performance.

Emerging Candidate		Developing Candidate		Proficient Candidate		Accomplished Candidate	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
Understands theories of leadership and interpersonal relations that are relevant and can be applied by the effective school executive. Understands ethical leadership and the principles of fairness and equity as they apply to people, processes, and resources in schools.	AND	Develops strategies to maintain high visibility and easy accessibility throughout the school. Is aware of the expertise, power and influence of staff members, and demonstrates sensitivity to their personal and professional needs.	AND	Works with others to build systems and relationships that utilize the staff's diversity, ideological differences, and expertise to realize the school's goals.	AND	Works with others to employ an awareness of staff's professional needs, issues, and interests to build cohesion and to facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making.	

Appendix C
North Carolina School Executive: Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process

Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Principals/Assistant Principals
Explanation of the Rubric and Performance Ratings

The following rubric was developed to align with and exemplify the North Carolina Standards for School Executives approved by the North Carolina State Board of Education in May 2008. The rubric should be used in conjunction with the standards.

The rubric will be used by the principal and assistant principal for self-assessment and by the superintendent or designee to guide performance ratings on the Summary/End-of-Year Evaluation Rating Form. A form for summarizing ratings, Summary Evaluation Worksheet, is also provided. Together, these materials form the core of the North Carolina School Executive: Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process.

The principal's/assistant principal's performance levels for standards 1-7 will be noted as follows:

Developing: Principal/assistant principal demonstrated adequate growth toward achieving standard(s) during the period of performance, but did not demonstrate competence on standard(s) of performance.

Proficient: Principal/assistant principal demonstrated basic competence on standard(s) of performance.

Accomplished: Principal/assistant principal exceeded basic competence on standard(s) of performance most of the time.

Distinguished: Principal/assistant principal consistently and significantly exceeded basic competence on standard(s) of performance.

Not Demonstrated: Principal/assistant principal did not demonstrate competence on or adequate growth toward achieving standard(s) of performance. (Note: If the "Not Demonstrated" rating is used, the evaluator must comment about why it was used.)

Standards 1-7 have sub-categories of performance elements. Each element has performance descriptors. These levels of performance are cumulative across the rows of the rubric. A principal or assistant principal who is new to the position or an experienced principal or assistant principal who is working in a new school, or who needs a new skill in order to meet the standard, may be rated Developing for an element. A principal or assistant principal who is rated Proficient for an element must exhibit the skills and knowledge described under the *Developing* leader as well as those under *Proficient*. Likewise, a principal or assistant principal who is rated Distinguished for an element exhibits all of the skills and knowledge described for that element across the row. Occasionally, a principal or assistant principal might not demonstrate evidence of proficiency on a particular element. In that case, the *Not Demonstrated* column should be selected. This column may also be used to document evidence that a principal or assistant principal is performing at a level below expectations or below standard. If that column is chosen, then a comment must be made as to why it was selected.

Source: North Carolina State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2015). *North Carolina school executive: Principal and assistant principal evaluation process*. Raleigh, NC. McREL.

Rubric for Evaluation and Self-Assessment (Required)

This form **must** be completed by the principal/assistant principal as part of the self-assessment process *and* by the superintendent/designee in preparation for the summary/end-of-year evaluation conference.

Standard I: Strategic Leadership

Principals/assistant principals will create conditions that result in strategically re-imaging the school's vision, mission, and goals in the 21st century. Understanding that schools ideally prepare students for an unseen but not altogether unpredictable future, the leader creates a climate of inquiry that challenges the school community to continually re-purpose itself by building on its core values and beliefs about its preferred future and then developing a pathway to reach it.

Element I.a. School Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals: The school's identity, in part, is derived from the vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals of the school, the processes used to establish these attributes, and the ways they are embodied in the life of the school community.

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
❑ Develops his/her own vision of the changing world in the 21st century that schools are preparing children to enter	. . . and ❑ Leads and implements a process for developing a shared vision and strategic goals for student achievement that reflect high expectations for students and staff ❑ Maintains a focus on the vision and strategic goals throughout the school year	. . . and ❑ Creates with stakeholders a vision for the school that captures peoples' attention and imagination ❑ Designs and implements collaborative processes to collect and analyze data about the school's progress for the periodic review and revision of the school's vision, mission, and strategic goals	. . . and ❑ Ensures that the school's identity (vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals) actually drive decisions and inform the culture of the school ❑ Initiates changes to vision and goals based on data to improve performance, school culture and school success	

Element I.b. Leading Change: The principal/assistant principal articulates a vision, and implementation strategies, for improvements and changes which result in improved achievement for all students.

	. . . and	. . . and	. . . and
❑ Identifies changes necessary for the improvement of student learning	❑ Systematically considers new and better ways of leading for improved student achievement and engages stakeholders in the change process	❑ Adapts/varies leadership style according to the changing needs of the school and community ❑ Is comfortable with major changes in implementing processes and accomplishing tasks ❑ Routinely and systematically communicates the impacts of change processes to all stakeholders	❑ Is a driving force behind major initiatives that help students acquire 21st century skills ❑ Systematically challenges the status quo by leading change with potentially beneficial outcomes

Element I.c. School Improvement Plan: The school improvement plan provides the structure for the vision, values, goals and changes necessary for improved achievement for all students.

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
❑ Understands statutory requirements regarding the School Improvement Plan	. . . and ❑ Facilitates the collaborative development of the annual School Improvement Plan to realize strategic goals and objectives ❑ Uses the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey and other data sources to develop the framework for the School Improvement Plan	. . . and ❑ Facilitates the successful execution of the School Improvement Plan aligned to the mission and goals set by the State Board of Education, the local Board of Education ❑ Systematically collects, analyzes, and uses data regarding the school's progress toward attaining strategic goals and objectives	. . . and ❑ Incorporates principles of continuous improvement and creative 21st century concepts for improvement into the School Improvement Plan	

Element I.d. Distributive Leadership: The principal/assistant principal creates and utilizes processes to distribute leadership and decision making throughout the school.			
	. . . and	. . . and	. . . and
❑ Seeks input from a variety of stakeholder groups, including teachers and parents/ guardians ❑ Understands the importance of providing opportunities for teachers to assume leadership and decision-making roles within the school	❑ Involves parents/ guardians, the community, and staff members in decisions about school governance, curriculum and instruction. ❑ Provides leadership development activities for staff members	❑ Ensures that parents/ guardians, community members and staff members have autonomy to make decisions and supports the decisions made as a part of the collective decision-making process ❑ Creates opportunities for staff to demonstrate leadership skills by allowing them to assume leadership and decision-making roles	❑ Encourages staff members to accept leadership responsibilities outside of the school building ❑ Incorporates teachers and support staff into leadership and decision-making roles in the school in ways that foster the career development of participating teachers

Comments

Examples of Artifacts:

- School Improvement Plan
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- Evidence of School Improvement Team
- Student achievement and testing data
- Statement of school vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals
- Evidence of stakeholder involvement in development of vision, mission, value, belief and goal statements
- Evidence of shared decision making and distributed leadership
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Standard II: Instructional Leadership

Principals/assistant principals set high standards for the professional practice of 21st century instruction and assessment that result in a no-nonsense accountable environment. They must be knowledgeable of best instructional and school practices and must use this knowledge to cause the creation of collaborative structures within the school for the design of highly engaging schoolwork for students, the on-going peer review of this work, and the sharing of this work throughout the professional community.

Standard II: Instructional Leadership

Element II.a. Focus on Learning and Teaching, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: The principal/assistant principal leads the discussion about standards for curriculum, instruction and assessment based on research and best practices in order to establish and achieve high expectations for students.

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
❑ Collects and analyzes student assessment data in adherence with instructional and legal requirements ❑ Provides students access to a variety of 21st century instructional tools, including technology	. . . and ❑ Systematically focuses on the alignment of learning, teaching, curriculum, instruction, and assessment to maximize student learning ❑ Organizes targeted opportunities for teachers to learn how to teach their subjects well ❑ Ensures that students are provided opportunities to learn and utilize best practices in the integrated use of 21st century instructional tools, including technology, to solve problems	. . . and ❑ Ensures that the alignment of learning, teaching, curriculum, instruction, and assessment is focused to maximize student learning ❑ Creates a culture that it is the responsibility of all staff to make sure that all students are successful	. . . and ❑ Ensures that knowledge of teaching and learning serves as the foundation for the school's professional learning community ❑ Encourages and challenges staff to reflect deeply on, and define, what knowledge, skills and concepts are essential to the complete educational development of students	

Element II.b. Focus on Instructional Time: The principal/assistant principal creates processes and schedules which protect teachers from disruption of instructional or preparation time.				
Developing	**Proficient**	**Accomplished**	**Distinguished**	**Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)**
❑ Understands the need for teachers to have daily planning time and duty-free lunch periods ❑ Is knowledgeable of designs for age-appropriate school schedules which address the learning needs of diverse student populations	. . . and ❑ Adheres to legal requirements for planning and instructional time ❑ Develops a master schedule to maximize student learning by providing for individual and on-going collaborative planning for every teacher ❑ Designs scheduling processes and protocols that maximize staff input and address diverse student learning needs	. . . and ❑ Ensures that teachers have the legally required amount of daily planning and lunch periods ❑ Routinely and conscientiously implements processes to protect instructional time from interruptions	. . . and ❑ Structures the school schedule to enable all teachers to have individual and team collaborative planning time ❑ Systematically monitors the effect of the master schedule on collaborative planning and student achievement ❑ Ensures that district leadership is informed of the amounts and scheduling of individual and team planning time	

Comments

Examples of Artifacts:
- School Improvement Plan
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- Student achievement and testing data
- Student drop-out data
- Documented use of formative assessment instruments to impact instruction
- Development and communication of goal-oriented personalized education plans for identified students
- Evidence of team development and evaluation of classroom lessons
- Use of research-based practices and strategies in classrooms
- Master school schedule documenting individual and collaborative planning for every teacher
- _____
- _____
- _____

Standard III: Cultural Leadership

Principals/assistant principals will understand and act on the understanding of the important role a school's culture plays in   contributing to the exemplary performance of the school. Principals/assistant principals must support and value the traditions,   artifacts, symbols and positive values and norms of the school and community that result in a sense of identity and pride upon   which to build a positive future. A principal/assistant principal must be able to "re-culture" the school if needed to align with   school's goals of improving student and adult learning and to infuse the work of the adults and students with passion, meaning and   purpose. Cultural leadership implies understanding the school and the people in it each day, how they came to their current   state, and how to connect with their traditions in order to move them forward to support the school's efforts to achieve individual   and collective goals.

Element III.a. Focus on Collaborative Work Environment: The principal/assistant principal understands and acts on the understanding of the positive role that a collaborative work environment can play in the school's culture.				
Developing	**Proficient**	**Accomplished**	**Distinguished**	**Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)**
❏ Understands characteristics of a collaborative work environment within the school ❏ Understands the importance of data gained from the Teacher Working Conditions Survey and other data sources from parents, students, teachers and stakeholders that reflect on the teaching and learning environment within the school.	. . . and ❏ Designs elements of a collaborative and positive work environment within the school ❏ Participates in and relies upon the School Improvement Team and other stakeholder voices to make decisions about school policies ❏ Utilizes data gained from the Teacher Working Conditions Survey and other sources to understand perceptions of the work environment	. . . and ❏ Utilizes a collaborative work environment predicated on site- based management and decision making, a sense of community, and cooperation within the school ❏ Monitors the implementation and response to school policies and provides feedback to the School Improvement Team for their consideration ❏ Initiates changes resulting from data gained from the Teacher Working Conditions Survey and other sources	. . . and ❏ Establishes a collaborative work environment which promotes cohesion and cooperation among staff ❏ Facilitates the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge and skills	

Element III.b. School Culture and Identity: The principal/assistant principal develops and uses shared vision, values and goals to   define the identity and culture of the school.

	. . . and	. . . and	. . . and
❑ Understands the importance of developing a shared vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals to establish a school culture and identity	❑ Systematically develops and uses shared values, beliefs and a shared vision to establish a school culture and identity	❑ Establishes a culture of collaboration, distributed leadership and continuous improvement in the school which guides the disciplined thought and action of all staff and students	❑ Ensures that the school's identity and changing culture (vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals) actually drives decisions and informs the culture of the school

Element III.c. Acknowledges Failures; Celebrates Accomplishments and Rewards: The principal/assistant principal acknowledges   failures and celebrates accomplishments of the school in order to define the identity, culture and performance of the school.

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
❑ Recognizes the importance of acknowledging failures and celebrating accomplishments of the school and staff	. . . and ❑ Uses established criteria for performance as the primary basis for reward and advancement	. . . and ❑ Systematically recognizes individuals for reward and advancement based on established criteria ❑ Recognizes individual and collective contributions toward attainment of strategic goals	. . . and ❑ Utilizes recognition, reward, and advancement as a way to promote the accomplishments of the school ❑ Utilizes recognition of failure as an opportunity to improve	

Element III.d. Efficacy and Empowerment: The principal/assistant principal develops a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff which influences the school's identity, culture and performance.			
	. . . and	. . . and	. . . and
❑ Understands the importance of building a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff ❑ Understands the importance of developing a sense of well-being among staff, students and parents/ guardians	❑ Identifies strategies for building a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff ❑ Identifies strategies for developing a sense of well-being among staff, students and parents/ guardians	❑ Utilizes a variety of activities, tools and protocols to develop efficacy and empowerment among staff ❑ Actively models and promotes a sense of well-being among staff, students and parents/ guardians	❑ Builds a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff that results in increased capacity to accomplish substantial outcomes ❑ Utilizes a collective sense of well-being among staff, students and parents/guardians to impact student achievement

Comments

Examples of Artifacts:

- School Improvement Plan
- School Improvement Team
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- Evidence of shared decision making and distributed leadership
- Recognition criteria and structure utilized
- Documented use of School Improvement Team in decision making
- Student achievement and testing data
- Existence and work of professional learning communities
- Teacher retention data

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- _____

Standard IV: Human Resource Leadership

Principals/assistant principals will ensure that the school is a professional learning community. Principals/assistant principals will ensure that process and systems are in place which results in recruitment, induction, support, evaluation, development and retention of high performing staff. The principal/assistant principal must engage and empower accomplished teachers in a distributive manner, including support of teachers in day-to-day decisions such as discipline, communication with parents/ guardians, and protecting teachers from duties that interfere with teaching, and must practice fair and consistent evaluations of teachers. The principal/assistant principal must engage teachers and other professional staff in conversations to plan their career paths and support district succession planning.

Element IV.a. Professional Development/Learning Communities: The principal/assistant principal ensures that the school is a professional learning community.				
Developing	**Proficient**	**Accomplished**	**Distinguished**	**Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)**
❑ Understands the importance of developing effective professional learning communities and results-oriented professional development ❑ Understands the importance of continued personal learning and professional development	. . . and ❑ Provides structures for, and implements the development of effective professional learning communities and results-oriented professional development ❑ Routinely participates in professional development focused on improving instructional programs and practices	. . . and ❑ Facilitates opportunities for effective professional learning communities aligned with the school improvement plan, focused on results, and characterized by collective responsibility for instructional planning and student learning	. . . and ❑ Ensures that professional development within the school is aligned with curricular, instructional, and assessment needs, while recognizing the unique professional development needs of individual staff members	

Element IV.b. Recruiting, Hiring, Placing and Mentoring of staff: The principal/assistant principal establishes processes and systems in order to ensure a high-quality, high-performing staff.

	. . . and	. . . and	. . . and
❑ Understands the school's need to recruit, hire, appropriately place, and mentor new staff members	At the school level, creates and implements processes for: ❑ Recruiting new teachers and staff ❑ Hiring new teachers and staff ❑ Placing new teachers and staff ❑ Mentoring new teachers and staff	❑ Supports, mentors and coaches staff members who are new or emerging leaders or who need additional support	❑ Continuously searches for staff with outstanding potential as educators and provides the best placement of both new and existing staff to fully benefit from their strengths in meeting the needs of a diverse student population ❑ Ensures that professional development is available for staff members with potential to serve as mentors and coaches

Element IV.c. Teacher and Staff Evaluation: The principal/assistant principal evaluates teachers and other staff in a fair and equitable manner with the focus on improving performance and, thus, student achievement.

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
	. . . and	. . . and	. . . and	
❑ Adheres to legal requirements for teacher and staff evaluation	❑ Creates processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction and ways to improve their instructional practice ❑ Implements district and state evaluation policies in a fair and equitable manner	❑ Utilizes multiple assessments to evaluate teachers and other staff members ❑ Evaluates teachers and other staff in a fair and equitable manner and utilizes the results of evaluations to improve instructional practice	❑ Analyzes the results of teacher and staff evaluations holistically and utilizes the results to direct professional development opportunities in the school	

COMMENTS

Examples of Artifacts:
- School Improvement Plan
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- Student achievement and testing data
- Teacher retention data
- National Board Certification
- Teacher professional growth plans
- Master school schedule documenting individual and collaborative planning for every teacher
- Number of National Board Certified Teachers
- Number of teachers pursuing advanced degrees
- Record of professional development provided staff
- Impact of professional development on student learning
- Mentor records and beginning teacher feedback
-
-
-

Standard V: Managerial Leadership

Principals/assistant principals will ensure that the school has processes and systems in place for budgeting, staffing, problem   solving, communicating expectations and scheduling that result in organizing the work routines in the building. The principal/   assistant principal must be responsible for the monitoring of the school budget and the inclusion of all teachers in the budget   decision so as to meet the 21st century needs of every classroom. Effectively and efficiently managing the complexity of everyday   life is critical for staff to be able to focus its energy on improvement.

Element V.a. School Resources and Budget: The principal/assistant principal establishes budget processes and systems which are focused on, and result in, improved student achievement.				
Developing	**Proficient**	**Accomplished**	**Distinguished**	**Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)**
❑ Is knowledgeable of school budget and accounting procedures ❑ Utilizes input from staff to establish funding priorities and a balanced operational budget for school programs and activities	. . . and ❑ Incorporates the input of the School Improvement Team in budget and resource decisions ❑ Uses feedback and data to assess the success of funding and program decisions	. . . and ❑ Designs transparent systems to equitably manage human and financial resources	. . . and ❑ Ensures the strategic allocation and equitable use of financial resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs	
Element V.b. Conflict Management and Resolution: The principal/assistant principal effectively and efficiently manages the complexity of human interactions so that the focus of the school can be on improved student achievement.				
❑ Demonstrates awareness of potential problems and/or areas of conflict within the school	. . . and ❑ Creates processes to resolve problems and/or areas of conflict within the school	. . . and ❑ Resolves school-based problems/conflicts in a fair, democratic way ❑ Provides opportunities for staff members to express opinions contrary to those of authority or in relation to potentially discordant issues ❑ Discusses with staff and implements solutions to address potentially discordant issues	. . . and ❑ Monitors staff response to discussions about solutions to potentially discordant issues to ensure that all interests are heard and respected ❑ Resolves conflicts to ensure the best interest of students and the school result	

Element V.c. Systematic Communication: The principal/assistant principal designs and utilizes various forms of formal   and informal communication so that the focus of the school can be on improved student achievement.

	. . . and	. . . and	. . . and	
❑ Understands the importance of open, effective communication in the operation of the school	❑ Designs a system of open communication that provides for the timely, responsible sharing of information to, from, and with the school community ❑ Routinely involves the school improvement team in school wide communications processes	❑ Utilizes a system of open communication that provides for the timely, responsible sharing of information within the school community ❑ Provides information in different formats in multiple ways through different media in order to ensure communication with all members of the community	❑ Ensures that all community stakeholders and educators are aware of school goals for instruction and achievement, activities used to meet these goals, and progress toward meeting these goals	

Element V.d. School Expectations for Students and Staff: The principal/assistant principal develops and enforces expectations, structures, rules and procedures for students and staff.				
Developing	**Proficient**	**Accomplished**	**Distinguished**	**Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)**
❑ Understands the importance of clear expectations, structures, rules and procedures for students and staff ❑ Understands district and state policy and law related to student conduct, etc.	. . . and ❑ Collaboratively develops clear expectations, structures, rules and procedures for students and staff through the School Improvement Team ❑ Effectively implements district rules and procedures	. . . and ❑ Communicates and enforces clear expectations, structures, and fair rules and procedures for students and staff	. . . and ❑ Systematically monitors issues around compliance with expectations, structures, rules and expectations. Utilizes staff and student input to resolve such issues ❑ Regularly reviews the need for changes to expectations, structures, rules and expectations	

COMMENTS

Examples of Artifacts:
- School Improvement Plan
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- School financial information
- School safety and behavioral expectations
- Master school schedule documenting individual and collaborative planning for every teacher
- Evidence of formal and informal systems of communication
- Dissemination of clear norms and ground rules
- Evidence of ability to confront ideological conflict and then reach consensus
- _____
- _____
- _____

Standard VI: External Development Leadership

Principals/assistant principals will design structures and processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership. Acknowledging that schools no longer reflect but, in fact, build community, the leader proactively creates with staff, opportunities for parents/guardians, community and business representatives to participate as "stockholders" in the school such that continued   investment of resources and good will are not left to chance.

Element VI.a. Parent and Community Involvement and Outreach: The principal/assistant principal designs structures and   processes which result in parent and community engagement, support and ownership for the school.

Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
❑ Interacts with, and acknowledges that parents/guardians and community members have a critical role in developing community engagement, support and ownership of the school ❑ Identifies the positive, culturally-responsive traditions of the school and community	. . . and ❑ Proactively creates systems that engage parents/guardians and all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success reflecting the community's vision of the school	. . . and ❑ Implements processes that empower parents/guardians and all community stakeholders to make significant decisions	. . . and ❑ Proactively develops relationships with parents/guardians and the community so as to develop good will and garner fiscal, intellectual and human resources that support specific aspects of the school's learning agenda	

Element VI.b. Federal, State and District Mandates: The principal/assistant principal designs protocols and processes in order to comply with federal, state, and district mandates.			
❑ Is knowledgeable of applicable federal, state and district mandates ❑ Is aware of district goals and initiatives directed at improving student achievement	. . . and ❑ Designs protocols and processes to comply with federal, state and district mandates ❑ Implements district initiatives directed at improving student achievement	. . . and ❑ Ensures compliance with federal, state and district mandates ❑ Continually assesses the progress of district initiatives and reports results to district-level decision makers.	. . . and ❑ Interprets federal, state and district mandates for the school community so that such mandates are viewed as an opportunity for improvement within the school ❑ Actively participates in the development of district goals and initiatives directed at improving student achievement

COMMENTS:

Examples of Artifacts:

- Parent involvement in School Improvement Team
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- PTSA/Booster club operation and participation
- Parent survey results
- Evidence of business partners and projects involving business partners

- Plan for shaping the school's image throughout the community
- Evidence of community support
- Number and use of school volunteers
- _____
- _____

Standard VII: Micro-political Leadership

Principals/assistant principals will build systems and relationships that utilize the staff's diversity, encourage constructive ideological conflict in order to leverage staff expertise, power and influence in order to realize the school's vision for success. The principal/assistant principal will also creatively employ an awareness of staff's professional needs, issues, and interests to build cohesion and to facilitate distributed governance and shared decision making.

School Executive Micro-political Leadership: The principal/assistant principal develops systems and relationships to leverage staff expertise and influence in order to influence the school's identity, culture and performance.				
Developing	**Proficient**	**Accomplished**	**Distinguished**	**Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)**
❑ Maintains high visibility and is easily accessible throughout the school	. . . and ❑ Is aware of the expertise, power and influence of staff members, and demonstrates sensitivity to their personal and professional needs	. . . and ❑ Builds systems and relationships that utilize the staff's diversity, ideological differences and expertise to realize the school's goals	. . . and ❑ Creatively employs an awareness of staff's professional needs, issues and interests to build cohesion and to facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making	

COMMENTS

Examples of Artifacts:

- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- Teacher retention data
- Evidence of visibility and accessibility
- Evidence of shared decision making and distributed leadership

- _____
- _____
- _____

APPENDIX D
Letter of Agreement

McDowell County Schools

Letter of Agreement

March 3, 2016

To the Appalachian Institutional Review Board (IRB):

I am familiar with Larry Putnam's research project entitled A Case Study on Novice Principals' Perceptions of Leadership: Developing A District Leadership Academy.

I understand McDowell County School's involvement to be that of allowing employees to be surveyed, and individually interviewed.

As the research Mr. Putnam conducts this research project I understand and agree that:

- This research will be carried out following sound ethical principles and that it has been approved by the IRB at Appalachian State University.
- Employee participation in this project is strictly voluntary and not a condition of employment at McDowell County Schools. There are no contingencies for employees who choose to participate or decline to participate in this project. There will be no adverse employment consequences as a result of an employee's participation in this study.
- To the extent confidentiality may be protected under State or Federal law, the data collected will remain confidential, as described in the protocol. The name of our agency or institution will not be reported in the results of the study.

Therefore, as a representative of McDowell County Schools, I agree that Larry Putnam's research project may be conducted at our agency/institution, and that Mr. Larry Putnam may assure participants that they may participate in surveys/individual interviews and provide responsive information without adverse employment consequences.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Garrett
Superintendent
McDowell County Schools

APPENDIX E
Consent to Participate in Research

Research Project title: A Case Study on Novice Principals' Perceptions of Leadership: Developing a District Leadership Academy
Principal Investigator: Larry Putnam
Department: Educational Leadership
Contact Information: Dr. William Gummerson

Consent to Participate in Research
Information to Consider About this Research

I agree to participate as an interviewee in this research project, which is to investigate novice principals' and assistant principals' perceptions of their ability to execute the eight NC Leadership Standards for the North Carolina School Executive. The results of this in-depth study will be used to develop topics for exploration and education for novice principals within a local school district. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the school executive leadership capabilities of the practicing novice principals in order to strengthen student achievement, and to contribute to the culture of sustainable leadership practices that promote success within the district.

Fifteen principal and assistant principal participants from within the school district will be asked to participate in this qualitative research study, with the expectation that at least 10 will participate. Each interview will last approximately sixty to ninety minutes. The interviews will be held away from the participants' own schools. It is hypothesized that conducting interviews in a neutral location will alleviate fears of appearing unprepared for the principalship. Since the interviews will be in a different location, participants may be more apt to give honest answers.

Initially, an online, selected response survey will be given to participants using Survey Monkey application software. Next, novice principals and assistant principals will be interviewed. To fully triangulate the data, a second phase of data collection will begin after survey data are analyzed. This phase will include individual interviews conducted to mine the data collected and to drill even deeper into the comments made by survey respondents. For this study, a semi-structured interview will be conducted with 5 participants. This approach allows flexibility while still being somewhat structured. A list of guiding questions will be developed after focus group data is coded and analyzed. These questions will be asked, as will follow-up questions that might not be part of the guiding questions.

I understand the interview will be about themes associated with the perceptions of novice principals and assistant principals that will lead to a more complete picture in determining the perceived strengths and deficits of principals in relation to the eight North Carolina Standards for School Executives.
I understand that *state there are no foreseeable risks* associated with my participation. I also know that this study may be shared with administrators, superintendents, surrounding school districts, and institutions of higher education.

I understand that the interview(s) will be audio recorded and may be published. I understand that the audio recordings of my interview may be used to develop novice principals in their leadership role if I sign the authorization below.

I understand if I sign the authorization at the end of this consent form, photos may be taken during the study and used in scientific presentations of the research findings.

I understand I will not receive compensation for the interview.

I understand that the interview is voluntary and there are no consequences if I choose not to participate. I also understand that I do not have to answer any questions and can end the interview at any time with no consequences

If I have questions about this research project, I can call Dr. William Gummerson at (828) 406-9946 or the Appalachian Institutional Review Board Administrator at 828-262-2692 Monday through Friday, through email at irb@appstate.edu or at Appalachian State University, Office of Research Protections, IRB Administrator, Boone, NC 28608.

This research project has been approved on ____(date) by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Appalachian State University. This approval will expire on [Expiration Date] unless the IRB renews the approval of this research.

☐ I request that my name **not** be used in connection with tapes, transcripts, photographs or publications resulting from this interview.

☐ I request that my name **be used** in connection with tapes, transcripts, photographs or publications resulting from this interview.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read this form, had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and received satisfactory answers, and want to participate. I understand I can keep a copy for my records.

_____
Participant's Name (PRINT)   Signature
Date
[OPTIONAL] If you wish to waive the signature, remove the above items and use this wording:

By proceeding with the activities described above, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the research procedures outlined in this consent form, and voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

[If applicable] **Photography and Video Recording Authorization**

With your permission, still pictures (photos) and/or video recordings taken during the study may be used in research presentations of the research findings. Please indicate whether or not you agree to having photos or videos used in research presentations by reviewing the authorization below and signing if you agree.

Authorization

I hereby release, discharge and agree to save harmless Appalachian State University, its successors, assigns, officers, employees or agents, any person(s) or corporation(s) for whom it might be acting, and any firm publishing and/or distributing any photograph or video footage produced as part of this research, in whole or in part, as a finished product, from and against any liability as a result of any distortion, blurring, alteration, visual or auditory illusion, or use in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the recording, processing, reproduction, publication or distribution of any photograph, videotape, or interview, even should the same subject me to ridicule, scandal, reproach, scorn or indignity. I hereby agree that the photographs and video footage may be used under the conditions stated herein without blurring my identifying characteristics.

_____

Participant's Name (PRINT)   Signature

APPENDIX F
Survey Part 1 Questions

Please answer the following questions regarding your perception of your effectiveness in relation to the eight standards of the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process. All responses are anonymous.

1. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, what is your perception of your own effectiveness on Standard I: Strategic Leadership?

1- Not effective   2- Somewhat effective   3- Effective   4-Very effective

Please explain your rating.

2. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, what is your perception of your own effectiveness on Standard II: Instructional Leadership?

1- Not effective   2- Somewhat effective   3- Effective   4-Very effective

Please explain your rating.

3. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, what is your perception of your own effectiveness on Standard III: Cultural Leadership?

1- Not effective   2- Somewhat effective   3- Effective   4-Very effective

Please explain your rating.

4. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, what is your perception of your own effectiveness on Standard IV: Human Resource Leadership?

1- Not effective   2- Somewhat effective   3- Effective   4-Very effective

Please explain your rating.

5. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, what is your perception of your own effectiveness on Standard V: Managerial Leadership?

1- Not effective   2- Somewhat effective   3- Effective   4-Very effective

Please explain your rating.

6. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, what is your perception of your own effectiveness of Standard VI: External Development Leadership?

1- Not effective   2- Somewhat effective   3- Effective   4-Very effective

Please explain your rating.

7. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, what is your perception of your own effectiveness on Standard VII: Micro-political Leadership?

1- Not effective   2- Somewhat effective   3- Effective   4-Very effective

Please explain your rating.

8. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, what is your perception on your own effectiveness of Standard VIII: Academic Achievement Leadership?

1- Not effective   2- Somewhat effective   3- Effective   4-Very effective

Please explain your rating.

APPENDIX G
Survey Part 2 Questions

Please answer the following questions regarding your perception of your school administration graduate coursework and its relationship to eight standards of the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process. All responses are anonymous.

1. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, how effectively did your graduate coursework prepare you for Standard I: Strategic Leadership?

1- Not effectively   2- Somewhat effectively   3- Effectively   4-Very effectively

Please explain your rating.

2. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, how effectively did your graduate coursework prepare you for Standard II: Instructional Leadership?

1- Not effectively   2- Somewhat effectively   3- Effectively   4-Very effectively

Please explain your rating.

3. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, how effectively did your graduate coursework prepare you for Standard III: Cultural Leadership?

1- Not effectively   2- Somewhat effectively   3- Effectively   4-Very effectively

Please explain your rating.

4. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, how effectively did your graduate coursework prepare you for Standard IV: Human Resource Leadership?

1- Not effectively   2- Somewhat effectively   3- Effectively   4-Very effectively

Please explain your rating.

5. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, how effectively did your graduate coursework prepare you for Standard V: Managerial Leadership?

1- Not effectively   2- Somewhat effectively   3- Effectively   4-Very effectively

 Please explain your rating.

6. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal

Evaluation process, how effectively did your graduate coursework prepare you for Standard VI: External Development Leadership?

1- Not effectively   2- Somewhat effectively   3- Effectively   4-Very effectively

Please explain your rating.

7. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, how effectively did your graduate coursework prepare you for Standard VII: Micro-Political Leadership?

1- Not effectively   2- Somewhat effectively   3- Effectively   4-Very effectively

Please explain your rating.

8. In regards to the North Carolina School Executive Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation process, how effectively did your graduate coursework prepare you for Standard VIII: Academic Achievement Leadership?

1- Not effectively   2- Somewhat effectively   3- Effectively   4-Very effectively

Please explain your rating.

Vita

Larry Lynn Putnam was born in Caldwell County, North Carolina. He grew up in the small community of Chesterfield, located in the northern part of Burke County, North Carolina. He entered Burke County Public Schools as a first grader and graduated from Freedom High School in 1985.

Larry spent his freshman year at Mars Hill College as a student athlete. The following year, Larry transferred to Appalachian State University and received his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 1990.

As a third generation furniture worker, Larry began a career with Drexel Heritage Furnishings after graduation. However, within three years, the furniture industry moved overseas, and he was left without a job. Larry returned to Appalachian State University to pursue his Add-On License in Business Education while working as a correctional officer at Western Youth Institute in Morganton, North Carolina.

On January 2, 1996, Larry began his teaching career at Freedom High School in the Business Education Department, where he taught for three years. During this time, Larry worked toward his Master's degree and completed the School Administration program through Gardner Webb University in December of 1998.

In 1999, Larry accepted a principalship under the Department of Health and Human Services at Enola Alternative School, located on the grounds of Broughton Hospital in Morganton, NC. He served as principal there for five years, before briefly returning to Burke County Public Schools as the assistant principal at Oak Hill Elementary.

From 2005-2010, Larry served as principal at both Chesterfield Elementary and W.A. Young Elementary. During this time, Larry continued his education, and received his Educational Specialist degree in 2006 from Appalachian State University.

In 2010, Larry served as principal of Jimmy C. Draughn High School, also located in Burke County, for a period of one school year. In August of 2011, Larry was appointed by the Burke County Board of Education to serve as Interim Superintendent for the remainder of the school year. In June of 2012, Larry was named Superintendent of Burke County Public Schools. He received his Doctorate of Educational Leadership from Appalachian State University in 2016.

Dr. Larry Putnam is married to Dr. Jennifer Putnam and lives in Morganton, North Carolina. They have two children, Kyle and Savannah, who are pursuing their educational degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.