

KASHUBARA II, PETE ZACHARY, Ed.D. Too Big to Fail: Principal Professional Development—Perceptions of Secondary Principals. (2017)
Directed by Dr. Carl Lashley. 182 pp.

The purpose of this study was to examine how high school principals in a large urban district in the Southeastern United States view their professional development by gathering data on the essentials of professional development that support principals in carrying out their expanding roles, promoting the professional growth and efficacy of principals, and fostering the overall success of the schools they lead. Principal perceptions of professional development directly affect the extent to which they engage in and garner knowledge and skills from professional development activities. This semi-structured qualitative interview study asked 16 high school principals about their professional development experiences. Three major themes emerged from the data including: (a) improved outcomes and efficacy for practicing high school principals, (b) development of the characteristics desired for professional development, and (c) Adult Learning Theory correlated to preferred delivery models. Within each theme, implications of the study are discussed and recommendations for high school principal and districts are presented.

Key words: Andragogy, Adult Learning Theory, Characteristics of Adult Learners, Principal Leadership, Job-embedded professional learning, Professional Learning Communities, Rounds Networks, Outcomes for Principals, High School Principal Professional Development, Principal Efficacy, Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

TOO BIG TO FAIL: PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT—
PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY PRINCIPALS

by

Pete Zachary Kashubara II

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
2017

Approved by

Committee Chair

© 2017 Pete Zachary Kashubara II

This dissertation is dedicated to my Uncle Joe Lamb and to my Grandfather, Pete Kashubara. You have been the two most inspirational men in my life and always pushed me to go beyond what I ever envisioned for myself. I wish you were here to celebrate with me but know that you have been there every step of the way.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation, written by Pete Zachary Kashubara II, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

Date of Acceptance by Committee

Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Carl Lashley, Dr. Rick Reitzug, Dr. Craig Peck, and Dr. Ann Davis. Their foresight, understanding, and insights have guided me throughout this process. Although at times it appeared I might never finish, their encouragement and feedback motivated me to complete the process. The friendship and trust they share with each other serves as a model that I aspire to in my professional and personal relationships.

To Amysue Kashubara. You have been the ultimate cheerleader throughout this process. The support and love you share with our family helped us survive and stay strong as a couple and as a family during this work. I simply could not have completed this without you and the continued sacrifices that you made to put my needs first when you and the boys needed a husband and father. You are the rock and compass of our family and I love you!

To Zachary and Nicholas. The Kashubara Boys! I started this journey wanting to set a strong example for each of you of what you can accomplish through hard work, sacrifice, and dedication. You have understood and sacrificed so much time that we could have spent together. You have each delivered many meals to the den and filled my water glass multiple times while I completed this work. The encouragement you shared and the hugs you gave me helped carry me through and move forward even when life wasn't always "Sunshine and Rainbows." I love each of you and can't wait to start a new journey together as I finish.

To my mother and father-in-law, Captain and Mrs. Jim and Sandy Speer. You have always checked up on me, been willing to read through my work, and offer feedback. The support you provided to not only myself but to Amysue and the boys during this process is appreciated and cherished. Thank you.

Finally, a big thank you to my friends and family who have been so supportive. My brother, Ken Kashubara, my best friend, Matt Lafko, and so many others have shared their encouragement. A special thank you to my cousin, Leanna Hart, who saved me when I forgot my dissertation edits for Chapter IV at her house and ensured that they got back to me at the airport in time for me to catch my flight home.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	x
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement	4
Significance of the Problem.....	4
Research Questions	7
Conceptual Framework.....	8
Methodology	10
Summary and Forecast	12
 II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	 13
Significance of Principal Leadership	15
Essential Professional Development for Practicing Principals	18
Job-embedded Professional Development.....	23
Professional Learning Communities.....	26
Collaborative Principal Rounds Networks.....	28
Improving Educational Leadership Preparation and Professional Learning.....	 32
Conceptual Framework: Adult Learning Theory.....	38
Summary and Forecast	45
 III. METHODOLOGY	 49
Introduction.....	49
Methodology	50
Key Concepts	54
Professional Development	54
Andragogy.....	55
Methods.....	56
Trustworthiness Strategies	61
Summary	62

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....	63
Purpose of the Study	63
Essential Professional Development of Practicing Principals	65
Improving Professional Outcomes.....	66
Culture.....	66
Curriculum	67
Budget.....	68
Instructional coaching.....	69
Data analysis	70
Improving Principal Efficacy.....	71
Organizational leadership	72
Empowerment	74
Managing adults.....	74
Administrative team development	75
Time management.....	75
Addressing the Overwhelming Nature of the Job.....	77
Legislative and legal updates	77
Human resources.....	78
Student mental health issues	79
Characteristics of Effective and Efficient Professional Development.....	80
Perceptions of the Essential Characteristics of Effective Professional Development	80
Principal as participant in professional development planning.....	81
Relevant and realistic.....	82
Principal voice in district offerings.....	82
Formal and informal networks.....	84
Cyclical professional development.....	85
Presenter's credibility and professional development delivery.....	87
Factors that Negate Effective and Efficient Professional Development.....	88
Principal receptiveness.....	89
Timeliness	90
Funding and support	91
Lack of transparency.....	91
Time constraints and follow through	92
Diversity of needs	93
Lack of offerings, access, and support.....	94
Positive Local Educational Agencies/District Experiences.....	95

Preferred Professional Development Delivery Models	99
Professional Development Delivery Models	100
Job-embedded models.....	100
Formal executive coach	101
Informal mentors.....	102
PLCs and cohort networks	103
Supplementary models.....	105
Summary	107
V. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	109
Explication of the Themes	112
Improved Outcomes and Efficacy for Practicing High School Principals	113
Development of the Characteristics Desired for Professional Development.....	115
Adult Learning Theory Correlated to Preferred Delivery Models.....	117
Recommendations.....	119
Recommendations for School Principals	120
Recommendations for School Districts	123
Principal Professional Development Networks and Site Visits	124
A Model for Principal Professional Development.....	126
Composition of Networks	129
Expected Outcomes	130
Conclusion	131
REFERENCES	133
APPENDIX A. RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS CROSSWALK.....	157
APPENDIX B. SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	158
APPENDIX C. RECRUITMENT EMAIL	160
APPENDIX D. TELEPHONE SCRIPT FOR RECRUITMENT.....	161
APPENDIX E. RECRUITMENT FOLLOW UP	162
APPENDIX F. CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS.....	163

APPENDIX G. UNCG IRB APPROVAL	167
APPENDIX H. DISTRICT IRB APPROVAL.....	169
APPENDIX I. ALIGNMENT CROSSWALK OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS, THREADS, AND CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED	170
APPENDIX J. HIGHLIGHTED AREAS OF ESSENTIAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ORDER TO EXECUTE THE ROLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL.....	172
APPENDIX K. DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	174
APPENDIX L. FACTORS THAT HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON EFFICIENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	175
APPENDIX M. PREFERRED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY MODELS	176
APPENDIX N. COMPARISONS OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTIVE COACH CHARACTERISTICS	177
APPENDIX O. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS FOR PRINCIPALS AND ADULT LEARNING THEORY CROSSWALK.....	178
APPENDIX P. CHART OF PARTICIPANTS	181

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Blueprint for Improved Outcomes for High School Principals.....	9
Figure 2. Characteristics of Adult Learners (Pappas, 2013).....	40
Figure 3. The Suggested Cyclical Nature of Professional Development.....	86
Figure 4. Conceptual Framework for the Professional Development of Principals	111

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The role of the principal has changed dramatically over the past couple of decades (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Levine, 2006; Rousmaniere, 2013). There was a time when a principal's primary tasks were limited to making sure that the buses ran on time, supplies were ordered, and personnel issues were addressed. Principals are now more than ever focused on student achievement while retaining their traditional administrative and building manager duties. Because of this, effective and efficient professional development is crucial to fulfilling their roles (Cray & Weiler, 2011; Spillane & Lee, 2013; Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000). Principals must receive professional development aimed at helping support them in carrying out the expanding role of the principal, promoting professional growth and efficacy of the principal, and ensuring the overall success of the schools they lead.

Principal leadership is critical to creating conditions that lead to effective schools; thus, arming principals with the skills to meet the challenges they face is the most feasible way to equip them to exhibit the tenacity to effect change (Mizell, 2010; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Many studies indicate that in schools with high achievement, principals make the difference (Hallinger, Lee, & Ko, 2014; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Mizell, 2010; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Usdan et al., 2000; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

Consequently, training practicing principals to become effective school leaders and strengthen their performance levels is essential to school success. Learning starts with the leader; hence, effective principals need to continually expand their knowledge and skills if they want to successfully lead change, address improvement issues, and expect their staff to do the same (Bichsel, 2008; Burk, 2012; Mizell, 2010).

Practicing principals seldom have the opportunity to participate in training that provides the analytical skills required for identifying a program's strengths and weaknesses and understanding the data collection required to make evidence-based decisions (Bichsel, 2008; Melnyk, 2012; Murphy & Schiller, 1995). The professional development they do receive is often a passive experience that is inconsistent, disassociated, and lacks relevance to their core needs (Bichsel, 2008; Bizzell, 2011; Cowan & Hensley, 2012; Melnyk, 2012; Nicholson, Harris-John, & Schimmel, 2005). To compound matters, principal development traditionally has been given a lower priority by school systems than teacher development (Bizzell, 2011; Duncan, Range, & Scherz, 2011; Sparks, 2006). Furthermore, pressures created by the job have tended to keep principals in a continual "doing" mode, with little to no time for reflection and real thinking (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2005; Mitchell & Sackney, 2011). Their time continues to be filled by the many demands on them for administrative functions. Like most people, they also tend to gravitate toward doing what they know how to do. With their knowledge of teaching growing outdated, they delegate questions of instruction and professional development to others (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Honig, 2012). Thus, the continuous professional development that addresses the needs of

principals can build essential leadership capacity that supports the principals, and in turn, school success (Bizzell, 2011; Salazar, 2007).

As a practicing principal for the past 12 years, I have a vested interest in the preparation of administrators through effective and efficient professional development. I am interested in what high school principals identify as the essential professional development needs for principals, what they identify as the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development, and what they identify as preferred professional development delivery methods for principals. In this study, I conducted qualitative interviews with practicing high school principals and garnered their recommendations from the field to support improved outcomes for principals, improve efficacy, and stem high principal turnover rates.

My experience is one of professional isolation. I have been provided few formal opportunities within the district to collaborate with high school peers. District professional development is a series of isolated, monthly meetings where agenda items are disjointed and rarely connected to my individual professional development needs or linked to the school improvement goals of my school. I need professional development that is ongoing and tailored to my specific professional needs, connected to the circumstances at my school, and connected to federal, state, and local accountability standards. By conducting qualitative interviews with high school principal peers, the goal was to determine if there is alignment of needs, effective experiences, and preferred delivery models to make recommendations for improved, shared, common, and collaborative professional development practices that may improve the outcomes for

principals, improve principal efficacy, and stem high principal turnover rates. I was also hopeful that the research would assist me in leveraging this feedback and reflections from peers (high school principals) to improve my interactions with internal and external professional development to sustain a cycle of reflection to consistently improve my leadership skills as a principal and avoid burnout. Educational leadership must be strengthened, and there must be an investment in high-quality professional development for principals. Research affirms that there is a deep need to determine the type of professional learning necessary to develop school leaders which can improve student achievement (Bichsel, 2008; Melnyk, 2012).

Problem Statement

To maintain or improve the quality of education provided in our schools, the effectiveness of the school leader is essential. The widespread emphasis in the literature, as well as in the standards of various accrediting bodies, calls for the need for quality, systematic professional development opportunities that align with what principals say they need to know and offered in a way that they prefer to learn.

Significance of the Problem

For much of the past century, the typical role of the school principal has been to serve as the manager-in-chief. However, the nature of the principalship has changed dramatically. The major driver has been the emergence of accountability measures required by the federal and state governments that hold principals responsible for student outcomes in achievement scores. This has required principals to learn a new set of

leadership skills—skills for which they have not received adequate professional development (Bichsel, 2008; DuBois, 2012).

Federal education improvement policies have increased the scrutiny on principals, bringing a sharper focus to supporting and investing in principals, including the 1965 *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) that began the work to improve education for all children. The ESEA has evolved over nearly five decades, emphasizing education reform priorities that mirror the changing national education policy conversation (American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2011). It has emerged as different names, such as *Goals for America 2000*, *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) in 2001, and the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) of 2015, all in an effort to focus on student achievement and school accountability (Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/>, 2016). This level of accountability has increased the pressure on school leaders tremendously and has principals struggling to find solutions (Bichsel, 2008; Melnyk, 2012; West, Peck, & Reitzug, 2010; West, Peck, Reitzug, & Crane, 2014).

After five decades of federal legislative focus, subsets of schools still had chronically low performance. In this context, President Barack Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) that provided \$4.35 billion for Race to the Top (RttT) Funds (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2009a). Race to the Top encourages states and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to provide principals with effective support by providing effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and

collaboration time to principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job-embedded (Campbell & Gross, 2012; Kutash et al., 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2009a).

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), which took effect in the 2017-2018 school year, was signed into law in December 2015 (ed.gov; Klein, 2015). It reauthorized the now 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The ESSA in many ways builds on the key areas of progress in many years such as increased national graduation rates but is also a U-turn from the current, much-maligned top-down approach version of the ESEA law, the No Child Left Behind Act of the U.S. Department of Education (Smith, 2016). ESSA is a departure as it empowers states and local leaders in developing their own strong systems for school improvement in setting goals, determining what to hold schools and districts accountable for, and deciding how to intervene in low-performing schools (ed.gov; Every Student Succeeds Act: A Progress Report on Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015; Klein, 2015; Smith, 2016). States still must submit accountability plans to the Education Department, including high school proficiency tests, English-language proficiency, graduation rates, and at least one other indicator that focuses on whether students have the opportunity to learn or are ready for postsecondary work including factoring test participation (ed.gov). Schools that continue to fail to meet expectations can still be taken over by the state, fire the principal, or convert the school into a charter school. However, unlike NCLB, states can decide what kind of action to take (Klein, 2015).

ESSA also updated the definition of professional development for teachers and K-12 leaders from the general terms of NCLB by defining professional development as

sustained (not standalone, one-day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and a focused process throughout the school year (Pierce, 2016). Title II, Supporting Effective Educators Development (SEED) of the ESSA, describes the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund program which supports principals with ongoing, differentiated, targeted, and personalized support and feedback for improvement, including professional development opportunities to increase effectiveness (Haller, Hunt, Pacha, & Fazekaas, 2015; Pierce, 2016).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how high school principals in a large urban district in the Southeastern United States view their professional development by gathering data on their reflections on the essentials of professional development that support principals in carrying out the expanding role of principals, promoting the professional growth and efficacy of principals, and ensuring the overall success of the schools they lead. The research questions include:

- What do high school principals identify as essential professional development to meet the growing demands of the principalship?
- What do high school principals identify as the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development?
- What do high school principals identify as preferred delivery models of professional development to improve the leadership of practicing principals?

The research questions, along with a comprehensive review of the literature, guided the research process.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, Adult Learning Theory, initiates the examination of the study to identify data on professional development substantiations that may improve the outcomes for practicing high school principals. The debate on how to effectively train principals to tackle increased responsibilities, accountability measures, and public pressures has reached little consensus (Militello, Fusarelli, Alsbury, & Warren, 2013; Militello, Gajda, & Bowers, 2009; Shandor, 2011; Sherman, Gill, & Sherman, 2007). It requires the identification of (a) principal professional development needs, (b) the characteristics of effective and efficient principal professional development, and (c) the preferred professional development models of principals as research establishes that a principal not appropriately skilled and trained for school management and leadership results in poor outcomes in schools (Bush, Kiggundu, & Moorosi, 2011; Mathibe, 2007; Moorosi & Bush, 2011).

This study relied on the feedback and reflections of high school principals to develop a framework on the professional development of the principal. The intangibles of the Adult Learning (Andragogy) Theory are critical when studying the learning and growth of adults while participating in professional development in order to identify the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development that may result in improved outcomes for high school principals (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2014). The Adult Learning Theory affirms the possibility that effective and efficient professional development may create change within the individual and offers the potential that professional development processes have the opportunity to change the educational

paradigm by improving the leadership skills of practicing principals (Hussin & Al Abri, 2015; Knowles et al., 2014; Shandor, 2011).

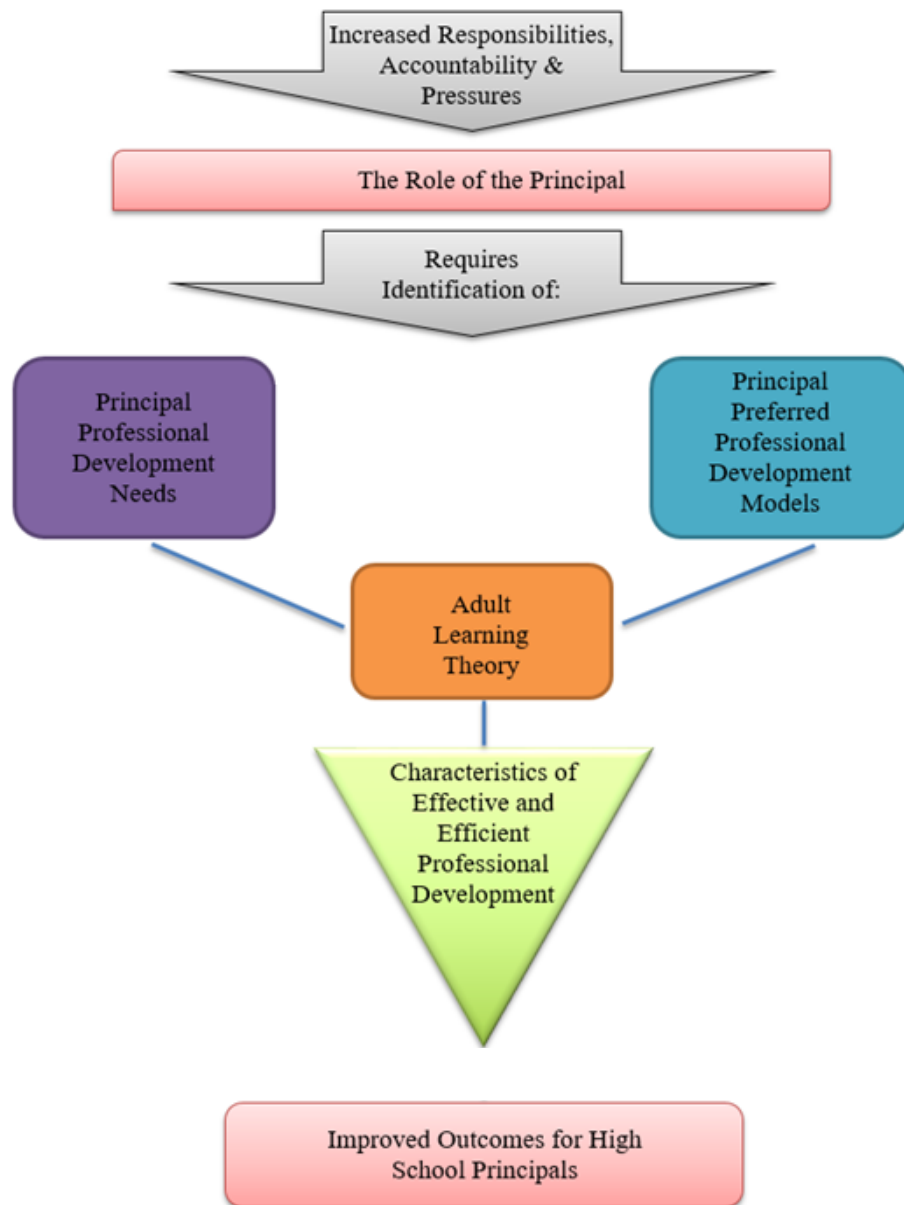


Figure 1. Blueprint for Improved Outcomes for High School Principals.

As depicted in Figure 1, the blueprint provides a structure and focus for this current study and serves as the primary lens for analyzing my data. It seeks to ascertain evidence to ensure principals receive intentional professional development linked to what they enumerate as their professional development needs, identify what they understand as the effective characteristics of the professional development, and utilize data on the preferred professional development models to ensure professional development programming supports practicing high school principals in carrying out their expanding role as principal, promotes the professional growth and efficacy of the principal, and ensures the overall success of the schools they lead.

Methodology

For this qualitative study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with high school principals in order to learn their views on their professional development needs, identify what they perceive as the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development programming, and ascertain their preferred professional development delivery methods needed to develop and challenge principals to meet the demands of the principalship in a time of increased accountability and legislative change. I chose high school principals to study because the transition to this level of administration is characterized as significantly challenging with few supports to meet the demands of the work (Grant, 2016). High school principals need to learn how to perform the tasks and execute the growing responsibilities required to successfully lead consistently changing internal and external mechanisms of a school community. They need professional development that supports the development of skills that enable them to meet the

demands of the principalship, promote the professional growth and efficacy of the principal, and ensure the overall success of the schools they lead. Therefore, they are uniquely qualified to provide context to the professional development needs and professional development programming experiences for high school principals.

I interviewed 16 high school administrative leaders in a large urban school district in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of the study and interview protocols were reviewed with participants prior to the interview and prior to obtaining participant signatures on the Consent Form for Participants (see Appendix F). Interviews followed a semi-structured format that allowed for follow-up questioning based on respondents' answers and further allowed respondents the flexibility to move into additional content areas as desired (see Appendix B). Interviews were transcribed and analyzed to provide evidences of the importance of the need for professional development for high school principals by identifying their professional development needs, characteristics of effective and efficient professional development programming, and their preferred methods for delivery for their professional development. Responses were initially coded based upon the Research and Interview Questions Crosswalk (see Appendix A). The resulting data were utilized to make recommendations to revise the professional development paradigm for high school principals while also applying the conceptual framework for this study depicted in Figure 1 and the Professional Development Elements for Principals and the Adult Learning Theory Crosswalk (see Appendix F).

Summary and Forecast

In this chapter, I introduced the purpose of this study, along with a brief overview of the need for professional development programming focused on principal leadership needs and school outcomes to facilitate proficiencies for practicing principals to meet the expanding role of the principal and the demands of increased scrutiny under changing federal, state, and local legislative accountability models. In the next chapter, I conduct a literature review of significant professional development themes concerning the principalship and the Adult Learning Theory. Chapter III provides a detailed account of the methodology, including how I planned to collect and analyze the content data. In Chapter IV, I report the results and findings demonstrating what participants specified as the professional development needs of high school principals, the essential characteristics that they desired from professional development programming, and their self-described preferred models of professional development. I provide my interpretations of the data in Chapter V to support recommendations to change the professional development paradigm for high school principals while applying the conceptual framework of the study. The appendices include the Research and Interview Crosswalk, Suggested Interview Questions, recruitment documents, consent forms, university IRB approval letter, District approval letter, Professional Development Elements for Principals and Adult Learning Theory Crosswalk, and a Chart of Participants.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Taking into consideration increased accountability measures for principals, coupled with the fact that the average school gets a new principal every three to four years, an investment in effective and efficient professional development for practicing principals is imperative (Louis et al., 2010). The high turnover rate of educational leaders nationwide continues to point to the complexity, responsibilities, and relentless pressures of the job (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015; West et al., 2010). The training offered does not address many issues around developing principals as instructional leaders. It is separated from building-level goals and is not occurring within a professional learning community (Bichsel, 2008; Melnyk, 2012). In addition, the quality of the experiences tied directly to improving instruction is less than desirable (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Grissom & Loeb, 2011). Simply, the professional development for the principal is lacking quality (Cray & Weiler, 2011; Fullan, 2014b; Pashiardis & Brauckman, 2008; Spillane & Lee, 2013; Usdan et al., 2000).

While there is some agreement on the desirability of professional development that is job-embedded, ongoing, and focused on specific goals (Bizzell, 2011; Hirsh, 2009; Nicholson et al., 2005; National Staff Development Council [NSDC], 2001), most studies of professional development have examined professional development of teachers rather

than of principals (Blank & de las Alas, 2009; Katz & Dack, 2012; Killion, 2002; Scher & O'Reilly, 2009; Wallace, 2009). Furthermore, there is a lack of information on what type of professional development is effective in supporting the development of desired leadership behaviors and/or positively influencing school outcomes (Bizzell, 2011; Leithwood & Levin, 2008; Nicholson et al., 2005; Salazar, 2007).

In this literature review, I provide a background on the significance of principal leadership to highlight their role in school and student success. Second, I review the need for effective and efficient professional development for practicing principals. Third, I provide a discussion of the legislative push toward job-embedded professional development in federal accountability models to support the increased accountability for principals and review two current professional development delivery methods—professional learning communities and collaborative principal rounds networks. Fourth, I conclude with the review of literature on improving educational leadership preparation and professional learning to enable high school principal to not only face but also meet their growing responsibilities. Finally, I expand the Conceptual Framework by detailing the Adult Learning Theory and how it may augment interactions with professional development programming to support principals understanding of how to use professional development to facilitate their individual leadership growth. Effective selection and engagement in professional development has the opportunity to enable principals to improve their professional practice, efficacy, outcomes, and longevity.

Significance of Principal Leadership

Contemporary models of school reform acknowledge the principal as the passport to school success. The modern principal is no longer the principal teacher, but rather the manager of an increasingly complex organization (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002; Rousmaniere, 2013; Zepeda, Parylo, & Bengtson, 2014). Pamela Mendels (2012), writer and editor for The Wallace Foundation, detailed the expanding role of principals as they are expected to shape a vision, create a climate hospitable to education, cultivate leadership in others, improve instruction, and manage people, data, and processes. Even as principals refine and potentially excel in the essential practices that shape their role as instructional leaders, it may not mean much if they do not produce numerical results as demanded via federal, state, and local accountability models.

In conjunction with principal accountability for student outcomes, the traditional managerial roles now encompass the roles of educational visionary, instructional and curriculum leader, assessment expert, disciplinarian, community leader, public relations and communication expert, budget analyst, facility manager, and special programs administrator, as well as overseer of legal, contractual, and policy mandates (Duncan et al., 2011). Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) emphatically state in “How Leadership Influences Student Learning” that there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds but leadership is the catalyst.

Gill's (2012) "Strength Training: Aspiring Principals Need Fortified Programs to Prepare Them for the Challenges They Face" reinforces this premise, describing that every district wants its schools to shine, and more are recognizing that to raise performance they need well-trained principals who can shake up the status quo and create an environment where all students flourish. Indeed, in a 6-year study analyzing data from 180 schools in nine states, researchers found that principal leadership is second only to teaching among school related factors as an influence on student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Several studies on educational reform concur and highlighted the role of school principals in improving student achievement (Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Duncan et al., 2011; Louis et al., 2010; Mendels, 2012; Tucker, Henig, & Salmonowicz, 2005).

For school reform efforts to be successful, strong leadership must prevail (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Quality schools are dependent upon well-trained principals who can develop effective teachers, implement organizational processes, and set a vision for learning (Harris, 2006; Hatfield, 2013; Leeds, 2008). Thus, the importance of rigorous and effective preparation through professional development for practicing principals continues to be emphasized (Hatfield, 2013; Oplatka, 2009). In fact, school leadership has been identified by many researchers as central in the effectiveness of school organizations (Deal & Peterson, 2000; Fullan, 2014a; Gronn & Ribbins, 2003; Ibrahim & Al-Taneiji, 2012; Kythreotis & Pashiardis, 2006; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

America's public schools both need and deserve high-quality educational leadership. At a time when the public is demanding accountability and as research has

increasingly indicated that the quality of the leadership demonstrated by the principal has a major impact on the overall effectiveness of schools, there has been a lack of focused attention on examining how principals continue to grow and develop once they assume these roles (Perez, Uline, Johnson, James-Ward, & Basom, 2011). Additionally, the successes of initiatives to improve teaching, student achievement, and school outcomes have been tied to the enthusiasm and competence of principals at school building levels, where such changes are expected to occur (Gorton, Alston, & Snowden, 2007; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2011; Prasse, 2008). The impetus for such initiatives have been targeted at increased leadership competence and accountability originated at the national level (Spanneut, Tobin, & Ayers, 2012). According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, “States need to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to ensure today’s leaders have the skills, knowledge, and support required to guide the transformation of schools and raise achievement for all students” (Shelton, 2009, p. 4).

School effectiveness as well as school improvement research has demonstrated the importance of the role of the leader in school life (Pashiardi & Brauckman, 2012). Moreover, in view of the complex and changing context of education, school leadership has received increased attention from educational policymakers. Various stakeholders have increased their expectations from school principals, demanding higher academic results and performance standards or face potential dismissal (Li, 2012; West et al., 2010, 2014). There is a general agreement on the need to have school leaders who exhibit the capacity to improve the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in their schools.

With the responsibilities that accompany the work of practicing principals, they must possess the ability to identify their individual competencies, motivations, and factors that promote their professional efficacy. Self-awareness and self-reflection on their professional development needs is critical. Moreover, since the quality of school outcomes depends on the quality of principal leadership and their leadership within a school community, principals need to have a firm grasp on not only their individual leadership development needs but also be equipped to identify their schools' professional development needs. Recognizing strengths and opportunities for improvement via appropriate professional development training on established needs will provide principals with the tools to improve their practice and will promote improved school outcomes. The following section highlights and acknowledges the importance of identification and targeting principal professional development needs to not just manage but excel in meeting the increasing size and scope of the responsibilities of the principalship.

Essential Professional Development for Practicing Principals

Identification of the essentials of professional development for practicing principals is at a critical juncture as school leaders are challenged by the need to create a school culture that helps prepare staff and students alike to meet expected outcomes under federal, state, and local guidelines. School leaders need to experience relevant, sustained, job-embedded, instructionally focused professional development to successfully lead their schools and students. As educational institutions, agencies, and organizations work to respond to the needs of school leaders, determining the needs of

those school leaders is an important first step toward school improvement (Bichsel, 2008; Melnyk, 2012).

As the principal plays a critical role in creating conditions for school improvement, professional development invariably makes a difference. The fact that expectations for today's principals extend beyond general management functions to instructional leadership has substantial implications for professional development (Bineham, 2014; Keith, 2008; Pontius, 2010). Perceptive principals identify with their own weaknesses, seek out professional development opportunities, and communicate an attitude of continuous improvement (Byrnes & Baxter, 2006; Zepeda et al., 2014). However, while autonomy is important, principals need the support of their districts to be effective. Hence, district leaders play an important role in determining the impact their principals have on their schools by supporting them through investment in high quality professional development on identified needs (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Mendels & Mitgang, 2013).

Research on professional development is a young field and is almost exclusively focused upon the needs of teachers in professional development initiatives. There is little empirical research on what constitutes effective practice in the professional development arena. There is even less evidence concerning effective professional development practice on principal needs (Bizell, 2011; Nicholson et al., 2005). Thus, an effort must be made to provide systematic professional development focused on the needs of principals.

To ensure that schools are managed and led by appropriately qualified principals, professional development programming must support principals in understanding the

notion of optimum utilization of the potential leadership within their staff (Bush et al., 2011; Mathibe, 2007; Moorosi & Bush, 2011). Likewise, since quality in education derives from effective school management and leadership, the quest for quality in education necessitates that principals receive support to ensure they are current with developments in the education and training fields. Professional development for principals is the oxygen that ensures that principals survive as educated and trained professionals (Mathibe, 2007; Owen, 2014).

Professional development programming must also provide principals with meaningful opportunities to engage in new ideas and learn new instructional strategies through collaboration and reflective inquiry with colleagues, as well as providing them with enough time, follow-up support, and feedback from successful practitioners to help them to be more effective (Bichsel, 2008; Lauer, Dean, Martin-Glenn, & Asensio, 2005; Suski, 2009). Now is the time for more school district leaders to investigate ways to create their own sustained and meaningful principal professional development plans within their districts to ensure educational growth and change for principals and the schools they lead (Bichsel, 2008; Melnyk, 2012; Nicholson et al., 2005).

The world in which we live today is very different from the one of just a few years ago. Thus, the former national administrative standards, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), have gone through a major update by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015). This update reinforces additional professional development needs for practicing principals as they are confronted with a global economy that is transforming jobs and the 21st century workplace for our students.

Furthermore, professional development focusing on how to address the changing conditions and characteristics of children, in terms of demographics, family structures, and more, pose immediate programming needs. On the education front, the politics and shifts of control make the headlines daily. For example, cuts in school funding loom everywhere, schools are being subjected to increasingly competitive market pressures, and are being held to higher levels of accountability for student achievement; each highlight professional development needs for practicing principals (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

The 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) have been recast with a stronger, clearer emphasis on student and student learning, outlining foundational principles of leadership to help ensure that each child is well educated and prepared for the 21st century. To accomplish PSEL's aggressive goal structure, principals need continuous professional development opportunities to support their efforts toward school improvement and to revitalize their commitment to creating and sustaining positive learning communities (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015)

Professional development opportunities should be tailored to the needs of the participants and geared to actual leadership roles (Bizzell, 2011; Salazar, 2007; Spanneut et al., 2012). The Southern Region Education Board (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010) recommends that districts provide training and coaching to build principals' capacity to assist schools with creating a personalized, relevant, and challenging learning environment. Furthermore, just as it is necessary for principals to have requisite

qualifications before they are appointed to headship positions, there is a great need for systematic professional development programs for practicing principals (Bush et al., 2011; Mathibe, 2007; Moorosi & Bush, 2011; Owen, 2014).

Practicing principals need training, technical support, adequate resources, and supportive policies to become instructional leaders who can focus more clearly on teaching, learning, and the needs and interests of students (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). No line can be drawn between administration and professional development. In fact, professional development is not something separate from administrative responsibilities or added onto them. Instead, professional development is the centerpiece of administering a district's commitment to continuous improvement in student learning (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Honig, 2012).

When districts leverage professional development and move away from 'sit and get' professional development activities, they will be able to offer targeted professional development on principals' needs. Opportunities for principals to receive job-embedded, constructive professional development feedback about their leadership practices and on organizational strategies and protocols, they will be better equipped to improve school wide instructional practices, students' progress, and administrative protocols. For when districts support principals in both their individual pursuit of and through well-designed, rich, job-embedded district professional development, principals can create the same types of rigorous and engaging opportunities for teachers and students—a foundation for student success in school and beyond (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

The following section of the literature review documents the federal governments roll in job-embedded professional development, provide a definition of and detail the characteristics and benefits of job-embedded professional development, and describe two examples of job-embedded professional development activities.

Job-embedded Professional Development

The term job-embedded professional development is featured prominently in recent federal education regulations. For example, the School Improvement Fund regulations (U.S. Department of Education, 2010b), the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) guidelines (U.S. Department of Education, 2009c), and the Race to the Top grant application (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a) encourage job-embedded professional development. In addition, guidance for using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to support Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B and Title I activities encourages the implementation of job-embedded professional development (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a, 2009b). The NSDC also emphasizes the importance of school-based learning and job-embedded coaching as necessary components of effective professional development (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, & Powers, 2010). ESSA calls for job embedded professional development opportunities that are seamlessly woven into principals' experience throughout the year so they can begin to apply their learning immediately in ways that are meaningful and relevant to their practice (Pierce, 2016).

Job-embedded professional development refers to educator learning that is grounded in day-to-day practices and is designed to support team learning that will

enhance the organizational and pedagogical practices with the intent of improving outcomes for practicing principals (Croft et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Hirsh, 2009; Hirsh & Killion, 2007). It is integrated into the workday consisting of assessing and finding solutions for authentic and immediate problems of practice (professional development needs) identified for the professional growth of principals by engaging in interactive, integrative, practical, and results-oriented work (Croft et al., 2010; Fogarty & Pete, 2009; Hirsh & Killion, 2007; Zepeda et al., 2014). Moreover, job-embedded professional development is a shared, ongoing process that makes a direct connection between learning and application in daily practice, thereby requiring active educator involvement in cooperative, inquiry-based work around identified professional development needs as well as identified school, district, and state professional and academic targets (Boud & Hager, 2012; Webster-Wright, 2009).

Job-embedded professional development is more effective than traditional professional development because it better addresses the needs of adult learners (Croft et al., 2010; School Improvement Network, 2013). Adults learn best when they are pursuing identified needs, building new knowledge upon preexisting knowledge, and are aware of the relevance and personal significance of what they are learning—grounding theoretical knowledge in actual events (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Knowles et al., 2014). In addition, job-embedded professional learning is more effective than traditional professional development because educators work on concepts or initiative more than once. Principals can expect deeper and sustained engagement because they have a chance to learn, try it in their own practice, and evaluate their performance while developing a

collaborative learning culture. The learning-try-evaluate cycle is what makes job-embedded professional development so powerful (AIR, 2011; School Improvement Network, 2013).

The Michigan and Minnesota Departments of Education also endorse the shift to job-embedded professional development because it exemplifies the importance of continuous learning and reinforces the collaborative culture between educators, for it is social, situated, and distributed among colleagues (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Putman & Borko, 2000; Webster-Wright, 2009). It helps practicing principals to systemically ensure that school improvement plans align with their professional development plans and practices in order to improve school and principal success. It further encourages principals to address issues of interest and professional needs and helps colleagues enhance principals' content knowledge as they try new instructional strategies and work to improve their leadership skill sets.

There are several different ways job-embedded professional development learning opportunities can be structured for principals. Recommended methods include professional learning communities and collaborative principal rounds networks through on-going study groups, regular visits to one another's schools within the district, and frequent in-school coaching on critical skill areas (DuFour, 2004; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Hoffmann & Johnston, 2005; Houston, 2001; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000; Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008; Zepeda, 2011; Zepeda et al., 2014). Adult learners appreciate the opportunity for personal reflection and interacting with peers to address and apply new professional practices to meet and target their professional development needs.

Professional learning communities and collaborative principal rounds networks are being increasingly recognized across the profession as an effective avenue for professional development and as valuable tools for practicing principals to develop and grow as individuals (Aceves, 2013; Bichsel, 2008; City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009; Knowles et al., 2014). Moreover, such processes not only model and help develop a culture of collaboration but also are a cost-effective way to address the professional development needs of practicing principals (Burk, 2012; Duncan et al., 2011; Duncan & Stock, 2010; Zavala, 2014).

The following sections offer a broad perspective on two examples of job-embedded professional development—professional learning communities and collaborative principal rounds networks. I provide general descriptions of each while also identifying suggested structures, strengths, and expected benefits of the models.

Professional Learning Communities

Ongoing professional development is required for significant change to occur. Adult learners appreciate the opportunity to interact with peers to experience more informed and collegial problem solving (Kilmer & Koenig, 2008; Tate, 2012). In addition, reflection is an essential element of the Adult Learning Theory. In the absence of reflection on professional practice, identification of professional development needs, and consideration of professional development experiences, principals either tend not to change behavior or they spend too much time simply recounting everything that had not worked in the past (Tate, 2012). Professional learning communities empower principals

not only as reflective school leaders but also as adult learners (Bizzell, 2011; Nicholson et al., 2005).

The idea of improving schools by developing collegial networks has been increasingly featured in scholarly literature in the form of professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs are a professional development model structured to provide sustained opportunities for collaborative learning strategies while empowering educators with the skills to perpetuate a continual process of identifying needs, developing response strategies, and evaluating results (Aceves, 2013; Garrett, 2010). Dufour and Dufour (2013) describe the strengths of PLCs in that they foster collaboration through a systematic process in which people work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice to improve individual and collective results.

PLCs are cited as being a powerful professional development approach and a potent strategy for school change and improvement (Dufour & Dufour, 2013; Jacobson, 2010; Zepeda, 2011). In this model, principals work together and engage in continual dialogue to examine their practice and to develop and implement more effective instructional practices. PLCs offer ongoing opportunities for collegial work and reflection on new practices in specific context and provide occasions to share individual knowledge and expertise (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Dufour & Dufour, 2013; Jacobson, 2010; Zepeda, 2011). PLCs help build a context conducive to change and improvement by reducing isolation, increasing capacity, providing a caring and productive environment, and improving the quality of the school's programs for students (Dufour & Dufour, 2013; DuFour & Eaker, 2010). The process of analysis, reflection,

and action is continual. This approach ensures that principals receive the additional support they need for success, since it becomes the communities' responsibility (Dufour & Dufour, 2013; DuFour & Eaker, 2010; Garrett, 2010; Hardin, 2010).

Improving professional practices can occur when principals create collegial relationships with their peers (Dufour & Dufour, 2013). Shared leadership is then developed as principals hold each other accountable to identify professional development needs and problems of practice, make their practice public to colleagues, and take an inquiry stance. Change will begin to occur as principals learn to describe, discuss, and adjust their practices according to a collectively held standard of organizational and instructional quality (Little, 2003; Matthews & Crow, 2010; Zepeda et al., 2014). The process of learning with colleagues in small, trusting, supportive groups makes the difference (Dufour & Dufour, 2013; Dunne, Nave, & Lewis, 2000; Zepeda, 2011).

Collaborative Principal Rounds Networks

School leaders need opportunities to participate in high-quality professional learning (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). Relevant professional development opportunities must occur within a principal's regular practice and focus on how to implement the consistent use of best practices and how to build job-embedded learning opportunities (Elmore, 2000; Sparks, 2002). Too often professional development activities are oriented toward principals going it alone professionally once they return to their collective buildings from district and/or local, state, or national conference professional development activities. Research indicates principals prefer collaborating with other principals to learn new ways of addressing issues in their schools

(Bichsel, 2008; Burk, 2012). Collaborative Principal Rounds Networks provide a job-embedded opportunity to build leadership skills through sharing problems and getting feedback (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). They provide practicing principals not only the confidence to take on their leadership roles but also the competence to be successful and motivated through satisfaction with their work (Bizzell, 2011; Howley, Chadwick, & Howley, 2002).

Principal Rounds Networks are a disciplined way for principals to work together to improve instructional leadership (City et al., 2009; Drago-Severson, 2012). Principal Rounds Networks are set in the context of a principal's actual daily practice, and the participant/ observer sees the fundamental ways in which administrators, teachers, and students work together (Petti, 2013). They are site-specific, site-generated, and create a system to support peer-to-peer learning opportunities geared to the specific circumstances of individual schools and the principals working in them (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Fink & Resnick, 2001).

Principal Rounds Networks are a structured process of visiting and describing professional practices and instruction, based on the term "medical rounds," in which a group of novice doctors are led from patient to patient by a senior physician who describes each patient's condition, vital statistics, and symptoms, while the novices collaborate on appropriate treatment. In schools, a round is a term that is generalized to include a variety of practices related to making observations of how a principal's leadership practices and organizational structures impact the instructional program (Petti, 2013). The practice combines common elements of improvement, including review of

organizational structure, organizational improvement strategies, professional development programming, classroom observation, and networks of principals (City et al., 2009).

Effective and efficient principal professional networks take place in the principal's home school, focus on solving real problems, and include networks of principals who serve as critical friends. Principals share with the peer network group their difficulties in meeting agreed-upon instructional goals, professional development needs and goals, and or specific problems of practice. Problem sharing is treated not as evidence of poor performance but as the creation of an opportunity for figuring out improvements in practice (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Drago-Severson, 2012; Fink & Resnick, 2001). The problem-centered strategy of the network support groups is aimed at creating a culture of mutual dependency, one in which other principals are viewed as supportive colleagues (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). This strategy of group discussion of problems in instructional practice contrasts markedly with the normal culture of schools and districts, in which principals are isolated in their buildings.

Inter-visitations are built around the premise that the visiting principals want to learn by observing and analyzing activity in another school. A school may be known for excellent practice in professional learning communities; it may have experienced high proficiency and growth statistics on state testing; or its principal may have been successful at overcoming teacher resistance to the work involved in effective vertical teaming with feeder middle schools. Whatever its particular "expertise," a school will

attract, as visitors, principals who want to learn or improve a particular leadership practice (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Fink & Resnick, 2001). With its focus on a collaborative culture that values reflection and adult learning, a coherent theory of action, and a system wide implementation strategy, Rounds can be an effective tool for achieving a vision of system wide administrative professional development (City et al., 2009; Drago-Severson, 2012). When principals are able to learn together and talk about the core of teaching and learning, they begin to understand deeply what good instruction looks like and how to work with teachers in order to help them deliver the best instruction possible to their students (Bichsel, 2008; Burk, 2012).

Principal Rounds Networks offer an opportunity for a paradigm shift for professional development to enhance administrative competence while emphasizing active leadership practice, assessment, observation, and reflection rather than abstract discussions through job-embedded professional development (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Hosting peers on-campus forces practicing principals to reflect and focus on what organizational and instructional programming needs to be reviewed while also receiving feedback on identified individual professional development needs and goals. Receiving real-time job-embedded feedback without leaving campus offers the opportunity to learn from mistakes and missteps which is fundamental to transforming practices for practicing principals (Margolis & Doring, 2012).

Each job-embedded opportunity allows an opportunity for principals to engage in a collaborative learning environment and continued learning for principals is a fundamental ingredient of successful school improvement. This need has driven the

policymakers, as well as educational organizations and researchers, to be proactive in creating different plans for leadership development across the country (Burke, Marx, & Lowenstein, 2012; Elmore, 2000, 2002). Preparing principals with the leadership skills necessary for those responsibilities will require commensurate changes in the content and delivery of professional development (Nicholson et al., 2005).

With this in mind, the following section provides material on the leadership skills principals need through professional development learning opportunities to improve their leadership and fostering professional learning in their buildings. Skill sets such as training on being a reflective practitioner, ethics and professional integrity, how to manage the change process, and supporting improvement on key components of a school's culture and climate—surround yourself with competent and dedicated people, treat people with respect, and consistent and clear communication—may also contribute to improving professional efficacy and improve school outcomes.

Improving Educational Leadership Preparation and Professional Learning

Schools need effective leaders like never before to take on the challenges and opportunities facing education. Practicing principals must be able to bridge the gap between learning about leadership and demonstrating leadership. Improving professional practice takes a holistic view of leadership (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Essentially, it takes a multitude of leadership skills to effectively coordinate all elements in a school community. For example, effective leaders must understand that it is a personal intrinsic motivation—the drive to do something because it is interesting, challenging, and absorbing—that will carry them through each challenging

critical situation (Pink, 2011). People who have the greatest chance of being successful are those who work hard and are excited about what they are doing, for there is no substitute for energy and enthusiasm (Barry, 2004). If one follows one's passion and purpose, success—whether material or abstract—will be an added bonus to doing what one loves. The elements of genuine motivation, by their very nature, defy short-term views; thus, principals cannot allow themselves to interpret temporary setbacks as failure and frustrate their job satisfaction or the school climate (Pink, 2011). Continued reflection and focus on the long-range goals will help principals and the learning communities they work with from growing frustrated. This not only supports the principals as instructional leaders but also helps staff grow professionally with each experience.

The cornerstone for improvement for principals may be centered on the foundations of personal and professional reflection on professional development needs as they subject every realm of the school to improvement, including themselves and their own work (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). In order to effect change, principals must cultivate this ability to be more aware of their thoughts and demonstrate a willingness to make their own cultivation a central aspect of their work. In *On Becoming a Leader*, Bennis (2009) stressed that leaders must learn from the past, make learning conscious, get to the heart of the matter, and determine the meaning of the past and the resolution of the past to move forward in practice. This will enable reflective conversations and build trust between their staff and administrative peers in order to improve their leadership development and their schools to take appropriate steps ahead

(Mitchell & Sackney, 2011; Senge et al., 2005). Principals must be able to take failures, reflect, and learn from them to build the foundation of effective leadership (Brubaker & Coble, 2004).

It is critical for principals to act ethically and with personal and professional integrity to make a difference (Collins, 2001; Gonzales & Firestone, 2013; Mintrop, 2012; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). By demonstrating integrity, a leader needs to be humble and confident—confidence shows you believe in what you are doing, and humility lets you recognize other ideas and opinions (Lorenz, 2007). It is essential to be humble and know what you do not know as principals move forward in creating expectations and setting directions for their professional practice (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

Another key skill set is that principals must be effective managers of the change process by constructing appropriate organizational policies and systems (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Principals must act swiftly and decisively as they construct and strengthen a system of organizational structures (Collins, 2001; Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). Most change initiatives that end up going nowhere do not fail because they lack grand visions and noble intentions; they fail because people cannot see the reality they face (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011; Senge et al., 2005). As leaders, principals must produce, thus putting themselves in a position where others look to them for guidance, advice, and an example of how to behave. It is acceptable to disagree as long as the team remains committed to one another and cohesive in making the best decisions for students (Collins, 2001; Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). Bennis (2009)

highlighted that leaders must be agile in tackling the task of being able to take charge without taking control. Thus, a leader's natural need for control must be tempered when needed. The challenge of a leader is to develop buy-in and ownership of the educational process. Principals must continue to learn with which issues to use persuasion, which issues to acquiesce, and which issues are non-negotiable (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011; Senge et al., 2005).

Principals are responsible for establishing the culture and climate of the building by creating positive working conditions (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Success or failure of the shared vision rides on their shoulders. District staff, administrative peers, and their staffs must see the principal as a leader who is a tenacious change agent who is willing to weather the potential risks, uncertainties, and political fallout to make their schools places where students thrive (Bennis, 2009; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). There is something about a principal who exhibits a passion for what they do that resonates with people who have a similar intent and a similar set of principles and values (Bennis, 2009; Mitchell & Sackney, 2011; Senge et al., 2005).

In *Lessons Learned from Experience*, Coble (2005) reinforced the concept that as educational leaders are able to surround themselves with competent, energetic, and dedicated people, they will improve both school culture and climate and the school's chances for success. However, caring for people is good but if it does not convert into some type of action then it is not worth much, as principals must be able to create conditions for a school community to do their best work (Fullan, 2014b; Pink, 2011).

Their success as a leader will be dependent in large measure on how well they take care of their teachers, staff, and community stakeholders (Engelhart, 2012; McNeal & Oxholm, 2008). They must create ways to help people connect more deeply with one another, and with their common concerns and sense of purpose (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011; Senge et al., 2005). In order to accomplish this, good interpersonal and communication skills are an absolute requirement and non-negotiable for practicing principals (Engelhart, 2012; McNeal & Oxholm, 2008).

To improve school culture and climate, principals must cultivate consistent, clear communication and collaboration between each stakeholder including students, parents, teachers, staff, and external community outlets, as a school community can only be as strong as their collective voices (Ouchi, 2009; Whitaker, 2014; Whitaker, Whitaker, & Lumpa, 2013). As trust is established, the collaborative leader is able to build a professional learning community by engaging in deep and meaningful work outside of the classroom that will have a powerful impact on what happens inside it (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015; Riggins-Newby, 2004; Terrell, 2010). Without this, the school community cannot grow and make the strides needed to establish equity, responsibility, and excellence.

In addition, climate and culture is impacted by how principals interact with their staff. Principals must treat staff with respect by developing and supporting teachers (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Every job has value, shares victories and defeats, and rewards those who produce, as the understanding of the impact and power of praise is essential (Whitaker, 2014; Whitaker et al., 2013).

Principals must be able to create an environment that allows for the staffs' innate psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—to flourish by entrusting and empowering teachers and staff with ownership of the schools' success (Pink, 2011; Whitaker et al., 2013). Moreover, principals must develop the professional capacity and practice of teachers and staff members through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by an understanding of professional and adult learning and development (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). However, it is important to honor resistance. Respect is a two-way street—give respect and you will earn it. Always treat people with dignity. Not only is this appropriate behavior, but if principals honor this practice, they will attract and retain talented people, who they will find are essential to the organization's success (Lorenz, 2007; Whitaker et al., 2013).

Successful professional development takes time and consistent opportunities to incorporate training into practice. Principals, like teachers, benefit from professional development that examines best practices, provides coaching support, encourages risk-taking designed to improve student learning, cultivates team relationships, and provides quality time for reflection and renewal (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002; Zepeda et al., 2014). Unfortunately, as communities shine a public spotlight on principals when their schools' test scores are released, few principals have serious and sustained opportunities to cultivate the skills associated with this new instructional leadership role in a period of high stakes accountability (Bizzell, 2011; Duncan et al., 2011; Sparks, 2006; Usdan et al., 2000). Accordingly, principal performance will continue to suffer if they are not provided sustained, ongoing training to deal with continued changes in law and policy,

accountability models, curriculum, instructional practice, technology, student learning needs, and more (Burk, 2012; Keith, 2008; Mizell, 2010).

Taking into consideration the significance of the role of principal leadership in school success, the significance of understanding the professional development needs for practicing principals, job-embedded professional development practices, and the educational leadership skills and professional learning for high school principals, will all be window dressing if we do not understand the conditions of how adults learn. The following section documents the definition of and significance of the Adult Learning Theory in its role in supporting improved outcomes for principals as they participate and apply professional development concepts.

Conceptual Framework: Adult Learning Theory

All learning starts with a problem—problems that require solutions. In this atmosphere of education reform, the search is for ways to improve principal performance for our nation's students as many school leaders do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to manage the standards-based school reform required in this era of high stakes accountability (Burke et al., 2012; Elmore, 2002). Reforming principal professional practices and realizing student achievement gains will require enlightened leadership and leadership training (Hussin & Al Abri, 2015; Knowles et al., 2014; Shandor, 2011; Tirozzi, 2000). Today the historical, sociocultural context of adult learning is recognized as a key component in understanding the nature of adult learning. The more we know about how adults learn, the better we will be able to structure professional development activities that resonate with those adult learners (Knowles et al., 2014; Merriam, 2001).

Adult Learning Theory is a dynamic area of research. It is a complex phenomenon that can never be reduced to a single, simple explanation. Recognition that adult learning is more than cognitive processing, that it is a multidimensional phenomenon, and that it takes place in various context has not only enhanced the understanding of how adults learn but expanded thinking as to which professional development strategies might be employed to foster adult learning. With the growing understanding that adult learning is a multidimensional and holistic phenomenon, school districts and principals must begin to recognize the value of incorporating more creative modes of professional development into practice (Knowles et al., 2014; Merriam, 2001). Without changes to current professional development based on the characteristics and principles of the adult learning theory, principal professional development will continue to fall short of achieving the potential that principals possess both as individuals and as collaborative partners in the districts they serve (Deffenbaugh, 2016).

Interaction with the rich resources found in adult learning and through utilization of the Adult Learning Theory and how it supports identification of principal professional development needs, the identification of desired characteristics of professional development, and what are the preferred methods of professional development for principals can help school districts develop an enhanced understanding of adults as learners and help inform the creation of professional development for principals (McCray, 2016). School districts can utilize the characteristics of adult learning (see Figure 2) to create professional development activities that are aligned with principals' professional development needs, desired characteristics, and preferred delivery models

that encourage reflection and dialogue, whether with the self, another, or a group and activities that connects new learning or experiences with prior knowledge. New learning and experiences with prior knowledge are linked to personal growth and improved school outcomes. This enables learning to take place. They must recognize that learning to reflect and collaborate—especially in a critical manner—is itself a developmental process that needs to be fostered in adult learning settings. Critical reflection is essential for transformative learning, for developing brain capacity, and for confronting power and politics in the workplace (Knowles et al., 2014; Merriam, 2001).

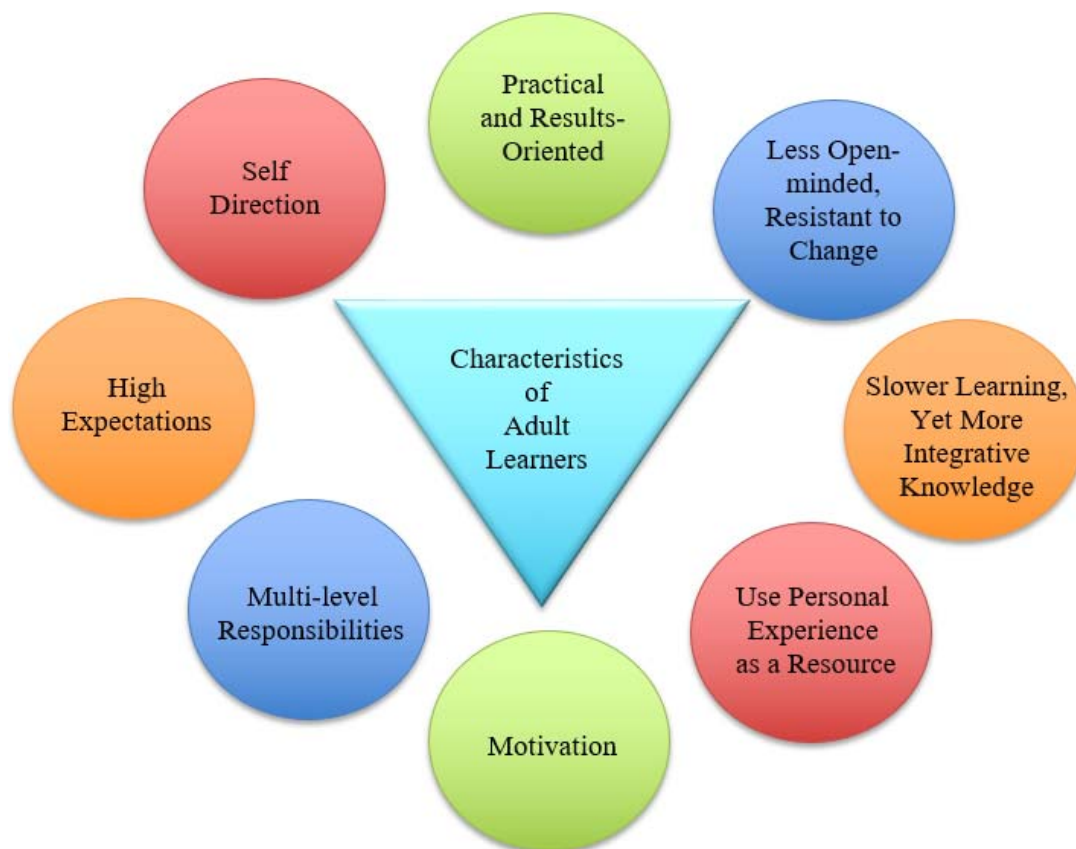


Figure 2. Characteristics of Adult Learners (Pappas, 2013).

School districts want to meet principals where they are and the adult learning theory reminds them how adults learn best—by engaging with material in job-embedded environments, connecting material to their self-directed interests and school objectives, and linking it with their personal experience (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Honig, 2012; Mizell, 2010). Principals need time to take content in, play around with it, compare it to what they already know, and develop their own conclusions. Adults are pragmatic. Principals want professional development experiences they can instantly apply directly to their work (McCray, 2016). To do this, school districts must shift professional development programming from simply content-centered to learning-centered and embrace and use the personal process to illustrate the power of object-centered learning in professional development design. This does not mean abandoning content, only that professional development programming weave content into a structure that supports learning for their principals. When school districts model solid adult learning practices in professional development, principals, in turn, develop greater awareness of their own practices and their interactions with their school communities (Deffenbaugh, 2016; Malik, 2016; McCray, 2016).

Educators know adult learning best via the work of Malcolm Knowles. Knowles, a leader in the field of education, helped spread the theory of andragogy—that is, how adults learn—and is considered the founding father of adult learning (Cercone, 2008; Fidishun, 2000; Knowles et al., 2014; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012). Knowles's original studies and writings arose from the assumption that there are significant, identifiable differences between adult learners and learners under the age of

18. Primarily, the differences, according to Knowles, relate to an adult learner being more self-directing, having a repertoire of experience, and being internally motivated to learn subject matter that can be applied immediately (Knowles et al., 2014; Merriam et al., 2012).

Malcolm Knowles's Adult Learning Theory may support practicing principals' understanding of the set of assumptions regarding adults as learners. Knowles identified six andragogic assumptions of the adult learner (Cercione, 2008; Fidishun, 2000; Knowles et al., 2014; Merriam et al., 2012):

1. *Adults are internally motivated and self-directed*—Adult learners are autonomous. Adult learners resist learning when they feel others are imposing information, ideas or actions on them.
2. *Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences*—Adults have a lifetime of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning. Adults like to be given opportunity to use their existing foundation of knowledge and experience gained from life experience, and apply it to their new learning experiences.
3. *Adults are goal oriented*—Adults use a hands-on problem-solving approach to learning. Adult students become ready to learn when "they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems."
4. *Adults are relevancy oriented*—Adult learners want to know the relevance (the why) of what they are learning to what they want to achieve and how it will affect them (impact).
5. *Adults are practical*—Adults want to apply new knowledge and skills immediately. Through practical fieldwork experiences, interacting with real clients and their real-life situations, students move from classroom and textbook mode to hands-on problem solving where they can recognize firsthand how what they are learning applies to life and the work context.
6. *Adult learners like to be respected*—Adults need to be shown respect. Respect can be demonstrated to your student by taking interest, acknowledging the wealth of experiences that the student brings to the placement; regarding them

as a colleague who is equal in life experience, encouraging expression of ideas, reasoning and feedback at every opportunity.

To impact student learning, principals must begin first with their own learning, for significant organizational change begins with significant change in what leaders think, say, and do (Knowles et al., 2014; Sparks, 2006; Zepeda, 2011). Effective professional development for principals should be grounded in the theories of Adult Learning Theory and should focus on understanding of self, of context, and the dynamics of the interactions between the two (Peters, 2011). In so doing, leaders increase their intellectual, emotional, and intro-personal capacities. For buy-in and engagement, professional development needs to address leaders' specific needs (Inman, 2009; Nica, 2013).

To be effective, learning processes must also resonate with the professional development models in which principals prefer to learn. Not only should professional development activities for principals encompass the needs of adult learners, they should include tenets such as ownership of learning activities, appropriateness of learning activities, structure of learning activities, collaboration during activities, and reflection after the conclusion of activities (Zepeda, 2012; Zepeda et al., 2014).

Several professional development premises have been proposed that seem to summarize what it is that school principals need and identify as preferred characteristics of professional development (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002; Nicholson et al., 2005; Zepeda et al., 2014). These include the ideas that principals' learning is personal, yet takes place most effectively when offered in collaborative groups, and that principals foster more

powerful teacher and student learning by modeling their own learning. That reflection is central to learning and that rigorous planning is an absolute necessity for effective professional development. Principals need to connect with other principals to create shared understanding and engage in intellectual dialogue and debate about their work (Bizzell, 2011; Knowles et al., 2014; Nicholson et al., 2005).

Adults are internally motivated and self-directed dovetails into what it takes to create buy-in for effective pedagogical growth for practicing principals. For example, the assumption is that principals are motivated to lifelong learning that is self-directed and helps them improve upon their skills for self-discovery focused on identified professional development needs (Knowles et al., 2014). If the skills for self-identification of needs are augmented, the assumption is that the expected outcome will not only be to strengthen principals' skills in reflection and professional efficacy but also to promote additional inquiry and further research to ensure principals' pedagogical growth.

Adults are relevancy- and goals-oriented. Practicing principals will improve their pedagogical practice when they understand the reasons for why pedagogical learning is needed. If practicing principals' growth activities are connected to the school improvement goals, the assumption is that they will take greater levels of leadership preparation and focus on long-term goals leading to a more responsive, more flexible, and ultimately more effective organization (Ang, 2002; Karlsson & Skålen, 2015; Knowles et al., 2014).

Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences. Principals acknowledging and respecting the experience of each other to aid in learning directly

impacts their success. Being given the opportunity to utilize existing knowledge and experiences while applying it to school improvement goals will assist principals when engaging in professional discussions. Collaborative problem solving, when developing a common understanding of what constitutes effective administrative practice, may also appeal to principals differing needs (City et al., 2009; Duignan, 2012; Knowles et al., 2014; Koons, 2004).

Principals must be able to support and feel empowered to make the connections and systematically change the instructional and organizational paradigm in their professional practice, in their districts, and in their schools. Likewise, districts must operate from the foundation that effective professional development programming rooted in the themes of the Adult Learning Theory will create buy-in and ownership needed for sustained pedagogical growth for their principals by addressing identified learning needs and as principals participate in preferred professional development modes.

Summary and Forecast

Throughout my career, I have searched for professional development opportunities that would impact my professional performance and leadership skills, as effective and efficient professional development for principals is critical in a period of educational reform that exhibits increased accountability and potential removal or demotion for principals. If principals are to be held accountable for creating successful learning communities, schools in which both teaching and learning thrive, they will require opportunities to learn about how to create those environments and how to sustain them (Bizzell, 2011; Nicholson et al., 2005; Zepeda et al., 2014). I am convinced that

professional development must focus on principal leadership, school goals, and take place in the school. How principals support district professional development impacts action steps taken to move the organizational structures and pedagogical practices of principals, the school that they lead, and the districts they serve forward.

The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 2 is based on the review of the literature and my belief that effective and efficient professional development will create principals who are highly reflective and successful as they seek continuous improvement to prepare themselves to meet the growing pressures of the principalship. It is apparent in the literature that principals can and will meet the challenges of increased responsibilities and federal, state, and local accountability measures to achieve academic success for all students by participating in professional development programming that is aligned with their professional development needs, aligned with school goals, developed using desired characteristics of professional development, and offered in preferred professional development models.

Research indicates that the utilization of andragogic assumptions improved the quality of professional development programming, improved participant satisfaction, and further suggested that the quality of professional performance may be improved when utilizing the characteristics of adult learning when designing and implementing professional development programs that are based on the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development (Duignan, 2012; Knowles et al., 2014; Koons, 2004). Additionally, when the elements of the Adult Learning Theory are recognized and

embedded in professional development, the research suggests that it may enhance the probability of success for principals.

The literature also indicates that professional development programming for principals will be for naught if it does not target and connect to the professional development needs and leadership skills sets required to enable them to systematically change the organizational and instructional paradigm of their work at their schools (City et al., 2009; Duignan, 2012; Koons, 2004). Listening to the reflections of high school principals will go a long way in understanding what appropriate designs are needed for their professional development programming, will help improve principal leadership skills on identified professional development needs, and enable principals to connect more deeply with one another through a new renewed sense of purpose when discussing common concerns. Ultimately, gathering evidence of how professional development can be designed to achieve desired outcomes in terms of principals' leadership behaviors and student achievement is necessary and important (Bizzell, 2011).

The identification of the professional development needs, characteristics of effective and efficient professional development, and preferred delivery models by high school principals in my conceptual framework provides a structure and focus for my study. After developing this framework, I developed interview questions that were utilized to conduct semi-structured interviews and create codes to analyze my data (see Appendix B). The results and findings will be used to make recommendations to support improved professional development activities that target principals' professional development needs and are collaborative in nature, used to improve outcomes for schools

and their principals, used to improve principal efficacy, and used to stem high principal turnover rates. An explanation of my methodology will be provided in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The literature review indicates that effective and efficient professional development for practicing principals is critical in a period of educational reform that exhibits increased accountability for principals and pressures on their leadership. As a practicing principal for the last 12 years, I believe it needs to be a national priority. However, what I am missing in my review of the literature are the voices of my colleagues. To explore principals' perspectives on the topic of their professional development, I recognized that it would be necessary to go directly to practicing peers. In order to hear and share their reflections, I chose to conduct a qualitative study and interacted with high school principals through face-to-face interviews. In using semi-structured interviews, I was able to capture the attitudinal and contextual feedback and reflections of high school principals in a large urban school district in the Southeastern United States.

The purpose of the research study was to examine the professional development experiences of practicing high school principals focusing on what they identify as essentials for principal professional development, the characteristics that principals desired when participating in professional development, and identify what principals viewed as preferred professional development models. The data gathered documented

their reflections on the essentials of professional development that support principals in carrying out their expanding role as principal, promote the professional growth and efficacy of the principal, and ensure the overall success of the schools they lead. Recommendations on methods for shared, common, and collaborative professional development practices will be made to change the paradigm of principal professional development after an analysis of research findings.

Chapter III details the methodology of the study and the justification for the use of a qualitative study. It also describes the functions of qualitative studies including strengths and challenges, key concepts, a description of the method used to conduct the research, and trustworthiness strategies. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study including a review of the content from each of the first three chapters.

Methodology

The methodology section includes the foundational assumptions and characteristics of qualitative research and a qualitative interview study. It will also discuss the strengths of and challenges that may be faced when using the qualitative interview method, as interviews are one of the most commonly used methods to gather data for the qualitative researcher (Crowley, 2010; Roulston, 2010). Creswell (2012) defined qualitative research as the process of understanding a social or human phenomenon. Based on methodological research traditions, qualitative researchers aim to generate a complex holistic view by analyzing and describing the standpoint of the subjects within a natural context. In this case, conducting an analysis of high school

principals' responses led to a textual understanding on the professional development programming needed to meet the demands of their position (Crowley, 2010).

In the qualitative mode, I aspired to grow and expand my knowledge and interest in describing and explaining particular social phenomena—principal responses and reflections on their professional development needs and inquiries into their professional development experiences identifying preferred characteristics and professional delivery models. I sought to discover patterns of meaning in the examination of words and actions associated with the social phenomenon of professional development (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Sowell, 2001). Additionally, a benefit of qualitative study is that it uses a largely inductive approach that allows for meaningful conversations between the researcher and their participants. I begin with the idea that professional development must satisfy the professional development needs of high school principals to provide them with the skills to meet the growing job responsibilities in the profession. Qualitative studies also allow for continued examination of the literature and consistent review of the design of the study. The semi-structured interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints on the current status of professional development needs, characteristics they identify of effective and efficient professional development, and preferred methods of professional development for high school principals (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Sowell, 2001; Turner, 2010).

Lichtman's (2012) ten critical elements of qualitative research informed the decision to utilize a qualitative interview research study as:

- It involves description, understanding, and interpretation;
- It is dynamic;
- Different methods may be employed in conducting qualitative research;
- It involves an inductive approach;
- It is holistic, viewing the situation in its entirety;
- Data are typically gathered in natural settings;
- The researcher is instrumental in constructing an interpretation of reality;
- Limited phenomena are studied in depth;
- Reporting is characterized by thick description, often using the words of participants; and
- Qualitative research frequently proceeds in a nonlinear fashion.

Semi-structured interviews have the potential to provide thick, rich descriptions of incidents that advance the understanding of human behavior (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Sowell, 2001). They also allow for follow-up questions and are generally easier for the respondent to answer as I seek opinions and impressions rather than direct content requests for policy or procedure. Furthermore, it was important to carefully select an appropriate setting for the research, identify what content to gather, and find an appropriate method to analyze the content collected (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Sowell, 2001; Turner, 2010; Willig, 2013).

A strength of using a qualitative study is the ability to focus on interrelations between the reflections of high school principals that may support their success, efficacy, and longevity in the profession coinciding with improved academic outcomes for their

schools (Creswell, 2012; Griffin, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Sowell, 2001). It is a suitable approach for building proposals and testing professional development methods for practicing high school principals. Although the content collected using semi-structured interviews can reflect inconsistencies and contradictions within and between individual accounts, it is an important focus during analysis and an advantage of discourse analysis (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Sowell, 2001).

The use of a qualitative study challenged my assumptions about specific phenomena—principal reflections on their professional development needs and inquiries into their reflections of their professional development experiences—as well as reflecting potential inconsistency, variation, and contradictions I had as a researcher and a practicing principal (Creswell, 2012; Griffin, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Sowell, 2001). Additionally, semi-structured interviews allowed for a degree of flexibility in the conduct of the study and enabled me to make connections between different aspects and viewpoints of principals. It is a method that can allow for in-depth analysis since it can deal with potentially contradictory data and provides insights into respondents' perspectives (Creswell, 2012; Griffin, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Sowell, 2001).

There are also several challenges when using the qualitative study. I acknowledged that data collection via interviews and especially the analysis of the interview content would be time-consuming and may prove difficult when coding the data. Since the open-ended format of questions allowed participants to contribute as

much detail as they wished, it can be cumbersome to extract similar themes or codes from the interview transcripts as may be possible with less open-ended questions. However, this may reduce my biases within the study if I am able to acquire the participation requested (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Griffin, 2004; Turner, 2010). Another disadvantage is that assumptions made may not apply outside the scope of the sample. The information from the sample group and the knowledge produced might not generalize to other principals or in other districts. Moreover, in utilizing a qualitative study, I must acknowledge that the results potentially are more easily influenced by my personal biases, preferences, and idiosyncrasies (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Sowell, 2001).

Key Concepts

Professional Development

- Professional development is the strategy schools and school districts use to ensure that educators continue to strengthen their practice throughout their career (Mizell, 2010).
- The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (now known as Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association) offered the following definition of professional development: “The term professional development means a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement” (Hirsh, 2009, p. 12).

- Haslam and Fabiano (2001) define professional development as any professional learning activity that has the potential to enable principals to perform their work more effectively, including traditional services (e.g., workshops, institutes, university coursework) and informal learning opportunities (e.g., principal networks, study groups, mentoring, collaborative projects with colleagues, independent study).

Andragogy

- The methods or techniques used to teach adults (Retrieved from Dictionary.com, 2016).
- The term andragogy can be supposedly equivalent to the term pedagogy. Andragogy in Greek means the man leading in comparison to pedagogy, which in Greek means child-leading. However, it should be noticed that the term pedagogy is used since the Ancient Greek times while Alexander Kapp, a German educator, originally used the term andragogy in 1833 (Pappas, 2013).
- Two primary understandings of “andragogy” currently exist (Retrieved from en.wikipedia.org, 2016):
 1. The science of understanding (= theory) and supporting (= practice) lifelong and life-wide education of adults.
 2. In the tradition of Malcolm Knowles, a specific theoretical and practical approach, based on a humanistic conception of self-directed and autonomous learners and teachers as facilitators of learning.

- Interpreted broadly throughout the academic literature, the term also invites such definitions as “adult education practice,” “desirable values,” “specific teaching methods,” “reflections,” and “academic discipline,” with many authors claiming it to be better than traditional adult education (Retrieved from en.wikipedia.org, 2016).

Methods

The study was designed as an assessment of principal professional development needs, identification of characteristics of effective and efficient professional development, and documentation of the preferred delivery methods of professional development of high school principals. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 16 practicing high school principals in one large urban school district in the Southeastern United States. Participants offered individual feedback on their professional development programming experiences. Participants did not receive compensation for their time. They had access to their interview transcripts. Recruitment drew from a range of gender, racial, and ethnic diversity, and no one was excluded on the basis of race, gender, or ethnicity.

The geographically identified region used for this study serves more than 72,000 students in a geographic area that includes two large urban cities. The district is the second most diverse district in the state with a student ethnic composition of 0.39% American Indian, 6.42% Asian, 40.65% African American, 15.70% Hispanic, 4.30 Multi-Racial, 0.15% Pacific Islander, and 32.49% White students, representing over 112 languages/dialects. Considering the diversity of the district, diversity of participants, and culturally responsive pedagogy, race and ethnicity was not a factor in participant

narratives. The silence in their narratives augments the potential impact of the researcher being white may have influenced responses. Cultural responsiveness in principal professional practices and development will not be discussed in this study but does lend itself to an area of future research.

I am a high school principal in the district studied. Thus, the most difficult part of conducting the interviews was to not be a participant and engage with peers whom I have shared experiences. This was an important aspect of conducting the interviews. My job as interviewer was to simply ask the questions and neither show agreement nor disagreement with responses, and especially not to add my opinions. The intent was to ensure that my professional experiences were neither included or interjected, nor would my biases influence the data collected. Throughout the process, I felt that there was a respect and trust between the participants and myself as we shared a comrade and connection as high school principals. I believe this helped remove potential awkwardness for the interviews and helped participants speak freely, and at times, bluntly.

Once site approval from the school district was received, I made personal face-to-face contact and personal telephone calls to eligible high school principals introducing and describing the purposes of the study and seeking their agreement to participate. All participants were provided a consent form including a statement regarding their right to remove themselves from the study at any time. In addition, during the recruitment of contacts, I explained the terms of confidentiality, explained the interview format, indicated the approximate length of the interview, provided follow-up contact information to each respondent, allowed respondents to ask clarifying questions and

reviewed the technology that was utilized to record data from the interview (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012). I reviewed study protocols and explained that pseudonyms would be used in place of participant names, the names of their schools, and the name of the district(s) in which they had worked to create an environment where participants felt comfortable openly discussing their responses. I also assured them it was not my intent to create a report on the lack of appropriate professional development offered in their individual districts, but to gain a better understanding of the professional needs and experiences of high school principals.

During the spring of 2017 (April-June), qualitative interviews were conducted on an individual basis at a location of the participants' selection using a semi-structured face-to-face interview format. Although I offered to meet at an off-site location, every participant requested that the interview take place on his or her school campus. I also asked participants to provide their own pseudonym, if desired. The interviews were conducted in approximately 60-90 minutes, which provided me with a little over 19 hours of interview data. Six follow-up interview conversations were held lasting approximately 10-15 minutes by phone, which allowed for a detailed discussion within a selected time frame sanctioned by the respondent.

The interview questions allowed for probing follow-up questioning obtaining feedback on professional development needs, identifying what characteristics/elements made the professional development models they've participated in effective, and identifying professional development model preferences. Moreover, the interviews provided practicing high school principals an opportunity to provide information

regarding professional development experiences that impacted their effectiveness, efficiency, and efficacy as principals. During the interview, it was important to ask one question at a time, remain as neutral as possible by not showing strong emotional reaction or feedback to responses, encourage responses with participants by positively acknowledging responses, provide clear transitions between questions, and monitor the time restrictions in managing the pace of the interview (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012; Turner, 2010). The study procedure allowed participants to fully express their viewpoints and experiences as they desired and it enabled follow-up questions to be asked (Turner, 2010). When interpreting the data content, it was important to use standard coding, categorization, and theme identification by looking for consistent phrases or ideas that are common among respondents utilizing the Research and Interview Question Crosswalk (see Appendix A). Agreement in coding/themes assisted in measuring the reliability of and establishing the trustworthiness of the data.

I transcribed all interviews, which produced approximately 120 pages of transcripts. Transcriptions took place after all interviews had been conducted. Participants were then emailed a copy of their transcribed interview to review. I asked participants to review and contact me if there were changes that needed to be made including additions or omissions. This allowed participants full access to what they said during the interview in the event that they were not fully comfortable with the transcript. Each participant responded receipt and none requested changes to the transcriptions.

Once transcriptions were approved, I electronically merged all individual transcriptions into a single document correlated to individual questions utilized. To begin

the coding process, I created an outline of threads from the interview questions. Thirteen threads were initially generated. A two-column table was used to code responses. The first column and subsequent rows for each thread recorded individual responses from participants. Once a response was recorded in the chart, I highlighted the quote in the merged document noting the thread utilized and category identified. The second column content captured my reflections and thoughts to content, recorded potential additional categories, and noted the frequency additional participants shared similar feedback. I went back through the table multiple times for additional categorization and thematic analysis of essential professional development for practicing high school principals to create an aligned crosswalk including the research questions, threads, and categories (see Appendix I). Once coding was complete, eight threads developed with subsequent categories and were utilized to identify three broad themes based on what emerged during the course of the data analysis.

As the primary and only researcher in this study, I was the only one who has access to the research files. All files for this study are being kept confidential and are kept in a secure locked file cabinet off campus in my home office. Electronic files were secured and shared with the research team utilizing the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Box software. Electronic data files were also contained in Box. The privacy and confidentiality of respondents was protected by not discussing participants names directly with anyone and the locations of interviews were in a private setting to ensure privacy. Audio files were transcribed and deleted at the conclusion of the study. All collected data will be housed for a period of three years following the closure of the

study, and all paper copies will be shredded involving possible identifiable content of respondents.

The assumption is that high school principals share similar experiences throughout their careers concerning professional development and that they identify common professional development needs, characteristics, and experiences while seeking to find commonality in preferred delivery models. The benefits of the study are to be able to articulate what principals identify as their professional development needs, ascertain the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development, and determine preferred professional development delivery options for effective professional development programing that will lead to recommendations for improved professional development practice and programming.

Trustworthiness Strategies

All researchers must take steps to demonstrate that findings that emerge from the data are not their own predispositions. However, qualitative researchers can incorporate measures to respond directly to the issues of validity and reliability in their own qualitative studies (Lichtman, 2012; Shenton, 2004). By member checking (also known as member/participant validation), which has been viewed as an important aspect of establishing accuracy, credibility, and validity in qualitative research (Koelsch, 2013), the interview data collected was returned to the participants. As stated, participants were given the opportunity to review the transcripts and provide feedback as to the way I interpreted their responses. In doing this, I feel assured that what I captured is trustworthy, dependable, transferable, and confirmable (Crowley, 2010; Shenton, 2004).

Summary

Chapter III documented the methodology of the qualitative study utilized. It highlighted the benefits and limitations of utilizing a qualitative study. The study was designed to assess principal professional development needs, identify what principals desired as the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development, and what high school principals identified as preferred delivery methods of professional development. The study utilized semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 16 high school principals in a large urban school district in the Southeastern United States. The district's Research Review Committee provided approval and access to its principals. Participants were chosen from a range of gender, racial, and ethnic diversity, and no one was excluded based on race, gender, or ethnicity. Participants were provided a description of the study, interview protocols, and subsequently signed consent forms to participate. Interviews were conducted at a location of the participant's choice and audio recorded and transcribed. The chapter concluded with a review of the trustworthiness strategies utilized in support of the validity and reliability of the quantitative study. Chapter IV presents the results and findings of the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Throughout the course of this study, I sought to better understand the current state of professional development for practicing high school principals by identifying essential professional development to meet the growing demands on the principalship as well as detailing their experiences with professional development. If we are to build leadership capacity, improve school outcomes, and improve the professional efficacy of high school principals, they must receive professional development that helps them to be more effective, knowledgeable, and qualified to execute a perpetually expanding job.

Purpose of the Study

The overarching purpose of this study was to examine how high school principals in a large urban district in the Southeastern United States view their professional development by gathering data on the essentials of professional development that support principals in carrying out their expanding roles, promoting the professional growth and efficacy of principals, and fostering the overall success of the schools they lead. Principal perceptions of professional development directly affect the extent to which they engage in and garner knowledge and skills from professional development activities. In addition, understanding how principals perceive professional development might provide insight into what improvements may be necessary to increase the effectiveness of professional development programming.

A semi-structured interview study was utilized to explore high school principals' perceptions regarding areas of need for their professional development and their experiences with professional development. More specifically, the following research questions guided the investigation:

- What do high school principals identify as essential professional development to meet the growing demands of the principalship?
- What do high school principals identify as the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development?
- What do high school principals identify as preferred delivery models of professional development to improve the leadership of practicing principals?

Sixteen participants were successfully recruited to participate in this study through face-to-face interviews. All formal names, including the name of the local educational agency/district, the high schools in which they work, and participants have been replaced with pseudonyms (see Appendix F). Participants' years of experience in the high school principalship ranged from one to 14. Fifty-six percent of participants had experience leading only one high school. Eighty-one percent of participants had only served as a high school principal in one district. Sixty-three percent of participants had served over ten years overall in administration. Eighty-eight percent of participants have over 20 years of total experience in education.

This chapter presents the interview data pertaining to the essential professional development and experiences of high school principals. This chapter is divided into three sections, each including individual quotes from participants that illustrate categories

developed about their essential professional development. The first section reviews categories about the essential professional development identified by practicing high school principals to execute their growing professional responsibilities. Categories include areas of essential professional development to improve principal professional outcomes, suggested professional development to improve the efficacy of principal, and detail the size and scope of the essential professional development of principals. The second section reports on what high school principals identified as desired characteristics of effective professional development including principal perceptions of essential characteristics of high quality professional development, factors that negate effective and efficient professional development, and five examples of positive experiences principals had in the local educational agency/district in which they currently work. The third section details the preferred professional development delivery models of participants. See Appendix I for the aligned research questions, threads, and categories identified in Chapter IV.

Essential Professional Development of Practicing Principals

At the start of each interview, I explained the overall purpose of the study, the overall format for the interview, and ascertained their educational experience. Next, I asked them to identify areas that practicing high school principals need or could benefit from professional development in order to improve outcomes for their schools, to improve their efficacy in the position, and to identify additional items that a good principal needs to know and be able to do to fulfill the expanding size and scope of the principalship. This addressed the first research question, “What do high school principals

identify as essential professional development to meet the growing demands of the principalship?” With regard to the first research question, principals discussed professional development suggestions to improve the professional outcomes of practicing high school principals.

Improving Professional Outcomes

High school principals recognized professional development in multiple areas would not only build professional capacity but would also present opportunities to improve the outcomes within their schools by improving their management competencies. All 16 high school principals identified the following areas as important professional development needs:

- Culture of the school
- Curriculum
- Budget
- Instructional Coaching
- Data Analysis

Culture. Principals highlighted learning and interacting with the overall culture of the school as a defining need for successfully navigating their tenures. Principals emphasized the significance of assessing school culture prior to interviewing for the job, questioning, reflecting, and analyzing the school culture during the interview phase, and ongoing reflection and action throughout their principalship to understand what best school culture leads to best student achievement. Mr. Robert Kerr, principal of Tillery High School, stressed,

One high school I lead was a cultural nightmare. I was not prepared at all for that. Professional development is needed on the realistic day to day that you don't talk about when in graduate school. You talk a lot about instruction but boots on the ground, what you really face when you get to a school, we really do not receive.

Ms. Panajia Ward, principal of Sands High School, emphasized the need for professional development to develop organizations “or advisory councils where you are able to get feedback from a diverse population of student, teachers, and parents so that you understand what their role is in the building in building a successful school culture.” Ms. Tammy McKinney, principal of Ludwizak High School, detailed that

micro-political leadership of the school culture has been a major weakness of mine and no one, nor one thing has offered professional development supporting me in influencing and impacting the formal and informal power of the stakeholders I lead to ensure we achieve our goals—so I think there are a lot of little things that make a great impact on culture and performance of the school that have never been discussed with me.

Dr. Karen Eggelston, principal of Kearns High School, shared,

One of the hardest lessons I've learned was not paying attention to the power of culture. When I arrived, I had no idea how to evaluate or understand the culture so it took me a long time to recover from that because culture is so engrained in people and I was an outsider. If I had someone to say let's understand the situation you are going into, let's talk about your charge, let's talk about who is there and what the school has experienced, this may have dramatically influenced decisions I made in the first 90-days. I thought I knew school and how to run a school but that was irrelevant—what I needed to know was the people and the culture of the school through the eyes of school and community stakeholders.

Curriculum. A second area that principals expressed anxiety over was the diversity of curriculum at the high school level. However, a saving grace when discussing curriculum was their overall comfort with the pedagogical aspects within the classroom.

Mr. Corey Hawkins, principal of Jackson High School, articulated,

I would say the number one professional development need is probably going to be deeper dives into understanding curriculum so that whatever curricular change comes through, we would get more exposure to each. As a result, we will be better able to plan for instruction in our building, be able to ensure our staff is trained in a timely manner, and make sure standards and strategies we are looking for are employed on a regular basis. I think we do not receive this as soon as we need it but usually get it as a reaction to something that is not working out the way we want it to.

Mr. Bob Latouf, principal at Cook High School, emphasized,

Curriculum is an ever-evolving door and you are responsible for so many content areas across so many areas—not that you are going to become an expert in every field but you will be able to acquire enough knowledge to navigate best practices and the trending practices of that content area.

Budget. A third area identified was the school budgetary process (school budget intriguingly remained a constant area of discussion throughout questioning surrounding all three of the research questions). Principals desire training on the allocation of resources in the day-to-day operation of the school as well as equipping them with the tools to manage the district's allocation workbooks in preparing for staffing and professional development budgetary decisions. Mr. Fred Cade, principal of Thompson High School, emphasized,

One thing we do not get enough training in is the significance of being prepared to manage a budget especially with the state and local budget crunch we are now in to ensure we are effectively using the minimal resources provided to ensure the success of school programming and efficient spending.

Ms. Jacquelyn Leslie, principal of Harris High School, was concerned with the lack of professional development working with the budget with school leadership teams:

How do you make decisions, how much do teachers need to know when making decisions, do you have to get teacher feedback on everything, and once you've reached a decision, how much do you explain the factors that went into that decision and still keep the peace?

Mr. Charles Jacobs, principal of Bleier High School, stressed, "In over 15 years as a principal, I have yet to have a professional development with the financial aspect of school especially as we are coming into more and more of a budget crunch."

Instructional coaching. Instructional coaching was a fourth area identified that was intermingled throughout the discussion with curriculum. Participants believed that growing and developing teacher leaders will build instructional capacity and improve school outcomes. Mr. Jim Shaw, principal of Bradshaw High School, indicated,

I've always been convinced that the outcomes of students in school relies deeply on the level of preparedness of the teachers in the building. What support they receive in terms of delivering instruction to students, what professional development opportunities they have in my building, and what resources principals have to support teachers plays a major role, if not the most important role of student outcomes at the school level.

Dr. Eric Morgan, principal of Russell High School, highlighted the significance of professional development for principals on having critical conversations with teachers concerning instructional skill sets, and he felt that the lack of effective professional development for principals on coaching teachers has resulted in some principals shying away from having those conversations because it is not very comfortable for them. Each

principal stressed the importance of having those critical conversations around instruction, whether it is getting someone to understand that the profession is not probably best suited for them or helping them see strengths and weaknesses through constructive feedback on what is observed and action steps presented to improve instructional pedagogy.

Dr. Jada Noel, principal of Greene High School, was interested in professional development to improve the abilities of principals to be instructional leaders in their buildings, enhance ways principals can become more effective instructional coaches, and help teachers meet the diverse needs of students and ensuring teachers are using best practices in teaching that have a proven track record of increasing, enhancing student improvement. Ms. Dawna Cimini, principal of Stallworth High School, reiterated, “Dealing with staff that are not doing an effective job and how we deal with that effectively without backlash or ramifications and really focusing on doing what’s best for students is an area of need.”

Mr. Jacobs took a different angle to express why professional development is needed, as not all principals come from a teaching background and thus do not always feel comfortable providing the coaching that is so imperative for teacher and student success. Principal after principal continued to stress that if they can get into the classroom and impact instruction by helping teachers grow, they will have the greatest output in academic growth and achievement, and improve the overall success of the school.

Data analysis. The concluding area for professional development needs to improve professional outcomes is in the area of data analysis. Ms. Mari Reece, principal

of Lambert High School, emphasized the need for continued professional development with data:

I think that the best models in that realm don't just give us the data but rather give us some processes to look at the data. It is never going to go away in the near future or our lifetime so embrace it through the tools professional development may provide.

Mr. Shaw continued,

I think that professional development offered still has a ways to go to ensure data analysis is more effective. Looking at areas such as specific school data, student performance data, and teacher performance data, and how each impacts the level of performance in our schools drives home the significance. Learning to interpret the volumes of data that is available and learning how to break it down through effective professional development will support relevance and school improvement efforts.

Principals emphasized that the district has attempted to support practical applications of data. However, principals felt the volume of data was almost too much to manage without consistent professional development instead of the one-touch model currently being employed. Principals do not feel they are prepared with an understanding of what to do with the data and what to take away from it, which in turn impacts their efficacy. Moreover, participant feelings of not being fully prepared when dealing with school culture, curriculum, budget, instructional coaching, and data analysis is a strategic shortfall and impacts the professional efficacy of principals.

Improving Principal Efficacy

Practicing principals want their districts to offer professional development to improve professional efficacy in their positions. High school principals identified their

most important professional development needs to support their efficacy in the areas of managing the organization and human resources components in their complex roles:

- Organizational Leadership
- Empowerment
- Managing Adults
- Administrative Team Development
- Time Management

The data suggested that high school principals have not lost their passion for the profession, but participants did acknowledge that the district could do more to support their efficacy.

All 16 high school principals, regardless of experience level, expressed a desire for professional development to improve leadership skills and training in the nuances of leadership. This desire was manifested in multiple facets including a review of effective organizational leadership structures, strategies to managing adults while balancing staff empowerment, promoting staff ownership of school improvement activities, delegation of tasks throughout the organizational structure, and professional development on how to grow leadership not only within the administrative team, but also with building level staff.

Organizational leadership. Principals expressed a desire for more concrete training on organizational management and for examples of what effective models look like. Dr. Noel continued by expressing the need for organizational management professional development:

Schools have so many things going on. I don't want things halfway done because of the volume of organizational tasks within my role. I want development on prioritizing the overall and daily organizational structures and tasks going on in my building so I can maximize efforts to get the most results and have the greatest impact on student learning.

Mr. Jacobs echoed in support of professional development in organizational decision-making:

You might make a hundred decisions in a day and three months from now one of those decisions may come back and haunt you. We must have development in supporting the process and procedural aspect of the how principals make decisions within school organizational structures.

In addition, principals expressed a desire for district assistance in participating in professional development that offered a job-embedded deep root analysis of management of organizational protocols to ensure alignment with district expectations, policies, and goals. They desired professional development that allowed protocol reviews through district and peer support to provide another set of eyes to review processes and procedures. Mr. Latouf stated,

It is like being home with a dirty television—your house is clean and you pass that television everyday—but it is a big dust screen and it takes someone else to come in and notice. They can point me in the right direction where I can get professional development to help me get better in whatever my deficiencies are at that time.

An outcome highlighted by principals was that through district lead and sponsored job-embedded professional development, the district would get to know their schools better and understand a little bit more of what their principals go through on a daily basis.

Empowerment. Moreover, principals also highlighted an interest in receiving more professional development on delegation of leadership roles while also balancing ownership of school decisions and outcomes with stakeholders, including:

- What and how much can principals designate to the staff in their buildings, yet still be responsible for as the principal?
- How much efficacy can you promote across your staff but still manage without being a micromanager?

Ms. McKinney added the questions in a simpler format as to the how and the what when considering delegating organizational tasks. For example, as an early career principal (0-5 years), Ms. Ward detailed a desire to respond to every parent question and concern, but realized that she must develop the leadership skill set to delegate and be comfortable saying that this is a social studies concern and that department is directly supervised by the assistant principal. She further utilized this example to express her understanding that not being able to develop this skill set impacts her efficacy and hampers her ability to support the development of the leadership skills of her administrative team.

Managing adults. Mr. Jacobs highlighted that principals receive consistent professional development concerning working with students; however, district professional development misses the mark concerning the larger issue of managing adults. Jacobs continued, “You have to develop the skill to understand what a person’s perspective might be on things and how they are able to adapt to situations can be critical to the day to day efficacy working with my team.” Ms. Cimini provided examples on teacher empowerment and desired professional development on how to make staff feel a

part of the decision-making process while at the same time hold them accountable for doing their jobs. Dr. Noel added that principals need support in helping other adults on campus understand that change is a natural part of educators working together. Principals understood that they must work to garner buy-in from the first-year teacher to the 29-year teacher, each with their own experiences to bring, but we need professional development on how principals get each teacher to embrace change and also receive professional development to develop the leadership skills to incorporate and manage the change at multiple levels.

Administrative team development. Frustration from the principals was evident as they felt they had never received any professional development or support information on how to grow their administrative team and in the nuances of leadership. Dr. Eggelston stated, “A lot of what I’ve done has been based on what’s been done with me and that of course is not always correct because there are different types of learners. It really bothers me because I am directly responsible for their development.” Ms. Leslie continued in that

principals get forced into a box where everyone thinks—you know everything you have to have the answer, that is what you get paid for. Even after being a principal for over ten years, I sadly have not had enough training in navigating the administrative leadership roles.

Mr. Jim King, principal of Hooper High School, stated, “I have not had leveled leadership development in a while. I would truly enjoy dialogue on professional learning and leadership roles.”

Time management. Principals mentioned the importance of professional development support that may lead to improving time management skills to navigate the

many unexpected things that arise that momentarily dictate and/or mandate one's time. Dr. Noel joked that if there was a magic professional development in the works for this she would have signed up yesterday. Principals agreed that in administration, one never knows what one is going to encounter when one walks in the door that day, and having training in helping one manage that time and still carve out time dedicated to instructional leadership, administrative paperwork, and meeting parents and other stakeholders would be beneficial. Principals want professional development on how to organize their time so that they can be effective in a variety of other areas that would in turn provide increased efficacy.

Principals agreed that the role of the comprehensive high school principal continues to grow and change with a multitude of different aspects with which to cope. Dr. Faraone, principal of Bell High School, conveyed a desire for leveled professional development for high school principals that is "ongoing, supportive, and inspirational to help principals keep their eyes on the prize and avoid getting bogged down in everything that needs to be done." Dr. Eggelston explained it as the

stuff of the job that sends you over the edge and may cause burnout in high school principals. Most of us like curriculum and if we could do that all day that would be great but that is simply not the reality that we deal with. We must have training to effectively manage the role of the comprehensive high school principal.

Mr. Shaw believes

the volume of our work has gotten so large including items we have no control over as instructional leaders. This continues to take us away from our primary role as instructional leaders. We have to have the training and manpower to assist us with discipline and other situations that happens in our school building on a daily

basis so we can get into classrooms. It is a frustrating work load—one that is getting harder and harder as they are cutting our resources.

Mr. Hawkins warned districts to be cognizant of the fact that we are being asked to do more, more, and more and be very selective in the professional development offered to each level of administration to meet the growing size and scope of the principals' responsibilities.

Addressing the Overwhelming Nature of the Job

Participants were asked to identify additional items that a good principal needs to know and be able to do to fulfill the expanding size and scope of the principalship.

Although curriculum and instructional leadership, instructional coaching, the budget process, and data analysis were a continued focus of participants, principals provided multiple areas the high school principals needed to know in order to be able to execute their jobs (see Appendix J). In this section, I will focus on professional development needs identified including legislative and legal issues, human resource skill development, student mental health issues, and effective and efficient service learning and character education.

Legislative and legal updates. The need for professional development to include updates on legislative and legal updates was prevalent across participants. Principals expressed concerns over the timeliness of the update and felt updates were more reactionary and not always part of comprehensive programming. Principals did provide some latitude to the district as they understood that situations do occur and legislative actions may feel fluid, but development is necessary and should be addressed in a

standardized method as warranted. An example used was the importance of legal updates and professional development on appropriately dealing with the legalities and the legal rights of staff and students when working with gender and sexual orientation. Dr. Noel expressed the significance of this training for principals:

Principals may have our own beliefs but we have to be sensitive and respectful in executing legal protections. Navigating this sensitive issue with internal and external stakeholders who interact with our building and is something more than a two-hour video can provide.

A final item concerning legal updates was a general concern over job security and potentially losing their job if appropriate professional development on legal matters was not adequately addressed.

Human resources. The need for professional development in human resources skill sets was prevalent. An item that caused a particular level of stress was teacher recruitment, hiring, and retention processes and protocols. Mr. Cade indicated, “If we are equipped with strategies to cut down on your teacher turnover rate, we can spend more time reflecting on how to improve the school throughout the summer.” In a previous district, Mr. King alluded to a successful three-day management process training before a new principal could step into their building and open the office. He emphasized that the training provided him more confidence before he walked through the door, as it included key items such as professional development on the district’s vision on hiring practices and district-level evaluation accountability standards. In addition, principals included a need for training from human resources in the following areas:

- Interviewing and hiring skills

- Professional soft skills when working with students, staff, and parents
- Supporting beginning teachers as well as veteran staff
- Employee documentation
- Resignations and surplus staffing

With this type of support, principals felt that the frustrations of many principals will probably decrease if they receive these types of professional development resources from the Human Resources Department and from direct supervisors.

Student mental health issues. Additionally, in regards to students, principals went into detail in wanting professional development on understanding student mental health issues. They desired professional development in understanding some of the mental health challenges that students come to us with in order to recognize them earlier. Professional development is needed on how mental health issues may impede learning and how to employ different approaches of instruction that might help better serve students who have various learning challenges and different types of modality of learning to employ. Mr. Hawkins compared it to a car accident:

Someone is injured, there is an emergency, someone shows up, and they're brought to the emergency room. Doctors do an assessment and diagnosis for treatment and that is what we are asked to do as educators now. The diagnosis piece is the key in deciding what kind of educational strategies that we may need to employ. So right now, we are being asked to do this and do not have the specific training in that area.

While the discussion and identification of the areas that practicing high school principals need or could benefit from professional development is significant to improve principal outcomes and improve their efficacy, professional development will be to no

avail if it is neither effective nor efficient. To improve professional leadership capacities, principals must identify and understand the desired characteristics of professional development training that will promote improved outcomes and improve their efficacy to support consistency in leadership and school improvement planning.

Characteristics of Effective and Efficient Professional Development

During the course of the interviews, I asked high school principals to describe their professional development experiences, specifically what aspects contributed to effective professional development training they had experienced. This addressed the second research question: “What do high school principals identify as the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development?” Multiple categories emerged concerning the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development including what high school principals identified as essential characteristics of high quality professional development, factors that have negated effective and efficient professional development, and descriptions of effective personal experiences with professional development offered in their local educational agency/district.

Perceptions of the Essential Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

Principals reported the essential characteristics of high quality professional development for practicing principals. See Appendix K for a collective list of terms principals identified. This section will describe the importance of the principal’s role as a participant in professional development planning, professional development that is relevant and realistic, principal voice in district offerings, professional development opportunities that allow for formal and informal networks, what principals identified as

cyclical professional development, who delivers the professional development, and additional essential characteristics provided.

Principal as participant in professional development planning. Interestingly, principals stressed the importance of their role in ensuring professional development is effective and of high quality. Participants agreed that they have the ability to be open and honest with themselves and admit in what area they may need help; for many principals, this was not only a key aspect but one in which they struggled. Principals felt that if they are able to identify areas of need established through self-assessment and reflection they would be more receptive to the professional development and would be able to attack professional development activities with the vigor needed to be more proactive and less reactive in their practice. Principals suggested that tools such as the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and Supervisor Summative Evaluation feedback as external sources used to identify professional development needs. Although principals did admit that at times this feedback is hard to digest, they emphasized that they must have a tough skin and be able to acknowledge they do not have all of the answers. Principals further explained that they need professional development that supports their ability to acknowledge and own potential shortcomings, learn from mistakes, understand how to hold themselves accountable, and admit they don't know everything to increase the opportunity for professional growth and success. Mr. Jacobs suggested,

Internal reflection—looking inward—must be ongoing. Principals must continually evaluate and assess themselves and school processes and protocols to improve school outcomes and professional efficacy through appropriate selection and participation in professional development.

Relevant and realistic. The two terms that were predominant in discussion concerning effective and efficient characteristics of professional development was participation in activities that were relevant and realistic—or as the principals continued to refer to it, professional development that is “concrete”—for when professional development is not embedded within the work they do, it loses its relevance. The preferred characteristic throughout interview questioning was the desire for professional development that is tied to (a) how they run their schools, (b) operational situations they deal with in their respective buildings, (c) day-to-day activities of teaching and learning, (d) accountability results, and (e) professional development that is aligned with the goals of the district. Mr. Jacobs elaborated,

We have goals we set as a school and we try to access professional development around those things. As a district, it would be helpful to know what are three things we are going to focus on next year. What are the big ticket items and set up professional development around that because a lot of times it seems like we get professional development based on what may be going on at the time and what kind of crisis are we experiencing. Unfortunately, they don't tend to flow together very well because we don't seem to have a cohesive plan that we are all on the same page. What is the most important thing in this district and in this school and we should be able to answer that based on the professional development that we receive.

Principal voice in district offerings. Principals resoundingly stated that having a voice in what the district offers is also a critical characteristic in providing an effective professional development. Principals felt that having a voice and choice in what is offered would support both individual growth and improved practice in critical job responsibilities. Principal Shaw stressed the need to provide feedback on things that were interesting to their work such as wanting to look at low-level readers and what he could

do as a principal to impact the teachers who work with those students, along with how to support and motivate the students. Principal Morgan underscored a common frustration participants had—he could not remember the number of times principals have attended professional development that none of the principals had requested—you sit for two hours and there is no dialogue.

When a question is asked that causes the room to start to buzz and it is evident to principals that it is the topic that everyone wants to discuss. We tend to get shut down and told that we have to move on because we have to end in ten minutes—how disappointing!

Mr. Kerr concluded, “If the district is going to help me do my job better and professional development is part of it give me a voice in what we need and what activities we are going to do.”

Furthermore, principals felt that district leadership should conduct a survey to ensure topics are relevant to their audience. A survey would enable the district to assess the pulse in the district as to potential principal concerns, target/individualize principal needs, and intentionally align principal development to execute district goals while working to move away from one-size-fits-all professional development. Principals also felt district-supported individual face-to-face professional development sessions would help support their desire for differentiated professional development throughout the school year. Passport professional development, as Mr. Latouf explained, is a characteristic that meets a desire for the district to create supplemental sessions at district professional development meetings.

Principals stated that having options based on identified principal individual needs would go a long way to growing principals. They also recognized that the need to fit professional development to individual growth is essential because school needs, experience levels, and individual professional development goals (strengths and weaknesses of principals) differ. Mr. King echoed the sentiments of his peers in that first-year principals' needs are different than the veteran high school principal, asserting,

I want to have differentiated options. Additionally, the district should offer and make allowances for everyone to choose a professional development growth area outside of monthly principals meetings and have a time period to collaborate and work on your leadership practice that is not lead by supervisors.

Formal and informal networks. Professional development opportunities to learn through collaborative groups and from colleagues and people who once “walked in our shoes” or continue to do so, both through informal and formal networks, was a characteristic that was extensively discussed. In addition to formal district professional development that allows for networking, principals acknowledged and valued their responsibility in building their own informal collaborative networks. Ms. Leslie explained the value of simply asking other principals questions about situations and bouncing ideas off each other. You may not be in the exact same situation, but given an idea, principals can adapt it to their schools. Principals expressed that a by-product of having professional development opportunities for peer collaborative conversations helps them share their thinking; allows peers to offer feedback or concerns that might have not been shared; discuss what next steps may look like; identify potential landmines in implementation; and promote digging deeper into topics that may not have even been on

their radar, but listening to someone else's concerns or feedback strengthens their professional practice. Mr. Jacobs put it best when he stated, "When we speak we only talk about things we know but when we listen we tend to learn things."

Moreover, reinforcing the use of and working to build a collaborative atmosphere of sharing and support, principals felt the networks helped them deal with a challenge they each identified with and had experienced as a high school principal—the feeling of isolation in the principalship. Dr. Eggleston explained,

When you're in school they tell you that being a principal is a lonely job—they are not kidding. It is lonely in ways that it is hard to explain but when you have opportunities to be with groups with like minds; it is exciting because everyone understands and can empathize with where you are coming from. You can just be yourself and be open to supporting and growing with peers in a district with the same goals which allows principals to build not only professional capacity but also trust in each other.

Cyclical professional development. Principals also asserted that professional development training received be cyclical in nature (Figure 3). Beginning with self-reflection and self-selection of professional development needs, principals will attend training. The training would include the effective characteristics listed in Appendix N.



Figure 3. The Suggested Cyclical Nature of Professional Development.

Prior to leaving training, principals must be afforded time to process materials, create implementation steps, and garner feedback from trainers and peers on action plans for implementation. Principals will return to their buildings to review and implement the professional development with their teams. After an implementation period, building principals and their team will assess the implementation, review results, and generate potential modifications. This is where a key characteristic identified enters the equation—professional development must not only be reflective but also ongoing to make it the most effective. Mr. King indicated, “Professional development programming and implementation evolves as we need it to and requires follow-up to see if it is working through feedback from peers and initial professional development leaders.” Once

principals return to the professional development setting, they must have opportunities to share implementation successes and failures with each other in order to establish ongoing action planning for professional development to promote creative thought while honing skills and implementing the professional development with fidelity. Additionally, principals suggested that an effective cycle of professional development has to be an ongoing process that occurs at a minimum over a semester or a year for it to really have meaning and ensure that it is implemented with fidelity at their schools.

Throughout the interviews, participants continued to repeat the significance of the cyclical pattern for professional development and agreed that the pattern would also work for how principals are grouped during professional development. Working with feeder pattern schools and high school leveled collaborations with similar economic and demographic patterns would not only be an effective model but was also viewed as a desired opportunity for district training.

Presenter's credibility and professional development delivery. When attending district, state, and national professional development conferences, principals shared the importance of the presenter(s) being someone who has walked in their shoes. Principals expressed that they are more receptive to someone who is currently or was an experienced principal and not someone who has been a consultant for their entire career. Principals seek someone who is leading a school similar to their own and with whom they can make a connection; someone who supports a climate where not knowing is okay; and someone who establishes a safe place for professional dialogue free from retributions or evaluation. Additionally, principals seek someone who provides a format

where interaction is allowed and encouraged and provides opportunities to challenge the information that is being shared. This they felt would foster the characteristics of effective professional development—a level of support, comfort, and trust that nurtures their professional growth.

Additional essential characteristics principals shared were that effective and efficient professional development must be interactive through small group discussions with peers and trainers, engaging through hands-on activities related to administrative tasks, include activities that promote critical thinking and creativity, should be motivational and inspiring, must be research-based coinciding with produced results, supported by data samples of implementation and demonstrated results, and provide resources. However, principals had difficulty separating essential characteristics of effective and efficient professional development from negative experiences with professional development as their frustrations were intertwined throughout the interview session.

Factors that Negate Effective and Efficient Professional Development

When considering professional development within their current district, principals were direct and succinct when sharing examples of what has hindered the effectiveness of professional development programming. In this section, principals offered examples of the factors that have impacted their professional growth when participating in professional development activities. See Appendix L for a detailed list of factors that have had a negative effect on effective professional development.

Principal receptiveness. Parallel to the effective characteristic of the open-minded and receptive principal is that the study participants also viewed themselves as an obstacle to accessing and receiving the full benefit of professional development activities. Mr. Jacobs emphasized this role: “There is really not a tremendous amount of bad professional development; however, sometimes we don’t always receive it that well.” Principals admitted to sometimes being cynical and writing off the professional development activities because they believe that what is being offered will not work in their situation or that they have already tried a variation of the idea. This lack of receptiveness was shown to impact the less-experienced principals in the study, as they found themselves questioning professional development offered when they notice veteran principals openly or subversively dismissing the professional development activity being offered.

Ms. Ward: Receptivity of those sitting in our positions—just like teachers, there are those who are sitting there—I don’t need this I run a great class. But we all have something that we can learn and could do better because none of us have a perfect classroom or school.

Principals acknowledged that the size and scope of their responsibilities also influenced their lack of receptiveness. Ten months of the year, the primary professional development they attend is offered through their district in one-day sessions and they do not like being away from their buildings. Principals cited their difficulty to separate, disengage from, and absorb the information due to the critical issues at their schools during professional development as technology provides 24-hour access and connection to their schools and their school communities. All principals admitted that they were on

edge during professional development held during the calendar school year due to their responsibilities back at school.

Timeliness. Another limiting factor is the lack of timeliness of the professional development offered in the district. Principals cited that professional development has been based on the current crisis experienced and lack of flow of professional development demonstrated a lack of a cohesive planning. Bandwagon professional development was the phrase used most often. Mr. Kerr cited,

Too often this county in the last several years, the professional development offered and discussed is not what is needed at the time. Or professional development is offered and not brought back up for six months. This appears to be haphazard so how do they expect us with fidelity and integrity to execute programming?

Mr. Morgan continued,

How often do we receive training on an initiative after you should have already initiated the initiative? I think that is always an interesting way we do things in education. Like an initiative last year, first we didn't have a whole lot of input; second, it was a canned approach; and third, we did not get a whole lot of training until right before our teachers and at the end of the day the initiative may be gone in ten months.

Several participants also specifically cited webinars that may support their professional development are consistently offered during the work day and thus not timely and respectful of their work. Additionally, as principals discussed professional development timing and delivery, principals felt that too much of district lead professional developments have the 'fly the plane while we build it' mentality. Ms.

McKinney captured this succinctly: “Building the plane as you fly it, is always a recipe to end up on the ground.”

Funding and support. In addition, principals agreed that they are not provided the funding and at times the support of their district to attend professional development. Ms. Reece added that her district does not place emphasis or value on professional development of its principals:

They have made the approval process cumbersome and as principals we have to work with the district to break through these barriers to receive professional development for ourselves. Unfortunately, traditionally, we, as principals, are scraping around for our own professional development and are spending our own money.

Principals further agreed that quality professional development is expensive and with budget cuts access is now even more limited. With the limited funds provided in individual school budgets, principals emphasized that they have to make the tough choice of how to allot the money for professional development that is received. A majority of the time it is at their own expense as they prioritize teacher professional development over their own as significant in improving student outcomes when budgeting building level professional development money for the fiscal year.

Lack of transparency. Although limited opportunities were provided to suggested professional development topics, principals still felt there was a lack of transparency due to the lack of subsequent follow through on topics they had suggested. They felt that the district professional development topics had been prescribed and designed prior to surveys and based on what district officials think principals need

regardless of principal feedback. Thus, principals do not feel valued and feel that professional development is put on them. Furthermore, there is trepidation and lack of trust as they feel that central office administrators who plan principal professional development have not walked in their shoes or have not walked in their shoes for a long time, subsequently contributing to their lack of engagement during professional development.

Time constraints and follow through. Each high school principal discussed time restraints of professional development activities (traditionally a one day per month event) accompanied by a lack of district follow through on professional development topics as barriers to effective and efficient professional development. They stressed that current district professional development is not providing time to process and reflect prior to leaving the meetings; thus, principals feel they are losing potential applications and collaboration opportunities. In addition, principals complained that at one meeting, professional development is about literacy and everyone is doing literacy. The next month there was a tragedy so now professional development is about safety and no mention of literacy. Principals promoted the old adage—you get what you supervise—and if it is not supervised, people tend to think that it is not important.

Participants articulated that without ongoing, reflective implementation and follow-up training on professional development topics, professional development activities and suggested actions will not be effective. They have the feeling that district professional development meetings are a series of one-stop shop sessions. Mr. King explained,

As principals—we've delivered professional development that has been ineffective and we've led professional development that has been effective. However, we want our teachers doing things that are meaningful and affects their jobs—principals feel the same way. Thus, if we have a two-hour presentation on something that we know that we are not going to have any follow-up and one-stop professional development presentations and activities that we know we are not going to get any additional professional development sessions on—we tend to tune it out.

Principals highlighted the phenomenon of the one-stop shop for professional development has been demonstrated in different ways:

- One-time 90-minute presentation,
- No professional development goes any longer then 2-3 months before it changes to something else,
- The flavor of the moment professional development, or
- The lack of seeing a long-term plan and experiencing more of a quick fix mentality—something here today and gone tomorrow.

This was a common frustration as Mr. Hawkins quantified,

I do not learn as deeply as I need to with one touch. I need multiple touches on a particular topic to change the paradigm at this school. Furthermore, I also need the sense and trust that what the district is offering at the time is what is needed the most to improve both my practice and the outcomes at my school.

The canned/boxed approach is not working. Participants wanted to know that the professional development they attend will have relevance to the day-to-day operations of the school and will increase their capacity to help their staff at the ground level.

Diversity of needs. Principals also indicated that diversity of needs is not limited to the relevant professional development needs of a diverse set of schools, but is also

differentiated professional development based on the needs of a diverse group of principals. Frustrations over a lack of receiving professional development that connects to and meets their individual needs as leaders was a predominant feature throughout the interviews. Mr. Latouf continued,

I need the district to provide professional development that digs deeper into the brass tacks of leadership that will be scaffolded to my needs and the needs of my peers based on their experiences and experience levels. You have to approach it just like your master teacher as that is a different professional dialogue than with your first-year teacher. Obviously, there is a respect there but it is a higher respect because they have been in the trenches—they are proven and battle tested.

Lack of offerings, access, and support. A final characteristic to be described in detail that has negated high quality principal professional development is the lack offerings, access, and support for principals. All principals expressed concern that their districts are not providing the volume of professional development they had access to when they were a teacher in the district. They felt that finding professional development offerings for teachers was as simple as finding grapes on a healthy vine. Ms. Leslie felt,

As a teacher, the district conducted district teaching and learning activities, all types of technology training, and identified and encouraged access to AIMS conferences and National Math Teachers Association events. But as a principal, I do not think there is a wide variety of professional development available. For example, teachers have access to professional development on blended learning. I want to be able to use what I want the teachers to use. So what does a blended model for professional development and staff meetings look like. I've searched and I cannot find training specifically for principals.

Additionally, principals had resigned themselves, as they put it, to continue being in the lifeboat on their own. They also desire more support from the state department of public

instruction and state branches of groups such as the state Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development because they felt that the majority of the initiatives are teacher-centered and principals are part of the forgotten class.

Although participants unmistakably made a strong case by identifying characteristics that have negated the effectiveness of their professional development experiences, they were able to intermingle positive aspects of professional development offered by their district(s) that met their professional development needs.

Positive Local Educational Agencies/District Experiences

The following results under the heading of characteristics of effective professional development were revealed when principals were asked to consider the professional development activities offered for principals within their districts that met both their professional development needs but also supported their growth and effectiveness as a leader. Their experiences are reflective of the characteristics discussed and focused on activities that offered feedback opportunities in a retribution-free environment, offered relevant and timely content, offered principals choice in professional development experiences, offered opportunities for collaborate practice on leadership, offered professional development directly tied to school results, and offered small group, leveled experiences. I will highlight the five examples provided by participants that provide a general explanation of the professional development topic and activities experienced that supported professional growth through effective and efficient professional development.

First, Ms. Cimini felt professional development received on a new model of school improvement planning was effective. She explained that the structure of the

professional development afforded time for school teams to work on their own school data with the new tool and create the draft plan for the following school year during the training. Strengths included immediate feedback from presenters as needed and that presenters created an environment where questions were welcomed and free from evaluative reactions and judgments. Ms. Cimini concluded by underlining the significance of partnering with like schools to write effective school improvement goals, that a timeline of follow-up activities was provided, a district coach was provided to ensure that goals were timely and targeted, and the school team followed all the state legal mandates of school improvement.

Second, Mr. Cade shared the importance of the utilization of activities that included relevant scenario-based examples provided through the district summer institute for district staff and administrators. He underscored the importance of the timing of the professional development, as professional development in summer is slightly less stressful which supported engagement, focus, and responsiveness. It also provided relevant and realistic topics of discussion that afforded principals a choice of individual sessions to attend. For example, Mr. Cade selected a session that Human Resources offered and was able to walk through the protocols and processes for spring allotment programming, protocols and suggestions when dealing with letters of resignation, and was provided information on how the surplus and choice programs are executed.

Mr. King provided the third and fourth examples. He explored two key experiences in a previous district in which he worked. In the first example, the district provided a variety of options (courses) to choose from during the year. The second

example focused district professional development on professional learning communities (PLCs) that aligned with a district implementation goal for PLCs. The ability to choose professional development activities was welcomed, as principals were able to select professional development that met their individual professional and leadership needs through consistent, connected follow-up experiences. Topics were meaningful and embedded in their professional practice and school goals. Topics included working with teachers, dealing with conflict and confrontation, working with children, and working with parents—all relevant to what principals have to deal with in their buildings along with general leadership practices. Once principals made a choice, participants were required to dialogue with peers, and review and reflect on questions prior to monthly meetings. He shared that this experience made him a more reflective practitioner through regular discussions with principal peers and offered opportunities to share not only focused leadership topics but also share any prospective issue with which they may be experiencing difficulty. This also helped to break down the isolation of high school principals through an understanding that he was not alone dealing with individual problems of practice. This also helped him develop a network of peers to collaborate with and also fostered a sense of resilience when he returned to his building, knowing that everyone was having some of the same leadership ups and downs.

Mr. King: These are books, materials, and colleagues that I still go back to today to reference and discuss when dealing with issues in my building and problems of professional practice.

The PLC training was an embedded professional development experience that was consistently at the forefront of all principal professional development meetings throughout the year. There was an intentional and focused rollout for principals through a three-day kick-off in the summer including activities lead by nationally renowned trainers, along with examples from practicing peers. The training on how to start PLCs, set meeting norms and agendas, how to ensure teachers are working with their curriculum, and how to ensure teachers work with common assessments was followed up on and updated through the school year and related directly back to the work that they were doing at the school level. Therefore, it was constantly in front of principals and trickled down to what teachers were doing in their PLC meetings and in their classrooms. Mr. King felt it was more meaningful because the professional development directly tied to the school's results and supported improvement in meeting accountability and modeling expectations.

Mr. Hawkins presented the final experience. He communicated that the district led a small group, leveled principals' professional development session looking at specific data that was helpful in sorting out the volumes of data to which schools and principals have access. District assessment experts were able to help principals review student performance data, teacher performance data, and other data points to demonstrate how each affects the level of performance of their schools while promoting collaborative dialogue between peers. The training included two significant features. First, it was not only learning how to break the data down and begin thinking about action steps to take back to school, but more importantly it was relevant to foster improved principal

leadership in their buildings. Secondly, the training session provided time for leveled principals to collaborate with each other. Mr. Hawkins emphasized that although it was not a deep dive into the data, it provided him an opportunity to continue to build his informal network with like peers as well as make template spreadsheet resources available to all principals to expedite the analysis of data.

In conclusion, participants have a mixed review of the effectiveness of the professional development they have attended. During the course of the interviews, data abounded when identifying the adverse characteristics that negated the effectiveness of their experiences. Although the data results support the hypothesis that practicing high school principals are not receiving consistent effective and efficient professional development, the fact that each participant is not simply tolerating their role until they can find something else demonstrates that there must have been sources of professional development that have kept them engaged and energized. Thus, the interview concluded with questioning that intended on finding their preferred professional development models and the identification of the professional development experience that has had the strongest impact and enriched their professional development.

Preferred Professional Development Delivery Models

During the course of the interviews, I asked high school principals to describe both their preferred professional development delivery models and their most valued professional development experience. This addressed the third research question: “What do high school principals identify as preferred delivery models of professional development to improve the leadership of practicing high school principals?” This

section addresses participants' opinions on the preferred professional development models for high school principals including job-embedded opportunities, professional learning communities, and sessions from professional organizations. See Appendix L for a complete listing.

Professional Development Delivery Models

Principals must have access to and attend professional development programming that will develop and improve the essential leadership skills required to execute the ever-expanding job responsibilities of a high school principal. Thus, participants were asked to describe the types of preferred professional development delivery models they have experienced that have improved their professional practice. Principals interviewed described a variety of professional experiences they preferred, experiences that resulted in high levels of engagement, and experiences that fostered individual growth. See Appendix M for a complete listing of preferred professional development models.

Job-embedded models. Two job-embedded professional development methods came to light through the interviews. First, a formal executive coach provided by the district, and second, the enlistment of an informal mentor potentially through district alignment with a similar school principal or retired principal or through a mentor of their choice. However, principals described that in order for a coach or mentor to be effective, the individual should be or should have been an experienced high school administrator, the individual must be able to build strong relationships through a caring and trusting partnership, and the individual must not be a person who has evaluative power over the principal or any other leveled peers who may participate.

Formal executive coach. Benefits abound from a strong executive coach and parallel with the preferred characteristics of effective and efficient professional development. The initial ingredient to ensure a successful partnership is building an open and collaborative relationship. See Appendix N for a complete list of the characteristics of an effective executive coach that participants identified compared to the characteristics of effective professional development desired.

In order to improve the opportunity for a successful collaboration with an executive coach, principals preferred professional development programming that included an opportunity to arrange a pre-visit meeting with the executive coach to include a review of district goals and expectations and an opportunity to review school data, culture, environment, and school improvement plan goals. Participants stressed that the district executive programming must also be personalized, providing opportunities to create and structure ongoing, follow-up timelines on a minimum of two to three individual professional growth goals. Programming would also include bi-weekly individual job-embedded school visitations. At the district level, programming would include a monthly opportunity to meet at district principal meetings to have the executive coach lead a collaborative small group discussion on district goals and current curricular initiatives with no more than five high school principal peers.

A non-negotiable for participants when working with executive coaches is that the coach does not have evaluation power or any hints of evaluation power. Without this, the principals emphasized that feedback offered would have limited impacts other than simple compliance and would result in resistance and lack of engagement. If this can be

avoided, principals proposed that it is also critical that feedback is offered and not dictated. They preferred that the executive coach provide support by giving scenarios on pedagogical and organizational items to drive reflection on items related to the day-to-day and organizational decisions that have to be made. Individual, in-house meetings, school walk-throughs, and small group district principal meetings would provide the opportunity to provide feedback that is cyclical in nature, affording opportunities to plan, implement, garner feedback, and make revisions to action planning.

The executive coach would also have the experience and training necessary to appropriately and adequately prompt, probe, and poke holes in the components of principal decisions and daily practice to ensure principals have a 360-degree view of dilemmas faced. Participants underscored that this may support improved decision making and potentially improving school outcomes. Moreover, principals recognized that in order to receive the feedback appropriately a trust would need to be built with the coach. Mr. Latouf stressed the importance of the relationship:

I can't have you come in and let you strip me down and I'm going to tell you what I do not know and not know if you are in my corner or not. Are you really in it for my benefit or are you in to gain some type of financial gain or throw me out to the wolves with district supervisors.

Sometimes we don't always get the feedback we are looking for but unless somebody tells me that I am doing something wrong; I might not be aware of it. Someone that is watching me at work may have suggestions on ways of making it more effective than what I am doing. (Mr. Jacobs)

Informal mentors. The role of a mentor, participants agreed, had corresponding characteristics with the executive coach, especially when considering experience,

confidentiality, trust, and non-evaluative functions. Two types of mentors were discussed. First, a formal mentor who would be designated by the district, and secondly, an informal mentor whom principals select on their own. However, principals did leave the window open for the district to assign an informal mentor if he or she was a principal from a similar school. Principals felt that formal mentors could push them towards improved leadership practice and outcomes. They desired that mentors discuss what principals should be working on as principals freely admitted that they were not always in the best position to see deficiencies and potential dilemmas. In addition, principals admitted that the size and scope of the job requires an outside force to push them to reflect. Principals detailed that this may facilitate, connect, and spark reflection—for without this, principals are relegated to a continual “doing” mode and will experience little to no professional growth. Principals shared meaningful and productive relationships with informal mentors—someone that they looked up to, respected, and trusted; someone who they could call, email, or meet with to bounce ideas off, receive feedback on strategies that would work and would not work, give perspective on decisions reached, and someone who would help principals stay the course when doing the hard work required by the job.

I think having a mentor, having a support person I can call at any time to talk through any situation. Someone that would sit down and help me look at data, help me look at scheduling. Someone who wants to see you grow who has the capacity to provide resources such as a book, virtual resources, video, or articles in response to issues faced. I do not think I would have been as successful without having the support that was given to me. (Dr. Noel)

PLCs and cohort networks. Across the board, principals desired an opportunity to work with each other through PLCs and cohort networks within the district. Being able

to meet with principals who served the same grade levels, similar demographics, and similar achievement gap issues was at the top of their list. Principals felt that this was a common practice for teachers, but did not occur with the same frequency at the administrative level. Principals felt that time for colleagues to talk about elements that impact principal leadership philosophies, pedagogical leadership, organizational leadership, and how to resolve problems of practice would be essential to their professional development and improve school outcomes. The PLC and cohort network models also provided an opportunity to vent to each other without fear of reprisal from a supervisor, provided an opportunity to learn about themselves individually through the lens of a peer, and provided an opportunity to learn about their peers. Participants expressed that each collaborative model was beneficial to their professional practice and further supported a desire for additional informal mentoring opportunities in the future.

I like small group PLC. I think principals have a lot of similar areas of focus. I love the PLC for model and incorporate it at my school for teachers so for principals I think if principals had an opportunity to sit together at professional development to talk about what's working at their school would be a huge piece.
(Mr. Shaw)

Additionally, the PLC format used in conjunction with the review of case studies and scenario-based programming also satisfied principals' desire for an interactive, hands-on professional development model that provides small group discussions to share ideas, experiences, and reflections. They felt that through each strategy the district would be able to move from the theoretical to real-time dilemmas. Again, the desired characteristics of professional development, collaborative partnerships, trust with peers

(informal networks), and breaking down the isolation of the principalship is satisfied. Ms. McKinney highlighted, “You don’t even realize that you are being developed just having a conversation, but you walk away with a lot of ideas.”

Principals also preferred the district provide an unscripted time period during professional development sessions to have allocated time to work together in both leveled small groups and feeder pattern small groups. They wanted this time to be a separate agenda item without supervisor input or supervision to allow principals the freedom to discuss and address current issues and dilemmas and build networks of support. With this freedom, principals would be able to have opportunities to lead session discussions, develop leadership competencies, build relationships with a network of principals, and receive real-time feedback. Each offers and encourages a professional environment among principals that promotes dialogue free of the fear of evaluation. Principals emphasized that this type of opportunity affords an opportunity to review and manage current issues of practice that in turn break down concerns over the size and scope of responsibilities of the position in defined, corresponding time frames.

Supplementary models. Supplementary professional development opportunities described to promote principals’ personal growth included traditional venues such as national organizational conferences such as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the International Center for Leadership in Education (Model Schools Conference), and conferences by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). Furthermore, leadership programming from groups such as the Center for Creative Leadership, Dale Carnegie Training, and the Franklin-Covey

Company also offered principals the opportunity for professional growth. Conferences offered choice and self-selection of options that fit their leadership needs and the needs of their school by attending sessions hosted by accomplished practicing principals who have proven results. Attendance at such programming has had a rejuvenating effect on principals interviewed while also fostering opportunities for resource acquisition and networking opportunities with principals from all over the country. Talking to principals and attending professional development sessions with like practitioners who are dealing with the same funding, staffing, and student/parent issues offers opportunities to spark critical thinking and creative thought on how to hone their leadership skills and practice and come away with potential solutions while in an environment away from the day-to-day responsibilities of their jobs.

I have attended the Model Schools Conference because I want to see other principals. Building level leaders who are excelling in their craft and be able to hear directly from them what they are doing and what is being done in schools that are similar to the school that I work. This conference offers an opportunity to select which schools and which leaders I want to hear from because their experiences are more like I have every day; they are walking in my shoes so their experiences are more relevant to me than somebody that has never been in a building like mine. (Mr. Hawkins)

Throughout the review of preferred professional development delivery models, principals consistently fluctuated from concrete examples, demonstrating preferences while adding components to each that would augment their experience. The data establishes for districts that principals desire time to work together. Whether it was formally or informally, they desire to work in an environment that encourages and values the strengths and experiences of high school principals. However, without fully

functioning preferred models shared, it is important to document fully formed opportunities that participants regarded as making a discernible difference in their leadership practice.

In conclusion, principals have accessed different programs to improve their leadership. They acknowledged that although some delivery models have been effective, they are aware of programming shortcomings. How district and professional organizations structure and select relevant professional development programming is essential to improving principal leadership practices. The selection of presenters, the availability of relevant data, implementation success examples, and how they plan to group principals are essential to the receptivity, acquisition of, and application of the professional development presented. Districts also have to ensure that professional development topics are revisited and initiatives are followed through by monitoring, additional training, and follow-up support activities. Principals accepted that professional development activities simply cannot hit everything that a high school principal will face in their day-to-day or in a career but realize that their participation, engagement, and professionalism will drive their development.

Summary

This chapter presented the data as it pertained to the professional development and experiences of high school principals in a large urban school district. Taking into consideration the size and the scope of the high school principalship, the chapter provided data on the professional development needs and experiences of high school principals and detailed their concerns and successes when reflecting on the effectiveness and efficiency

of their professional development experiences. They consistently indicated a desire for effectual professional development to meet the expanding expectations of their profession. They articulated professional needs to improve both their individual leadership needs and the development of leadership skills to improve organizational outcomes.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Principals are overburdened by enormous work demands, responsibilities, and role-induced pressures that have become a permanent part of the modern principalship. In this environment, principals are positioned to be key leaders who can improve academic outcomes in their schools (West et al., 2014). Due to increased scrutiny from changing federal, state, and local accountability, I chose to conduct this qualitative study to garner high school principals' feedback on essential professional development and ascertain their experiences with professional development intended to improve leadership capacity, school outcomes, and efficacy to manage and excel at the unmanageable. In brief, the data I collected can be reduced to these three themes that coalesce to provide guidance about principals' perspectives on professional development and what can be done to make it more helpful to their work:

- Improved Outcomes and Efficacy for Practicing High School Principals
- Development of the Characteristics Desired for Professional Development
- Adult Learning Theory Correlated to Preferred Delivery Models

Chapter I introduced the premise that the size and the scope of the principals' responsibilities have changed significantly and also highlighted the need for effective professional development programming to improve the leadership development of the high school principal in order to improve results of schools and their students. Adding

fuel to the fire, practicing principals lack adequate professional development required to consistently improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their professional practice (Bizzell, 2011; Melnyk, 2012). The purpose of this study was to examine how high school principals in a large urban district in the Southeastern part of the United States view their professional development. Understanding how principals perceive professional development provided insight into what improvements may be necessary to increase the effectiveness of professional development programming. Hence, the following research questions guided the research:

- What do high school principals identify as essential professional development to meet the growing demands of the principalship?
- What do high school principals identify as the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development?
- What do high school principals identify as preferred delivery models of professional development to improve the leadership of practicing principals?

The research questions were developed as part of the conceptual framework, a review of literature, and my experiences as a 12-year practicing high school principal.

The conceptual framework (see Figure 4) provided a structure and focus while studying the professional development needs and experiences of high school principals. High school principals are facing the trifecta of an increased size and scope of job responsibilities, increased academic accountability measures from both federal and state legislation measuring principal effectiveness, and increased pressures from internal and

external stakeholders in the school community, district, and media. This unrelenting stress has become a permanent part of the modern urban principal (West et al., 2014).

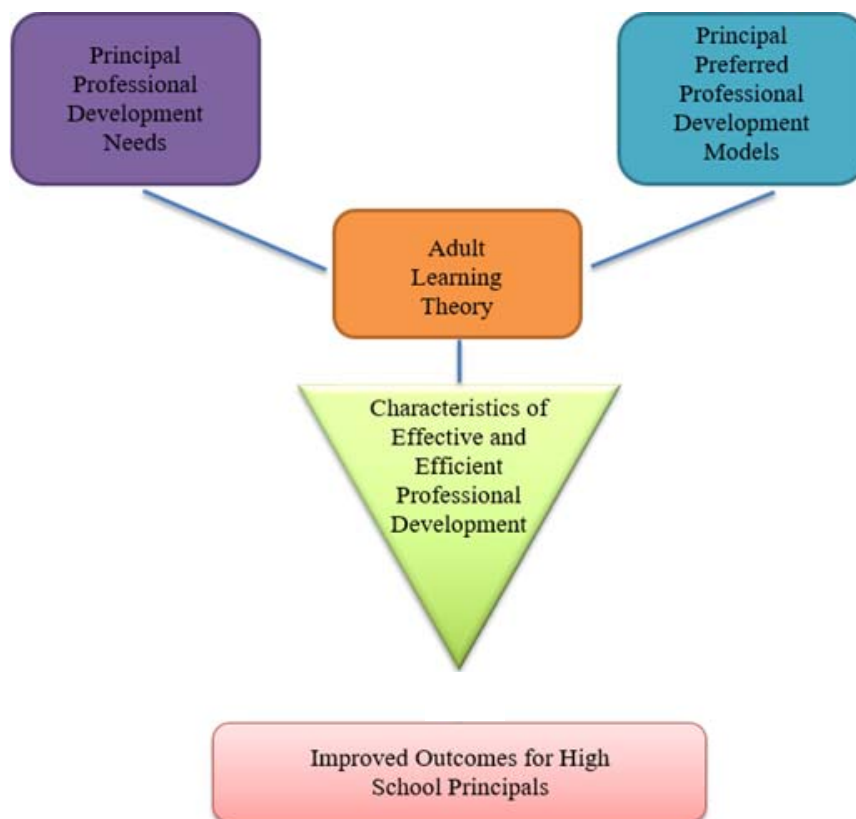


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework for the Professional Development of Principals.

Chapter II provided a review of the literature regarding the significance of principal leadership, the professional development needs for practicing principals, job-embedded professional development, the profession of improving educational leadership for principals, and an expanded description of the conceptual framework, the Adult Learning Theory. After the review of the literature in Chapter II, Chapter III documented the methodology of how the qualitative study was employed by conducting semi-

structured face-to-face interviews with 16 high school principals in a large urban school district in the Southeastern United States.

Chapter IV presented the data gathered on what principals identified as:

- Essential principal professional development,
- Desired characteristics of professional development, and
- Preferred professional development models

The data supported recommendations for shared, common, and collaborative professional development practices that may change the paradigm of principal professional development. The need for high quality professional development arises from the expanding role of principals, the need for professional growth and efficacy of the principal, and the importance of the overall success of the schools they lead to meet increasing federal and state accountability.

Chapter V discusses the findings of the study. The categories and threads presented in Chapter IV will be synthesized into themes that address the research questions. Finally, recommendations for practicing principals, recommendations for school districts, and conclusions from the study will be presented.

Explication of the Themes

In this section, I share my findings, interpretations, and new understandings that came about as a result of this study. These are based on what the 16 high school principals shared with me about their professional development experiences. After a thorough analysis of the data, three themes emerged that are connected to the conceptual framework and have the potential to improve principal engagement in effective and

efficient professional development and meeting the desired outcome—improved principal leadership and improved outcomes for students. Within each theme, I discuss the interconnectedness of principal performance and the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework was used to categorize the data on high school principal professional development and to substantiate evidence for the three themes identified. The three themes of (a) improved outcomes and efficacy for practicing high school principals, (b) development of the characteristics desired for professional development, and (c) Adult Learning Theory correlated to preferred delivery models form a basis for the collective and collaborative professional development practices the framework identified as necessary components to change the paradigm of principal professional development. For effective and efficient professional development programming to become a reality, districts must value and incorporate practicing high school principals' voices, take into account their individual personal and school level needs, while integrating local, state, and national accountability standards.

Improved Outcomes and Efficacy for Practicing High School Principals

The first research question, “What do high school principals identify as essential development needs to meet the growing demands of the principalship?” prompted study participants to share their professional experiences and thoughts regarding essential professional development that would improve principals professional outcomes, identify areas of professional development that would improve principal professional efficacy, and enumerate additional areas requiring professional development to meet the growing size and scope of the high school principalship. Themes developed can be correlated to

the literature review on the Conceptual Framework: Adult Learning Theory. The literature documented the value of understanding how adults learn, the importance of professional development strategies that might be employed to foster adult learning, listed the characteristics of adult learners, and documented Malcolm Knowles's assumptions of the adult learner (Cercione, 2008; Fidishun, 2000; Knowles et al., 2014; Merriam et al., 2012; Pappas, 2013).

Participants' frustrations were rife throughout the interviews. They identified professional development areas that they, as adult learners (assumption—adults are practical), wanted to acquire and apply new knowledge critical to their individual and school successes (assumption—adults are goal oriented), but offered that there was a dearth of meaningful professional development on the topics identified as significant. They consistently referenced that the size and the scope of job responsibilities at times are unmanageable. However, participants were not deterred as they were personally and professionally determined to drive the success of their school communities (assumption—adults are internally motivated). With this focus, they indicated that targeted and focused professional development offered within their districts that were aligned to both district and school goals would improve professional outcomes and personal efficacy. If made available, participants were hopeful that effective and efficient professional development would help them avoid burnout and turn around the trend of high principal turnover rates.

When considering categories for targeted professional development to improve professional outcomes, principals acknowledged that they needed supports in developing

the ability to assess, interact, and modify school culture, curriculum, budget, instructional coaching, and data analysis (assumption—adults are self directed). To improve their professional efficacy, they focused on the development of their leadership skills, particularly the abilities of organizational leadership, empowerment, managing adults, administrative team development, and time management (assumption—adults are relevancy oriented). When considering the size and scope of the high school principalship, principals reached consensus that principals wanted professional development to meet legislative and legal statutes, emphasis on Human Resource skill sets, and student mental health issues (assumption—adults are practical).

Development of the Characteristics Desired for Professional Development

The second research question, “What do high school principals identify as the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development?” prompted participants to share the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development desired, identify factors that negated the effectiveness and efficiency of professional development principals participated in both internally in their district(s) and externally through additional opportunities, and highlighted positive professional development experiences within their districts that produced positive interactions and improved outcomes, efficacy, and longevity. Throughout the interviews, there was a definitive link between the characteristics of professional development that practicing principals desire and the characteristics of adult learners.

Adult learners exhibit high expectations for their performance, like to be self-directed, their desire to integrate knowledge, and are results oriented. The desired

characteristics emerged and mirrored the attributes of the adult learner through interactions with professional development. Principals wanted to participate in professional programming that was selected through self-assessment and reflection, professional development that had an intentional focus, and wanted implementation of programming integrated to build professional capacity.

Additionally, participants acknowledged that their self-discipline and responsibility as participants falls on their shoulders as adult learners. Participant engagement and reflection during and after professional development was explained to be of utmost importance in supporting their individual professional growth. In order for professional development to be effective in supporting their multi-level responsibilities, it had to provide professional development that was both realistic and relevant and offered principal choice and voice in district professional development offerings.

Moreover, when considering that adult learners want to use personal experiences as a resource and honoring that adults are resistant to change, principals desired district implementation of and respect for the formation of formal and informal networks—professional development networks that encouraged and fostered accountability to themselves, each other, and the district. Moreover, as adults are results oriented, principals desired consistency and follow through on professional development activities supported by cyclical professional development and delivered by trustworthy presenters.

As much as principals were frank in providing the characteristics that would lead to their professional growth, they were equally frank in underscoring both their personal failures and district failures when participating in professional development activities—

failures that have led to a lack of motivation and engagement in district professional development activities. Negative factors including timeliness, funding and support, lack of transparency, time restraints, lack of accountability, and follow through has had an impact on the effectiveness of participants' professional growth as building and community leaders. Accentuating their frustrations, participating principals expressed (a) that they do not feel supported by the district in seeking external opportunities, (b) there exists a lack of diversified professional development that is relevant to a diverse set of schools, and (c) an overall lack of professional development offerings specifically for the high school principal.

Developing the characteristics desired concluded with examples from participants that exemplified effective and efficient professional development. The examples provided a reprieve from what seemed to be endless streams of factors that are not aligned with the characteristics of adult learners. Examples that align with the characteristics of adult learners and have augmented their professional practice included (a) receiving effective feedback from district coaches, (b) relevant scenarios-based professional development on professional needs, (c) multiple options of professional development activities to support choice professional development on what principals identified through personal reflection of their practice, and (d) effectual small group principals networks that also called for job-embedded professional development.

Adult Learning Theory Correlated to Preferred Delivery Models

Adult Learning Theory, studying adults as learners, may have the potential to help principals to effectively access and select professional development programming that

may lead to improved leadership skills. It also affirms the significance of districts using the assumptions of Adult Learning Theory to support the creation of more effective and efficient professional development processes for principals. This together has the chance to change the educational paradigm for current professional development practices for practicing high school principals.

The third research question, “What do high school principals identify as preferred delivery models of professional development to improve the leadership of practicing high school principals?” was developed to gain an understanding of what principals are currently accessing and professional development opportunities that are impactful to their professional practice. Preferred professional development methods seamlessly accentuated the assumptions of Adult Learning Theory as principals identified the delivery model of job-embedded, leveled PLCs, and cohort networks as the most preferred. This succinctly parallels Adult Learning Theory’s assumptions, as participants (adult learners) like to be respected, self-directed, and goal-oriented, paralleled with principals seeking professional development delivery models that included job-embedded opportunities. Additionally, participants (adult learners) bring life experiences and knowledge to the learning experience and are internally motivated paralleled with principals preferring to utilize their experience and desire to excel in professional learning communities focused on targeted expected outcomes with peers in a non-evaluative environment.

In conclusion, the three thematic interpretations can have significant implications on the outcomes of high school principals. In light of continued local, state, and federal

emphasis on school reform and accountability, district(s) continue to miss on opportunities to impact the outcomes, efficacy, and leadership abilities of their principals. From the literature and interview data, I understand that I, as a practicing high school principal, must own my professional development by being an active and if needed aggressive participant and voice to improve my professional practices through purposeful reflection and collaboration within the context of my daily practice. Moreover, districts must also have ownership in acknowledging the importance of the professional development for their principals to produce a sense of efficacy and improve outcomes for their principals. Districts can and must provide opportunities for shared leadership by promoting deep conversations focusing on essential administrative professional practices.

The following sections include my recommendations for practicing principals and the districts they serve to offer a paradigm shift in the professional development of principals to enhance administrative competencies while emphasizing effective and efficient leadership practices. Focusing on principal professional development is necessary to help principals carry out their expanding role, promote their professional growth and efficacy, and ensure the overall success of the schools they lead.

Recommendations

In the previous section of this chapter, I provided a review of chapter content, the conceptual framework, and the themes created after an analysis of the data collected. In the following section, I discuss recommendations for principals and to school districts when participating in and/or planning professional development activities intended to improve principals' capacity for leadership, school outcomes, and principal efficacy.

Recommendations for School Principals

The data collected demonstrated that principal perceptions of professional development would directly affect the extent to which they engage in and garner from professional development activities. The research conducted clearly points to the fact that principals must be willing to create an environment where they open their leadership, organizational management, and pedagogical practices to others for input and inspiration. It revealed that principals want to be energized through deep conversations concerning their leadership and the success of their respective schools. Moreover, it showed that principals have a responsibility to enhance their competence through purposeful and consistent self-reflection on their leadership needs and the needs of their school including organizational management and academic outcomes.

The conceptual framework provides a lens and focused on principals as they face increased responsibilities, accountability, and pressures. First, in dealing with each, principals can no longer be their own obstacles when accessing professional development. Principals must be proactive in identifying and accessing essential professional development to develop leadership skills to improve practice. They must utilize their voice within the district by promoting and advocating for effective and efficient district professional development. Principals cannot afford to sit idly by and point blame at the district for the lack of utilization of preferred characteristics and preferred professional development models.

Second, principals must take the time to utilize the characteristics of adult learners and the six andragogical assumptions of Adult Learning Theory to guide self-reflection

and support engagement in professional development activities. Principals as adult learners must not rely on district or organizational professional development as the sole source of leadership development. Principals must take individual ownership of their growth and take the time to reflect on their professional development needs. The process of analysis, reflection, and action must be continual. Principals must hold themselves accountable to identify problems, make their practice public to colleagues, and take an inquiry stance (Dunne et al., 2000).

Third, the assumptions and concepts of Adult Learning Theory and the characteristics of adult learners indicated that adults are internally motivated, self-directed, practical, and results-oriented. Thus, principals have to develop the skill to reflect on, identify, and seek internal and external resources needed to identify and support their leadership needs. Being able to identify and succinctly voice their needs to the district and to peers aids in engagement and growth. Since adults are less open-minded and resistant to change, pointed dialogue with peers and district supervisors may precipitate actionable changes to their leadership practices while promoting a sense of support through professional development that was lacking by the participants in this study. Change will begin to occur as principals learn to describe, discuss, and adjust their practices according to a collectively held standard of professional quality (Little, 2003).

Fourth, not only must they reflect, but principals must also find the time to build effective networks of support. By receiving help and support from leveled peers, principal efficacy may improve as it creates a community of principals working to ensure improve school outcomes. Furthermore, by seeking out, accessing, and creating informal

peer network groups, principals can take advantage of Adult Learning Theory and characteristics of adult learners by utilizing professional experiences and knowledge as a resource to improve practice and promote positive principal efficacy. Acknowledgement by and from peers supports a feeling of well-being and professional respect—yet another assumption and characteristic that adults like to be respected, which supports and helps motivate adult learners.

The data further demonstrated that the establishment of networks allows principals to gather, focus, and commit to their professional growth. For networks to be successful, they must focus on sharing leadership best practices and organizational strategies to improve leadership competencies and reinforce effective leadership practices. Once principals build a network and start working together, the benefits are huge. It reduces that sense of isolation that participants had, and increases their mutual support of each other, their collegiality. They share the workload and they share their responsibility for improving school outcomes (Garrett, 2010). Reducing the cycle of isolation will aid principals by increasing capacity to execute multi-level responsibilities, promote efficacy by building trust with peers, and increase the opportunity to cope more satisfyingly with increased responsibilities of the principalship.

Overall, employing the ideas of Adult Learning Theory and the Characteristics of Adult Learners will foster principal (adult) learning, improve principal professional efficacy, and improve outcomes for high school principals. The concepts will help principals move away from abstract discussions and lack of engagement and move to effective and efficient interactions with professional development. Improving how

principals interact with professional development and how districts create and implement effective professional development will support a changed educational paradigm by improving both the leadership skills of practicing principals, the effectiveness of the professional development, and offer an opportunity to improve school outcomes.

Recommendations for School Districts

High school principals face student populations that must learn complex and analytical skills needed for the 21st century, and must exhibit the tenacity to change the paradigm of principal professional development. But they cannot do it alone. School districts must offer more effective structures for collaborative and collegial professional development learning environments. It is important that districts find strategies that will create job-embedded opportunities for principals to share best practices, become highly reflective, and acknowledge and respect each other's experiences. If they are able to authentically view adult learning as a continuous process, district professional development can provide an intensive, content-rich, and collegial learning environment that will support the leadership skills of practicing principals and improve student outcomes.

Districts must model, train, and build consensus with their principals about the content, context, and design of district professional development. Professional development must have substantive and specific dialogue that is grounded in a cycle of questioning, reflecting on evidence, and taking action (Nelson, Deuel, Slavit, & Kennedy, 2010). Furthermore, the data suggested that when the district ensures that professional development programming is coherent, focused on leadership expectations and norms,

focused on specific district and school goals, and rooted in active learning protocols, it would support principal efficacy.

Participants understood that there are always going to be survival days in the job, but as a whole, principals cannot operate professionally in survival mode as they address school outcomes, their professional leadership growth, and their professional efficacy if they expect to have longevity in the job. They expressed deep frustrations with their districts and criticized their districts for not providing consistent professional development with any systemic follow through. When asked of their most positive experience in their district, eight of the principals could not identify a single one. They highlighted that year after year, it is no different—they were given their professional development goals by the district based on school data without any consideration to their individual professional development needs or aligned to the individual characteristics of their schools. If districts do not change current practices, principal improvement will continue to be an isolated and frustrating affair.

Principal Professional Development Networks and Site Visits

Districts must accept Fredrick M. Hess's (2009) challenge to look outside the confines of K-12 education beyond the narrow focus of traditional educational leadership and explore alternative options for professional development; formal principal professional networks and site visits will fit the bill. This job-embedded professional development will provide principals with the tools to improve the outcomes of their schools, promote formal and informal networking, and improve principal professional capacity and efficacy while also offering a professional development tool to meet the

expanding responsibilities of the high school principal. The study has reinforced that job-embedded professional learning environments for principals through principal networks offer more effective structures for collaborative and collegial learning environments. The formation of collaborative professional networks for principals can help systemically improve professional development programming for principals.

The district must support principal professional development by enabling them to focus on individualized problems of practice that can include a leadership skill set or a school level issue/goal fostered on the ideas, concepts, and protocols of professional learning communities. District professional development must also focus on implementing organizational process and protocols that align district goals and school level goals. Network activities can serve as a way to share and reflect on one's leadership practices with colleagues while providing an opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with peers—relationships founded on trust, shared experiences, and professional and personal supports. Network activities will create job-embedded opportunities for principals to share best practices, become highly reflective, and acknowledge and respect each other's experiences while viewing adult learning as a continuous process.

Prior to introducing the Principal Professional Development Networks and site visits to principals, districts must consider procedural factors when making preparations for conducting network activities. What type of staff development timeline will you have for full implementation? What will be the composition of the networks and site visits? What will be the expected outcomes for principals?

A Model for Principal Professional Development

Rome was not built in a day, and with this understanding, districts will not have full implementation of the model in year one. The first year will allow the district to introduce, train, and conduct in-depth research on the new professional development model with its principals while maintaining a focus on improving principal leadership, school outcomes, and principal efficacy. Moreover, the first year will provide the district with an opportunity to survey principal needs and study the academic, demographic, and culture and climate needs of its high schools. The first year must involve consistent opportunities for district collection of principal input and analysis of school level needs needed to continue implementation and foster principal ownership and feedback on Principal Professional Development Networks.

Monthly district principal meetings activities in year one must provide principals with training on the professional norms of small group networks, provide reflection on district and school data, offer monthly literature investigation activities outside of formal meetings, and allow for monthly informal network discussion among principals with the use of technology such as Skype as a supplement between formal meetings. The creation of feedback opportunities accompanied by consistent and accountable professional development will begin to support the foundations of Adult Learning Theory for effective and efficient principal professional development such as adult learners are goal oriented, relevancy oriented, and like to be respected while participating in professional growth activities (Cercione, 2008; Fidishun, 2000; Knowles et al., 2014; Merriam et al., 2012).

The following summer, the district will conduct intensive training of principals through summer-mandated professional development days. The district will release learning activity programming for the following calendar year in early July to its principals. Learning activity programming must include the release of the small group network clusters (that will initially meet at the district summer institute), district principal professional development dates and resources, and provide a calendar of two site visits per nine-week period in year two of implementation. The district will ensure that small group network clusters have opportunities to discuss problems of practice at each monthly principal meeting agenda (September-May) utilizing the protocols of professional learning communities and collaborative principal rounds networks while also completing a debrief for the following months site visit. The site visits will be hosted the second half of the scheduled district professional development day.

In preparation for the site visit, the host principal will prepare an agenda for participants that will include a debrief on the principal's leadership philosophy, the background of the school (culture/climate), school level data, and the problem(s) of practice that will be observed. By providing background information, the principal will provide perspective and context for the visit. This also allows for participants to ask for clarification of desired outcomes and to discuss what interactive role with students and teachers, if any, they may play. The visit may serve multiple purposes including feedback on what the principal identifies as individual leadership concerns, school goals, organizational structures, and instructional programming. The debrief will conclude with a summary on the 3-5 questions of practice that the participants will use to guide

observation and reflection that relates back to a specific problem(s) of practice and allows participants as adult learners (Adult Learning Theory) to bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences.

The visitation team next observes a minimum of three classes. The primary goal of observation teams is to collect meaningful data without disrupting the learning, forcing team members to set aside their ingrained notions of school and classroom visits. Additionally, observers speak with students and staff, at appropriate times during the visit, since this is often one of the best ways to understand what is occurring.

The final two steps of the site visit are the post-visit debrief and the recommendations for next steps based on the initial 3-5 questions to foster reflection based on problems of practice initiated by the host principal. Multiple types of protocols may lead the dialogue, ensuring that feedback emphasizes observations focusing on and illustrating principal learning. Specifically, the debrief protocols will focus on what is observed and heard as indications of problems of practice, leadership style, organizational structures, and academic programming understanding. Comments during debrief protocols should be descriptive, examining the questions.

In addition, to help facilitate the success of the model, district monthly professional development programming must reinforce professional norms for peer review to aid principals to go beyond the “land of nice” (Fowler-Finn, 2013, p. 73) and more into a culture of change (City et al., 2009). Principals must practice the skills of observations and debriefing as they consider alternative approaches addressing the question, “What might be done differently and why?” The juxtaposition of what was

actually observed to what ideally would be observed with the highest, most rigorous learning taking place provides the basis for generation of the “next level of work” for the principal and eventually for the entire network (Fowler-Finn, 2013, p. 7).

The key to implementation during year two will be principal interaction with the model, follow-up district lead professional development activities, and accountability through reflective feedback during the year that will include an end of the year survey. At this point, the districts must work with all feedback in preparation for year three programming.

Composition of Networks

Principal Professional Development Networks must be structured to meet the professional development goals to provide sustained, job-embedded opportunities for collaborative learning strategies while ensuring districts empower their principals with skills to perpetuate a continual process of identifying needs, developing response strategies, and evaluating results (Garrett, 2010). By providing ongoing opportunities for collegial work, principals learn, try, and reflect on new practices in a specific context and share individual knowledge and expertise (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

The district must take the time to create clusters principals. Cluster size would be dependent upon the size of the district. Clusters must include leveled principals from schools that share characteristics including approximate size, demographics, and academic performance levels. This effort will demonstrate district commitment to the mission and goals of its schools and promote shared responsibility for school successes. It will also support the professional development of district principals by increasing

efficacy and morale while supporting significant growth and lasting changes to the leadership practices of district principals.

In sum, Principal Professional Development Networks and site visits will help complement and sustain principal professional development by creating fundamental change in the districts approach to principal professional development. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) acknowledge that forming functional networks is often slow and fraught with conflicts, silences, and misunderstandings. However, by continuously working through and reflecting on these challenges creates avenues for an educational community to emerge. Principals will gradually begin to accept shared responsibility for individual growth, form a group identity and norms of interaction, and learn to use difference and conflict productively (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001).

Expected Outcomes

The benefits of Principal Professional Development Networks and site visits include creating learning communities of highly reflective leaders. It acknowledges and respects a principal's experience, and views adult learning as a continuous process. Since the site visits are job embedded and are collaborative and reflective in nature, the professional development opportunity to compare practices with like schools in the network and the subsequent self-reflection will distinguish Principal Professional Development Networks from previously employed district professional development activities. Furthermore, this type of professional development programming is a collegial way to share, understand, and reflect on leadership practice, school structures, and both

district and school expected outcomes. They provide an opportunity for principals to focus together on specific practices before, during, and after they occur.

Conclusion

Effective and efficient professional development for principals is essential for supporting improved outcomes for the schools they lead, building leadership capacity, improving principal professional efficacy, and stemming high principal turnover rates. As school leaders, principals must place emphasis and focus on understanding their professional development needs. They must embrace their role in improving school outcomes and in creating a culture of professional improvement. The failure to do so will negatively impact principal performance. High expectations and opportunities for reflection and collaboration through effective and efficient professional development are necessary to personalize and modify professional development programming.

I contend that effective and efficient professional development of secondary principals through individual principal reflection on the characteristics of adult learning and Adult Learning Theory, paired with district Principal Professional Development Networks can sustain principal professional growth by creating fundamental changes in the way principals approach their professional practice. Effective and efficient professional development initiatives must place emphasis on the formation of collaborative professional cultures. The encouragement, expertise, and support of colleagues in the learning community through Principal Professional Development Networks and a cycle of site visits will support principal resiliency and professional growth. For when districts support principals with well-designed and rich professional

development, principals are able to create the same types of rigorous and engaging opportunities in the communities they lead.

Sustained focus on the essential professional development needs of principals will be in large part the responsibility of the individual principal. However, this must be augmented by the responsibility of the district to provide effective and efficient professional development that offers sustained opportunities to improve leadership competencies and provide networks for principals to receive constructive feedback about their leadership practices, school organizational management, and academic processes and protocols. When a cycle of reflection and feedback can be implemented in a district, it will change how principals interact with and engage in professional development to create and sustain a change in the current paradigm. By building a culture of professional development that is consistently offered and holding principals accountable through collaborative discussions with networks—focused on principal individual leadership needs—and on improving school outcomes can systematically change how principals accept and genuinely interact with professional development opportunities. For when principals sense that this initiative is part of a systemic change in how professional development will be conducted in the district, principals will feel an ownership and connection to professional development activities.

REFERENCES

- Aceves, M. A. (2013). *Schools of education in a new era of accountability: A case study of an annual report process used to advance a professional learning community* (Doctoral dissertation, Loyola Marymount University). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1239&context=etd>
- American Institutes for Research. (2011). *Reauthorizing ESEA: Making research relevant—School turnaround: A pocket guide*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Ang, A. (2002). An eclectic review of the multidimensional perspectives of employee involvement. *The TQM Magazine*, 14(3), 192–200.
- Barry, D. (2004). *Wisdom for a young CEO: Incredible letters and inspiring advice from today's business leaders*. Philadelphia, PA: Running Press.
- Bennis, W. (2009). *On becoming a leader*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bichsel, J. A. (2008). *Professional development needs and experiences of secondary principals in southwestern Pennsylvania* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh). Retrieved from http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7756/1/JBichsel_ETD_2008_Final2.pdf
- Bineham, S. C. (2014). *Knowledge and skills essential for secondary campus-based administrators to appropriately serve students with special needs* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas). Retrieved from

<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/26056/BINEHAM-DISSERTATION-2014.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

- Bizzell, B. E. (2011). *Professional development of school principals in the rural Appalachian region of Virginia* (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University). Retrieved from http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-03202011-093016/unrestricted/Bizzell_BE_D_2011.pdf
- Blank, R., & de las Alas, N. (2009). *Effects of teacher professional development on gains in student achievement*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.
- Bottoms, G., & Schmidt-Davis, J. (2010). The three essentials: Improving schools requires district vision, district and state support, and principal leadership. *Southern Region Education Board (SREB)*. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Three-Essentials-to-Improving-Schools.pdf>
- Boud, D., & Hager, P. (2012). Re-thinking continuing professional development through changing metaphors and location in professional practices. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 34(1), 17–30.
- Bransford, J., Brown, A., & Cocking, R. (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience and school*. Washington, DC: Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council.
- Brubaker, D. L., & Coble, L. D. (2004). *The hidden leader: Leadership lessons on the potential within*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

- Burk, R. D. (2012). *New building level leaders' perceptions: Experiences in the Pennsylvania inspired leadership's induction and mentoring program* (Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania). Retrieved from <http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1636&context=etd>
- Burke, W., Marx, G. E., & Lowenstein, E. (2012). Leading, leadership, and learning: Exploring new contexts for leadership development in emerging school environments. *Planning and Changing*, 43(1/2), 113.
- Bush, T., Kiggundu, E., & Moorosi, P. (2011). Preparing new principals in South Africa: the ACE: School leadership Programme. *South African Journal of Education*, 31(1), 31-43.
- Byrnes, M. A., & Baxter, J. (2006). *The principal's leadership counts!: Launch a Baldrige-based quality school*. Milwaukee, WI: Quality Press.
- Campbell, C., & Gross, B. (2012). *Principal concerns: Leadership data and strategies for states*. Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education. Retrieved from <http://www.crpe.org/publications/principal-concerns-leadership-data-and-strategies-states>
- Cercone, K. (2008). Characteristics of adult learners with implications for online learning design. *AACE Journal*, 16(2), 137–159. Chesapeake, VA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE).
- City, E. A., Elmore, R. F., Fiarman, S. E., & Teitel, L. (2009). *Instructional rounds in education: A network approach to improving teaching and learning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

- Coble, L. (2005). *Lessons learned from experience: A practical developmental source book for educational leaders*. On Track Press.
- Collins, J. C. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap . . . and others don't*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Cowan, J., & Hensley, J. (2012). Preparing and supporting principals in rural South Dakota schools. In K. Sanzo, S. Myran, & A. H. Normore (Eds.), *Successful school leadership preparation and development* (Advances in Educational Administration, Vol. 17, pp. 137–151). Emerald Group Publishing.
- Cowie, M., & Crawford, M. (2007). Principal preparation: Still an act of faith? *School Leadership and Management*, 27(2), 129–146. doi:10.1080/13632430701237198
- Cray, M., & Weiler, S. C. (2011). Principal preparedness: Superintendent perceptions of new principals. *Journal of School leadership*, 21(6), 927–945.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Croft, A., Cogshall, J. G., Dolan, M., & Powers, E. (2010). *Job-embedded professional development: What it is, who is responsible, and how to get it done well*. Issue Brief. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. Retrieved from <https://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/jobembeddedpdbrief.pdf>
- Crowley, E. P. (2010). Using qualitative methods in special education research. *Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal*, 5(2), 55–69. doi:10.1207/s15327035ex0502_1

- Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (2011). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(6), 81–92.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Richardson, N. (2009). Research review/teacher learning: What matters. *Educational leadership*, 66(5), 46–53.
- Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., & Meyerson, D. (2005). *School leadership study: Developing successful principals (Review of Research)*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.
- Deal, T., & Peterson, K. (2000). *The leadership paradox*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Deffenbaugh, M. D. (2016, February). Adult Learning Theory: Time to recognize the Marine Corps has grown up. *Marine Corps Gazette*, 100(2), 47–51.
- Drago-Severson, E. (2012). New opportunities for principal leadership: Shaping school climates for enhanced teacher development. *Teachers College Record*, 114(3), 1–44.
- DuBois, L. (2012). Principals' leadership and leadership principles: Creating professional development to help today's principals excel at leading teachers and schools. *Peabody Reflector*, Summer 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/magazines/peabody-reflector/2012/07/principals-leadership-and-leadership-principles/>
- Duignan, P. (2012). *Educational leadership: Together creating ethical learning environments*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- DuFour, R. (2004). What is a “professional learning community”? *Educational Leadership*, 61(8), 6–11.
- DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (Eds.). (2010). *On common ground: The power of professional learning communities*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- Duncan, H., Range, B., & Scherz, S. (2011). From professional preparation to on-the-job development: What do beginning principals need? *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 6(3), 1–20. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ974249.pdf>
- Duncan, H. E., & Stock, M. J. (2010). Mentoring and coaching rural school leaders: What do they need? *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 18(3), 293–311. doi:10.1080/13611267.2010.492947
- Dunne, F., Nave, B., & Lewis, A. (2000). Critical friends: teachers helping to improve student learning. *Phi Delta Kappa International Research Bulletin*, 28, 9–12.
- Elmore, R. F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute.
- Elmore, R. F. (2002). *Bridging the gap between standards and achievement: The imperative for professional development in education*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute.
- Engelhart, E. F. (2012). *The relationship of servant leadership on teacher satisfaction and teacher retention* (Doctoral dissertation, Lindenwood University).

- Every Student Succeeds Act: A Progress Report on Elementary and Secondary Education. (2015, December). Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/ESSA_Progress_Report.pdf
- Fenwick, L. T., & Pierce, M. C. (2002). *Professional development of principals*. ERIC Digest.
- Fidishun, D. (2000, April). Andragogy and technology: Integrating adult learning theory as we teach with technology. *Proceedings of the 2000 Mid-South Instructional Technology Conference*. Murfreesboro, TN: Middle Tennessee State University. Retrieved from <http://www.mtsu.edu/~itconf/proceed00/fidishun.htm>
- Fink, E., & Resnick, L. B. (2001). Developing principals as instructional leaders. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(8), 598–610.
- Fogarty, R., & Pete, B. (2009). Professional learning 101: A syllabus of seven protocols. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(4), 32–34.
- Fowler-Finn, T. (2013). *Leading instructional rounds in education: A facilitator's guide*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Fullan, M. (2014a). *Leading in a culture of change personal action guide and workbook*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2014b). *The principal: Three keys to maximizing impact*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Garrett, K. (2010). Professional learning communities allow a transformational culture to take root. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review*, 76(2), 4–9.

- Gill, J. (2012). Strength training: Aspiring principals need fortified programs to prepare them for the challenges they face. *Journal of Staff Development*, 33(6), 24–31.
http://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/educ/TP_Prep_StrengthTrainingPrincipals.pdf
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15–31.
- Gonzalez, R. A., & Firestone, W. A. (2013). Educational tug-of-war: Internal and external accountability of principals in varied contexts. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(3), 383–406.
- Gorton, R., Alston, J. A., & Snowden, P. (2007). *School leadership & administration: Important concepts, case studies, & simulations* (7th ed.) Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Grant, R. (2016). *Experiences of early career business professionals who transition to education administration through the broad residency* (Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University). Retrieved from <https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/27112685/GRANT-DISSERTATION-2016.pdf?sequence=1>
- Griffin, C. (2004). The advantages and limitations of qualitative research in psychology and education. *Scientific Annals of the Psychological Society of Northern Greece*, 2, 3–15.

- Grissom, J. A., & Loeb, S. (2011). Triangulating principal effectiveness how perspectives of parents, teachers, and assistant principals identify the central importance of managerial skills. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(5), 1091–1123.
- Gronn, P., & Ribbins, P. (2003). Evolving formations: The making of secondary school principals on selected small islands. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 31(2), 76–94.
- Grossman, P., Wineburg, S., & Woolworth, S. (2001). Toward a theory of teacher community. *Teacher College Record*, 103(6), 942–1012.
- Hale, E., & Moorman, H. (2003). *Preparing school principals: A national perspective on policy and program innovations*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.
- Haller, A., Hunt, E., Pacha, J., & Fazekas, A. (2015). *Lessons for states: The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) increases focus on and investment in supporting principal preparation and development*. Retrieved from Center for the Study of Education Policy, Illinois State University website.
- Hallinger, P., Lee, M., & Ko, J. (2014). Exploring the impact of school principals on teacher professional communities in Hong Kong. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 13(3), 229–259.
- Hardin, J. (2010). *A study of social cognitive theory: The relationship between professional learning communities and collective teacher efficacy in international school settings* (Doctoral dissertation, Capella University). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/594651692>

- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2012). *Sustainable leadership* (Vol. 6). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Harris, S. L. (2006). Best practices of award-winning public school principals: Implications for university preparation programs. *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, 3(2), 30–41.
- Haslam, M. B., & Fabiano, L. (2001). *A comprehensive review of professional development in South Carolina*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.
- Hatfield, S. (2013). *Effectiveness of K-12 administrator preparation programs: A mixed method study* (Doctoral dissertation, Northwest Nazarene University).
- Hess, F. M. (2009). Cages of their own design. *Educational Leadership*, 67(2), 28–33.
- Hirsh, S. (2009). A new definition. *Journal of Staff Development: The Learning Forward Journal*, 30(4), 10–16.
- Hirsh, S., & Killion, J. (2007). *The learning educator: A new era for professional learning*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.
- Hoffmann, F. J., Johnston, J. H. (2005). Professional development for principals, by principals. *Leadership*, 34(5), 16–20.
- Honig, M. I. (2012). District central office leadership as teaching how central office administrators support principals' development as instructional leaders. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(4), 733–774.
- Houston, P. (2001). Superintendents for the 21st Century. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(6), 429–433.

- Howley, A., Chadwick, K., & Howley, C. (2002). Networking for the nuts and bolts: The ironies of professional development for rural principals. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 17(3), 171–187.
- Hussin, S., & Al Abri, S. (2015). Professional development needs of school principals in the context of educational reform. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 7(4), 90–97.
- Ibrahim, A., & Al-Taneiji, S. (2012). Principal leadership style, school performance, and principal effectiveness in Dubai schools. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 2(1), 41–54. <http://www.consortiacademia.org/index.php/ijrse/article/view/86/80>
- Inman, M. (2009). Learning to lead: development for middle-level leaders in higher education in England and Wales. *Professional Development in Education*, 35(3), 417–432.
- Jacobson, D. (2010). Coherent instructional improvement and PLCs: Is it possible to do both? *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(6), 38–45.
- Karlsson, J., & Skålén, P. (2015). Exploring front-line employee contributions to service innovation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 49(9/10), 1346–1365.
- Katz, S., & Dack, L. A. (2012). *Intentional interruption: Breaking down learning barriers to transform professional practice*. Corwin Press.
- Keith, D. L. (2008). *Principal desirability for professional development* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia). Retrieved from

http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=fac_dis

- Killion, J. (2002). *What works in high school: Results-based staff development*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.
- Kilmer, L., & Koenig, G. (2008). Job-embedded professional development for principals. *National forum of applied educational research journal*, 21(2), 4–23.
- Klein, A. (2015). ESEA reauthorization: The Every Student Succeeds Act explained. *Education Week*. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/11/esea_reauthorization_the_every.html
- Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2014). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Koelsch, L. E. (2013). Reconceptualizing the member check interview. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12(1), 168–179.
- Koons, D. C. (2004). *Applying adult learning theory to improve medical education*. (Master's thesis, University of Connecticut). Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/uchcgs_masters/51
- Kutash, J., Nico, E., Gorin, E., Rahmatullah, S., & Tallant, K. (2010). *The school turnaround field guide*. Boston, MA: FSG Social Impact Advisors. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/The-School-Turnaround-Field-Guide.pdf>

- Kythreotis, A., & Pashiardis, P. (2006, October). Exploring leadership role in school effectiveness and the validation of models of principals' effects on students' achievement. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237566807_EXPLORING_LEADERSHIP_ROLE_IN_SCHOOL_EFFECTIVENESS_AND_THE_VALIDATION_OF_MODELS_OF_PRINCIPALS%27_EFFECTS_ON_STUDENTS%27_ACHIEVEMENT
- Lauer, P. A., Dean, C. B., Martin-Glenn, M. L., & Asensio, M. L. (2005). Teacher quality toolkit. *Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED484546.pdf>
- Leeds, A. M. (2008). *Suffolk County elementary principals' perceptions of their needs for professional development in instructional leadership*. ProQuest.
- Leithwood, K., & Levin, B. (2008). Understanding and assessing the impact of leadership development. *International handbook on the preparation and development of school leaders*. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning: Review of research*. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Leithwood, K. A., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
- Levine, A. (2006). Educating school teachers. *Education Schools Project*.
- Li, D. (2012). *School accountability and principal mobility: How No Child Left Behind affects the allocation of school leaders*. Unpublished manuscript.

- Lichtman, M. (2012). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Little, J. W. (2003). Inside teacher community: Representations of classroom practice. *Teacher College Record*, 105(6), 913–945.
- Lorenz, K. (2007). *Top seven traits that lead to success*. Retrieved from careerbuilder.com
- Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K., & Anderson, S. (2010). *Investigating the links to improved student learning*. St. Paul, MN: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota & Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.
- Lunenburg, F. C., & Ornstein, A. C. (2011). *Educational administration: Concepts and practices*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Malik, M. (2016). Assessment of a professional development program on adult learning theory. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 16(1), 47–70.
- Margolis, J., & Doring, A. (2012). The fundamental dilemma of teacher leader-facilitated professional development: Do as I (kind of) say, not as I (sort of) do. *Educational Administration Quarterly*. doi:10.1177/0013161X12452563
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage.
- Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Matthews, L. J., & Crow, G. M. (2010). *The principalship: New roles in a professional learning community*. Prentice Hall.

- Mathibe, I. (2007). The professional development of school principals. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(3), 523–540.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McCray, K. H. (2016). Gallery educators as adult learners: The active application of adult learning theory. *Journal of Museum Education*, 41(1), 10–21.
- McNeal, B., & Oxholm, T. (2008). *A school district's journey to excellence: Lessons from business and education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Melnyk II, S. A. (2012). *What types of support programs have Pennsylvania school districts established to aid principals as building leaders?* (Doctoral dissertation, Lehigh University). Retrieved from <http://preserve.lehigh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2387&context=etd>
- Mendels, P. (2012). The effective principal. *Journal of Staff Development*, 33(1), 54–58.
- Mendels, P., & Mitgang, L. D. (2013). Creating strong principals. *Educational Leadership*, 70(7), 22–29.
- Merriam, S. B. (2001). Andragogy and self-directed learning: Pillars of adult learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2001(89), 3–14.
- Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2012). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Militello, M., Fusarelli, B., Alsbury, T., & Warren, T. P. (2013). How professional standards guide practice for school principals. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 27(1), 74–90.

- Militello, M., Gajda, R., & Bowers, A. J. (2009). The role of accountability policies and alternative certification on principals' perceptions of leadership preparation. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 4(3), 30–66.
- Mintrop, H. (2012). Bridging accountability obligations, professional values and (perceived) student needs with integrity. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 50(5), 695–726.
- Mitchell, C., & Sackney, L. (2011). *Profound improvement: Building capacity for a learning community*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mizell, H. (2010). *Why professional development matters*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.
- Moorosi, P., & Bush, T. (2011). School leadership development in Commonwealth countries: Learning across the boundaries. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 39(3), 59–75.
- Murphy, J., & Schiller, J. (1995). *Transforming America's schools: An administrator's call to action*. Open Court Publishing.
- National Policy Board for Educational Administration. (2015). *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*. Reston, VA: Author.
- National Staff Development Council. (2001). *Standards for staff development (Revised)*. Oxford, OH: Author. <http://www.nsde.org/standards.htm>
- Nelson, T., Deuel, A., Slavit, D., & Kennedy, A. (2010). Leading deep conversations in collaborative inquiry groups. *The Clearing House*, 83, 175–179.

- Nica, E. (2013). The importance of leadership development within higher education. *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice*, 5, 189.
- Nicholson, B., Harris-John, M., & Schimmel, C. (2005). *Professional development for principals in the accountability era*. Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory at Edvantia (NJ1).
- Opfer, V. D., & Pedder, D. (2011). Conceptualizing teacher professional learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(3), 376–407.
- Oplatka, L. (2009). Learning the principal's future internal career experiences in a principal preparation program. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 23(2), 129–144.
- Ouchi, W. G. (2009). *The secret of TSL: The revolutionary discovery that raises school performance*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Owen, J. (2014). *Managing education: The purpose and practice of good management in schools*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Pappas, C. (2013, May 8). *8 important characteristics of adult learners*. Retrieved from <https://elearningindustry.com/8-important-characteristics-of-adult-learners>
- Pashiardis, P., & Brauckmann, S. (2008). Evaluation of school principals. In J. Lumby, G. Crow, & P. Pashiardis (Eds.), *International handbook on the preparation and development of school leaders* (pp. 263–279). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Perez, L., Uline, C., Johnson, J., James-Ward, C., & Basom, M. (2011). Foregrounding fieldwork in leadership preparation: The transformative capacity of authentic inquiry. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47(1), 217–257.

- Peters, T. (2011). Immunity to change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization. *Journal of American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 50(2), 199–200.
- Petti, A. D. (2013). *Successful leaders beating the odds: Leveraging instructional rounds with professional development in school-university partnerships*. Ypsilanti, MI: NCPEA Publications.
- Pierce, D. (2016). *ESSA Redefines Professional Development for Teachers. Are you ready for this shift?* Retrieved from <http://www.schoolimprovement.com/essa-professional-development-for-teachers/>
- Pink, D. H. (2011). *Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us*. New York, NY: Penguin.
- Pontius, N. F. (2010). *Principal's desirability for professional development in competencies related to leading special education programs*. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest LLC.
- Prasse, D. P. (2008). *Leadership leadership leadership*. Retrieved from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/ri-blog/search/entry/1/6>
- Putman, R., & Borko, H. (2000). What do new views of knowledge and thinking have to say about research on teaching and learning? *Educational Researcher*, 29(1), 4–15.
- Riggins-Newby, C. G. (2004). A new look at leadership priorities. *PRINCIPAL-ARLINGTON*, 83(4), 8–9.

- Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research, 10*(2), 199–228.
- Rousmaniere, K. (2013). The principal: The most misunderstood person in all of education. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/11/the-principal-the-most-misunderstood-person-in-all-of-education/281223/>
- Salazar, P. S. (2007). The professional development needs of rural high school principals: A seven-state study. *The Rural Educator, 28*(3), 20–27. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ783878.pdf>
- Scher, L., & O'Reilly, F. (2009). Professional development for K-12 math and science teachers: What do we really know? *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2*(3), 209–249.
- School Improvement Network. (2013). *Job-embedded professional development*. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolimprovement.com/job-embedded-professional-development/>
- Sebastian, J., & Allensworth, E. (2012). The influence of principal leadership on classroom instruction and student learning: A study of mediated pathways to learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48*(4), 626–663.
- Senge, P. M., Scharmer, C. O., Jaworski, J., & Flowers, B. S. (2005). *Presence: An exploration of profound change in people, organizations, and society*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

- Shandor, V. D. (2011). *Analyzing school executive professional development in one suburban school district in North Carolina* (Doctoral dissertation, Wingate University). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/911792131>
- Shelton, S. V. (2009). *Strong leaders, strong schools: 2008 state laws*. Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Strong-Leaders-Strong-Schools-2008-State-Laws.pdf>
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for information*, 22(2), 63–75.
- Sherman, R., Gill, P., & Sherman, C. (2007). Soup du jour and so much more: A model for school preparation. *The AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, 4(3), 5–10.
- Smith, T. (2016, September 15). *States can help every student succeed*. Retrieved from <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2016-09-15/education-dept-is-micro-managing-the-every-student-succeeds-act>
- Spanneut, G., Tobin, J., & Ayers, S. (2012). Identifying the professional development needs of public school principals based on the interstate school leader licensure consortium standards. *NASSP Bulletin*, 96(1), 67–88.
- Sowell, E. J. (2001). *Educational research: An integrative introduction*. McGraw-Hill Humanities Social.

- Sparks, D. (2002). The development of principals and teacher leaders. *Designing Powerful Professional Development for Teachers and Principals* (pp. 8-1–8-6). Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.
- Sparks, D. (Ed.). (2006). *Leading for results: transforming teaching, learning and relationships in schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Sparks, D., & Hirsch, S. (2000). *Learning to lead, leading to learn*. Retrieved from http://lsc-net.terc.edu/do.cfm/paper/8295/show/use_set-admin.pdf
- Spillane, J. P., & Lee, L. C. (2013). Novice school principals' sense of ultimate responsibility problems of practice in transitioning to the principal's office. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 50(3).
- Stronge, J. H., Richard, H. B., & Catano, N. (2008). *Qualities of effective principals*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Suski, L. A. (2009). *School district administrators' perceptions of the quality of professional development in Pennsylvania's public school districts*. ProQuest.
- Tate, M. L. (2012). *"Sit and get" won't grow dendrites: 20 professional learning strategies that engage the adult brain*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Terrell, H. P. (2010). *The relationship of the dimensions of distributed leadership in elementary schools of urban districts and student achievement* (Doctoral dissertation, The George Washington University). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/89173311>
- Tirozzi, G. (2000, February 23). Our time has come: Principals may get a share of the federal pie. *Education Week*.

- Tucker, P. D., Henig, C. B., & Salmonowicz, M. J. (2005). Learning outcomes of an educational leadership cohort program. *Educational Considerations*, 32(2), 27–33.
- Turner III, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 754.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2009a). *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: Using ARRA funds provided through Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) to drive school reform and improvement*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/idea-b-reform.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2009b). *Guidance: Using Title I, Part A ARRA funds from grants to local educational agencies to strengthen education, drive reform, and improve results for students*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/titlei-reform.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2009c). *State fiscal stabilization fund* [website]. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/factsheet/stabilization-fund.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2010a). *Race to the top fund: Purpose* [Website]. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2010b). *School improvement fund: Purpose* [Website]. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>

- U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>
- Usdan, M., McCloud, B., & Podmostko, M. (2000). Leadership for student learning: Reinventing the principalship. *Institute for Educational Leadership, 1*, 24.
- Wallace, M. (2009). Making sense of the links: Professional development, teacher practices, and student achievement. *Teachers College Record, 111*(2), 573–596.
- Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). Retrieved from <http://www.mcrel.org/PDF/LeadershipOrganizationDevelopment/503IRRBalancedLeadership.pdf>
- Webster-Wright, A. (2009). Reframing professional development through understanding authentic professional learning. *Review of Educational Research, 79*(2), 702–739.
- West, D. L., Peck, C., & Reitzug, U. C. (2010). Limited control and relentless accountability: Examining historical changes in urban school principal pressure. *Journal of School Leadership, 20*(2), 238–266.
- West, D. L., Peck, C. M., Reitzug, U. C., & Crane, E. A. (2014). Accountability, autonomy and stress: Principal responses to superintendent change in a large US urban school district. *School Leadership & Management, 34*(4), 372–391.
- Whitaker, T. (2014). *Dealing with difficult teachers*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Whitaker, T., Whitaker, B., & Lumpa, D. (2013). *Motivating & inspiring teachers: The educational leader's guide for building staff morale*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Zavala, F. A. (2014). *Principals' perceptions of the most important components in an effective principal preparation program* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University). Retrieved from <http://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=dissertations>
- Zepeda, S. J. (2011). *Professional development: What works*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.
- Zepeda, S. J. (2012). *Instructional supervision: Applying tools and concepts*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.
- Zepeda, S. J., Parylo, O., & Bengtson, E. (2014). Analyzing principal professional development practices through the lens of adult learning theory. *Professional Development in Education*, 40(2), 295–315.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS CROSSWALK

Research Questions	Interview Questions for High School Principals
Essential professional development	When considering the size and scope of the principalship, what would you identify as the top three to five areas that practicing high school principals need or could benefit from professional development in to:
	A. Improve outcomes
	B. Improve efficacy
	C. Reduce turnover or attrition
Characteristics of effective and efficient professional development	D. What does a good principal need to know and be able to do?
	What do you perceive as the essential characteristics high quality professional development for principals?
	What characteristics of professional development empower principal learning?
	What characteristics negate principal's high quality professional development?
	When considering the professional development activities for principals that you have participated in within your district, what activities met your current professional development needs and improved your effectiveness as a leader?
	What kinds of supports have you sought and/or received in your role as a high school principal?
	What kinds of supports do you still need or seek in order to improve your effectiveness?
	What kinds of support or assistance do principals need as they work to apply the knowledge/skills they learned in professional development?
Preferred delivery models	In order to develop and/or grow essential leadership skills, what are three to five preferred professional development delivery models essential to your practice?
	What is the determining factor(s) for your leadership growth?
	What content is essential to your growth as a leader?
	What is the best delivery model(s) for you personally?
	Over the course of your career in administration, what has been your greatest professional development experience as principal? Why was it valuable?
Closing Question	Taking into consideration the role of the 21st century principal, what items and or topics have we failed to discuss as essential to the success of professional development for practicing principals?

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Question #1: What do high school principals identify as essential professional development to meet the growing demands of the principalship?

1. When considering the size and scope of the principalship, what would you identify as the top three to five areas that practicing high school principals need or could benefit from professional development in to:
 - a. Improve outcomes;
 - b. Improve efficacy;
 - c. Reduce turnover or attrition;
 - d. What does a good principal need to know and be able to do?

Research Question #2: What do high school principals identify as the characteristics of effective and efficient professional development?

2. What do you perceive as the essential characteristics high quality professional development for principals?
3. What characteristics of professional development empower principal learning?
4. What characteristics negate principal's high quality professional development?
5. When considering the professional development activities for principals that you have participated in within your district, what activities met your current professional development needs and improved your effectiveness as a leader?
6. What kinds of supports have you sought and/or received in your role as a high school principal?
7. What kinds of supports do you still need or seek in order to improve your effectiveness?
8. What kinds of support or assistance do principals need as they work to apply the knowledge/skills they learned in professional development?

Research Question #3: What do high school principals identify as preferred delivery models of professional development to improve the leadership of practicing principals?

9. In order to develop and/or grow essential leadership skills, what are three to five preferred professional development delivery models essential to your practice?
10. What is the determining factor(s) for your leadership growth?
11. What content is essential to your growth as a leader?
12. What is the best delivery model(s) for you personally?
13. Over the course of your career in administration, what has been your greatest professional development experience as principal? Why was it valuable?

Conclusion

14. Taking into consideration the size and scope of the high school principalship, are there any additional items, topics and/or comments that we did not cover that you would like to discuss or share as essential to the professional development for practicing principals?

APPENDIX C
RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Participant A:

This email is to invite your participation in a research project I am conducting in fulfillment of the requirements for a degree in Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The project is titled “Too Big to Fail: Principal Professional Development – Perceptions of Secondary Principals.”

I would like to sit down with you for approximately ninety minutes, as the method for my research is a quantitative interview study. As an educator, I know that your time is valuable and limited. Preferably, I would like to meet with you prior to Wednesday, May 31, 2017.

The hypothesis of the project is that effective efficient professional development for practicing principals is critical in a period of educational reform that exhibits increased accountability. I believe that continued investment in principal preparation and professional development is the key to moving schools and districts forward.

If you are willing to participate in this project or have any questions, please respond to this email at kashubp@gcsnc.com, or via telephone, 1-336-324-3636 in order to organize an interview date and time. I hope that you will consider participating.

Sincerely,

Pete Z. Kashubara II

APPENDIX D
TELEPHONE SCRIPT FOR RECRUITMENT

Good evening Participant A, my name is Pete Kashubara and I am the principal at Western Guilford High School. How are you this evening?

I am calling to invite your participation in a research project I am conducting in fulfillment of the requirements for a degree in Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The project is titled To Big to Fail: Principal Professional Development – Perceptions of Secondary Principals.

I would like to sit down with you for approximately ninety minutes, as the method for my research is a quantitative interview study. As an educator, I know that your time is valuable and limited. Preferably, I would like to meet with you prior to Wednesday, May 31, 2017.

The hypothesis of the project is that effective efficient professional development for practicing principals is critical in a period of educational reform that exhibits increased accountability. I believe that continued investment in principal preparation and professional development is the key to moving schools and districts forward.

What clarifying questions do you have prior to moving forward?

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this project. What is your availability to meet, as I would like to schedule a date and time that fits into your professional calendar?

If you have any additional questions or any conflicts arise with the scheduled date and time, please email me at kashubp@gsnc.com, or call me at 1-336-324-3636 in order to discuss.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate and I look forward to meeting with you.

Talk to you soon. Goodbye.

APPENDIX E
RECRUITMENT FOLLOW UP

Good evening Participant A, this is Pete Kashubara. How are you this evening?

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me. I am calling to confirm the data and time for our interview as I continue to pursue my dissertation.

Wanted to confirm that the interview will be completed in approximately ninety minutes.

I also wanted to confirm that you received the interview questions. I am interested in continuing my research as we discuss professional development for practicing principals. I believe that continued investment in principal preparation and professional development is the key to moving schools and districts forward.

Do you have any additional clarifying questions prior to moving forward?

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this project.

If you have any additional questions or any conflicts arise with the scheduled date and time, please email me at kashubp@gcsnc.com, or call me at 1-336-324-3636 in order to discuss.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate.

Have a good evening!

APPENDIX F**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS****UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO****CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT**

Project Title: **Principal Professional Development: Perceptions of Secondary Principals**

Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor: Pete Z. Kashubara II, Principal Investigator
Carl Lashley, EdD, Faculty Advisor

Participant's Name:

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. There may not be any direct benefit to you for being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies. If you choose not to be in the study or leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

What is the study about?

This is a research study. Your participation is voluntary. The purpose of this study to ascertain evidence from high school principals on their professional development needs, what they identify as effective and efficient characteristics of professional development, and preferred professional development models that support principals in carrying out their expanding role as principal, promote the professional growth and efficacy of the principal, and the overall success of the schools they lead.

Why are you asking me?

I am asking you to take part in this study because you are a practicing high school principal. This study includes approximately 16 practicing high school principals. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct an individual interview with you. The interview will include questions about your professional development experiences over the course of your administrative career. The interviews will be conducted on an individual basis at a location of your selection. The interviews will be conducted in approximately ninety minutes with any potential follow-up interview conversations lasting approximately twenty minutes at a location you prefer.

Is there any audio/video recording?

The interview will be audiotaped to ensure accuracy in transcribing your answers. Transcriptions, and any writings related to this study, will use pseudonyms for you, your school, and the school district. On any audio recorded file there is a possibility that voices will be recognized, however these recordings will be password protected and kept in a secure location. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the tape, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will limit access to the tape as described in this consent form.

What are the risks to me?

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. There are no known risks to participants in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. If you have questions, want more information, or have suggestions: The researcher conducting this study is Pete Z. Kashubara II. Please ask any questions you have before, during, and after the study. You may contact Pete Z. Kashubara II, 336.324.3636, pzkashub@uncg.edu. You may also contact the faculty advisor, Carl Lashley at 336.334.3745 or carl.lashley@gmail.com. If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study please contact the **Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at 855.251.2351**.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?

The information gleaned from you and other participants may help determine if there is alignment of needs, effective and efficient characteristics, and preferred delivery models and make recommendations on ways for shared, common, and collaborative professional

development practices that may improve the outcomes for principals, improve efficacy, and stem high principal turnover rates.

Are there any benefits to *me* for taking part in this research study?

There are no direct benefits to participants.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study. All participants will be entered into a drawing for one of four \$10 gift cards.

How will you keep my information confidential?

The records of this study will be kept private and electronic files will be secured utilizing the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Box software. Pseudonyms will be used in all written publications or presentations of the data. A master list of all participants' names and their corresponding pseudonyms will be created and kept in a separate document. This document along with all research records will be kept on password protected computers and locked filing cabinets; only the researcher will have access to the records. The master list will be an entirely separate document from the interview data document. This list will be stored completely separate from the data on a completely separate password protected computer and completely separate locked filing cabinet from the interview data. Once interviews are transcribed the list will be destroyed. The audiotape of your interview will be destroyed once it has been transcribed, which I anticipate will be within two months of it's taping. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

What if I want to leave the study?

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with the researcher or your school district as all answers and level of participation will be kept confidential. If you decide to take part in the study, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state. The investigator also has the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

What about new information/changes in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you read, or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.

APPENDIX G

UNCG IRB APPROVAL



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY
2718 Beverly Cooper Moore and Irene Mitchell Moore
Humanities and Research Administration Bldg.
PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
336.256.0253
Web site: www.uncg.edu/orc
Federalwide Assurance (FWA) #216

To: Pete Kashubara
Ed Ldrship and Cultural Found
pete.z.kashubara.ii@gmail.com

From: UNCG IRB

Date: 3/28/2017

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption (modification)

Exemption Category: 2.Survey, interview, public observation

Study #: 16-0282

Study Title: Principal Professional Development--Perceptions of Secondary Principals

This submission has been reviewed by the IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is alignment of needs, effective and efficient characteristics, and preferred delivery models that may improve outcomes for practicing principals, cultivate principal efficacy, and stem high turnover rates.

Modification Information:

I made a minor change to the Project Title.

I have made a change to the second of three research questions. This change will impact the wording of the purpose of the study and attached interview questions.

Attachments: Recruitment Follow-up Script; Telephone Script for Recruitment, Recruitment email, and Consent form do not match A.4.2 design of approximately ninety minutes. I will make correction to the documents.

Changes will be made to B.1.2 by removing the experience qualifier and adding additional descriptors.

I will be attaching the pdf approval documentation to proceed from the District I will be working.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Please be aware that any changes to your protocol must be reviewed by the IRB prior to being implemented. Please utilize the most recent and approved version of your consent form/information sheet when enrolling participants. The IRB will maintain records for this study for three years from the date of the original determination of exempt status.

Signed letters, along with stamped copies of consent forms and other recruitment materials will be scanned to you in a separate email. **Stamped consent forms must be used unless the IRB**

has given you approval to waive this requirement. Please notify the ORI office immediately if you have an issue with the stamped consents forms.

Please be aware that valid human subjects training and signed statements of confidentiality for all members of research team need to be kept on file with the lead investigator. Please note that you will also need to remain in compliance with the university "Access To and Retention of Research Data" Policy which can be found at http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/research_data/.

CC:

Carl Lashley, Ed Ldrship and Cultural Found

APPENDIX H
DISTRICT IRB APPROVAL

March 17, 2017

Pete Kashubara
3613 Tagus Drive
Greensboro, NC 27410

Re: 161726

Dear Pete Kashubara:

I am pleased to inform you that your proposal *Principal Professional Development – Perceptions of Secondary Principals* has cleared the district's Research Review process and meets the requirements of state legislation and the current research policy of [REDACTED].

Approval does not guarantee access to schools or to individuals, nor does it imply that a study can or will be conducted. School principals make the final decision regarding their participation in the research. Participants decide independently whether they wish to consent to participate and they may withdraw at any time. It is expected that the identities of individuals, schools, and the district will remain anonymous throughout all stages of the research.

Please present this letter upon initial contact with principals. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Chair, Research Review committee

APPENDIX I

ALIGNMENT CROSSWALK OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS, THREADS, AND CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED

Research Question	Threads	Categories Identified
Essential professional development	Improve Professional Outcomes	School Culture
		Curriculum
		Budget
		Instructional Coaching
		Data Analysis
	Improved Principals Efficacy <ul style="list-style-type: none">Skills of Leadership	Organizational Management
		Empowerment
		Managing Adults
		Administrative Team Development
	Size and Scope of Professional Development Needs	Legislative and Legal Updates
Human Resources Skill Development		
Student Mental Health Issues		
Characteristics of effective and efficient professional development	Essential Characteristics of High Quality Professional Development	Principal as Participant
		Relevant and Realistic
		Principal Voice
		Formal and Informal Networks
		Cyclical Professional Development
		Presenters Role
	Factors that Negate Effective and Efficient Professional Development	Principal as Participant
		Timeliness
		Funding and Support
		Lack of Transparency
		Time Restraints and Follow Through
		Diversity of Needs
	Positive Local Educational Agencies/District Experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none">Five examples	Lack of Offerings, Access, and Support
		Feedback Opportunities in a Retribution-free Environment
		Relevant and Timely Content
		Principals Choice

Research Question	Threads	Categories Identified
Preferred delivery models	Preferred Professional Development Delivery Models	Collaborative Networks
		Small Group, Leveled Experiences
		Job-Embedded
		Professional Learning Communities
		Professional Organizational Structures

APPENDIX J

HIGHLIGHTED AREAS OF ESSENTIAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ORDER TO EXECUTE THE ROLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Student Populations	Day-to-Day Operations	Administrative Protocols
Exceptional Children	Conflicts between Parents	<i>Legislative and Legal Updates</i>
Academically Gifted Students	Conflicts between Teachers	Marketing
<i>Mental Health</i>	Conflicts between Students	Interpretation of Surveys
English as a Second Language	Conflicts between Students/Teachers/Parents	Recruitment and Retention
Cultural Diversity	Conflicts in the Community	Public Relations
Closing the Achievement Gap	Athletics	<i>Service Learning and Character Education</i>
Social and Emotional Development of Children	<i>Human Resource Skills</i>	History of the District
Improving Outcomes for African American Males	Effective Communication	Technology
Students with Low Socio-Economic Status	Literacy	Processes and Protocols
Student Gender and Sexuality Identifications	Engaging Classrooms	Vision and Mission creation and Communication
	Crisis Training	Training and Partnerships for Next Level Positions
	Discipline and Discipline Models	Legislation Interpretation and Implementation
	Management and Decision Making	Building Successful Administrative Teams

Student Populations	Day-to-Day Operations	Administrative Protocols
	Multiple Intelligences	Professional Development tied to the Accountability Model
	Leading the Professional Learning Community process	Building Community Internally and Externally
	Building Common Assessments	Vertical Alignment in Feeder Pattern Programming
		Flipped/Blended Faculty Meeting Models

APPENDIX K

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-assessment	Intentional focus	Implementation
Relevant and realistic	Choice	Follow-through
Formal networking	On-going	Reflective
Informal networking	Targeted	Research based
Provides resources	Individualized	Collaborative
Timeliness	Length of time	Motivational
Job-embedded	Linked to District goals	Linked to school goals

APPENDIX L

FACTORS THAT HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON EFFICIENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Principals' receptiveness	Lack of transparency on topics and activities	Lack of individualization for principal needs
Timing (Calendar)	Physical time restraints during activities	Lack of individualization according to school needs
Timeliness of topics	Lack of follow through	Lack of offerings, access to, and support
Funding	One-size-fits-all—flavor of the month	Theoretical and lacking relevance
Lack of Choice and Voice	Not Job Embedded	Size and Scope of the Job—isolation

APPENDIX M

PREFERRED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY MODELS

Job-Embedded <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Coaches • Mentors • Site visits
Professional Learning Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveled/Cohort Based • Scenario Based • Feedback and Follow-through • Formal and Informal Networking • Formal District Organization
Professional Organizational Structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Creative Leadership • Chamber of Commerce and community activities • Speakers programming • North Carolina Principal and Assistant Principal Association (NCPAPA) • Association for Secondary Curriculum Development (ASCD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State Level ○ National Level • National Model Schools Conference
Additional Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unscripted meeting time during district training • Professional Journals • Virtual Resources and Trainings • Flipped/Blended Professional Learning

APPENDIX N

COMPARISONS OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTIVE COACH CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic of an Effective Executive Coach	Characteristic of Effective Professional Development
Experienced and has the capacity to be an effective teacher and confident	Someone who has walked in their shoes; choice, relevance; provides resources; implementation; follow-through; ongoing
Regular bi-weekly and/or monthly meetings to provide real time feedback and encouragement	Consistent; implementation; ongoing; follow-through; job-embedded; collaborative
A person who genuinely has a principal's best interest at heart	Support growth; reflective; build relationships; motivational
A person who knows the organizational structure, protocols, and procedures of the district	Someone who has walked in their shoes; relevance; linked to district goals; linked to school goals
Overview provided for the year with corresponding topics	Relevant; intentional focus; correlates to school and principal growth goals; follow-through

APPENDIX O

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS FOR PRINCIPALS AND ADULT LEARNING THEORY CROSSWALK

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS FOR PRINCIPALS AND ADULT LEARNING THEORY CROSSWALK		Knowles's Six Principles of Adult Learning					
		Adults are internally motivated and self-directed	Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences	Adults are goal oriented	Adults are relevancy oriented	Adults are practical	Adult learning like to be respected
Essential Professional Development Needs	Tailored to individual needs and geared to leadership role	What do you see as major issues facing principals today?					If your staff was asked why you were hired, what skill sets would they highlight?
	Connected to building level goals						
	Support that is up-to-date with developments in the education and training fields			What does a good principal need to know and be able to do?	When considering the size and scope of the principalship, what would you identify as areas that practicing principals need PD?		
	Focusing on how to address the changing conditions and characteristics of children						

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS FOR PRINCIPALS AND ADULT LEARNING THEORY CROSSWALK		Knowles's Six Principles of Adult Learning					
		Adults are internally motivated and self-directed	Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences	Adults are goal oriented	Adults are relevancy oriented	Adults are practical	Adult learning like to be respected
Characteristic s of Effective Professional Development	Occurs within a professional learning community						
	Job-embedded – integrated into the workday				In your judgment, what are essential characteristics of PD programming that would improve your efficacy when participating?		
	Relevant and sustained – receive follow-up support and feedback		When considering the PD activities for principals in your district, what activities met your current PD needs and effectiveness as a leader?				
	Focused on specific goals			What are descriptors you would offer to describe the shortcomings of and limit the effectiveness of current PD for principals?		When you imagine high quality PD, how is it delivered?	In order to develop essential leadership skills, what are your preferred delivery models of PD you feel are essential to improve your practice?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS FOR PRINCIPALS AND ADULT LEARNING THEORY CROSSWALK		Knowles Six Principles of Adult Learning					
		Adults are internally motivated and self-directed	Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences	Adults are goal oriented	Adults are relevancy oriented	Adults are practical	Adult learning like to be respected
Preferred Professional Development Delivery Methods	Job-embedded coaching					What support or assistance do principals need as they work to apply the knowledge/skills they learned in PD?	
	Professional Learning Communities						Taking into consideration the role of the 21 st Century principal, what items and or topics have we failed to discuss as essential to the success of PD for practicing principals?
	Collaborative Principal Rounds Networks				Over the course of your career in administration, describe the most meaningful, effective PD in which you have engaged.		

APPENDIX P

CHART OF PARTICIPANTS

	Participants	Total Number of Years as a High School Principal	Number of Schools Lead as a High School Principal	Number of Districts Served as a High School Principal	Total Number of Years in High School Administration	Total Number of Years in Administration	Total Number of Years in Education
1.	Corey Hawkins	7	4	4	15	22	28
2.	Bob Latouf	8	2	1	8	13	24
3.	Jim Shaw	9	3	3	15	17	20
4.	Mari Reece	2	1	1	5	7	37
5.	Panajia Ward	1	1	1	4	4	18
6.	Jada Noel	11	1	1	11	20	40
7.	Karen Eggelston	9	1	1	12	15	20
8.	Jacquelyn Leslie	3	1	1	3	11	25
9.	Tammy McKinney	2	1	1	5	5	14
10.	Lisa Cimini	6	1	1	6	12	27
11.	Eric Morgan	4	1	1	10	10	21
12.	Don Faraone	2	1	1	10	15	20
13.	Charles Jacobs	14	2	1	16	16	29
14.	Fred Cade	3	2	1	12	12	21
15.	Jim King	11	4	2	14	16	21
16.	Robert Kerr	12	3	1	19	19	25

CHART OF PARTICIPANTS

	Participant	High School Pseudonym	Race	Gender
1.	Corey Hawkins	Jackson High School	African-American	Male
2.	Bob Latouf	Cook High School	African-American	Male
3.	Jim Shaw	Bradshaw High School	African-American	Male
4.	Mari Reece	Lambert High School	White	Female
5.	Panajia Ward	Sands High School	White	Female
6.	Jada Noel	Greene High School	African-American	Female
7.	Karen Eggelston	Kearns High School	African-American	Female
8.	Jacquelyn Leslie	Harris High School	African-American	Female
9.	Tammy McKinney	Ludwizak High School	African-American	Female
10.	Dawna Cimini	Stallworth High School	African-American	Female
11.	Eric Morgan	Russell High School	White	Male
12.	Don Faraone	Bell High School	White	Male
13.	Charles Jacobs	Bleier High School	White	Male
14.	Fred Cade	Thompson High School	White	Male
15.	Jim King	Hooper High School	White	Male
16.	Robert Kerr	Tillery High School	White	Male