Avoiding Pitfalls in Administrative Internships

M. Scott Korpak

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AVOIDING PITFALLS IN ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIPS

By

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A Project Report
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AVOIDING PITFALLS IN ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIPS

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Educational leaders and researchers are concerned about the number of qualified candidates for school leadership positions (Tracy, G. & Weaver, C. 2000). In response to this need, many school districts are promoting administrative internships. Through this project, the author sought to learn more about the following challenges: What does the current research literature say about administrative internships, and what are some of the common pitfalls that administrative interns face, especially in the area of journal preparation and the corresponding guidelines of the Human Subject Institutional Review Board.

Through this project, recommendations were formulated for future interns and their advisors. Common recommendations include clear expectations and frequent and open communication.

In conclusion, this project attempts to provide broad assistance for future administrative interns and their advisors.
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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The Michigan Institute for Educational Management is predicting an unprecedented amount of public school principal and superintendent retirements in the next five years. The Michigan Institute for Educational Management believes that fewer teachers who have leadership potential are aspiring to move into these critical leadership positions. To help counter this potential crisis, the Michigan Institute for Educational Management is providing weekend "Academies" for potential leadership candidates (Quinn, T., personal communication, April 2000).

The Michigan Institute for Educational Management is not alone in their concern for finding and cultivating the next generation of educational leaders. School districts, who already are seeing fewer and fewer applicants for leadership positions, are developing strategies of their own. One such strategy is to take potential leaders within their own district and provide them with an administrative internship experience.

Completing an administrative internship is valuable to both the intern and the school district. The school district is providing an experience for a potential leader with low risk. Meanwhile, the district has an opportunity to observe the intern and evaluate their potential as an administrator in real circumstances. The intern is able to
get real life experiences in school leadership, be mentored by an accomplished principal and list the accomplishment on their resume.

Just as the potential for growth and leadership development is available in an administrative internship experience, so is the potential for confusion, abuse and mismanagement. For example, the term “intern” can be interpreted in several ways. For the intern, it may mean “almost assistant principal,” but for the cooperating administrator it might mean, “coffee gopher.” For the cooperating principal it might also mean the opportunity to use personal days for the first time in years. Regardless of the assumptions, both the intern and the cooperating principal must discuss and clarify expectations.

Further, the success of the experience may be dependent on variables other than the leadership potential of the intern. Beyond principal support, the reactions of teachers and parents are all important factors that could be mismanaged and provide inaccurate information for the district about the intern. Balance is necessary so that the intern experiences school leadership, but is not so protected that they never have a chance to “test” their skills and leave the experience without any new information about their leadership ability.

The experiences and the challenges made available by the opportunity to serve as an administrative intern allow the following questions to be viewed: What are the insights that are learned through an internship? What does the current research literature say about training future school leaders? And, finally, what are some of the pitfalls of journaling the internship experience?
The answers to these questions will be summarized in a pamphlet and a two-page form titled, “An Introductory Guide to Journal Preparation.” These documents are not designed to be an exhaustive explanation, but rather a quick and easy reference guide for interns with practical suggestions.
METHOD

Literature Review

An important resource for this project is current literature on the subject of leadership training, primarily in the area of preparing future school leaders. Applicable literature to administrative internships has been summarized and used to develop the pamphlet and guides found in the Appendix of this project.

Pitfalls of Journal Preparation

A key component of internship completion is the experience of journaling. However, journaling is a form of research and is under the supervision of the Human Subject Institutional Review Board. If the journal is to be used in any format related to the fulfillment of coursework, it must first be approved by the NSIRB. Approval comes before the journal is completed, not after. Non-compliance with the HSIRB guidelines will nullify the internship experience as usable research and thus it is not usable in a thesis, project, dissertation, or for the fulfillment of course requirements. It is of critical importance that interns understand the guidelines of the HSIRB and follow them. This section provides a review of the HSIRB guidelines and practical journal examples for interns to use as a reference.
Recommendations

Through personal experience, the literature review and the review of the HSIRB guidelines, recommendations have been suggested for interns and their principal and university supervisors. Each subgroup will be listed separately with role specific recommendations. The recommendations are not all inclusive. They are a collection of common sense reminders that will hopefully assist in the development of future school leaders. In addition, a pamphlet and a two page guide titled, “An Introductory Guide for Journal Preparation,” are provided for supervising principals, future interns and university supervisors.
Several journals were reviewed to extend the author’s understanding of the current research being applied in the development of future educational leaders. The research varied from conceptualizing the “ideal” principal to university and state programs to hints for principals who have been assigned interns. Each journal article conveyed the necessity for preparing future leaders through practical applications.

What are the characteristics of the “ideal” principal? Hausman suggests that “an idealized view of the principal’s role ignores both the importance that context plays and the unique and dynamic quality of individual principals (2000).” His argument is that effective principals understand the context of their position and their personality so well that they are able to adjust to the complex and ever-changing challenges of school leadership.

There are three main contexts for a principal to understand if she is to be successful: The community, the school and the level of reform the district is pursuing.

The demographics of a community have a great bearing on the needed actions of the principal. Principals who do not understand the implications of the demographics of their community are doomed for failure. Hausman states that, “…for example, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) found that principals in communities with lower socioeconomic status tended to be both controlling and coordinating in their administrative styles, whereas principals in communities with a high socioeconomic
status relied more on coordination (2000)." The participating principals exhibit an understanding of their context and are successful because of their ability to coordinate events. They demand of their subordinates to have absolute control in all instances. At times they exert their authority (ex. "I am paid to make this decision."), but this happens only in limited circumstances and as a last option.

School size, location and facilities all impact the actions of the principal. A principal of a large high school has different circumstances in which to lead than does a principal of a small elementary school. Another important factor is that of the staff. Veteran teachers are different from newly hired teachers, and each group has their set of challenges for principals. A principal may be effective using a non-directive leadership style in a building with veteran teachers, but the same principal using the same leadership style may be very ineffective in a building with newly hired teachers.

The climate and culture of the school also determine the type of leadership style necessary for principal success. Some schools encourage innovation and experimentation. Other schools prefer teachers who maintain traditional learning techniques and do not encourage new methods of instruction. Huasman (2000) discusses the difference between a school in which parents and teachers feel direction is lacking and require a highly visible role by the principal, and a school where teacher and parents simply want the principal to maintain the current schools culture, not transform it.

The last context to consider is the reform context. Hausman states that, "shared decision making, school choice, standards and accountability, and
interagency collaboration represent some of the reform movements that contribute to the complex and changing portraits of principals (2000).” This array of new initiatives makes it necessary for principals to develop a repertoire of tools to use when leading. For example, Hausman states, “crucial human resource roles include mediator, consensus builder, and builder-of-trusts (2000).” In an environment of new complexities, effective principals frame decisions by how it will affect students. By asking this crucial question they are able to work backwards from the students to the school in general when examining all reform initiatives. Principals who do not use this strategy will soon find themselves immersed in several new initiatives/projects that they cannot maintain.

Hausman states, “Given the high expectations placed on schools and school leaders, the diverse and large number of stakeholders with whom they must work, and the complexity of schooling, serving as a principal is a demanding and stressful role (2000).” A principal with only cognitive skills will soon become ineffective. Principals that are able to do their job well have a high degree of “emotional intelligence.” Emotional intelligence is comprised of five facets: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill.

In summary, Hausman states that, “…ideal principals must see themselves more as negotiators of the environment and less managers of a school system. The once-held assumption and common practice that any licensed principal can be moved from school to school is no longer valid (2000).”
The recognition that a single, ideal portrait of a principal does not exist has become prevalent among university and state officials who are in charge of preparing future leaders. In addition to the lost ideal of the perfect administrator, other important factors are also affecting those responsible for training and licensing principals. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), predict a shortage of competent school leaders. This is due to increased enrollment and the fact that approximately 40% of current school principals will retire in the next five years (Tracy, G and Weaver, C., 2000).

Increased enrollment and retirement are not the only issues responsible for fewer applicants. The NASSP believes that many current teachers with leadership potential have not been given the necessary experience by their districts to be prepared to accept the responsibility of a school leader. Christie (2000) reports that a survey of 151 students enrolled in a principal preparation programs at four universities, published in the Spring 2000 issue of ERS Spectrum, found that several inhibitors existed for potential principal candidates. The number one inhibitor was paperwork and bureaucracy, followed by increased time commitment, possible litigation, discipline problems and standardized tests. In addition, there is increasingly little difference between the salaries of teachers and principals.

The potential shortage of committed and competent principals has led universities and states to offer programs to recruit and prepare future principals. Two
of these programs developed collaboratively by universities and states are the 
"Aspiring Leaders Academy" and "Principals for Tomorrow."

The "Aspiring Leaders Academy" was planned and implemented by the 
Hamilton County Educational Service Center, the Ohio Principals’ Center, the 
University of Cincinnati, Miami University (OH), Xavier University and Ohio School 
Districts. The October 2000 NASSP Bulletin states that “The Academy” strives to 
meet the following goals:

1. Advance the understanding of the crucial connections between effective 
school leadership and improved student learning.

2. Provide leadership theory and practical strategies based on the Interstate 
School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards.

3. Develop facilitation and communication skills that support school 
leadership.

4. Use learning teams, university connections, and mentoring relationships to 
extend professional networks.

5. Ensure the transfer and knowledge and skills to participants’ 
organizations, creating a pool of talented educators considering school 
leadership as a profession (p. 77).

Tracy, G. and Weaver, C. state that, “The Academy provides intense, varied, 
and integrated learning opportunities throughout the school year. Participants study 
the history of leadership, trends, culture and climate issues, ethics and current practice 
(2000).” In addition, each aspiring leader developed a portfolio, had the option of 
shadowing a school leader, and was paired with a mentor.

“Principals for Tomorrow” is a year-long program that was developed through 
a collaborative effort between the University of Louisville Department of
Administration and Higher Education and Jefferson County Public Schools.

Participants were the top candidates for the principalship who had completed the state certification requirements and were recommended by a principal. The program begins in May with a reception and ends the following May with a celebration. Each participant serves in an internship. Instructional sessions are conducted during twelve days over a three-week period in the summer, one Saturday morning each month and on eight school days. Kirkpatrick states that, “The theme of ‘Principals for Tomorrow’ is closing the gap between what you know and what you can do, or putting theory into practice (2000).”

Although these programs have yet to be in existence long enough to provide data on their effectiveness, the sponsoring organizations are hopeful they will benefit the participants, their cooperating school districts and help decrease the potential for a principal shortage.

States and individual school districts are also taking initiatives to help soften the impending principal shortage. States, such as Georgia, are mandating high salaries for principals. Other States are helping districts “grow their own.” Classes for licensure are being offered with reduced tuition, in cohort groups and with flexible schedules. Lastly, many districts are providing principal mentoring for potential leaders. These programs are diverse and have different components, depending on the districts needs and financial ability. However, all programs focus on using only the most qualified principals who are deeply vested in developing future leaders.
Finally, there is some literature that is based upon personal experience by former principals and university professors. One such article was written by Suzanne R. Painter. The article is titled, “Growing New Principals (2001).” In the article she provides her top ten tips for success in supervising interns. A summary of her tips appear in the pamphlet, which is a part of the appendix. These common sense and common courtesy tips are valuable reminders for busy principals to remember when working with interns.

In summary, the current literature and research provides valuable information for universities, states, school districts and current educational leaders on how to best prepare future educational leaders.
PITFALLS OF JOURNAL PREPARATION

The pace of an administrative internship is hectic. As a result of the pace, it is difficult to reflect on the activities that occur daily. Without reflection, valuable lessons are missed. One defense against this is to keep a journal. A journal will assist in reflection and build a much clearer picture of the experience once it is completed. The journal is an integral part of the internship.

However, there are pitfalls of journaling that must be avoided. The Human Subjects Institution Review Board (HSIRB) governs how humans are treated and represented in the internship journal.

On the HSIRB website (http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb/hsirb_1.html, 2001), it states, “The HSIRB is a local review board, established by the Western Michigan University Board of Trustees in accord with federal regulations, to interpret and apply federal regulations, state law, and research sponsor requirements for the use of human subjects in research.” A misconception of many interns is that journaling is not research. It is. Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects, defines a human subject as, “a living individual about whom an investigator...conducting research obtains:

1. data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or

2. identifiable private information (45 CFR 46).”
“Interaction includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject (45 CFR 46).” Journal entries that include information related to student or staff are viewed as interactions between a researcher, the intern, and human subjects. To further support this analysis of 45 CFR 46, the HSIRB states on its website that, “Since 1972, University policy has required that all research be reviewed regardless of funding source. If human subject data will be aggregated, analyzed, or summarized for publication (whether inside or outside the University), it requires HSIRB submission and review (http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsrbihsirb_1.html, 2001).” In the past, the perception by many has been that the HSIRB only governs formal research studies conducted in the medical and psychological fields. That perception is incorrect. The HSIRB website also states that, “All WMU research involving human subjects – including graduate theses and dissertations – must be reviewed for the protection of human subjects. The research must be approved by the HSIRB before the research is begun (http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsrbihsirb_1.html, 2001).”

If questions of validity are still present in regards to the role of the HSIRB, the following guidelines of when to contact the HRISB should be helpful:

1. The research is sponsored by WMU, regardless of the location of the project.

2. The research is conducted by, or under the direction of, any staff, faculty, student, or other agent of WMU in connection with his or her institutional responsibilities.

3. The research is conducted by or under the direction of any employee or agent of WMU using any property or facility of WMU.
4. The research involves the use of WMU's non-public information to identify or contact human research subjects or prospective subjects.

5. The research is a thesis or dissertation that involves human subjects. The Graduate College will not accept as a dissertation or thesis any research involving human subjects research which was not reviewed by the HSIRB prior to the research being conducted.

Number five in the above list also relates to Specialist Projects and journals that are used in the completion of coursework, such as in required internships, including EDLD 712.

To this point, the pitfalls have been defined in guidelines and in abstract concepts. The following examples are real-life illustrations where interns have included inappropriate information that violates the HSIRB guidelines and nullified their journal. Examples:

1. The use of names.

2. Any personal information, such as age, health or weight, even when these are not associated with a name.

3. Specific locations, such as an address or the name of the school.

4. Information related to students' that is specific enough so that it could lead back to a situation or identify a student.

5. Information related to any school personnel or parent/guardian that is specific enough so that it could lead back to a situation or identifies an employee or parent/guardian.

6. The inclusion of field trips or special events by name.

Although intern's completing journals may find these examples restrictive, they have been established because the HRISB has been, "...charged with the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects in research conducted under aegis of
Western Michigan University
(http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb/hsirb_1.html, 2001)” Appendix C includes examples of acceptable entries in an internship journal.

Once the guidelines of the HRISB are understood, steps need to be taken to ensure compliance. Author Christopher Shea states, “One funny thing about IRB oversight is that it doesn’t come to you – you have to go to it. Plenty of people who should present their work to IRB’s simply do not, either because they are confused or because they wish to avoid bureaucracy (2000).” It is much easier to go find the necessary HSIRB forms and follow the guidelines than complete a new research project.

The steps to follow in gaining permission to conduct research can be found on the Western Michigan University Human Subject Institutional Review Board website (http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb/hsirb_1.html, 2001) or by calling the Western Michigan University Research Compliance Coordinator at 616.387.8293. The compliance coordinator can also be reached at 240W Walwood Hall, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

In summary, before beginning a journal, understand the HSIRB guidelines, complete the required paperwork and maintain the ethical principles of respect for persons in your internship. In doing so, the pitfalls of journaling can be avoided.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for interns were developed through personal experiences and a review of the current literature on training future leaders.

Recommendations for Administrative Interns

Congratulations! You are about to embark on a new assignment that will be educational and exciting. The following recommendations have been designed to assist you prepare for your new assignment as an administrative intern. All though not all inclusive, these recommendations will provide you with a few helpful hints and a starting point.

Feel good about your new assignment: Your potential for being a school leader has been recognized and your school district is willing to spend time and money to develop your talents. That deserves a quiet moment of self-satisfaction! Your new assignment also means you are ready to explore the possibility of a career in school leadership. Dedicated and caring principals are needed, and you are being cultivated to fill this vital need. Feel good about the opportunity you have been provided!

Start successfully with your cooperating principal: The most important professional relationship during your administrative experience will be with your cooperating principal. It is crucial that you begin your internship experience
successfully. Regardless of whether or not you have a prior relationship with the principal, take the time to plan together for your new assignment. The following questions will help you get started when you first meet with your cooperating principal:

1. What is the desired outcome(s) of this experience for the intern, principal and staff?

2. How will the desired outcomes be assessed?

3. What is the plan to ensure that outcomes are reached?

Answers to these three simple questions will eliminate any false assumptions held by each party and the dialogue will help ensure your success as an intern. Summarize the answers and put them in an area that is easily retrievable for both of you. Refer to the questions and answers often throughout your intern experience in order to maintain direction.

Put you learning cap on: You may have read about being an administrator, but reading about it isn’t half as exciting and intense as the real thing. Each day will provide you the opportunity to learn more about human behavior, curriculum, school law, standard operating procedures, school tradition, budgets and a host of other challenges that make up the day of an administrator. Do your best to look at each experience as a learning opportunity. You should also remember that your role is that of intern. Most of the time you will be expected to watch, learn and provide assistance when necessary. You are not the principal, and you will be resented by staff if you act like you are.
Remember to clarify: Your goal setting session with the principal at the beginning of your experience was a good start to clarifying your role and responsibilities. However, don’t stop there. Don’t be afraid to ask questions continuously and clarify what you are responsible for. This will be especially important when working with counselors, custodians and teachers. Walking late into a staff meeting and realizing that you were expected to lead the meeting is not a good way to make a positive impression. It is also important to clarify your role because some teachers will view you as an opportunity to be released from some of their responsibilities. Be prepared for this situation and have an answer ready to deflect the teacher’s assumptions that you are going to do all of the work.

Keep a journal: Most nights you will be leaving school late and will be anxious to get home and relax. However, don’t allow yourself to leave school until you have written in your daily journal. Keeping a journal of your internship experience is imperative! Each day is a like a picture and when your experience is completed you will have a “photo album” of information to use as you reflect on your experience. However, before beginning your journal, clarify with your advisor the purpose of your journal, review the, “Guide to Journal Preparation,” and completely understand the Human Subject Institutional Review Board. Bypassing this crucial step will lead to the nullification of your hard work and diligence in journaling your experience.

In summary, you have been given the opportunity to develop your potential as a school leader. Make this experience the best it can possibly be by working together
with your principal, taking every opportunity to learn, clarifying your responsibilities and keeping a journal in the approved format.

Recommendations for Principals

You are an educator. You enjoy helping other people succeed. Assisting people to succeed is what made you successful in the classroom and now as a school leader. Currently you have the opportunity to formally assist a teacher become a school leader. This task is important and will take time and effort. The following recommendations are a quick and easy guide to assist you with supervising an administrative intern.

Plan ahead: Your schedule probably does not readily permit it, but it is essential that you begin planning now for your administrative intern. Begin by asking yourself what would have been most helpful for you when you started on your journey of becoming a principal. Talk to other principals who have had administrative interns and find out what worked best for them. Finally, ask yourself these questions before meeting with your new intern: What is it that I want the intern to learn while working with me? What criteria will I use to assess the intern’s performance? And finally, what are the necessary steps to ensure that the intern understands the expectations of the internship assignment as well as the criteria I will use to evaluate them? Your personal reflections, advice from other principals and these questions will help ensure that you are prepared when the intern first walks into your school.
Start successfully: Take the time to meet with your intern when there aren’t a lot of distractions and interruptions. During this time discuss their responsibilities and the criteria by which they will be evaluated. Soon after they begin, formally communicate the arrival of the intern to staff, students and parents. The form of communication will be dependent upon your organizational level and the size of the district, but it is crucial that the new intern is adequately introduced. At first you will need to expect to spend more time with the intern. They will have questions – lots of questions. Be patient as they become more familiar with your leadership style, the staff and the students. Additional time spent with the intern at the beginning will better prepare them for when they are given more responsibility and leave you with fewer problems.

Provide reasonable and relevant experiences: Most interns do not understand the hectic pace and pressures that school leaders face each day. Allow the intern to shadow you and observe your schedule – they will be amazed! To best understand the role of a school leader, interns need to be responsible for a variety of duties. Some of these should be routine, such as lunchroom supervision, assisting with the school newsletter, and helping with school dismissal. Other experiences should be more complex, such as leading a committee of teachers, creating and implementing a school survey or assisting with developing school improvement goals. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, provide the intern with the opportunity to experience the multiple disruptions that every principal experiences each day.

Schedule periodic feedback: Projects assigned to an intern will not amount to much if you do not regularly monitor the intern’s work and provide feedback to the
intern. Compliment them on the work they have done right, and provide them with helpful hints in areas where they need to improve. At the end of an assignment, require them to write a summary of their experience. Review the summary in the presence of the intern and discuss the benefits and challenges of the experiences in the context of becoming a school leader. Be mindful that your intern will need to follow the guidelines of the Human Subject Institutional Review Board if their review will be used for any purpose outside of your meeting. Finally, throughout the entire experience, remember the important role you are playing in the intern’s career. You are making the initial impact on the career of your intern!

In summary, don’t expect your intern to be successful without a lot of work on your part. Plan ahead, communicate your expectations, provide them with relevant and meaningful experiences and give regular feedback. The intern’s future staff will thank you for doing the job right!

Recommendations for Supervising Professors

Your student, the administrative intern, their cooperating principal and you make up a team. You are the captain of the team. Your leadership and insight will provide the means for the intern to begin successfully, continue successfully and end successfully. The following recommendations are reminders that will help you guide your team.

Communicate: You serve an important role in the success of your students experience as an administrative intern. Your experience as a scholar and school leader
is invaluable, both to the intern and their cooperating principal. However, the intern and cooperating principal will not benefit if you do not communicate with them regularly. The time you spend communicating with them will build a positive working relationship. The more trusting the relationship, the more the intern will learn from their experience and from you. Almost as important to the intern will be your expectations and the criteria used for their grade. Provide this information at the beginning of the experience and take the time to highlight important dates, forms to be completed and upcoming assignments.

Ask questions: With your wealth of experience, it would be easy to lecture to the intern (or to the cooperating principal) on what they should be doing and learning during their experience. Resist the urge to do this. Instead, find out what the intern needs by asking questions and listening intently. The content of the intern’s responses provide insights into the interns concerns and progress. At the end of each communication (phone, fax, e-mail) provide a word of encouragement for the intern. It may not always be easy, but it is necessary for the development of the intern’s confidence.

Request relevant homework assignments: It would be easiest for you to simply design some abstract assignments for the intern to complete during their experience. However, the best learning opportunities for the intern occur when you work with the cooperating principal. Assignments that allow the intern to demonstrate competence, and have a benefit to the adopted school will be most meaningful to the interns. This does not mean that the intern should not complete additional assignments outside of
the school experience or provide an analysis of relevant leadership theory tied to their experiences. It does mean most meaningful assignments are connected with the intern’s daily experience.

Require a journal and exit interview: It is essential that interns keep a daily journal of their experiences. As important as keeping the journal is doing it correctly. This begins with you helping the intern to understand the Human Subject Institutional Review Board guidelines. The intern’s journal will not be acceptable to use as an assignment or in any related projects if the HSIRB guidelines are not followed. Understand the guidelines yourself and take the responsibility to ensure that your student does as well. Each day in the journal is a picture and when the experience is done they will have a “photo album” of information related to their internship. It will be a valuable tool as they reflect on their experience and consider becoming a future school leader. Request to see their journal once or twice during their internship experience. It will help them be disciplined and alert you to any potential problems. When the internship experience is completed, review their journal and meet with them to discuss their experience. You and the journal will be a valuable resource as the intern puts together any summary of written thoughts and feelings related to the experience.

In summary, remember that you are an important component in the success of the intern you are supervising. Communicate with the intern and cooperating principal on a regular basis, ask questions to facilitate discussion, offer encouragement, connect your theoretical assignments to the intern’s daily experience, and encourage them stay
up to date on their journal. You and the intern will both benefit from your hard work and dedication.
SUMMARY

The experience of serving as an administrative intern is invaluable in determining a future career path and reflecting on one’s leadership ability. Most beneficial in completing an internship experience is the chance to get a realistic view of school leadership – warts and all. Those who complete an administrative internship and then go on to serve as competent, caring and ethical school leaders will benefit their community as they serve students, parents and teachers in this vital role.
Appendix A

A Principal’s Guide to Supervising Administrative Interns
Suzanne Painter, an assistant professor of education at Arizona State University, offers the following 10 tips for success in supervising interns:

1) Your role is critical! The intern cannot succeed without YOU.
2) Prepare for the internship. Agree on a work plan that gives the intern several experiences in school leadership.
3) Establish a clear form of evaluation. If an evaluation form is not provided, use the standards of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium.
4) Explain the intern's role to your faculty.
5) Involve the intern. It is important to have the intern involved in the daily work of a school leader.
6) Explain your actions. The intern needs to hear you explain the thinking behind your actions.
7) Provide frequent feedback. Plan to spend at least 15 minutes a week reviewing the intern's work, identifying what was done well, and offering suggestions or improvement.
8) Discuss interpersonal skills. This may be difficult, but it is important. It may help to use a specific list of interpersonal knowledge and skills like that developed by the National Policy Board for Education Administrators.
9) Create conditions for success. Provide the information, tools and resources necessary for the intern to be successful.
10) Help interns evaluate their work. Start them on the road to continuous self-improvement by helping them reflect on their work.
This guide is a resource for principals to use when working with administrative interns. It contains simple, practical guidelines and suggestions to create a positive relationship with your new intern and create conditions for their success.

**Pre-Planning and The First Meeting**

Before meeting with the new intern, ask yourself the following questions: What would have been most helpful to me when I began pursuing a career in educational leadership? What is it that I want the intern to learn while working with me? What criteria will I use to assess their performance? And finally, What are the steps to take to ensure that the intern understands their objectives and how they will be evaluated? Your responses do not need to be lengthy, but it is crucial that your responses are written so that they can be shared with the intern.

Meet with the intern before their assignment begins. Share the previous questions and your responses and use it as an outline for your discussion. The intern will most likely have a different perspective on the upcoming experience. Allow the intern to make suggestions and clarify your responses. A collaborative plan that specifically states the goals, criteria and plan of the internship will sharply increase the chances that it will be a positive experience for the intern, your staff and you.

**Starting Successfully**

Once you and the intern have determined their guidelines and responsibilities and it is important to share them with the staff, students and parents.

The intern should be introduced at a staff meeting and their responsibilities explained to teachers. A memo should be sent to teachers a few days later so that they are reminded of the intern’s role within the school.

If the intern will be responsible for helping with discipline (and they should be), it is extremely important to communicate to students and parents of the intern’s role. A letter should be sent home to parents and the intern should introduce themselves to the students. This may be difficult, but it is important for the success of the intern.

**Potential Projects and Experiences**

Most interns do not understand the hectic pace and pressures that school leaders face each day. Allow the intern to shadow you and observe your busy schedule on a regular basis.

To best understand the role of a school leader, interns need to be responsible for a variety of duties. Some of these should be routine, such as lunchroom supervision, assisting with the school newsletter and helping with school dismissal. Other assignments should be long-term, such as leading a committee of teachers, creating and implementing a survey or assisting with school improvement goals. Finally, provide the intern with the opportunity to experience the disruptions that every principal experiences.

**Feedback**

Clear expectations and relevant projects will not amount to much if you do not regularly provide feedback to the intern. Compliment them on the work they have done right, and provide helpful hints on where they need to improve. At the end of the experience meet with them and review their experience. It will be helpful to the intern and for you.

Finally, throughout the entire experience, remember the important role you are playing in the intern’s life. You are making a difference and intern’s future staff will someday thank you for doing the job right.

**Western Michigan University**

Western Michigan University  
Department of Teaching, Learning and Leadership  
3212 Sangren Hall  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

For more information on successfully working with administrative interns, contact Dr. Gary Wegenke at (616) 387-3896, or email him at gary.wegenke@wmich.edu.
Appendix B

An Introductory Guide to Journal Preparation
Maintaining a journal is often a helpful and required task in many graduate level courses, projects, theses and dissertations. Journals assist students in reflecting upon experiences, documenting learning and clocking time spent during internships.

However, there are pitfalls of journaling that must be avoided. The Human Subjects Institution Review Board (HSIRB) governs how humans are treated and represented in journals. The HSIRB is a local review board that interprets and applies federal regulations, state law, and research sponsor requirements for the use of human subjects in research. A misconception of many students is that journaling is not research. It is. Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects, defines a human subject as, “a living individual about whom an investigator...conducting research obtains:

1. data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or
2. identifiable private information (45 CFR 46).”

“Interaction includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject (45 CFR 46).” Journal entries that include information related to students or staff are viewed as interactions between a researcher, the intern, and human subjects. In the past, the perception by many has been that the HSIRB only governs formal research studies conducted in the medical and psychological fields. That perception is incorrect. The HSIRB website (http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb/hsirb_1.html, 2001), also states that, “All WMU research involving human subjects – including graduate theses and
dissertations – must be reviewed for the protection of human subjects. The research must be approved by the HSIRB before the research is begun.”

The following examples are real-life illustrations where a student included inappropriate information that violated the HSIRB guidelines and therefore nullified their journal. Examples:

1. The use of names.

2. Any personal information, such as age, health or weight, even when these are not associated with a name.

3. Specific locations, such as an address or the name of the school.

4. Information related to students’ that is specific enough so that it could lead back to a situation or identify a student.

Although intern’s completing journals may find these examples restrictive, they have been established because the HRISB has been, “…charged with the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects in research conducted under aegis of Western Michigan University

(http://www.wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb/hsirb_1.html, 2001),

The steps to follow in gaining permission to conduct research can be found on the Western Michigan University Human Subject Institutional Review Board website or by calling the Western Michigan University Research Compliance Coordinator at 616.387.8293. The compliance coordinator can also be reached at 240W Walwood Hall, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

In summary, before beginning a journal, understand the HSIRB guidelines, complete the required paperwork and maintain the ethical principles of respect for persons in your internship. In doing so, the pitfalls of journaling can be avoided.
Appendix C

Acceptable Journal Samples
New Entry

I had my first two “real” experiences with students today. I discussed choices and consequences with the students and involved the counselor. Dealing with student discipline is a challenge.

New Entry

Today, as usual, was very busy. Keeping up with the happenings throughout the day leaves you feeling very tired at the end of the day. I did not have any formal student situations.

I’m learning. I’m learning that 300 hundred things happen every hour and that my professors were correct when they said that being an educational leader is hard work.

New Entry

I am beginning to feel a little more a part of the staff. I was actually called into a team meeting today to discuss some school issues. However, I am learning that there are a lot of pitfalls.

Another insight I had today is how teachers really determine the amount of discipline that occurs in a building. Teachers that are “on the ball” rarely need assistance from the office and their students seem to be better behaved.

I forgot about a survey that was supposed to be handed out tonight at parent teacher conferences. So, I spent from after school until conference started preparing the survey and copying it.
New Entry

Today was much quieter. There was some follow-up from some previous incidents, but no new discipline issues. I think that the administrators that seem to be less stressed are those that go into the day realizing that the unexpected will happen, and it is a part of their job. Worrying about what is going to happen and then hoping everything will be quiet is counterproductive. If you don’t like to be surprised and think on your feet, don’t be a principal.

I continue to work on small projects (like helping prepare for career day and ensuring that all staff are notified of changes in schedules) and monitor students in the hallway and during lunch. This week has been difficult because I have started each day around 7:00 a.m. and the days have ended after 8:00 p.m. because of meetings.

New Entry

Coming back from spring break is always tuff. I keep telling myself that most people don’t have the luxury of a spring break, so I should be thankful – and I am. It was different this time, because I really hit the ground running. As a teacher I could ease back into the schedule, but not as an administrator. Parents were calling by 8:00 a.m. to discuss their students.

The principal gave me a list of things that she thought of during spring break. It appears as if I will truly be heading up field day this year. Most of the items will be done at night because my week is full of meetings. I’m learning that administration equals meetings.
New Entry

I was absent from school today due to a Central Office meeting. I am finding that there are responsibilities that principals are given that the general teaching staff does not know or understand. Many of these responsibilities are important because they may be tied to grants or State and Federal Regulations.

New Entry

I am continuing to lead the field day meetings each morning at 8:00 a.m. It certainly seemed like a Monday today. Nobody was that anxious to discuss activities or schedules. I need to do some more work on being an effective facilitator.

Administrators run meetings…lots of them, and you must be able to do it well.

I attended an administrator meeting today. It is pretty amazing to be among several established administrators. As a teacher I did not see the superintendent or administrators of other buildings.

The afternoon went quickly. I got back in time to help with two of the three lunches. I left early to go to another meeting at the neighboring middle school.

New Entry

As a potential administrator, it is important to understand Proposal A. Funding has always been a difficult topic for public schools, and it will continue to be so.

Today was pretty quiet. The field day meeting went better. People were a little more awake. Our goal is to be done by Friday with our proposal so that a teacher committee can look it over next week. I had a few minor student incidents today that did not warrant any discipline. I did talk to a mom today about a rubber band
snapping that happened yesterday. She wasn’t real happy, but the principal helped me before hand in what I should communicate.

It is amazing how fast the tasks build up and the small amount of time that is available to complete them. My organizational skills, which I have always thought of as strong, are getting a real workout. I am finding out that I never really had to organize before this experience.

New Entry

I am starting to learn that you need to rest up for Fridays. We had several student incidents today. I am continuing to observe and learn how to deal positively with students and parents. For parents, their children are their most important commodity, and their first instinct is to protect them. That is why it is so important to remember that students are not just students, but somebody’s child, and must be treated with care – even when they make bad choices.

New Entry

Quiet day in regards to student behavior. Really the whole week has been quiet. I had more IEP’s and projects to work on from the principal.

New Entry

I like routine. In some weird way, the chaos and pace of each day is becoming a routine. I getting more accustomed to the various requests teachers, parents, students and brain “surges” when you all of a sudden remember something that you had previously forgotten. I had my first lead on a serious discipline issue and it seemed to go fine.
There are only 20 days or so left of school, and right now that sounds pretty exciting.

New Entry

Principals where a lot of hats – more than teachers. The most perplexing hat is that of detective. At times, students make poor choices and are very good at covering their tracks.

Another hat is counselor. I had a parent call because they have concerns about their child. I listened and tried to be supportive.

New Entry

Today was an easy day. You can never guess or plan for an easy day. You can only reflect on them and be grateful for the occasional break after the fact. There have been some days when I thought it was going to be calm, and I wound up going crazy the entire day. Today was just a nice, easy day.

New Entry

Pretty calm day for being the first day back from a four-day break. We had a staff meeting in the morning and talked about field day. I believe most of the items have been organized. Now it is just a matter of getting all the supplies and getting them organized. I did not have any student issues to deal with today.
Appendix D

Approval Letter From the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Date: November 5, 2001

To: Gary Wegenke, Principal Investigator
    Michael Scott Korpak, Student Investigator for specialists project

From: Mary Lagerwey, Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 01-10-18

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “Avoiding Pitfalls in Administrative Internships” has been approved under the expedited 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: November 5, 2002
BIBLIOGRAPHY


