Principals’ Leadership and Its Association with Whether or Not Their Schools Meet District/State Performance Goals

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PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH WHETHER OR NOT THEIR SCHOOLS MEET DISTRICT/STATE PERFORMANCE GOALS

by

John Mark Rainey

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Dr. Van E. Cooley, Advisor

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PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH WHETHER OR NOT THEIR SCHOOLS MEET DISTRICT/STATE PERFORMANCE GOALS

John Mark Rainey, Ed.D.
Western Michigan University, 2007

The study focuses on the principals’ leadership and empowerment as a curriculum leader in meeting district and state mandated performance goals. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 represents a key increase in the role of the federal government in public education.

The research questions in the study addressed the levels of principals’ instructional leadership and empowerment as associated with number of years as teacher, number of years as principal, participation in an aspiring principal program, school size, school locale, and whether their school passed district or state accountability test.

As to principals’ leadership, principals reported that they had higher level leadership and empowerment in developing inservice professional development, deciding budget, and evaluating teachers. However, their leadership and empowerment was lower in engaging in staff development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction development.

As to the relationship between principals’ leadership and their professional and school characteristics, I found that principals’ “number of years as a teacher” prior to becoming principals and “participating in aspiring principal program” contributed
positively to principals' instructional leadership. As to empowerment, principals’ 
“number of years as a teacher” prior to becoming principals, “participating in aspiring 
principal program,” and “number of years as a principal” were all statistically 
significant, positive predictors at the elementary school level, but not at the secondary 
school level.

Looking at principals’ leadership and empowerment and whether their schools 
passed the accountability test, it was found at the secondary level that principals’ 
“facilitating student learning” was a significant, positive predictor for the schools’ 
passing accountability tests, and that at elementary school level, principals’ level of 
“influence on establishing curriculum” was a significant, positive predictor for the 
schools’ passing accountability tests.

As to the direction for future studies, additional longitudinal research should be 
conducted to provide evidence of relationship between principals as instructional 
leaders and student achievement. Additional research study should also be conducted on 
the chain of leadership from principals’ instructional leadership behaviors, to teachers’ 
teaching, and to student achievement.
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John Mark Rainey
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

If schools are to be successful as learning communities in terms of instruction, the leadership of principals is critical (Findley & Findley, 1992). However, evidence of what makes successful leaders remains elusive to researchers. Successful leaders establish direction and organize, monitor, and build relationships with the school community; they also model values and practices consistent with those of the school so that “purposes which may have initially be separate become fused” (Sergiovanni, 1990b, p. 119). Principals must have the knowledge and skills to develop, improve, and align curriculum. Effective principals must also understand the intricacies of instruction and provide teachers with guidance and professional development that leads to increased student achievement (Riggins-Newby, 2003). Kouzes and Posner (1990) found five common traits among hundreds of successful leaders. Leaders are at their best when they “(i) challenged the process, (ii) inspired a shared vision, (iii) enabled others to act, (iv) modeled the way, and (v) encouraged the heart” (p. 8). They also believed that “these practices are not the private property of the leaders we studied”; rather, “they are available to anyone who wants to accept the leadership challenge” (p. 8).

The leadership team must be expanded into a professional learning community. A professional community is one “in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning, and act on their learning” (Hord, 1997, p. 1).
When a positive school climate is cultivated, improvement in test scores should not be far behind (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

A number of authorities have commented on the structure, role, and challenges of 21st century principals. Stronge (1988) confirmed that the role of principals must change in order for instructional leadership to be realized.

In the 1980s, "instructional leadership" became the dominant paradigm for school leaders after researchers noticed that effective schools usually had principals who kept a sharp focus on curriculum and instruction. Explicit standards of learning, coupled with heavy pressure to provide tangible evidence of success, have reaffirmed the importance of instructional leadership (ERIC Digest Number 160, 2003).

Donahoe (1993) observed the critical objective of school restructuring has to be the development of a school organization that can generate good school performance when the principal is not an effective leader or that can sustain good performance when an effective leader leaves. Developing school-leaders, therefore, is one of the most promising avenues available for successfully addressing the changes which will challenge future schools (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1994, p. 6). Strong instructional leadership must be based on firm conceptual grasp of what is most important in the educational lives of learners (Webster, 1994, p. 38).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 denotes a major expansion of the position of the federal government in public education. It represents the most significant change in the role of the federal government since the passing of the Elementary School and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA, 2001). Linn, Baker, and Betebenner (2002) found that NCLB substantially increases the testing requirements and sets
demanding accountability standards for schools, districts, and states, including the setting of measurable adequate yearly progress (AYP) objectives for all students. The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (2004) study on the working conditions of teachers found that high-quality instructional leadership was the single greatest predictor of whether high schools made "adequate yearly progress"—as defined by NCLB—more than either school size or teacher retention.

Statement of the Problem

This study will assess how important principals' roles as instructional leaders is in meeting district or state performance goals. The impact of school characteristics, including school size and location, will also be assessed. This investigation focuses on principals' roles as curricular and instructional leaders.

The problem is captured in the following statement: There is little evidence that supports the principals' instructional leadership involvement in the areas of establishing curriculum and in meeting district and state performance goals.

Research Questions

1. What were the levels of principals' instructional leadership and empowerment?

2. Are principals' level of instructional leadership and empowerment associated with number of years as teacher, number of years as principal, participation in an aspiring principal program, after controlling for school size and school locale?
3. Are principals' level of instructional leadership and empowerment related to whether or not the school passed the district or state accountability tests, after controlling for school size and locations?

Significance of the Study

The importance of principals as instructional leaders cannot be disregarded. Principals require information and expertise that sustain effective instructional practices in their schools. States are holding principals accountable for their responsibility in improving student achievement. Ignoring principals' responsibilities as instructional leaders is not a choice. The role of principals calls for new data and attributes to bring about systemic change and permanent school improvement.

Hollar (2004) described successful principals as leaders who know the direction they want their schools to take. What appears to be constant with regards to the principalship is that this role continues to expand (Sergiovanni, 2001). Quinn (1992) found that schools are being asked to do more with less, and when the role of schools today is more expansive than ever before, along comes increasing demands for more rigorous standards and high-stakes testing. Portin, Shen, and Williams (1998) determined that the duties of principalship continue to expand with a recent emphasis on educational leadership and a reduced emphasis on managerial duties; principal preparation programs are training administrators for the position of instructional leader.

Seasoned and novice principals have and will have the challenge of not only managing our schools but also leading them through a period of undue change. Heifetz and Laurie (1997) argued that altering the traditional approach to leadership is
imperative when an organization faces an adaptive challenge. Fullan (2001) stated, "Change cannot be managed. It can be understood and perhaps led, but it cannot be controlled" (p. 33).

Methodology

The current study was based on data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), the largest survey of K-12 education in the United States conducted periodically by the National Center for Education Statistics. Data for this study were drawn from that collected from 1999-2000 Public School Principal and School Questionnaires.

Sample Size and Return Rate

This nationally conducted survey provides data on public school principals, and the most recent data are from the 1999-2000 SASS Public School Principal Questionnaire. As a consequence, the data from this study were not as immediate as preferred.

The return rates for all the 1999-2000 SASS Public School Principal Questionnaire was above 90%, a rate that was very high for this kind of survey. Among those in the sample, 43.6% of them were female, and 56.4% were male. The following breakdown displayed the racial composition of the sample using the census categories at the time of the survey: American Indian or Alaska Native (0.8%), Asian or Pacific Islander (0.8%), African American (11.3%), and White (87.1%). Among the sample, 5.1% were Hispanic and 94.9% non-Hispanic.
NCES developed a sampling weight for the SASS 1999-2000 Public School Principal Questionnaire so that a more accurate estimate of the population is possible based on the sample. Through the use of sampling weights, the results are generalizable to the national level.

This study uses rich data to derive conclusions related to principals' levels of instructional leadership in establishing curriculum. The data for the study offered an opportunity to query into the central topic of principals as instructional leaders.

The survey was selected as the method of data collection because it enabled data to be collected from a geographically diverse sample. The characteristics of surveys are that they should be (a) systematic, carefully planned and executed; (b) representative, reflecting the population; (c) objective, ensuring that the data are explicit; and (d) quantifiable, yielding data that can be expressed numerically.

The 1999-2000 SASS Public School Principal Questionnaire and School Questionnaire items are used in this study, which is nationally conducted and representative, to determine (a) principals' perceptions of their leadership in establishing curriculum in their schools, (b) personal characteristics of principals as associated with their years as teachers and principals, (c) principals' participation in aspiring principal programs and principal professional development, and (c) principals' instructional leadership and meeting district and state accountability tests as associated with locations and sizes of their schools.

The data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, (SPSS) by the researcher, and upon completion of the analysis, the results were converted to tabular form for presentation and study.
Definitions

Certain terms are recurrently found in this study. The definitions for these frequently used terms are located throughout the literature and are listed below:

_Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):_ An NCLB requirement of each state designed to ensure continuous improvement each year toward the goal of 100% academic proficiency in 2014.

_Curriculum:_ Any document or plan in a school or school system that defines the work of teachers, at least to the extent of identifying the content to be taught to children and the methods to be used in the process.

_District and National Assessment:_ For this study only two types of assessments are used:

- Norm-referenced tests assess a student's broad knowledge, measuring performance against a relevant comparison group.
- Criterion-referenced tests measure specific skills in relation to pre-established standards of academic performance.

_Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC):_ A nationwide organization comprised of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

_Instructional Leadership:_ Leadership that is directly interrelated to the development of instruction where teachers, students, and the curriculum interrelate.

_No Child Left Behind (NCLB):_ On January 8, 2002, No Child Left Behind Act became a law of the land; the United States began a new era of education in the nation's
history. Democrats and Republicans in Congress joined together with President George W. Bush in an historic agreement to improve the educational opportunities for every U.S. American child. Accountability, local control and flexibility—new options for parents—and record funding for what works are now the cornerstones of our education system.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The strength of this study is that a nationally survey was used to mine data significant to the research questions. The 1999-2000 SASS Public School Principal Survey used for this study uses numerous items to assess areas of principals' engagement in the development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction.

The SASS Survey also allows generalizations to be made across the United States related to principals' leadership roles in meeting district and national assessment tests. Limitations come with using SASS, even with abundant data on principals. The most recent survey results are from 1999-2000 survey. Although this survey provides rich data on the national level, principals' answers may have been more complete if interviews, observations at their school buildings, and other sources of data had been collected. The School and Staffing Survey contact principals across the nation. Conversely, principals may be uncomfortable responding to questions about their meeting district and state assessment requirements due to NCLB sanctions. Also, the researcher had to select questions most closely related to the role of principals as instructional leaders from items provided in the questionnaire.
The information presented by this research study is constructive to the field of education. It is appropriate because the study relates to instructional leadership issues including the NCLB Act, national movement on leadership preparation, and vigorous requirements for district and state assessment. This study is wide-ranging, providing expressive data of principals and curriculum that lead to student success.

Organization of the Study

The dissertation includes five chapters, an appendix, and a bibliography. Chapter I includes an introduction to the study and provides background of the relationship between principals and student achievements. It provides the problem statement, research questions and significance of the study, methodology, limitations of the study, definition of terms, summary, and organization of the study. Chapter II offers a review of the related literature pertaining to principals’ roles in establishing curriculum and instruction and leadership proficiency necessary for student achievement. Chapter III presents the methods and procedures used to conduct the study. Chapter IV displays the results of the analysis, detailing the methods used to conduct the study and the analysis of the data. Chapter V gives conclusions, implications, and recommendations where curriculum leadership contributes to the learning of all students.

Summary

Principals experience intense stress as they try to change their theoretical comprehension of leadership to the real practices they face in schools each day. In the introduction to this dissertation, it was emphasized that the connection between
principals as instructional leaders and success in meeting minimum requirements on
district and state assessment tests are essential. The No Child Left Behind Act has added
another dimension of stress by adding the influence of federal guidelines after the
accountability pressure, directing that schools bring all children to an sufficient level of
improvement. Policymakers, researchers, and school leaders themselves have reexamined
the function of the principal, asking what proficiencies are most important and then
creating recommendations for restructuring the profession. Analysis of this relationship
through the research questions in this study provides a description of instructional
leadership proficiency needed for student achievement.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the study was to present an overview of the changing role of principals and the impact of their leadership on student achievement. The investigation also describes the impact of leadership models, school reform, and factors associated with performance assessments in urban, suburban, and rural school districts of different sizes and locations.

Administrators have definite convictions about fundamental beliefs, public education, instructional leadership, and the primacy of learners and have decided opinions about how to administer schools and what administrative factors lead to success (Wendel, Hoke, & Joekel, 1996, p. 20).

Relevant literature in the areas of educational leadership and student achievement are reviewed in this chapter. It is organized into three sections: Principal leadership, school reform, and school demographics as related to principals meeting performance goal assessment standards.

Prevailing views of leadership suggest that principals’ roles should not be to direct others but to create a school culture in which decisions are collaboratively made. Conley and Goldman (1994) found that principals who are abrasive, arrogant, aggressive, uncaring, and inattentive to the needs of others are far more likely to lose their jobs. Martin (1990) focused on mistakes of unsuccessful principals in Oregon where
73% of responding superintendents had supervised a principal who they had to release, transfer, or counsel out of the principalship. Reasons cited for a lack of success were avoidance of situations, lack of vision, poor administrative skills, and poor community relations. Bartell (1990) suggested principals in high performing schools support and facilitate instruction in every way possible. Fullan (1989) reported that the individual and collective efforts of teachers as implementers, supporters, and initiators of improvement are vital. This is where the functions of the instructional leader are crucial. Weber (1989) identified five main functions of leadership:

- defining school mission;
- promoting a positive learning climate;
- observing and giving feedback to teachers;
- managing curriculum;
- instruction, and assessing the instructional program.

Sergiovanni (1994) argued that schools should be purposeful communities, in which firmly-held core values permeate every aspect of the school organization. At a minimum, major stakeholders (teachers, parents, community, students) must be invited to participate in formulating the mission (Rogus, 1990).

Fullan (2001) reflected that in a culture of change, leaders must work on five components of leadership. Leaders (1) have a moral purpose of making a positive difference, (2) understand the change process, (3) build relationships that foster purposeful interaction and problem solving, (4) focus on knowledge building, and (5) seek coherence. Whitaker (2003) researched factors that effective principals do to impact
student achievement. His research found that effective principals are distinguished from ineffective principals by the following characteristics:

- Have high expectations for themselves as well as the teachers;
- Treat all people with respect;
- Develop leaders;
- Understand the importance of standards and align what is taught with what is tested;
- Do what is right for the students;
- Clarify their core of beliefs and set the vision and tone for a successful school year.

Principals, according to Smith and Andrews (1989), were viewed as a visible presence who display behavior that reinforces school values and are frequently observed managing instruction: “Teachers perceived their principal to be a visible presence, if she makes frequent classroom observations, is accessible to discuss matters dealing with instruction, is regularly seen in and about the building, and actively participates in staff development activities” (p. 19). Strong instructional leaders were characterized by engineering and leading a culture of learning, framing practice with current research of instructional leadership dispositions associated with high student achievement and professional standards, while focusing on the school’s bottom line—student learning, prioritizing, and providing the right things for improved student learning and achievement for all (Fink & Resnick, 2001).
Principal as the Instructional Leader

Instructional leadership emerged in the early 1980s and changed the role of school administrators. Edmonds (1982) found that by focusing on effective teaching and learning, the principals' roles had changed from that of building managers to instructional leaders. Amodeo and Taylor (2004) found that there is an ongoing struggle to maintain a balance between the role of manager and instructional leader, building-level administrators often find the scales tipping toward managerial responsibilities. At this time, studies were starting to appear that showed successful academic schools had leaders who courageously directed the instructional program, set goals, scrutinized curriculum, evaluated staff, and appraised results. Administrators have definite convictions about fundamental beliefs, public education, instructional leadership, and the primacy of learners and have decided opinions about how to administer schools and what administrative factors lead to success (Wendel et al., 1996, p. 20).

Hill (2002) stated that over the past 25 years, the emphasis on accountability for student learning outcomes and the findings from effective schools research highlighting the importance of the instructional leadership role of principals have served to place a greater premium on principals' knowledge about teaching and learning. Acheson and Smith (1986) suggested that instructional leadership is leadership that is directly related to the processes of instruction where teachers, learners, and the curriculum interact. Successful school leaders respected the expertise of teachers, and teachers, in turn, respect principals' duties to observe, supervise, and appraise performance (Scott & Smith, 1987).
Hallinger, Murphy, Weil, Mesa, and Mitman (1983) identified three general functions of the instructional leader: defining the school’s mission, managing curriculum and instruction, and promoting a positive school climate. Jamentz (2002) noted that simply having a list of essential teaching skills is not enough for instructional leaders to internalize exemplars of effective classroom practices that they can make accurate judgments about, and give useful feedback to, the teachers with whom they work. Increasingly, people are recognizing that if educational leaders are to better serve schools and students in our rapidly changing society, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they possess must be different than those reflected in traditional educational administration curricula. (Halawah, 2005)

Elmore (2000) endorsed instructional leadership by emphasizing the importance of understanding effective practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and the ability to work with teachers on the day-to-day problems related to these topics. Smith and Piele (1989) concurred that principals who are effective instructional leaders focus upon five key areas: (1) defining the school’s mission, (2) managing curriculum and instruction, (3) promoting a positive learning climate, (4) providing supervision of instruction, and (5) assessing instructional programs. Principals can directly influence the expectations of students, for example, through setting school standards on student progress, homework, grading and marking practices, and mastery of learning (Murphy, 1982).

Locke (2003) found that, because leadership is a process, leaders must take actions; it is not just a matter of holding a position. Although the principal bears ultimate responsibility for the quality of his or her school, it is both necessary and appropriate that
teachers take on some of the responsibility for instructional leadership (Hoerr, 1996). In the ongoing struggle to maintain a balance between the role of manager and instructional leader, building-level administrators often find the scales tipping toward managerial responsibilities (Amodeo & Taylor, 2004, p. 22).

Beyer and Ruhl-Smith (1998) note that the research and literature has suggested that the school leader be one who empowers others, encourages creativity and flexibility, promotes collaborative planning and shared decision-making in an effort to develop trust throughout the school setting, and utilizes these qualities as a catalyst for successful school restructuring and reform. Stein (2006) recognized the more a program's work reflects the actual work of school leadership, the more effective its graduates will be at leading instructional improvement. Bizar and Barr (2001) expressed concerns with helping the principal meet the instructional leadership needs of the school while at the same time meeting all of the new administrative and organizational demands.

Splillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) argued that in order to understand school leadership, the focus of the study should not be leaders but leadership practices in situational contexts. Steller’s (1998) review of research on effective schooling practices found that effective principals were at the center of curricular and instructional improvements of their schools. Walberg and Lane (1985) revealed that early researchers of principals of effective schools were more concerned about instruction; the principals in effective schools assumed responsibility for instructional decisions, coordinated instructional programs, and emphasized academic standards. After having reviewed research on the benefits of principals who function this way, Walberg and Lane concluded: “The reality is that in most schools, the principal is no instructional leader”
Steller (1988) noted the same observation: "There is currently a shortage of instructional leaders in the principalship" (p. 16).

Drake and Roe (2003) stated that principals' major task is to exercise leadership in order to make a positive difference in student learning and to improve the quality of life of each individual with the school. Pajak (1992) concluded that leaders in learning organizations recognize that they are part of a highly interrelated and interactive system, and they devote their time and energies to the comparatively less glamorous roles of designer, steward, and teacher. DePree (1989) described the act of leadership as the liberation of people to do what is required of them in the most effective and humane way possible. Providing opportunities for teachers to grow in new understandings of their practice and developing support for such changes demands radical change in the kinds of professional development planned and offered to teachers and requires the field to think in different ways about the role of the educational leader and the leader's connection to issues of teaching and learning (Holtz, Dorph & Goldring, 1997, p. 148). Principals often designated instructional leadership responsibilities to a lead or experienced teacher, while continuing to articulate criteria that defined effective instruction. (Rafoth & Foriska, 2006)

It is important that principals have a sound knowledge of curriculum development. English (1992) defines curriculum as "any document or plan in a school or school system that defines the work of teachers, at least to the extent of identifying the content to be taught children and the methods to be used in the process" (p. 2). Research increasingly supports the imperative of the principals' roles in demonstrating and
supporting school-wide practices that promote and sustain student achievement (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

Principals are crucial to increasing the type of positive school culture that supports the changes mandatory for accountability and school reform. Freedman and LaFleur (2002) stated that in order to address current reform challenges, administrators must acquire new skills to serve as change agents, rather than act as mere conduits of externally mandated changes. Administrators must become more visible in their schools; know what is happening in classrooms; assess the alignment between the written, taught and tested curriculum; promote reflective practice; encourage public conversations about teaching and learning; support collaboration; articulate system and school vision; and have a comfort with creative tensions and ambiguities. According to Barrow (1988), school leaders and others can decide whether an educational curriculum is worthwhile using philosophical inquiry, democratic consensus, and empirical assessment of need.

Successful school administrators must oversee the design of curriculum and the development of a strategic plan that enhances teaching and learning in multiple contexts (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998). Gupton (2003), noting a change for today’s principals, observed that “Examination of today’s effective principal reveals that the most critical role shift is from managerial orientation to a leadership orientation” (p. 22).

Instructional leadership behaviors associated with promoting professional growth and staff development yield positive effects for classroom practice (Blase & Blase, 1999) Sheppard (1996) concluded that leaders who engage in behaviors that inform staff about current trends and issues encourage attendance at workshops, seminars, and conferences;
build a culture of collaboration and learning; promote coaching; use inquiry to drive staff
development; set professional growth goals with teachers; and provide resources that
foster teacher innovation in using a variety of methods, materials, instructional strategies,
reflective practice, and technology in the classroom. This, in turn, increases the
likelihood of increased student achievement.

Goodlad (1984) reasoned that principals are crucial players in the curriculum
scheme. Understanding the curricular functions of instructional leadership has lagged
behind (Murphy, 1990). Goodlad concluded that “as a long-term student of curriculum
reform, there has not been intensive, sustained attention to the content of elementary and
secondary education for some time” (p. 290).

Transformational Leadership

Burns' historical analysis of great leaders identified two forms of leadership:
transactional leadership, which involves instrumental exchanges between leader and
followers; and transformational leadership, which raises the moral plane of both the
leader and followers through the transcendence of self-interest. Burns also proposed a
theory of transformational leadership in his book, Leadership. For the purpose of this
study, only transformational leadership was reviewed. Transformational leadership
comprises a belief that a leader can influence followers to transcend self-interests and
commit themselves to excellence (Donohue & Wong, 1994). To the extent that a
transformational leader exhibits individually considerate behaviors by recognizing the
unique contribution of group members working on a group task and treating group
members as individuals rather than just a member of a group, we expected group
members to perceive individual consideration as above and beyond what one might expect to receive while performing a collective task. (Sosik, 1998, p. 113)

Leithwood (1993) stated that transformational leaders foster the acceptance of group goals, convey high performance expectations, create intellectual excitement, and offer appropriate models through their own behavior. Bass (2002) reported that since its inception, research has demonstrated the utility of transformational leadership for increasing organizational satisfaction, commitment, and effectiveness, as well as the increased understanding of the dynamics of transformational leadership. As a result, transformational leadership seems to strengthen development throughout an organization, perhaps by creating strong bonds among people at all levels ties that encourage and reinforce a development ethic (London, 2002, p. 208).

Transformational leadership provides intellectual direction and aims at innovating within the organization, while empowering and supporting teachers as partners in decision making (Conley & Goldman, 1994). Deal and Peterson (1994) suggested that transformational leaders play the role of historian, poet, healer, and anthropological detective. The source of transformational leadership is in the personal values and beliefs of leaders and by expressing their personal standards; transformational leaders are able to both unite followers and change their goals and beliefs in ways that produce higher levels of performance than previously thought possible (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Sergiovanni (1994) argued that the heart of leadership talk is conceptions, values, and ideas.

Bass (1985) observed that transformational leadership stimulates others to view their work from new perspectives, generate an awareness of the mission or vision of the organization, develop colleagues and followers to higher levels of ability and potential,
and motivate them to look beyond their own interests toward those that will benefit the group. Bass (1998) further acknowledged that a number of situational conditions (e.g., environment, organization, task and goals, and distribution of power between the leaders and followers) will likely influence the emergence and success of both transactional and transformational leadership.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) established in their research on leadership practices that transformational leadership occurs when, in their interactions, people raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Burns (1978) confirmed that transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and the led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both. Transformational leaders are leaders who work with people to create an atmosphere that allows staff members to work toward common goals through improvement (Homes, 1997).

Leithwood (1992) stated that the restructuring initiatives central to transformational leadership is primarily about "second order" changes, which includes building a shared vision, improving communications, and developing collaborative decision-making processes. Louis and Kruse (1995) suggested that any type of change that a leader may try to implement will be enhanced by a staff that has developed a strong network of trust and partnership instilled by a transformative leader.

Becoming an effective transformational leader is a process. Research indicates that conscious effort must be required to embrace a transformational style. According to Northouse (2001), a transformational leader has the following qualities:

• empowers followers to do what is best for the organization;
• is a strong role model with high values;
• listens to all viewpoints to develop a spirit of cooperation;
• creates a vision, using people in the organization;
• acts as a change agent within the organization by setting an example of how to initiate and implement change;
• helps the organization by helping others contribute to the organization.

Transformational leadership is a vital role for effective managers because leader effectiveness determines the success level of the organization. According to Hesselbein and Cohen (1999), organizations that take the time to teach leadership are far ahead of the competition. Transformational leadership can be applied in one-on-one or group situations. Using this approach, the manager (leader) and the associates (followers) are transformed to enhance job performance and help the organization become more productive and successful.

Servant Leadership

Rather than blaming the people in institutions for being uncaring, we should criticize ourselves for our attitudes and our level of caring (Greenleaf, 1977). Spears (1998) stressed that the servant leader must be receptively listening to what is being said and what is not said and that, coupled with regular periods of reflection, is essential to the growth of the servant leader. Sergiovanni (1992) proposed the idea that stewardship is change from within oneself. According to Covey (1990), the servant leader seeks to improve the skills of others, helping them to become more autonomous in their work settings. Wilkinson and Smith (1995) proposed that the goal
of the leader should be to learn and to create surroundings in which others want to learn, to create surroundings where we all believe that we are, indeed, on the same side.

Farling, Gregory, and Stone (2003) described servant leadership as having many parallels with transformational leadership with the leader needing vision, influence, credibility, trust and service, but it goes beyond transformational leadership in selecting the needs of others as its the highest priority.

Greenleaf (1977) observed that people “will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants” (p. 10). This perspective has come to be known as servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), with its basic tenets found in the biblical verse:

Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lorded over them, and that their great ones exercised authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant.” (Matthew 20:25)

Spears (1995) stated that Greenleaf sought ways of elevating the common man to higher levels of morality expectations through the element of service—monitoring the social climate within the organizational structure is but one facet of this process. Truly “serving” employees requires a commitment by leaders to develop a process that makes it safe for employees to honestly communicate (Greenleaf, 1998).

Sergiovanni (1990) suggested that there is no longer a bureaucratic hierarchy with the leader at the top; instead the organization is based on followership and is guided by ideas, values, and commitments. Sergiovanni (2001) subsumed the educational, symbolic, and cultural leadership forces described in an earlier model
of the principalship into a new theory of school leadership—one that focuses on the
school as a community and the principal as a servant:

Servant leadership describes well what it means to be a principal. Principals
are responsible for “ministering” to the needs of the schools they serve. The
needs are defined by the shared values and purposes of the school’s covenant.
They minister by furnishing help and being of service to parents, teachers
and students. They minister by providing leadership in a way that encourages
others to be leaders in their own right. They minister by highlighting and
protecting the values of the school. The principal as minister is one who is
devoted to a cause, mission, or set of ideas and accepts the duty and
obligation to serve this cause. (pp. 357-358)

Radcliffe (2003) observed that the term leadership appears to imply that there are
the leaders and the led. Honest, effective servant leaders emerge only through real self-
emphasized that it is persuasion rather than positional authority or coercion that denotes
a good servant leader. Greenleaf (1991) summarized the concept of servant leadership as
the leader who is seen as a servant first then as a leader.

Servant leaders endorse a “concept of persons,” which begins with an
understanding of the diversity of people’s gifts, talents, and skills (DePree, 1990). Spears
(1998) condensed the following 10 central characteristics of the servant leader from
Greenleaf’s writings:

- Listening—seeking to identify and clarify the will of a group, hearing one’s
inner voice, reflecting;
- Empathy—accepting and recognizing people for their special and unique
spirits;
- Healing—potential for making broken spirits whole;
- Awareness—being sharply awake and reasonably disturbed about one’s self
as well as general conditions;
• Persuasion—seeking to convince instead of coercing or using one's positional authority;

• Conceptualization—ability to dream great dreams;

• Foresight—ability to understand lessons from the past, realities of the present, and the likely consequences of decisions for the future;

• Stewardship—sense of holding something in trust for another;

• Commitment to the growth of people—belief that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers;

• Building community—demonstrating his own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group. (Greenleaf, 1970)

Servant leadership resides in the setting of values and convictions. As a framework of ethical leadership, it forces emotional commitment to a system of examples by members of the school. These ideals are more important than any one member of a school community. The very definition of servant leadership, the importance of the person being led and that person's well being are the greatest ultimate goals. An obligation to share leadership, significant responsibility for the student's well-being will be maintained to sustain strong relationships and positive servant leadership. Student achievement can advance if he or she is in a state of well-being. This obligation can be concrete, emotional, social, academic, or abstract. Block (1996) indicated that in order for an organizational leader to be considered a servant leader, he or she must have a true commitment to people and their top priority, above pursuing self interest, must be to build the organization.
Aspiring Principal Preparation

With new responsibility and discriminating expectations, aspiring principals necessitate new forms of training, and university preparation programs are coming under analysis now more so than ever. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) reported that although these aspiring administrators are certified, they may not be equipped for the shifting role of the principal from manager to effective instructional leader. In a national survey by the Public Agenda, which was commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, it was found that 80% of superintendents and 69% of principals think that the leadership training for graduate schools of education is out of touch with the realities of today's school districts (Farkas, 2001).

The demands of the job have changed so that traditional methods of preparing administrators are no longer adequate to meet the leadership challenges posed by public schools (Levine, 2005; Peterson, 2001). The requirements that principals have a positive impact on student achievement challenge conventional assumptions, procedure, and construction in leadership preparation programs. The National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (1987, as cited in Green, 2001) recommended that "administrative preparation programs should be like those in professional schools which emphasize theoretical and clinical knowledge, applied research, and supervised practice" (p. 1). Keller (2000) stated that large districts have negotiated tailor-made, practice-based certification programs with universities.

Tucker and Codding (2002) discussed at length the research conducted into what school principals needed to know about improved instruction from work supported in
grants from the Broad Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the
NewSchools Venture Fund, and the Stupski Foundation. They found that these programs
courage principals to think and act strategically about vision and results and trains
them to:

- Formulate a clear vision that inspires others;
- Think strategically;
- Lead the implementation of fully aligned, standards-based instructional
  systems;
- Build effective math, reading, and writing programs;
- Design and implement professional development programs;
- Manage for results that produce steady improvements in student
  achievement;
- Coach faculty teams to get the job done;
- Foster ethical and moral behavior in a just, fair, and caring culture;

While these observations of the principal differ to some measure, they signify an
extraordinary departure from the view of principals as building managers to instructional
leaders who focused on the teaching and learning inside schools. They stipulate that the
academy re-conceptualize both the knowledge source and the methods that are
integrated in university curriculum for aspiring principals.

Milstein (1995) identified evidence that a number of programs have re-
conceptualized the knowledge base and changed the structure of the program. Program
content should be delivered through a variety of methods to best meet the needs of adult
learners and to allow principals or aspiring principals to apply the curricular content in
authentic settings and toward the resolution of real-world problems and dilemmas (Davis et al., 2005). Their findings suggested the need to generate real and simulated leadership practice for aspiring principal preparation courses in the following statements:

- **Field-based Internships.** Heck and Marcoulides (1992) and Hallinger (1992) suggest that the principals’ leadership appears to be exercised primarily through behaviors that shape school-level instructional climate.

- **Problem-Based Learning (PBL).** Hallinger and McCary (1992) state, “It is not enough for principals to have a repertoire of behaviors; they must know how and when to use them, and they must be careful to monitor their effects on student learning.” Bridges and Hallinger, (1993) considered that for these reasons, the use of PBL has become increasingly popular in principal preparation programs over the past decade.

- **Cohort Groups.** Cohorts model the type of team building that is increasingly encouraged among school faculty (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2001). Leithwood, Jantzi, Coffin, and Wilson (1996) reported that teachers give higher ratings to the leadership practices of principals who participated in cohort training structures, which may be because cohorts not only benefit aspiring and practicing principals but the faculty members in the schools they ultimately lead as well.

- **Mentoring/Coaching.** Competent mentors do this through (a) modeling, (b) coaching, (c) gradually removing support as the mentee’s competence increases, (d) questioning and probing to promote self-reflection and problem solving skills, and (e) providing feedback and counsel (Lave, 1991). Peer
coaching is an effective strategy for learning and professional development (e.g., Costa & Garmston, 1994; Evered & Selman, 1989; Randels, Carse, & Lease, 1992; Schneider, 1989).

Aspiring principal programs reflect a variety of structures, partnership, and institutional arrangements. Daresh (1988) described the importance of developing effective collaborations between universities and local schools. Efforts to align university training and actual practice are reflected by an emphasis on the development of group processing skills, collaborative leadership styles, and communication skills (Worner, 1994), participatory decision making and consensus building (Thurston, Clift, & Schacht, 1993), reflective thinking (Gordon & Moles, 1994), and mentoring (Luebkemann & Clemens, 1994; Prestine & LeGrand, 1991; Stakenas, 1994; Synder, 1994; Worner, 1994). Traditional university principal preparation programs often fall short in seeking out or establishing interdisciplinary relations within the university or to totally make the most of prospective external resources in schools and other organizations. Critics of leadership preparation programs (Levine, 2005) point to the ways in which pre-service programs have been uneven, weak, or substandard in quality—even focusing on how the definition of leadership has wavered through the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, numerous district-based aspiring principal professional development efforts have not benefited from the academic resources from local universities.
Principal Professional Development

Leithwood, Stanley, and Montgomery (1984) argued that principals need ongoing development through inservice programs. Tirozzi (2001) indicated that if one principal is not properly trained and up to the task of leadership, it will have a damaging effect on hundreds of students—an unacceptable thought. Some schools of education are seeking to modify their programs to reflect new understandings about how leadership can be most instrumental in setting educational direction, in developing and supporting staff, and in creating school conditions that foster learning for all children (Orr, 2006, p. 492). Yeatts (2005) reports that many states have implemented successful principal internship programs that assist the new principal with ideas for professional development, encouraging the principal to try innovative steps and providing a communication link to the district office. Conger and Benjamin (1999) noted that professional development activities help to build a network of people who can share ideas, hold a common vision for their organizations, and share a commitment to the organization and its improvement.

School districts in the United States are facing a significant lack of well-trained principals. This is going on as educators in several states are realizing the central role of principals in the realization of better teaching practices that will create improved learning for all students. Kelley and Peterson (2000) stated that programs should be career-staged, with specialized training for aspiring, new, and experienced principals, and every aspect of the programs should communicate quality from the location and setting to the materials and presenters.
School Size and Location

From an administrative perspective, school district size has long been considered to the best way to organize the enterprise of schooling (Adams, 1994). Lee and Smith (1995) found that various indicators of student achievement involving large numbers of students, schools, and districts show those students may learn more and better in small schools. Howley (1994) indicated that school size is suggested to exert a unique influence on students' academic accomplishment, with a strong inverse relationship linking the two: the larger the school, the lower the students' achievement levels. Researchers found that smaller school size improves instruction and increases achievement (Achilles, Finn, & Bain, 1998; Achilles, Harman, & Egelson, 1995; Howley, 1996). Lee and Smith (1997) concluded that higher student achievement is associated with smaller high schools and suggest that the ideal high school has between 600 and 900 students. Kershaw and Blank (1993) indicated that small schools increase achievement for minority students and students of low socioeconomic status.

In observations of small schools, Howley, (1996) reported better attendance and fewer discipline problems than larger schools. Small schools are also more cost effective. Kennedy (1990), on the other hand, conveys that the direct influence of district size on achievement is negligible. Wasley (2000) stated that students in 90 small Chicago high schools made significant improvement in school behavior and achievement. Other research in Chicago demonstrates that students in smaller high schools outperform the city as a whole in both reading and mathematics (Viadero, 2000). Harvard University's
Vito Perrone believes that schools that stay small provide richer educational opportunities for students (Harvard University, 1996).

Cotton (1996) asserted that school size directly affects the cohesiveness of the school community, but smallness alone does not guarantee an equitable, personalized, and rigorous learning environment. In order for administration in small school to engender successful learning experiences for all students, it must foster a sense of autonomy, possess a compelling vision, have a personalized atmosphere, support teaching, and hold itself accountable to students and district standards (Sergiovanni, 1996). Mohr (2000) stated that perhaps the greatest difference between decision making in large schools and in small ones is how colleagues communicate. Guarino (1974) maintained that in the area of leadership, there is no skill more essential than one’s ability to communicate. Communication is the lifeblood of the school; it is a process that links the individual, the group, and the organization (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996).

Alspaugh (1994) discovered that the effect of school size on achievement may be different for variations in size of small schools as compared to variations in size of relatively large schools. Small-school reformers believe that they have an idea that will improve student learning, enhance school discipline, increase parent involvement, and catch more children who might otherwise be lost (Johnson, 2002, p. 353). Gough (2002) reported that some communities have already used the research findings on school size and shared facilities to create educational settings that work better for students, parents, and teachers. In smaller schools, virtually everyone will take the same curriculum, regardless of his or her interests, abilities, or social background (Bracey, 1998, p. 406). Although many factors affect the school as a context for leadership, its size is a major
one and the larger the school, the more children and staff there are. The more people there are, the more they need to be managed (Southworth, 2004, p. 9).

Kampits (1996) suggested that rural youth have significantly higher graduation rates from high school than urban youth, yet they are less likely to pursue college degrees and are less likely to graduate from high school with firm plans for the future. Rural principals who create academically challenging yet personally supportive school cultures motivate many at-risk students (Payne, 1997). The traditional view of the rural leader is that of an individual who exercises authority and directs the activities of others, but more recently leadership had been defined as an interactive, dynamic process by which all organization members are able to achieve their common goals (Seyfarth, 1999).

Urban principals face new challenges related to poverty, prejudice, disadvantage, and legislation (Wegenke, 2000). Hallinger (1992), in a study of urban schools, reported the principal’s effects on student learning center on the principal’s role in shaping the school’s instructional climate and instructional organization.

Brent, Roellke, and Monk (1997) suggested that rural and small schools must be particularly attentive to these constraints as they often confront a series of resource allocation challenges not fully shared by their larger urban and suburban counterparts. Miles and Darling-Hammond (1998) identified structural constraints that can complicate the resource allocation process, including (a) fragmented school schedules, (b) inflexible job definitions for teachers, and (c) specialized programs that may be peripheral to the academic mission. Alberta Department of Education (1984) indicated that there were no significant achievement differences between small, rural schools and school in cities but found that small schools were costlier.
The School Communities That Work: A National Task Force on the Future of Urban Schools (2002) found that urban principals, who are increasingly being held accountable by state and federal policies for improving the academic achievement of their students, are denied the most powerful tool available—control over resources—to help them be effective agents of change. Students in urban schools face a multitude of challenges including substandard high-school completion rates, disproportionate suspension rates, and top-heavy placement in special education (Lomotey, 1993).

Schmoker (1999) and Rosenholtz (1991) stated that goals are necessary for the success of any organization. Leaders in successful organizations facilitate the development of easily understood and readily applied organizational goals (Lomotey, 1993). Principals with clear goals increase the likelihood of staff members internalizing those goals (Lomotey, 1989). Fenwick and Pierce (2001) reported that the need for school administrators on a national level is projected to increase by 10 to 20% through 2004. Rural schools may find themselves in crisis at a time when, more than ever, they need strong leadership to meet the challenge of providing quality education with limited resources.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001

NCLB was signed into law January 8, 2002. It is the latest revision of the 1965 ESEA and is regarded as the most significant federal education policy initiative in a generation. The overall purpose of the law is to ensure that each child in America is able to meet the high learning standards of the state where he or she lives. The law has specific goals:
- All students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better, in reading and mathematics by 2013-2014.
- By 2013-2014, all students will be proficient in reading by the end of the third grade.
- All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English.
- By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
- All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free and conducive to learning.
- All students will graduate from high school.

Bloomfield and Cooper (2003) expressed concern that since Congress passed the ESEA of 1965, the role of the U.S. government in education has expanded, leading to the bipartisan reauthorization of ESEA in 2001 called the NCLB Act—clearly the most dramatic change in national school legislation since ESEA’s inception. NCLB moves the federal government from being essentially an informed authority of funding—now about 9% of every public school dollar—to being a major factor in forming the foundation of K-12 instruction. Fullan (1993) argues that educational reformers are fighting a battle that is not winnable given that the system has a propensity to continually seek change but is inherently averse to it. Proponents dispute that the law will enhance student achievement, specifically among the poor and minority group members for whom ESEA was originally intended, and will deliver responsibility to states’ and districts’ use of eligible federal funds. Opponents anticipate that NCLB testing mandates and sanctions for school failure will result in student regimentation and parental abandonment of public education.
NCLB has renewed the interest in school leadership development. Several research centers, policy centers, and professional organizations, with the support of foundations, have issued reports related to the following in leadership development:

- School administrator supply and demand (Gates, Ringel, & Santibañez, 2003);
- Career paths of school administrators (Gates, Ringel, & Santibañez, 2003);
- Perceptions and attitudes of school principals and superintendents (Farkas, Johnson, & Duffett, 2003);
- Reculturing of school administration around a reform agenda (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004);
- Principal as learner-centered leader (Hess, 2003);
- Principal preparation and professional development (Southern Regional Education Board, 2002).

NCLB legislation and state legislation increase the concerns for school administrators by making them gradually responsible for student performance. NCLB has set one escalating trend: school leaders are change agents. Encouraging reform has unavoidably been a measurement of the job description, but until recently, the objective was practical incremental change that could be incorporated into the existing system. Now the system itself is the intention of reform. Systemic change is not well understood, even by experts, and school leaders have had diminutive training to prepare them for the challenge. The reform movement does not present leaders with a coherent, completely aligned vision for change. NCLB is a grouping of standards-based accountability, educational choice, and obsolete bureaucratic mandates, not all of which work together.
harmoniously. Even as principals try to stay centered on improving comprehensive instruction, they without doubt have to sustain with very rigorous requirements about teacher qualifications and the right of students to eventually transfer schools. Elmore (2000) stated that the real work of reform ultimately occurs in the classroom, where teachers interact with students.

Leaders of the restructuring movement dispute that dramatic changes in school structures and school culture are needed in order to ratchet up student achievement (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Specifically, the law calls for principals to have “the instructional leadership skills to help teachers teach and students learn,” and “the instructional leadership skills necessary to help students meet challenging State student academic achievement standards” (Title II, Section 2113 (c)). Darling-Hammond and Ball (1999) suggested that a critical component of NCLB success will be the quality of support and guidance the school and district leadership provide. Since school reform is a complicated and multilayered procedure, singling out the principals offerings is no easy process.

Inter-State Leadership and Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards

In the mid-1990s, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) formed the Council’s Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) as part of a partnership with the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). The ISLLC standards are based upon a common core of standards that can be used to inform program instructional content, assessment tools for awarding new principal licensure, and advanced certification (ISLLC, 1996). Murphy (2002) reported that the
ISLLC team crafted a comprehensive strategy to employ the standards to reach the goal of changing the focus of the principalship from management to learning. ISLLC developed a list describing the kinds of knowledge, dispositions, and performance records that school leaders should possess or exhibit. According to the ISLLC Standards, a school administrator should have knowledge of effective consensus-building and negotiation skills, be committed to the inclusion of all members of the school community, and act to ensure that the school community is involved in school improvement efforts. These standards were developed based on expert opinion, experience, and theory, and, in the future, systematic evidence may confirm that some or most of these characteristics lead to improved student learning (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, pp. 10-11).

Waters and Grubb’s (2004) Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) report examines the ISLLC standards for school leaders in light of findings from McREL’s 2004 study of principal leadership. Together with other major educational leadership organizations, practitioners, and policymakers throughout the nation, they developed and published a set of model standards reflecting what school leaders should know and understand, what they should be able to do, and what they should believe, value, and commit to (CCSSO, 1996).

Waters and Grubb (2004) responded to chief state school officers, senior education officials, and other policy leaders requesting research-based guidance to develop or refine principal licensure policies that supported the development of principals who positively impact student learning. Their report built on the work of the consortium by examining the ISLLC standards in light of findings from McREL.
Waters et al. (2003) developed the McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework™ that identified specific leadership responsibilities and practices that are correlated with student achievement. The framework highlighted the ways in which McREL's research findings add value to the ISLLC standards through (a) increased utility, (b) research-based guidance, (c) identification of what should take primacy, and (d) new insights into change leadership. Their report summarized the research and theory that undergird the Balanced Leadership Framework and seeks to answer the following overarching question:

In what ways does the Balanced Leadership Framework compare to and add value to the use of the ISLLC standards for the preparation, licensure, and professional development of school leaders?

Although the “explicit goal” of the ISLLC standards was to “reground the profession” [and] “underscore learning and teaching” (Murphy, 2003, pp. 6-26), the standards do not explicitly communicate the critical connection between the standards and improved student learning. Specifically, research related to each of the ISLLC indicators is not provided. Ten years after their development and publication, Murphy (2003) presented the research base for the strategies underlying the ISLLC standards; his report, however, did not present the research base for each ISLLC indicator or standard.

The CCSSO (1996) ISLLC Standards Report observed that over the past quarter-century, significant changes have been reshaping our nation. At the same time, new viewpoints have redefined the struggle to restructure education for the 21st century. From these two foundations, educators and policy makers have launched many helpful initiatives to redefine the roles of formal school leaders. In this document, the results of
one of these efforts captured in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) to establish six common standards for school leaders:

- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. (CCSSO, p. 12)

- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. (CCSSO, p. 14)

- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. (CCSSO, p. 16)

- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. (CCSSO, p. 18)

- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity and fairness, and in an ethical manner. (CCSSO, p. 20)

- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity and fairness, and in an ethical manner. (CCSSO, p. 20)

The evolving role of principals as policy advocates requires educational leaders to promote the success of schools through active participation in, and knowledge of, policy-making processes (Pitre, Reed, & Ledbetter, 2003). The type of leader described by ISLLC is a visionary. Senge (1994) defined a visionary as an individual capable of conceptualizing a clear course of action for an organization.

The ISLLC standards offer an inclusive analysis and understanding of behavior associated with effective schools. However, the standards fail to adequately utilize the
human and social capital available within schools. Additionally, the framework for the standards needlessly pictures the principal as largely accountable for numerous of tasks that could and should be rethought in conditions of school leadership rather than from the point of view of the school leader.

Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL) Balanced Leadership

Waters et al. (2003) McREL's balanced leadership framework was developed from three key bodies of knowledge: a quantitative analysis of 30 years of research, an exhaustive review of theoretical literature on leadership, and the research team's more than 100 years of combined professional wisdom on school leadership. The ways in which leaders directly participate in the design and implementation of curriculum support and promote effective instructional and student assessment practices; recognize individual and school accomplishments; and adapt their leadership to address the context-specific needs of teachers, students, and other stakeholders (Waters et al., 2003; Waters & Grubb, 2004).

A systematic meta-analysis of nearly every available study (including doctoral dissertations) that purported to examine the effects of leadership on student achievement reported since the early 1970s was used. From a total of more than 5,000 studies completed during this period, 70 met the following criteria for design, controls, data analysis, and rigor:

- Quantitative student achievement data;
- Student achievement measured on standardized, norm-referenced tests or some other objective measure of achievement;
• Student achievement as the dependent variable;
• Teacher perceptions of leadership as the independent variable.

Heck (1992) established that different respondents provide different ratings regarding principal leadership. Teachers are thought to provide the most valid information because they are closest to the day-to-day operations of the school and the behaviors of the principal (Ebmeier, 1991).

The result represents a significant assimilation of quantitative research, theoretical insights, and professional wisdom with reference to effective leadership. The research team found 21 areas of principals’ responsibility in the meta-analysis:

1. *Culture*: celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures;
2. *Order*: sets operating procedures and routines;
3. *Discipline*: protects teachers from problems that detract from their teaching;
4. *Resources*: provides necessary materials and professional development to be successful;
5. *Curriculum-instruction-assessment*: is directly involved in design and implementation;
6. *Focus*: establishes clear goals and keeps them at forefront of school’s attention;
7. *Knowledge of curriculum-instruction assessment*: fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation;
8. *Visibility*: interacts with teachers and students;
9. *Contingent rewards*: recognizes individual accomplishments;
10. **Communication:** has strong communication with teachers and students;
11. **Outreach:** is an advocate/spokesperson for school to all stakeholders;
12. **Input:** involves teachers in design and implementation of important decisions and policies;
13. **Affirmation:** celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures;
14. **Relationship:** empathizes with teachers and staff on a personal level;
15. **Change agent:** is willing to actively challenge the status quo;
16. **Optimizer:** inspires and leads new and challenging innovations;
17. **Ideals/beliefs:** communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling;
18. **Monitors/evaluates:** focuses on effectiveness of school practices and impact on student learning;
19. **Flexibility:** adapts leadership behavior to the needs of the situation and is comfortable with dissent;
20. **Situational awareness:** is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses the information to address problems;
21. **Intellectual stimulation:** ensures that faculty and staff are aware of and discuss the most current theories and practices;

Marzano (2003) found that the principal as the conceptual head of the school with a strong leadership team of key players working with the classroom teachers is most effective for change or reform. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) study identified 9 of the 21 responsibilities that are the purview of the principal and are the foundations for establishing a purposeful community:
• **Optimizer:** Blase and Kirby (2000) identified optimism as a critical characteristic of an effective school leader and note that the principal commonly sets the emotional tone in a school for better or for worse. Kaagan and Markle (1993) express the benefit of a positive emotional tone as an environment where new ideas and innovation abound.

• **Affirmation:** Cottrell (2002) explains that one of the biggest challenges facing school-level administrators is directly addressing performance issues—both positive and negative. Kouzes and Posner (1990) found five common traits among hundreds of successful leaders. According to them, leaders were at their best when they "encouraged the heart" (p. 8).

• **Ideals/Beliefs:** De Pree (1989) describes beliefs as connections to intimacy that comes from policies or standards or practices. Bennis (2003) depicts well-articulated ideals and beliefs at the core of effective leadership.

• **Visibility:** One of the most important characteristics that is extremely important in the life of a school and is often neglected is that of being a visible principal (Whitaker, 1997). Commonly cited elements include a coherent instructional vision, rigorous standards, use of data to make decisions, emphasis on professional development, the creation of learning communities, and the clear demonstration—through behavior as well as words—that the principal is fully engaged with classroom instruction (Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001). Fink and Resnick (2001) found that effective principals are in teachers' classrooms every day, and it is difficult to draw the
line between observations that have an evaluative intent and those that are part of the professional support system.

- **Situational Awareness**: Deering, Dilts, and Russell (2003) describe this responsibility as anticipatory leadership. Cooley and Shen (2003) found that secondary school principals reported they were engaged in new roles that had simply been layered over the old job.

- **Relationships**: Elmore (2000) recommends that principals should rely more heavily on face-to-face relationships than on bureaucratic routines. Fullan (2001) expounds the importance of the school leaders forming emotional bonds with and among teachers that help staff and administrators stay aligned and focused during times of uncertainty.

- **Communication**: Scribner, Cockrell, and Valentine (1999) explain that effective communication might be considered the glue that holds together all the other responsibilities of leadership. If a school is to be instructionally successful as a learning community, it will be because of the leadership of the principal (Findley & Findley, 1992). According to Sass (1989), interpersonal communication skills, human relations, and leadership are the most important skills for educational leaders.

- **Culture**: Leithwood and Riehl (2003) stipulate that leaders sometimes do things—through words or actions—that have a direct effect on the primary goals of the collective, but more often their agency consists of influencing the thoughts and actions of other persons and establishing policies that enable others to be effective. Culture influences everything that goes on in schools:
How staff members dress, what they talk about, their willingness to change, the practice of instruction, and the emphasis given student and faculty learning (Deal & Peterson, 1994; Firestone & Wilson, 1985; Newmann & Associates, 1996).

• **Input:** Cottrell (2002) warns that principals forget to take the time to listen to their people, and soon they become insensitive to the needs and desires of the individuals on the team. Gantner, Newsom, and Dunlap (2000) have called attention to the importance of listening to the voices of teachers, parents, and students whose concerns are sometimes drowned out by the experts.

Given that principals can't reasonably engage in all 21 of these research-based responsibilities, Marzano (2003) discussed the 9 responsibilities that only the principal can carry out and the need for distributed leadership, specifically a leadership team, to undertake the other 11 responsibilities. Leadership teams must be comprised of teachers and administrators who volunteer, have a collective commitment to the school, have interpersonal skills, and will function as a group (showing trust, respect, fairness, shared values, and a transparent decision-making process for the staff to understand). The conclusion of the meta-analysis is that there is a high correlation between leadership and student achievement both positively and negatively, and without strong leadership, nothing will get better.
Summary

This review of the literature summarizes an extensive array of empirical research and associated documentation on the leadership styles of principals, aspiring principal preparation, professional development, school reform, school size, and school location. The review of literature also focused on student achievement and assessment results as they correlated to the principals’ leadership influence.

Different forms of leadership are defined in the literature and employ descriptors such as instructional, distributive, servant, transformational, instructional, and curriculum, but these labels primarily capture different technique or ritual methods to bring about two basic goals essential to any school district’s success: supporting a valid vision and influencing the stakeholders to decisively follow that vision. Leadership is seemingly clear-cut, yet extremely complex.

There is little doubt that both district and school leadership adequately grant a critical bridge between most educational reform initiatives, the principals’ leadership and their direct consequences for student achievement. In addition, influential leadership has the greatest impact in those surrounding circumstances in which it is most needed. The review of the literature surrounding NCLB, ISSLC Standards, and McREL’s Balanced Leadership study all support the sweeping interest in improving instructional leadership.

Principals need continuous professional development opportunities to support their efforts toward school improvement and revitalize their commitment to creating and sustaining positive learning communities (Evans & Mohr, 1999; Foster, Loving & Shumate, 2000; Neufeld, 1997). Successful professional development takes time. Both
principals and 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. In the end, principals and teachers should leave these experiences with a renewed sense of faith in the transformative power of schools in children’s lives. The core mission of the programs should focus on leading schools that promote high quality learning for all students. Selection into the program should use multiple measures and be rigorous and fair. Programs should have well-conceived structures and clear focus, as well as strong culture-building elements.

Urban and rural schools were represented the largest body of research. The review found that most students learn well in small schools. Smaller schools were also found to raise achievement for students of low socioeconomic and minority students.

The school’s location was also found to be significant. There are higher graduation rates from rural high schools than urban high schools, but many rural graduates did not move progress to postsecondary schools.

A number of structural constraints in rural districts complicate the resource allocation process, and principals must be particularly attentive to these constraints. These resource allocations include fragmented school schedules, inflexible job definitions for teachers specialized programs. These constraints were found not to be fully shared in larger urban districts but also suburban districts. If the three constraints and denied control over resources are not relinquished to principals, they will continue to struggle with academic achievement of their students.
NCLB mandates and numerous reform efforts to come, principals will be seeking activities to improve their students' achievement levels. But, the genuine activities in which principals aggressively engage will not be routine if they do not consciously devote time to additional development. Nonroutine activities prompt one to examine standard procedure from a different perspective, which means serving to increase capacity, as Ruddock (1988) stated, for the kind of constructive discontent with one's existing practices that will fuel the motivation for professional learning.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to assess the degree of importance of the principals’ instructional leadership in meeting district or state performance goals. The study also focused on the principals’ perceptions of their empowerment as related to (a) choosing in-service professional development programs, (b) determining budgets, and (c) evaluating teachers. The impact of school characteristics such as school size and location were also assessed.

This chapter will provide a review of research questions and explanations of the survey instrumentation, population and sample, measurement scale of the variables, and data analysis approach used in the study.

Research Questions

1. What were the levels of principals’ instructional leadership and empowerment?

2. Are principals’ level of instructional leadership and empowerment associated with number of years as teacher, number of years as principal, participation in an aspiring principal program, after controlling for school size and school locale?
3. Are principals' level of instructional leadership and empowerment related to whether or not the school passed the district or state accountability tests, after controlling for school size and locations?

Instrumentation

The 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) Public-Use Data (NCES: 2004-372) was used for the data analysis. Two SASS databases were utilize: The Schools and Staffing Public School Questionnaire and the Schools and Staffing Public School Principal Questionnaire. The SASS Public School Survey incorporated data on (a) common information about the school; (b) admissions, programs, and performance; (c) student and class organization; (d) parent participation and school safety; (e) staffing; and (f) special programs and services. The SASS Public School Principal Questionnaire included data on (a) knowledge and training, (b) attitudes and beliefs about education, (c) teacher professional development, (d) teacher and school performance, and (e) demographic data.

Participants

Approximately 14,000 schools and more than 75,000 teachers and principals were selected to participate in SASS. The return rates for all the surveys were above 90%, which was very high for this type of survey. The data analysis for this study was from SASS 1999-2000 Public School Principals and School Questionnaires.

The achieved sample sizes and weighted sample sizes of the 1999-2000 survey years are presented in Table 1. The achieved sample size for elementary school principals
was 4,138 compared to 4,386 for secondary school principals. The weighted sample size for elementary school principals was 59,535, which represented nearly twice the number of secondary school principals.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elementary School Principals</th>
<th>Secondary School Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieved Sample Size</td>
<td>4,138</td>
<td>4,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted Sample Size</td>
<td>59,535</td>
<td>23,267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NCES developed a group of sampling weights for each survey so that we can more accurately estimate the population based on the sample. Through the benefit of sampling weights, the outcomes are generalized to the national level.

This study presents data relating to principals, their involvement in the curriculum development process, and professional development, and draws inferences related to the principals' impacts on improving student achievement. Because this study examined the instructional leadership role of the principals, only their responses were reported. Data were collected from the School Principal Questionnaire Forms SASS-2A and School Survey Forms SASS-3A. The 1999–2000 School Principal Questionnaires obtained information about principal/school head demographic characteristics, training, experience, salary, and judgments about the seriousness of school problems. From the two questionnaires, as illustrated in Table 2, the following questions were used in data collection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifiers</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a0087</td>
<td>How much actual influence do you think the principal has on establishing curriculum at this school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a0209</td>
<td>Did your school meet the minimum district or state performance goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a0199</td>
<td>How often did you engage in guiding development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction in your role as principal of this school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a0095</td>
<td>How much actual influence did principal have determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers in this school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a0200</td>
<td>How often did principal engage in facilitating student learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a0104</td>
<td>How much actual influence did principal have evaluating teachers in this school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A0125</td>
<td>How much actual influence did principal have deciding how your school budget will be spent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a0053</td>
<td>How many years were you employed as the principal of this school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a0054</td>
<td>How many years were you employed as the principal of others schools?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a0055</td>
<td>Prior to becoming a principal, how many years of elementary school or secondary school teaching experience did you had?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a0065</td>
<td>Prior to becoming a principal, did you participate in any district or school training or development program for aspiring school principals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s0092</td>
<td>Around the first of October, what was the total number of students enrolled in this school in grades K-12 and comparable upgraded levels? 1 = Less than 300, 2 = 300-499, 3 = 500 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanic</td>
<td>What is Urbanicity of your school? 1=Large or mid-size central city, 2=urban fringe of large or mid-size city, 3=small town/rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

In this study, quantitative data from 1999-2000 SASS, Principal Questionnaire were analyzed to determine how much influence principals had on establishing curriculum and if their levels of influence made a difference in whether their school met the minimum district or state performance goals. The 1999-2000 SASS Electronic Codebook was used to analyze specific questions that are related to the variables for this study. The exploratory procedure incorporated the statistical software SPSS for Windows to establish the answers to the questions that direct this research. The strategy developed for this research involved the use of descriptive statistics and logistic regression. Figure 1 displays all variables, types of data, types of scales, and 1999-2000 SASS, Principal/School Questionnaire codes.

There are three research questions that need to be answered in this study:

1. What were the levels of principals’ instructional leadership and empowerment?

2. Are principals’ level of instructional leadership and empowerment associated with number of years as teacher, number of years as principal, participation in an aspiring principal program, after controlling for school size and location?

3. Are principals’ level of instructional leadership and empowerment related to whether or not the school passed the district or state accountability tests, after controlling for school size and location?

Variables for each question are listed in Figures 1–3. For the first research question, a descriptive statistical approach was used to determine the means of seven
variables. For the second question, two dependent variables—the level of principals’ instructional leadership and their level of empowerment—were formed by averaging the scores of related items. Then multiple regression analysis was conducted. For the third question, a logistic regression procedure was used to determine the possibility to predict whether the school could meet district or state performance goals based on the principals’ level of instructional leadership and empowerment.

A1 Principals’ influence on decision concerning establishing curriculum in the school (continuous. 1 = no influence to 5 = a great deal of influence)

A2 Frequency on guiding the development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction (continuous. 1 = never, 2 = once or twice a month, 3 = once twice a week, 4 = every day)

A3 Frequency on facilitating student learning. (continuous. 1 = never, 2 = once or twice a month, 3 = once or twice a week, 4 = every day)

A4 Frequency on providing and engaging staff in professional development activities (continuous. 1 = never, 2 = once or twice a month, 3 = once or twice a week, 4 = every day)

A5 Principal’s influence on deciding inservice professional development programs (continuous. 1 = no influence to 5 = a great deal of influence)

A6 Principal’s influence on evaluating teachers (continuous. 1 = no influence to 5 = a great deal of influence)

A7 Principal’s influence on deciding school budget (continuous. 1 = no influence to 5 = a great deal of influence)

Figure 1. Description of Variables for Question 1: Levels of Principals’ Instructional Leadership and Empowerment.

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Dependent Variables

B1 Level of principal’s instructional leadership (4 items—principals influence on curriculum decision, frequency on guiding the development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction, frequency on facilitating student learning, frequency on providing and engaging staff in professional development activities) (continuous)

B2 Level of principal’s perception of empowerment (3 items—principal’s influence on professional development program decision, principal’s influence on evaluating teachers, principal’s influence on deciding school budget) (continuous. 1 = no influence to 5 = a great deal of influence)

Independent Variables

B3 Years in teaching—number of years since first entering teaching (continuous)

B4 Years in principalship—number of years as principal (continuous)

B5 Participation in aspiring principal program (dichotomous. 1 = yes, 2 = no)

B6 School size measured by total enrollment (categorical. 1 = less than 300, 2 = 300-499, 3 = 500 or more)

B7 School location (categorical, 1 = large or mid-size central city, 2 = urban fringe of large or mid-size city, 3 = small town/rural)

Figure 2. Question 2: Are Principals’ Level of Instructional Leadership and Empowerment Associated With Number of Years as Teacher, Number of Years as Principal, Participation in an Aspiring Principal Program After Controlling for School Size and Location?
### Dependent Variables

C1 School meet the minimum district or state performance goals or not (dichotomous, 1 = yes, 2 = no)

### Independent Variables

A1 Principals’ influence on decision concerning establishing curriculum in the school (continuous, 1 = no influence to 5 = a great deal of influence)

A2 Frequency on guiding the development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction (continuous. 1 = never, 2 = once or twice a month, 3 = once or twice a week, 4 = every day)

A3 Frequency on facilitating student learning. (continuous. 1 = never, 2 = once or twice a month, 3 = once or twice a week, 4 = every day)

A4 Frequency on providing and engaging staff in professional development activities (continuous. 1 = never, 2 = once or twice a month, 3 = once or twice a week, 4 = every day)

A5 Principal’s influence on deciding inservice professional development programs (continuous. 1 = no influence to 5 = a great deal of influence)

A6 Principal’s influence on evaluating teachers (continuous. 1 = no influence to 5 = a great deal of influence)

A7 Principal’s influence on deciding school budget (continuous. 1 = no influence to 5 = a great deal of influence)

B6 School size measured by total enrollment (categorical. 1 = less than 300, 2 = 300-499, 3 = 500 or more)

B7 School location (categorical, 1 = large or mid-size central city, 2 = urban fringe of large or mid-size city, 3 = small town/rural)

Figure 3. Question 3: Are Principals’ Level of Instructional Leadership and Empowerment Related to Whether or Not the School Passed the District or State Accountability Tests, After Controlling for School Size and Location?
Summary

In this study, quantitative data from 1990-2000 SASS was analyzed to determine if principals' influence on establishing curriculum, guiding the development of curriculum, and facilitating student learning impacted the success of their school meeting district and state performance goals. The importance of the principals' instructional leadership focused on the principals' perceptions of their empowerment in three areas: (1) choosing in-service professional development programs, (2) determining budgets, and (3) evaluating teachers. School size and location were an important part that also had to be assessed and was a fixed variable of the design. Independent variables—(a) years in teaching, (b) years in principalship, and (c) participation in aspiring principal program—were analyzed as to school meeting performance goals at state and district level.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to assess (a) how important the principals’ leadership as an instructional leader was in meeting district or state performance goals, and (b) principals’ perceptions of their empowerment. The research questions for the study were as follows:

1. What were the levels of principals’ instructional leadership and empowerment?

2. Are principals’ level of instructional leadership and empowerment associated with number of years as teacher, number of years as principal, participation in an aspiring principal program, after controlling for school size and school locale?

3. Are principals’ level of instructional leadership and empowerment related to whether or not the school passed the district or state accountability tests, after controlling for school size and locations?

The instructional leadership variables included (a) principals’ influence on decisions concerning establishing curriculum, (b) frequency on guiding the development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction, (c) frequency on facilitating student learning, and (d) frequency on providing and engaging staff in professional development activities. The empowerment variables included (a) choosing in-service professional development programs, (b) determining the school budget, and (c) evaluating teachers.
Also included in the study are principals' years of teaching experience, number of years they served as principals, and the impact of principals' participation in an aspiring leadership program. For control purposes, the study also included the variables of school size and school location.

The 1999-2000 SASS public school principal survey and school survey included the responses from 8,524 public school principals. However, regarding the second research question, only the data from subjects who gave valid answers to item a209, i.e., a "Yes" or "No" answer to the question about whether the school meets the minimum district or state performance goals, are used for statistical analysis. Thus, the sample for that particular question is 5,312 public school principals.

Results are presented in 11 tables within this chapter, which is divided into sections pertaining to the three research questions listed below. The alpha level selected for purpose of statistical significance and rejection of the null hypothesis was \( p < .05 \).

**Question 1: WhatWere the Levels of Principals' Instructional Leadership and Empowerment?**

For principals' perception of instructional leadership, all the items use the 5-point Likert scale where 1 = Never, 2 = Once or twice a month, 3 = Once or twice a week, 4 = Everyday, and 5 = Always, except principals' actual influence on decision concerning establishing curriculum in the school, which uses 5-point scale where 1 = No influence and 5 = A great deal of influence.

The level of all principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership ability can be found in Table 3. The item regarding facilitating student learning had the highest level
(M = 3.35), which means many principals perceived that they frequently participated in this kind of activity. The principals’ perception level on providing and engaging in staff development is the lowest (M = 2.44). The value of the mean represents the frequency that principals engage in this activity, which varies from once or twice a moth to once or twice a week. The low means in frequency of providing and engaging in staff development, were partly influenced by the characteristics of professional development activities, which are not as frequent. However, they also raise some questions as to the principals’ role in these important aspects of their work.

Table 3

Means for Elementary School and Secondary School Principals’ Perceptions of Their Instructional Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items/Groups</th>
<th>Elementary Principals</th>
<th>Secondary Principals</th>
<th>Elementary/Secondary Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of curriculum and instruction development</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning facilitation</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing and engaging in staff development</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elementary school and secondary school principals appear to have some difference on curriculum establishment, deciding professional development programs, developing budgets, teacher evaluation, while elementary school principals tended to report higher levels of instructional leadership. Elementary school principals are higher means on three items: (1) guiding development and evaluation of curriculum and
instruction, (2) facilitating student learning, and (3) providing and engaging in staff
development. However, secondary school principals have more influence than
elementary school principals on establishing curriculum. Another significant point is that
both elementary school and secondary school principals have extremely low levels on the
frequency of guiding development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction ($M = 2.79$ for secondary school principals and $M = 2.94$ for elementary school principals.

Table 4 reports on items regarding principals’ perceptions of their empowerment,
which are based on 5-point Likert scales, where $1 = \text{No influence}$ and $5 = \text{A great deal of influence}$. All principals had relatively high levels on all three items, especially on
evaluating teachers, which was the highest ($M = 4.74$). There is no difference between
elementary school ($M = 4.26$) and secondary school ($M = 4.21$) principals in terms of
choosing professional development. Evaluating teachers also showed no difference of
influence between elementary school principals ($M = 4.74$) and secondary school ($M = 4.75$) principals. However, elementary school principals had a higher level than
secondary school principals on determining budget ($M = 4.27$ for elementary school and
$M = 4.15$ for secondary school). Elementary school principals have more power than
secondary school on determining school budget.
Table 4

Means for Principals' Perceptions of Their Empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items/Groups</th>
<th>Elementary Principals</th>
<th>Secondary Principals</th>
<th>Elementary/Secondary Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum establishment</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding professional development programs</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing budgets</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2: Are Principals' Level of Instructional Leadership and Empowerment Associated With Number of Years as Teacher, Number of Years as Principal, and Participation in an Aspiring Principal Program, After Controlling for School Size and School Locale?

Instructional Leadership

When all the principals were included, as exhibited in Table 5, the regression model is statistically significant, $F(5, 7654) = 46.44$, $p < .001$, $r^2_{adj} = .029$. The adjusted $R$ square appears to be small but significant, because the $F$ test is dependent, in part, on the sample size. All three independent variables, (1) years as teacher, (2) years as principal, and (3) whether or not participate in aspiring programs, significantly contributed to the prediction of principal's level of instructional leadership ($p < .05$) after controlling for school size and school location. The item with reference to influence on establishing curriculum had the highest mean ($M = 3.99$) for the whole group. The data seem to indicate that principals perceived that they had much instructional leadership in
establishing curriculum. School size and location were factors that might influence the leadership of the principals and were included and held constant in the statistical regression process. The longer the principals taught and the longer they held a principal position, the higher level their perception of instructional leadership. Whether or not the principals attended the program for aspiring principals, where 1 is “Yes” and 2 is “No,” was the most meaningful of the three predictors as indicated by the high beta coefficient as compared to the other predictors. The $t$ values for instructional leadership exhibited by elementary and secondary principals ranged from 3.541 for years of teaching to −9.408 for participating in aspiring principal programs. The $t$ value for years of experience as a principal was 2.140. Participating in aspiring principal programs is negatively correlated to the level of instructional leadership and meant that principals who attended the aspiring principal program tend to have higher-level perception of instructional leadership.

Table 5

*Multiple Regression Results for Instructional Leadership for Elementary and Secondary Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta Coefficients</th>
<th>$t$ value</th>
<th>$P$ value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years teacher experience</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>3.541</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years principal experience</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>2.140</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in aspiring principal programs</td>
<td>−0.109</td>
<td>−9.408</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Controlled for school size and school location.*
When only elementary school principals were considered, as reported in Table 6, the regression model is statistically significant, $F(5, 5509) = 36.395, p < .001, \quad r^2_{adj} = .031$. The small adjusted $R$ square, but statistically significant $F$ test could be partly attributed to the sample size of the research. Teaching experience and whether the principals attended the program for aspiring principals are statistically significant predictors for principal's level of instructional leadership ($p < .05$) after controlling for school size and school location. Whether or not the principals attended the program for aspiring principals, where 1 = Yes and 2 = No, is especially the meaningful predictor as indicated by the high beta coefficient as compared to the other predictors. It meant that elementary principals who attended the aspiring principal program demonstrated higher levels of instructional leadership. The $t$ values for instructional leadership exhibited by elementary principals ranged from 2.296 for years of teaching experience to –9.401 for participating in aspiring principal programs. The $t$ value for years of experience as a principal was

Table 6

*Controlled for school size and school location.*
The numbers of teaching prior to becoming a principal was significant, positive predictor for their level of instructional leadership. However, the number of years as an elementary principal is not a significant predictor of the level of instructional leadership.

When only secondary school principals were considered, as detailed in Table 7, the regression model is statistically significant, $F(5, 1862) = 8.721, p < .001, r^2_{adj} = .02$. The adjusted $R$ square is small but statically significant, because the test is dependent, in part, on sample size. Teaching experience and whether the principal attended the program for aspiring principals significantly contributed to the prediction of principal’s level of instructional leadership ($p < .05$) after controlling for school size and school location, while years of principalship does not. The $t$ values for instructional leadership exhibited by secondary principals ranged from 2.757 for years of teaching experience to $-2.391$ for participating in aspiring principal programs. The $t$ value for years of experience as a principal was 1.200. Teaching experience, which was indicated by years

Table 7

*Multiple Regression Results for Instructional Leadership for Secondary Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta Coefficients</th>
<th>$t$ value</th>
<th>$P$ value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years teacher experience</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>2.757</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years principal experience</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in aspiring principal programs</td>
<td>$-.056$</td>
<td>$-2.391$</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Controlled for school size and school location.
of principals as teachers, is especially the meaningful predictor as indicated by the high beta coefficient as compared to the other predictors. It positively correlated to the level of instructional leadership and meant that the longer principals teach the higher level of instructional leadership they have exhibited. Another significant factor, whether or not the principal attended the program for aspiring principals, showed that principals who attended the aspiring principal program tend to have higher-level perception of instructional leadership.

Empowerment

When elementary and secondary principals were included, as reported in Table 8, the regression model is statistically significant, $F(5, 7654) = 33.249, p < .001, r_{adj}^2 = .021$. The adjusted $R$ square is small, but statistically significant, because the test is dependent, in part, on sample size. All three independent variables significantly contributed to the prediction of principal's level of empowerment ($p < .05$) after controlling for school size and school location. The $t$ values for empowerment exhibited by elementary and secondary principals ranged from $-3.383$ for years of teaching experience to $-4.469$ for participating in aspiring principal programs. The $t$ value for years of experience as a principal was $3.553$. Among the predictors, whether the principal attended the program for aspiring principals is the most meaningful predictor as indicated by the high beta coefficient as compared to the other predictors. Principals who attended the aspiring principal program tend to have higher level of perception of empowerment. On the other hand, the longer principals teach and take the position; the lower is their level of perceived empowerment.
Table 8

*Multiple Regression Results for Empowerment for Elementary and Secondary Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta Coefficients</th>
<th>$t$ value</th>
<th>$P$ value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years teacher experience</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>-3.386</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years principal experience</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>-3.553</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in aspiring principal programs</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>-4.469</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Controlled for school size and school location.

When only elementary school principals were considered, as shown in Table 9, the regression model is statistically significant, $F(5, 5509) = 22.745, p < .001, r^2_{adj} = .019$. The adjusted $R$ square is small, but statistically significant, partly because of the big sample size of this research. The $t$ values for empowerment exhibited by elementary principals ranged from $-3.279$ for years of teaching experience to $-4.060$ for participating in aspiring principal programs. The $t$ value for years of experience as a principal was $-3.938$. All of the three independent variables—(1) years as a teacher, (2) years as a principal, and (3) participating in aspiring principal programs—significantly contributed to the prediction of principal’s level of empowerment ($p < .05$) after controlling for school size and school location. Principals who attended the aspiring principal program tended to have higher level of perception of empowerment. On the other hand, the longer principals taught and the longer of principalship, the lower level is their perception of empowerment.
Table 9

Multiple Regression Results for Empowerment for Elementary Principals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta Coefficients</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years teacher experience</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>-3.279</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years principal experience</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>-3.938</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in aspiring principal programs</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>-4.060</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Controlled for school size and school location.

When only secondary school principals were considered, as detailed in Table 10, the regression model is statistically significant, \( F(5, 1862) = 10.494, p < .001, r^2_{adj} = .025 \). The adjust \( R^2 \) square is small, but statistically significant, because the test is dependent, in part, on sample size. The \( t \) values for empowerment exhibited by secondary principals ranged from \(-1.103\) for years of teaching experience to \(-1.419\) for participating in aspiring principal programs. The \( t \) value for years of experience for principals was \(-1.524\). However, none of the independent variables significantly contributed to the prediction of principal's level of empowerment \((p < .05)\) after controlling for school size and school location.
Table 10

*Multiple Regression Results for Empowerment for Secondary Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta Coefficients</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years teacher experience</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>-1.103</td>
<td>.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years principal experience</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-1.524</td>
<td>.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in aspiring principal programs</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>-1.419</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Controlled for school size and school location.

Question 3: Are Principals’ Level of Instructional Leadership and Empowerment Related to Whether or Not the School Passed the District or State Accountability Tests, After Controlling for School Size and Locations?

When principals in all levels of schools are included, as stated in Table 11, results of the logistic regression analysis indicated that the set of independent variables statistically significantly predicted the outcome, \( \chi^2 (9, N=6894) = 83.363, p < .001 \).

However, the Nagelkerke pseudo \( R^2 \) indicated that the model accounted for a small percentage of the total variance, only 1.7\%. This means that the set of predictors can only weakly discriminate between the schools passing the district or state accountability test and those not. Prediction success for the cases used in the development of the model was moderate, with an overall prediction success rate of 66.8\%, correct prediction rates of 99.9\% for those schools passing the test, and 0.4\% for those not passing the test.

The regression coefficients, significance level, and odds ratio for each predictor are presented in Table 11. Principals’ influence on establishing curriculum, principals’
Table 11

Logistic Regression Results for Elementary School and Secondary School Principals: Can Principals' Instructional Leadership and Empowerment Predict Schools' Academic Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P value</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum establishment</td>
<td>-0.155</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of curriculum and instruction development</td>
<td>-0.074</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning facilitation</td>
<td>-0.086</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing and engaging in staff development</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>1.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding professional development programs</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.273</td>
<td>1.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing budgets</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td>0.982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>1.078</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Controlled for school size and school location.

Frequency on guiding development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction, and principals' frequency on facilitating student learning were statistically significant predictors of whether the school will pass the state's accountability test. Overall, the more principals had influence on establishing curriculum, the more principals engaged in the instruction-related activities, and the more they were engaged in facilitating student learning, the higher the possibility that their school would meet the district/state goals for student performance.
The statistics on odds ratio indicated that the more leadership principals perceived that they have on “establishing curriculum,” the less likely that their school would fail the state or district accountability test. To be more specific, for the principal who rated his/her leadership at 4, the odds of the school failing the accountability test are 14.4% less likely than that of the school whose principals rated his/her leadership in establishing curriculum at “3.” In other words, with each single level of increase in establishing curriculum, the odds of passing the accountability test increased by 16.8%.

For each single point increase in principal’s frequency on guiding development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction, there is a 7.1% less likelihood of the school not meeting district or state goals for student performance, controlling for other two factors. In other words, the odds of the school to meet goals will increase by 7.64% for every level increase in principal’s frequency on guiding development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction.

The more frequent the principal is on facilitating student learning, the higher the odds that the school will meet the district or state goals. The odds of not meeting the goals decreases by 8.3% for every level increase in student learning facilitation, controlling for the other two factors. In other words, the odds of the school to meet goals will increase by 9.05%. An interesting pattern is that those variables in instructional leadership tended to be statistically significant, while those variables in empowerment were not significant. It appears that other things being equal, principals’ instructional leadership plays a more important role in meeting the goals than the empowerment of principals.
When considering only elementary school principals, as reported in Table 12, results of the logistic regression analysis indicate that the set of independent variables significantly predicts the outcome, $\chi^2 (9, N=3395) = 76.026, p < 0.001$. However, the Nagelkerke pseudo $R^2$ suggested that the model only accounted for a small amount of the total variance, only 2.1%. This means that the set of predictors can only weakly discriminate between the schools passing the district or state accountability tests and those that did not. Prediction success for the cases used in the development of the model was moderate, with an overall prediction success rate of 66.6%. The correct prediction rate is 99.3% for schools who passed the test and 1.8% for those who did not.

The statistics on odds ratio indicated that the more leadership elementary principals perceived that they have on “establishing curriculum,” the less likely that their school would fail the state or district accountability test. To be more specific, for the principal who rated his/her leadership at 4, the odds of the school failing the accountability test was 18% less likely than that of the school whose principal rated his/her leadership in establishing curriculum at “3.” In other words, with each single level of increase establishing curriculum, the odds of passing the accountability test increased by 21.95%.

The regression coefficients, significance level, and odds ratio for each predictor as presented in Table 12 indicate the principals’ influence on establishing curriculum is a statistically significant predictor of whether the school will pass the state’s accountability tests or not. The more elementary school principals exert influence on establishing
Table 12

Logistic Regression Results for Elementary School Principals: Can Principals' Instructional Leadership and Empowerment Predict Schools' Academic Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P value</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum establishment</td>
<td>-.198</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of curriculum and instruction development</td>
<td>-.076</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning facilitation</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing and engaging in staff development</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding professional development programs</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing budgets</td>
<td>-.068</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Controlled for school size and school location.

curriculum, the more likely the elementary schools would pass the district/state goals for student performance.

When considering only secondary school principals, results of the logistic regression analysis indicated that the set of independent variables significantly predicts the outcome, $\chi^2 (9, N=2875) = 23.948, p < 0.001$ (Table 13). However, the Nagelkerke pseudo $R^2$ indicated that the model only accounted for 2% of the total variance. This means that the set of predictors can only weakly discriminate between the schools...
passing the district or state accountability test and those that did not pass. Prediction success for the cases used in the development of the model was moderate, with an overall prediction success rate of 67.2%. The correct prediction rate is 99.9% for those schools who passed the test and 0.2% for those that didn’t.

Table 13

*Logistic Regression Results for Secondary School Principals: Can Principals’ Instructional Leadership and Empowerment Predict Schools’ Academic Achievement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P value</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum establishment</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of curriculum and instruction development</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.738</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning facilitation</td>
<td>-.156</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing and engaging in staff development</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>1.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding professional development programs</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.369</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing budgets</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>1.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>1.184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Controlled for school size and school location.

The regression coefficients, significance level, and odds ratio for each predictor as presented in Table 13 revealed only principals’ frequency on facilitating student learning is a statistically significant predictor of whether the school will pass the state’s
accountability test or not. For each 1 point increase in principals’ frequency on facilitating student learning, the odds ratio of the school not meeting district or state goals for student performance decreases by 14.5%. In other words, the odds of the school meeting the goals will increase by 16.96%. The more secondary school principals engage in facilitating student learning, the more likely the secondary school will pass the district or state goals for student performance.

Summary

This chapter presented the results found in analysis of data from the SASS, 1999-2000 survey. The data analyzed addressed the impact of how important the principals’ leadership as an instructional leaders, their years as a teacher, their years as a principal, and whether they attended an aspiring principal program. It also presents results on principals’ instructional leadership and perceptions of their empowerment on deciding inservice professional development programs, deciding budget, and evaluating teachers. For the inferential statistics, school characteristics including school size and location were included for control purposes.

*Summary for Research Question 1: What Were the Levels of Principals’ Instructional Leadership and Empowerment?*

When investigating principals’ perceptions of their instructional leadership, it was found the levels were different for aspects in principals’ perceptions of their roles as instructional leaders. Both elementary school and secondary school principals reported their influence in curriculum establishment to be considerable. Facilitating student
learning had the second highest means among the variables in instructional leadership for both elementary school and secondary school principals. The lowest means were found in the area of staff development. It appears that elementary school principals' leadership is perceived to be high on all aspects except for curriculum establishment as compared to the secondary school principals. In the area of staff development, both elementary and secondary principals tend to be low.

Both elementary and secondary principals have relatively high levels of influence on all of the three empowerment variables: deciding inservice professional development programs, deciding budget, and evaluating teachers. The influence of elementary and secondary principals on professional development showed no difference. However, it can be observed that elementary principals had a higher level when deciding their budgets as compared to the secondary principals.

Summary for Research Question 2: Are Principals' Level of Instructional Leadership and Empowerment Associated With Number of Years as Teacher, Number of Years as Principal, Participation in an Aspiring Principal Program, After Controlling for School Size and School Locale?

Instructional Leadership and Principal's Background

After having controlled the sample for school size and school location, it was found that principals' level of instructional leadership and empowerment were related to number of years as a teacher, number of years as a principal, and whether they participated in an aspiring principal program or not. It was observed that for the combined elementary school and secondary school principals that (a) prior to becoming a principal the number of years as a teacher, (b) how long they have been a principal, and
whether they attended a aspiring principal program had significant influence on their perception of instructional leadership. The longer a principal has taught, with more years in a principalship, and having attended an aspiring principal program, the higher level of perceived instructional leadership.

When only elementary school principals were considered, attending an aspiring principal program was a statistically significant predictor of the level of instructional leadership. Their number of years as a teacher was also a significant predictor, but the number of years as principal was not significant. When only secondary school principals were considered, teaching experience and whether the principal attended a program for aspiring principals were significant in predicting their level of instructional leadership. However, secondary school principals' years as a principal had no significant effect on their level of instructional leadership.

Empowerment and Principals' Background

When observing multiple regression for empowerment results for the combined elementary schools and secondary school principals, years as a teachers, years as a principal, and attendance in an aspiring principal program contributed significantly to the prediction of the principal's level of instructional leadership. This was after controlling for school size and location. The most significant indicator was whether the principals had attended an aspiring principal program. However, principals who have spent longer years of teaching have a propensity to have a lower level of their perception of empowerment. Similarly, the longer the principal is in a principalship, the lower his/her level of empowerment is.
When only elementary principals were considered, all three empowerment variables still significantly contribute to the prediction of principals' level of empowerment. The most significant indicator was whether the principals had attended an aspiring principal program. However, elementary principals who have spent more years teaching have a propensity to have a lower level of their perception of empowerment. Similarly, the longer the elementary principal is in a principalship, the lower his/her level of empowerment is.

When observing multiple regression results for secondary principals we found that years as a teacher, years as a principal, and attendance in an aspiring principal program did not significantly predict principal's level of empowerment. After controlling for school size and location, these variables do not have significant influence on the empowerment of the principals.

Summary of Research Question 3: Are Principals' Level of Instructional Leadership and Empowerment Related to Whether or Not the School Passed the District or State Accountability Tests, After Controlling for School Size and Location?

When elementary school and secondary school principals are included in the logistic regression, it was found that the leadership variables—principals' influence on establishing curriculum, principals' frequency on guiding development and evaluation of curriculum and instruction, and principals' frequency on facilitating student learning—are statistically significant predictors of whether a school passes state accountability tests. The more influence principals have on establishing curriculum, the more principals engage in the instruction-related activities, and the more they engage in facilitating
student learning, the more likely the school will meet the district or state goals for student performance.

When only the elementary school principals were considered, results of the logistic regression analysis indicated that one leadership variable, principals’ influence on establishing curriculum, is a statistically significant predictor of whether the school will pass the district and state accountability tests. The more influence the principal has in curriculum establishment, the more likely that the school will meet the goals.

When only the secondary school principals were considered, results of the logistic regression analysis indicated that only one variable, principals’ frequency on facilitating student learning, was a significant predictor. The more the principals engaged in facilitating student learning, the more likely the school would pass district and state accountability tests.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of this study of principals, their instructional leadership practices, and the impact on meeting their district and state performance goals. Although images of failed schools have been a motivating force in educational reform, the passage of the 2002 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act established new and challenging demands. Confronted with an increasingly expanded requirement for achievement, schools that lag behind lose students, autonomy, and perhaps even their right to exist. Olsen (1999) established that the rigor of standards for testing vary considerably from state to state. The conclusions are consistent with the challenges that school leaders experience as related to the changing landscape of public policy and high student achievement requirements in education.

The rationale of this study was to demonstrate how vital the instructional leadership role of principals is in the development and implementation of curriculum and instruction. The researcher was aware that the wealth of evidence that makes a successful instructional leader still continues to be indefinable. Even though researchers stress the significance of principals as instructional leaders, the consensus in the literature is that principals expend the majority of their time dealing with management concerns.
The Public School Principal Questionnaire of the Schools and Staffing Survey from 1999-2000 was used to study the levels of the principals’ instructional leaders in establishing curriculum and instruction and the success their schools have on state and district accountability tests. The survey data, the 1999-2000 Public Principal Questionnaire, were related to their level of instructional leadership and empowerment, and how their leadership and empowerment are used to examine the principals’ success on district and state accountability tests.

Specifically, the following research questions were answered through completion of this study.

1. What were the levels of principals’ instructional leadership and empowerment?

2. Are principals’ level of instructional leadership and empowerment associated with number of years as teacher, number of years as principal, participation in an aspiring principal program, after controlling for school size and school locale?

3. Are principals’ level of instructional leadership and empowerment related to whether or not the school passed the district or state accountability tests, after controlling for school size and locations?

Inferences of the conclusions are discussed in this chapter. Implications and suggested recommendations are also made for potential research in the future.
Summary

The Level of Instructional Leadership and Empowerment

The study revealed differing perspectives of school perceptions of instructional leadership. Elementary school and secondary school principals reported their influence on establishing curriculum as being considerable. When asked about facilitating student learning, secondary school principals reported this was their highest level of influence as the instructional leader. The lowest level of influence of elementary school and secondary school principals as the instructional leader was in the area of staff development.

When we examine secondary school and elementary school principals, there are areas of difference. Elementary school principals exhibited a higher degree of influence on decisions of establishing curriculum, whereas secondary school principals reported a lower level. It is interesting to observe that secondary school principals had a high level of involvement in facilitating student learning.

Principals' perceptions of their empowerment revealed that all three empowerment variables—choosing in-service professional development programs, determining budgets, and evaluating teachers—have relatively high levels of influence for both elementary school and secondary school principals. The influence of elementary and secondary school principals on professional development revealed no significant differences. However, it was established that elementary school principals had a higher level of empowerment than secondary school principals when determining their budgets.
Instructional Leadership and Principals' Background

After controlling for school size and school location, the principals' level of instructional leadership is related to number of years a teacher, number of years as a principal, and whether they participated in an aspiring principal program. The number of years that elementary school and secondary school principals served as teachers prior to becoming a principal and how long they have been a principal had a high influence on their perception of instructional leadership. The highest predictor of instructional leadership was whether a principal had attended an aspiring principal program.

When only elementary principals were considered, attending an aspiring principal program was a high predictor of instructional leadership. The number of years they served as a teacher was high on their instructional leadership, but the number of years as a principal was low with no significance. When only secondary principals were considered, teaching experience and whether the principals attended a program for aspiring principals had a high effect on their level of instructional leadership, but for elementary and secondary principals, the number of years in principalship was low and had no significant result on their instructional leadership.

Empowerment and Principals' Background

When observing the results of the regression analysis of empowerment for elementary and secondary principals, years as a teacher, years as a principal, and attending an aspiring principal program were high in predicting principals' level of empowerment. This was after controlling for school size and location. The most
important predictor was whether principals had attended an aspiring principal program. However, principals who had spent more years of teaching and of serving as principal have a propensity to have a lower level of their perception of empowerment.

When only elementary principals were considered, all three empowerment variables were high predictors of principals’ level of their perception of empowerment. The highest predictors of level of perception of empowerment were the number of years as a principal and whether they participated in an aspiring principal program. Years as a teacher, years as a principal, and attending an aspiring principal program were not predictors of a secondary school principal’s level of empowerment.

**District and State Accountability Tests**

When elementary and secondary principals are included in the logistic regression analysis, it was found that three instructional leadership variables—influence on curriculum establishment, guiding the development and evaluation of curriculum, and principals’ frequency on facilitating student learning—were high predictors of whether a school passes state accountability tests.

When only elementary principals were considered, results of the logistic regression analysis found that only the influence on establishing curriculum had a high effect on whether the school meets the goals. When only secondary principals were considered, results of the logistic regression analysis found that only the principals’ frequency on facilitating student learning was high. The more engaged the principals are in facilitating student learning, the more likely that the school will pass district and state accountability tests.
Major Findings for Instructional Leadership and Principals' Background

- For all principals, the number of years they served as a teacher prior to becoming a principal had high influence on their perception of instructional leadership.

- The number of years in a principalship had no influence on their perception of instructional leadership.

- The highest predictor of instructional leadership was whether the principal had attended an aspiring principal program.

Major Findings for Empowerment and Principals' Background

- For elementary school principals, attending an aspiring principal program was a high indicator. Secondary school principals' attendance in an aspiring principal program had no significance to the prediction of principals' level of empowerment.

- Elementary school principals who had spent more years teaching had a tendency to have lower level of their perception of empowerment. For secondary school principals, years as a teacher was not a predictor of principal’s level of empowerment.

- For elementary school principals and secondary school principals, the number of years in a principalship showed lower perception of empowerment.

- For secondary school principals, attendance in an aspiring principal program was not a predictor of principals' level of empowerment.
• For elementary school principals, all three empowerment variables—(1) deciding professional development, (2) developing budgets, and (3) teacher evaluation—were high predictors of principals' level of their perception of empowerment.

Major Findings for District and State Accountability Tests

• Elementary school principals' influence on establishing curriculum was high on whether the school passed district and state accountability tests.
• Secondary school principals' frequency on facilitating student learning was high on whether the school passed district and state accountability tests.

Conclusions

Only a limited number of principal leadership factors that influence whether schools pass district and state accountability tests were investigated in this study. Other possible influences on student learning likely include school culture, knowledge of curriculum-instruction assessment, principals as a change agent role, interaction between teacher and students, and school community relationships. The narrow focus of this investigation limited the examination of other potential factors that potentially influence student learning. Based on the data and the literature, I suspect a systematic approach will help to ensure that school improvement occurs.

The role of the principal in curriculum development at the elementary level had a positive impact on their school's achievement, but conversely, secondary principals did not have the same influence as their elementary counterparts. These differences in
elementary and secondary principals are likely the result of elementary teachers being more student-centered and generally more amenable to change than high school teachers. Elementary principals also spent more time collaborating with teachers on curricular issues than their high school counterparts. The culture and complexity of the elementary school is less complex than the challenges faced by high school educators. Another consideration is that most elementary principal have taught the elementary school curriculum and they know and understand the basic elementary curricular concept. In contrast, secondary principals cannot possibly understand all curricular content areas. The departmentalization of high schools results in greater teacher autonomy with collaboration between the principal and teachers generally less than in elementary schools where a more cohesive culture exists. Changing the high school culture and improving the relationships between high school teachers and administrators is more challenging, especially in light of other challenges that high school teachers and administrators encounter each day.

The issue of facilitating student learning is perplexing. Secondary principals addressed facilitating student learning at higher levels than elementary principals. Facilitating student learning is a complex endeavor and the results of the study did not elicit how principals accomplished this task. The autonomy of secondary teachers, scheduling, and principals collaborating with high school department chairs may support the perspective that secondary principals took action to facilitate student learning.

The results of the study indicated that the more principals were involved in the facilitation of student learning, the more likely it was for students to perform well on state accountability tests. Few question the necessity of principals to provide
instructional leadership. However, specific principal actions and behaviors that facilitated student learning were not validated by this study; equally important is whether principal actions and behaviors are attributable to urban, rural, and suburban schools. Researchers must dissect what principals specifically do to facilitate student learning so that other principals can replicate these important leadership behaviors that impact student achievement.

Another curious finding focused on professional development. Respondents revealed that providing professional development activities for teachers once or twice a month had no significance on student achievement. With limited resources and large student achievement gaps, shouldn't professional development be designed to improve student achievement? In addition, if professional development is not an appropriate vehicle to increase student achievement by enhancing teacher pedagogical knowledge and skills, then how can principals work with teachers to improve student achievement? The question that must be asked is: Does professional development impact student achievement? This puzzling finding is also closely tied to scarce district resources and how resources and principal leadership strategies can more effectively be used to increase student achievement.

The number of years a teacher was in the classroom prior to becoming a principal was a significant factor of a principal's instructional leadership. Principals not having a substantial number of years teaching experience may not be prepared for the rigors of leading experienced teachers and school reform issues. School districts may need to consider number of years teaching as a major criteria in their hiring practices for new
principals. This is a policy issue for school boards who want to maximize student achievement as leadership matters.

Aspiring principal programs were important to a principal’s instructional leadership capacity. This is supported by research which examined the relationship connecting principals’ leadership and student success. This represents another area that requires additional investigation as the scope, intensity, and depth of aspiring principal programs are significantly different. What is included in aspiring principal programs that principals do not receive in traditional university preparation programs? Levine (2005) reported that graduate education programs found that most principals’ preparation programs suffered from irrelevant curriculum, low standards, weak faculty, and little clinical instruction. Many programs grant degrees to teachers who are trying to qualify for salary increases. Elementary and secondary principals today have to serve as leaders for student learning. They must recognize academic content and instructive techniques and collect, analyze, and use data to improve test scores.

As with most educational issues, a systematic approach must be taken. Based on the findings of this study and the research conducted by Levine (2005), it could be surmised that universities are part of the problem and perhaps part of the solution. A micro analysis of aspiring leadership programs would likely support the need for additional fieldwork and a more relevant curriculum offered by universities. In addition, university officials must examine hiring practices and recruit candidates with research potential but who also have significant K-12 administrator leadership experience.
Recommendations for Further Research

Six recommendations for additional research are offered. Additional research will likely add to the findings of this study and perhaps help to clarify questions raised by this investigation.

1. The study should be replicated to determine the impact that No Child Left Behind legislation has had on a principal’s instructional leadership.

2. Research should be conducted on the scope and depth of aspiring principal programs and the specific impact these programs have on a principal’s future performance.

3. Research should be conducted on the differences of a principal’s instructional leadership requirements and performance in urban, rural, and suburban settings.

4. The results of the study indicated that high school principals facilitated student learning more than their elementary counterparts. Research should be conducted to determine if this is an aberration or a result that is common to high schools, and why is it the case?

5. The effectiveness of professional development for teachers was also raised. Research needs to be conducted on the effectiveness of professional development on teacher performance and student achievement and the influence of the principals’ attitudes of professional development on improving student achievement.
6. Research should be conducted on what types of university preparation programs most effectively prepare aspiring principals for future instructional leadership roles.

Concluding Thoughts

Mandated policies have affected the principal's role as an instructional leader. This has resulted in a high degree of urgency in relationship to principal preparation programs and professional development for aspiring principals.

Principals are the most dominant individuals in the schools and are accountable for all activities in their schools. They set the climate for student learning. They are the major connection to the community and all its stakeholders. The concept of instructional leadership is a relativity new concept for school principals. In establishing curriculum, elementary school principals had an impact on meeting the goals, while secondary school principals had no significant impact. When facilitating student learning, elementary school principals had no impact, but secondary school principals' had a significant impact meeting the goals. Many principals were hired because of their strong management skills. This is no longer as important as knowledge of curriculum and instructional leadership skills.

Providing teachers professional development activities once or twice a month had no significance to student achievement. This is supported through principals' personal commitment to their own personal development. They hold a common vision for themselves and their teaching staff.
Elementary school and secondary school principals' years as a teacher prior to becoming a principal significantly contributed to the principals' level of instructional leadership. Understanding that instructional leadership should always be on student learning, principals with extensive teaching experience understand what good teaching looks like. They also know that they do not have all the answers. When looking at the number of years as a principal, it was found that it has no significant effect on the level of instructional leadership of principals. It was also found that principals who facilitate student learning at the secondary level have a significant effect on whether students pass the accountability test at the district and state levels.

This chapter presented a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study on the impact of elementary school and secondary school principals on their influence of curriculum development and whether their schools pass district and state performance tests. If the principal's role in curriculum development is well thought-out and an essential component of an effective school, then principals have to have an understanding of the fundamentals of curriculum, how to engage staff in the process of curriculum development, and how to evaluate the results. Only when principals have a concrete base in the knowledge of curriculum leadership practices can they assume their role as the instructional leader. In addition, school principals must be required to learn how to initiate a continuous improvement course of action and how to construct encouraging cultures that communicate the relationship between learning and student achievement.
Appendix A

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Letter of Approval
Date: February 6, 2006

To: Van Cooley, Principal Investigator
    John M. Rainey, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Mary Lagerwey, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 05-10-05

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “Principal’s Instructional Leadership in the Development of Curriculum and Instruction and Meeting State Performance” has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: February 6, 2007
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