

Professional Development Offerings for Principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia:

A Survey

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ABSTRACT

As the instructional leader, principals must engage in on-going professional development training for their learning and to aid in improving student achievement (Grande, 2012). This quantitative study examined the present baseline of professional development offerings in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The research questions that were explored are as follows: What professional development programs do school divisions provide for principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia? What topics are included in the professional development programs? In what format are the topics delivered? What types of professional development programs are offered to support new principals in their role as the instructional leader? What types of professional development programs are offered to support veteran principals in their role as the instructional leader? To what extent are the professional development training/programs offered in the Commonwealth of Virginia aligned to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards? How do the professional development offerings vary by superintendents' region, urbanicity and division size?

Once the data were collected by surveying professional development coordinators or equivalent personnel, the researcher assessed the alignment of the school divisions' professional development offerings with the ISLLC Standards. These standards were designed to provide guidance to state policy makers as they worked to improve educational leadership preparation, licensure, evaluation, and professional development (CCSSO, 2008). The findings were: (1) professional development offerings for principals across the Commonwealth of Virginia are aligned with national standards; (2) school divisions in the Commonwealth provided professional development opportunities for principals with heavy emphasis on instruction as well as shared vision and school culture; (3) there is a low level of differentiation of professional development offerings for principals based on interest or individual need; (4) the professional development training sessions in the Commonwealth mostly consisted of "one shot" sessions with a few on-going learning opportunities; (5) the majority of the professional development sessions offered to principals were provided either by external or in-house presenters with few examples of internal and external partnerships; (6) school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia that provided professional development training sessions to principals relied heavily on face-to-face

interaction and minimally utilized technology to transform the format of professional development opportunities; and (7) not all divisions maintained records of professional development for principals.

Dedication

First and foremost I would like to give thanks and praises to almighty God for allowing me to make it through this process. It was because of Him that I was able to successfully complete this journey. I would also like to dedicate my dissertation to my family who encouraged and inspired me to chase after my dreams.

To my mother, Scarlette Hunley, the woman whose shoulders I stand on each and every day, the constant in my life since birth, and a woman that I am proud to call my mother and friend. Thank you for always believing in me and for that subtle reminder that your past does not always predict your future. Thank you for allowing me and my siblings to dream big and for instilling in each of us that “you can do anything that you want to do, if you work hard and believe that you can do it.” I love you.

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Chapter One

Introduction

“Learning and leadership are inextricably intertwined.”

---John F. Kennedy

Background

Era of accountability. Since the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, the building principal’s role has become more stressful, more political, more complex, and more time-consuming than ever before (Hess & Kelly, 2006). In light of the heightened awareness of the NCLB legislation, societal pressures have focused greater attention and public demands on schools and those who lead them (Pierce, 2002). In this age of accountability, the emphasis on high-stakes testing, standards based accountability and the push toward common core state standards have garnered much public attention. During this period of time when the increasing demands for qualified and competent principals are at an all-time high, improving the quality of educational leadership in principal preparation programs and providing instructional support are of great need (Stapleton, 2007). The Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA) places great emphasis on the need for public schools to improve student achievement for all students across demographic backgrounds (ESEA, 2008). “At the core of the No Child Left Behind Act is a number of measures designed to drive broad gains in student achievement to hold states and schools more accountable for student progress” (NCLB, 2001, p. 1). According to Matthes (2008), “schools need principals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead their schools” (p. 13).

Impact of the principal. Education and business leaders are well aware of the pivotal role that administrators play in school improvement and the need to be supported through comprehensive training and development opportunities (Styron & LeMire, 2009). The preparation and continued development of school leaders, in particular the school principal, has become an issue of major concern in public education. According to the literature, effective principals are the key to strengthening teaching and schools (Leithwood, Anderson, Mascall, Strauss & Moore, 2010). Second only to classroom instruction, “the principal is the most potent factor in determining school climate” and affecting student achievement (2010, p. 4). Research continues to confirm that while the school leader affects student achievement in countless ways, the primary way should consist of creating a school culture with high expectations and one that

can be molded into an environment that is conducive to learning (Moffitt, 2007). According to Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom (2010), effective school research affirms that “instruction and classroom environment have the greatest impact on student learning” (p. 316). Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005), conducted an extensive review of literature of previous research and have determined that there is a strong correlation between effective leadership and student achievement. The literature supports the idea that in order to bridge the gap between instructional leadership and student achievement, principals are in need of on-going and relevant professional development training. Because of the crucial role that a principal plays in terms of improving student achievement, the content and context of professional development programs needed for principals and provided by their local school division, is worthy of further examination.

Professional standards. There is evidence in the literature that supports the belief that in many states, principal licensure based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards is becoming a common requirement (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007). The ISLLC Standards are designed to “provide guidance to state policymakers as they work to improve educational leadership preparation, licensure, evaluation, and professional development” (CCSSO, 2008). The ISLLC Standards are built on the foundation that the principal’s primary responsibility is to improve teaching and learning for all students (2008). These standards are also designed to serve as a roadmap for developing professional development activities and represent the latest high-level policy standards for education leadership (CCSSO, 2008). Research indicates that the ISLLC Standards serve as the foundation for principal professional development programs and can “clarify the expectations for professional development and the performance of the veteran principal” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 4).

Knuth’s (2004) study revealed that the ISLLC Standards captures the complexity of the principal’s role and provide direction for professional development training for principals. According to The Wallace Foundation (2009), “some states have begun using the ISLLC Standards as the basis for assessing leaders, improving their performance, and redesigning their training programs” (p. 2). Some educational experts believe that the revised 2008 ISLLC Standards provide clear direction to guide state policy relevant to everything from administrative licensing to professional development training (Knuth, 2004; Spanneut’, et al., 2012). The research implies that states that are using educational leadership standards are on the right track and thus moving toward developing strong instructional leaders and improving student achievement (CCSSO, 2008; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007; Knuth, 2004;).

Virginia and the nation in context. According to Knuth (2004) many states are requiring principal assessment and performance training programs to be in alignment with the 2008 ISLLC Standards. This information should encourage a school division's desire to design and deliver quality professional development activities aligned with the ISLLC Standards at the local level (Spanneut', et al., 2012). School districts are tasked with creating a vision and a system of support for instructional leaders; however, they should not be charged with undertaking this task alone (SREB, 2010). The Southern Regional Educational Board maintains that

State departments of education must build capacity helping local districts develop a coherent vision for the future of their schools, as well as knowledge and skills to support principals and teachers as they create their own vision and goals at the school level (SREB, 2010, p. ii.).

According to the 2010, The Wallace Foundation research study, states should ensure that administrative leaders at all levels, teacher leaders, assistant principals, principals and superintendents receive on-going, high quality professional development that can be linked to licensure renewal and the administrator's evaluation. According to the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (2007), in order to make a sustained and sound investment, some states and school districts are aggressively making the necessary changes to their professional development programs while others have introduced programs without systemic change.

In an effort to assist school divisions with creating a vision and training administrators as school instructional leaders, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) approved regulations for Advancing Virginia's Leadership Agenda Guidance Document that is designed to strengthen standards and to identify indicators for school leaders, principals and assistant principals. This document provides guidance to school divisions in recommending principals for the Principal of Distinction, Administration and Supervision endorsement, in an attempt to provide advancement opportunities for principals (VDOE, 2008). These regulations established alternate routes to the administration and supervision endorsement and included the School Leaders' Licensure Assessment as a requirement for school principals consistent with the *Code of Virginia* (VDOE, 2008).

Learning-based standards for effective school leaders also referred to as ISLLC Standards have been adopted in more than 40 states (The Wallace Foundation, 2009). According to Knuth (2004) more states are requiring principal assessment and performance training programs to be aligned with the 2008 ISLLC Standards. Spanneut', et al. (2012) contend that an awareness of

this trend at the state-level should facilitate school divisions' interest in designing quality professional development activities through methods that are aligned with the ISLLC Standards (Spanneut', et al., 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Dramatic changes have put educational leadership in the forefront of education policy and debate (CCSSO, 2008). States have begun to recognize that school divisions will not meet the demanding requirements for improving student achievement without strong and effective instructional leaders (The Wallace Foundation, 2010). According to the research studies, over the past decade the demands of the principalship have become increasingly more complex; therefore, the quality of the training provided to principals and throughout their professional career will determine whether or not school leaders can meet the challenging expectations of the job (The Wallace Foundation, 2007). The accreditation and state licensure requirements have called for administrator preparation programs to restructure their curricula to more fully address the principalship's shifting role expectations and to better prepare aspiring school leaders (Stapleton, 2007).

Today's school principals are charged with creating an environment that not only promotes and encourages teaching and learning, but also with creating an environment that improves student achievement (Bunch, 2006). According to a 2007 study from the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (SELI), the principal is in a position to ensure that ineffective educational practices are discontinued and that good teaching and learning occur in every classroom.

Division level administrators today are confronted with the challenge of designing and implementing professional development programs that provide training in instructional leadership and assessment for new and veteran building level principals (Matthes, 2008). However Lutz (2008) reports that "principals are often assigned to administrative roles with little or no guidance regarding how to create a thriving learning environment" (p. 2). At the time of this study, research is not available regarding the role the central office administrators play in providing job-embedded professional development for school administrators; however, research and best practices echo that without well-trained, highly skilled and committed leaders, the opportunity diminishes for creating and sustaining high quality learning environments within the schools (The Wallace Foundation, 2009).

According to Hess and Kelly (2006), principals of this decade are expected to be visionaries and change agents. However, many principals suggest that they are not equipped for all of the challenges they face and that they need to be more prepared for their job (2006). In the absence of high quality, relevant, job-embedded and on-going professional development for principals, will they be prepared to meet the growing, challenging and ever changing demands of their role? The problem to be investigated in this study relates to professional development offerings for principals. The researcher seeks to identify what types of professional development programs school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia are providing for principals, and how they align with the ISLLC Standards.

Significance of the Study

Importance of the principalship. According to Matthes (2008), “principal leadership matters when it comes to improving student achievement” (p. iii); however, the matter of properly preparing and training the principal for his role as the instructional leader rests with the division leadership (2008). According to the 2008 CCSSO Standards report, “Over the past decade, dramatic changes have put education leadership at the forefront of education policy research and debate” (ISLLC, 2008, p. 3). The accountability movement coupled with federal legislation from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has heightened the schools’ and communities’ awareness regarding the significance and importance of improving student achievement. The research also supports the belief that school leaders are crucial to improving instruction and raising student achievement (CCSSO, 2008; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007; The Wallace Foundation, 2010). According to Matthes (2008), whether the principal and other educational leaders matter is no longer the question; instead, the question that bears answering is how can we best develop and support professional leadership throughout the principal’s career.

National reform priority. Improving school leadership ranks high on the list of priorities in educational reform. With a national focus that is centered on improving achievement for all students, “principal leadership is among one of the most urgent matters on the list of issues in public education” (The Wallace Foundation, 2011, p. 3). On the national level, in an effort to encourage the growth of great teacher leaders, President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan announced the Race to the Top (RTTT) contest, administered by the United States Education Department (USED), to spur innovation and reforms in states and local districts across K-12 education. States were awarded points on competitive grant applications for

satisfying certain educational policies, such as performance-based standards for teachers and principals complying with nationwide standards, and states were eligible for different funding awards based on their ability to meet the established criteria. The United States Education Department agreed to set-aside 25 percent of its Title II funds to support programs that recruit and train principals and school leadership teams (The Whitehouse, 2013).

Inadequacy of preparation programs. Today's principals must possess the required leadership skills in order to create or sustain a great school and improve student learning (NASSP, 2011).

There is a resounding call for principal preparation programs to examine and revise their focus in order to ensure that today's school leaders are evolving into strong instructional leaders. According to researchers "our conventional procedures for training and certifying school administrators are simply failing to produce a sufficiency of leaders whose vision, energy, and skill can successfully raise the educational standards of children" (Ballenger, Alford, McCune & McCune, 2009, p. 533). The literature denotes that while policies and regulations are continuing to change, principals are not provided with the necessary on-going professional development training needed to remain current on both the Virginia and federal mandates (Keith, 2008).

According to Public Agenda Report (2001), 80 percent of superintendents and 69 percent of principals believe that the academic preparation of principals in schools of education is out of touch with reality. That same report revealed that 56% of superintendents and 54% of principals believe that improving the quality of professional development opportunities for administrators would be a very effective way to improve school leadership (Hess & Kelly, 2006; Public Agenda, 2001). The research supports the assertion that in order to provide successful leadership and improve student achievement, principals require specific, adequate, and appropriate professional development training (Lutz, 2008).

Importance of professional development. Principals are charged with being the instructional leaders of their schools with the primary goal of improving student learning (Lutz, 2008). Therefore, it is the expectation of the public that principals deliver results (Keith, 2008). Consequently, a recent study conducted by Spanneut', et al. (2012) indicates that "principals are interested in receiving professional development training to improve their leadership skills and abilities" (p. 11). According to Lindstrom and Speck (2004) "professional development is a powerful means to improving schools and student achievement" (p. 136). Saelens (2007) affirms this belief while maintaining that professional development provides an opportunity for the instructional leader to gain the necessary skills and techniques to meet success. The Virginia

Department of Education (2004) contends that professional development should be meaningful, succinct and of high quality. High quality professional development requires structure that reflect well-thought out delivery, efficient use of time, varies in effective styles of pedagogy, and provides opportunities for participants to become engaged in the desired learning (VDOE, 2008). If current and future leaders are going to produce sustainable results, foster successful, equitable, and socially responsible learning and accountability practices for all participants, then substantive changes in educational leadership programs and professional development programs are required (Ballenger, Alford, McCune & McCune, 2009).

Purpose of and rationale for the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the types and formats of professional development provided to principals in Virginia public school divisions and to examine to what extent the professional development offerings are aligned with the ISLLC Standards. The results of this study could provide central office administration in local divisions throughout the Commonwealth guidance on aspects of the principalship that are lacking coverage in professional development programs.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was developed from the research and analysis of the literature examining professional development for school principals. According to Mendels (2012), “standards for principals are the foundation on which everything else rests” (p. 49). Some educational experts believe that the revised 2008 ISLLC Standards provide clear direction to guide state policy relevant to everything from administrative licensing to principal professional development, and that effective principal preparation programs built on the standards could play a vital role in setting the tone and direction for successful schools (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Meyerson, 2005). The revised 2008 ISLLC Standards represent the latest set of high-level policy standards for educational leadership and reflect lessons learned in the field about leadership (*see Figure 1*).



Figure 1. Conceptual framework for professional development that provides context to aid in interpreting the findings of this study.

Research Questions

The overarching research question is what professional development do school divisions provide for principals and how are they aligned with the ISLLC Standards. Based on the overarching question, the following research questions were developed.

1. What professional development programs do school divisions provide for principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia?
 - a. What topics are included in the professional development programs?
 - b. In what format are these topics delivered?
 - c. How do professional development offerings vary by superintendents' regions, urbanicity, and division size?
2. What types of professional development are offered to support new principals in their role as the instructional leader?
3. What types of professional development are offered to support veteran principals in their role as the instructional leader?

4. To what extent are the professional development training/programs offered in the Commonwealth of Virginia aligned to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards?

Scope and Limitation

This study was centered on the professional development offerings of the 135 school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia as reported by the divisions. There were conditions for which the researcher did not have control. The limitations include

1. The person who will respond to the survey instrument will be identified by the local school division.
2. While the assumption is that all school divisions will respond to the survey, the number of individuals who will respond to the survey cannot be ensured.
3. The possibility that electronic survey requests could be returned as undeliverable.
4. The survey participants may not share exact or specific information in the format as requested.
5. School divisions may respond favorably to the initial request for information but may not follow through as previously indicated.

Delimitations

The study consisted of some conditions for which the researcher did have control. The delimitations include

1. The study was limited to the school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. The study focused only on the professional development opportunities of the principals and did not consider the professional development of assistant principals.
3. The survey responses were provided by a representative of the school division identified by the superintendent.
4. For the purpose of this study when referring to the duration of the professional development offering, professional development lasting more than two days (840 minutes) was categorized as on-going professional development.

Definition of Key Terms

Key terms will be used throughout this review and are defined to help facilitate understanding.

ISLLC 2008. Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium provides Standards for School Leaders that represent the latest set of high-level policy standards for education leadership. The 2008 standards reinforces the proposition in the original ISLLC Standards that leaders' primary responsibility is to improve teaching and learning for all children (CCSSO, 2008).

Principal. The principal is recognized as the instructional leader of the school and is responsible for effective school management that promotes positive school achievement (Virginia Board of Education, 2012).

Principal Preparation Program. A university-based degree or certification program that includes coursework and experiences designed to prepare candidates for a position as a school principal (Wilson, 2012).

Professional Development. Purposeful and on-going learning through the use of collegial inquiry, data analysis, dialogue, and reflection to increase capacity and improve practice. A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement (Learning Forward, 2011 & Hirsh, 2009).

Superintendents' Regions. There is no definition of the term *superintendents' regions*. The school divisions are included in each region of the state (A. Wescott, personal communication, February 24, 2014).

Urbanicity. Various combinations of civil jurisdiction, population density and used in economic notions. The degree to which a given geographical area is urban. Geographical classifications include rural, urban, mixed urban and mixed rural (U.S. Census.gov/2011, Rural Policy Research Institute, 2008).

Organization of the Study

This study includes five chapters. Chapter One contains introductory and background information, the significance of the study, the purpose and rationale for the study, research questions and definition of key terms. Chapter Two is comprised of the review of literature relevant to professional development. This chapter also includes the purpose of the literature review, the search process, the changing role of the principal, rationale for the changing role of the principal, shifting the focus to instructional leadership and school culture, perception of the principalship as a career option and educational leadership policy standards. Chapter Two details information relevant to principal preparation programs, ISLLC Standards and alignment

with principal preparation programs, professional development programs, on-going in-service and professional development for principals, self-expressed professional development needs of principals, ISLLC Standards with professional development and current assessment of professional development for principals. The methodology used for this study can be found in Chapter Three. Chapter Four consists of the raw data received from the study and finally, Chapter Five details the findings, implications and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Purpose of Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide information from current research regarding the evolution of the role of the principal, principal preparation programs, the impact of the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and their relevancy to principal professional development programs, the need for professional development and what is considered good professional development. Themes in each of these relevant areas will be explored.

Search Process

In an effort to conduct a comprehensive search of the literature pertaining to principal professional development programs, various search strategies were employed. The online database search was the primary method used for identifying scholarly research literature for the purpose of this study. The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University library Summon search engine yielded approximately 470,000 books, dissertations, journal articles, and other sources pertaining to the topic of interest when using the terms “professional development programs” and “administrators’ effectiveness.” That number was significantly reduced to 145,486 after refining the search and setting parameters for articles published on or after the year 2002. Using the search terms “principal professional development programs,” “perception of principals professional development programs,” “principal evaluation,” and “principal leadership academies,” and limiting the search to articles from scholarly publications the summon search yielded approximately 222 results. The search was further narrowed by reviewing relevant titles, bibliographies and scholarly journals. In addition, works cited by other researchers were carefully examined for inclusion in this literature review.

The Changing Role of the Principal

The role of the principal has changed drastically over the last several decades, but for hundreds of years, school principals have been held accountable for creating an environment that promoted teaching and improved student learning (Matthes, 2008). According to Shoemaker (2010), “over the last 150 years, an evolution of the administrative roles along with the demands of the job continued to develop and evolve until it reached its current state” (p. 18). Although the demands of the job of principal have transformed, the school principal continues to be perceived

as “the single most important person in the educational setting and having the greatest impact on student performance and achievement” (Bouchard, Cervone, Hayden, Riggins-Newby & Zarlengo, 2002, p. 1). While the role of the principal has been evolving, the belief that principals should focus on teaching and learning did not become apparent until educators and policy leaders were convinced that school leadership matters when it comes to improving student achievement (Spiro, 2013).

During the early 1800s neither principals nor teachers performed the necessary administrative, clerical and janitorial tasks. According to Adkins (2009), “early teachers were supervised by local school board members who made all administrative decisions” (p. 2). Eventually the need arose for a head teacher or a principal-teacher. The principal-teacher was to function as the head of the school charged to his care. In the early 19th and 20th centuries, principals were typically represented as teachers with administrative responsibilities or the principal leader. During the 19th century, bureaucratic forms of school organization first appeared in large cities. The establishment of a bureaucratic structure resulted in a principal teacher who reported to the superintendent, and was responsible for instructional leadership in the school (Adkins, 2009).

Principals repeatedly assert that their job and responsibilities have changed both in complexity and in the amount of time the job requires (Adkins, 2009). While the principal’s role still requires many of these responsibilities, today’s principals are expected to do more. According to a study conducted by Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010) entitled *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, in the past “the job of the principal mainly focused on the Bs, “bricks, buses, budgets, as well as managing the staff and creating rules and regulations to ensure the smooth operation of the school (p. 105). The literature acknowledges that today

Principals are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations and communication experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005, p. 3).

One of the key findings from the 2010 study on *Learning from Leadership* suggests that “the school leaders have an impact on student achievement primarily through their influence on teachers’ motivation and working conditions” (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010, p. 19). Levine (2005) asserts that in the role of the principal one must build trust, focus the

school in the proper direction, convene and sustain conversations, and insist on the implementation of policy and practice. Principals are being asked to adapt from the role of managing instructional leadership to being the “primary adult developers and architects of collaborative learning communities” (Drago-Severson, 2007, p. 71). Msila and Mtshali (2013) assert that being an effective principal leader or a building manager used to be good enough; however today principals are no longer exclusively managers of schools who implement policy within the bureaucratic hierarchy. The principal is considered the central leader in the building and is charged with cultivating leadership and learning. Therefore the principal needs to know how to lead and manage those under his charge and “it is for this reason that principals need continuous professional development” (2013, p. 47).

Rationale for the Evolving Role of the Principal

The principalship has been strongly influenced by reform efforts of the last 20 years and in response to powerful economics and social challenges. During the last two decades of the 20th century society was alarmed by national reports including the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report, which startled the educational world with its assertions that educational mediocrity and the poor academic performance of American students not only imperiled the future of the workforce, but also jeopardized the country’s standing in the world (Matthes, 2008).

The principals of the 21st century labor under enormous strain complicated by the intrusion of governmental mandates, politics, and diverse and powerful interest groups (Allen, Lutinski, & Schlanger, 2007). The accountability movement, culminating with the federal mandate of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, has placed pressures on school leaders to improve student performance (Butler, 2008). As a result, the role of the principal has transitioned from one of administrative building manager to one that is heavily involved in assessment, instruction, curriculum and data analysis (Butler, 2008). Accountability for student academic growth, measured by successful achievement on standardized state assessments, and the fear of financial sanctions, shifted the focus of the role of the school principal (Matthes, 2008).

With high stakes testing, the spotlight is on principals when their school’s test scores are released, with prescribed stiff penalties for many when the schools perform below expectations. Due to the environment created by No Child Left Behind, principals must develop a keen sense of how to use accountability to lead data-driven decision-making and possess a desire to challenge conventions, have the ability to lead a team, and to motivate, mentor and manage personnel (Styron and LeMire, 2009). In this era of accountability principals cannot do it alone

(Butler, 2006). Styron and LeMire (2009) believe schools will not improve until average building leaders begin to work collaboratively and cooperatively with teachers to oversee and improve instructional quality (2009).

The research affirms that the role of the principal has evolved over the years and is forever changing; however, “all too often, principal training has failed to keep pace with the evolving role of the principal” (Mitgang, 2012, p. 6). According to Hensley (2011), although the role of the principal is forever evolving, “the principal remains the central source of leadership influence” (p. 4). However, Mitgang (2012) suggests that while the principal is the source of leadership, there are barriers that impede maintaining high quality principals who possess the leadership styles needed to improve student learning.

Shifting Focus to Instructional Leadership and School Culture

The perception of the role of the principal has also gone through a transformation. According to the 2011 report released by Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), “just a few years ago, school principals were expected to be administrators. Today, that focus has shifted...to school leaders creating cultures of success, working closely with teachers, and aggressively leading improvement in curriculum, instruction and academic performance” (SREB, 2011, p. 1). The role of the principal covers many different areas including instructional leadership, teacher evaluation, student discipline and several others. According to the literature today’s principal must be that of an instructional leader. The view of the principalship should be centered on instruction and not on management of the school building (Mendels, 2012). In a research study conducted by Mendel, he declares that “today’s best principals know what good and effective instruction looks like so they can provide feedback to guide teachers” (Mendels, 2012, p. 54). Louis, et al., (2010) contends that instructional leaders are expected to know and understand the rules of quality instruction and should be capable of providing constructive feedback to improve teaching. The results of the Louis, et al., study suggests that although the principal has a significant effect on teachers working in professional learning communities, instructional leadership has both a direct and indirect impact on the overall quality of instruction.

With the heightened accountability measures, the current demands of many schools have placed a heavy emphasis on instructional leadership and less attention on the managerial functions (Mendel, 2012). According to Louis & Wahlstrom (2011), shaping or refining the school’s culture is perhaps one of the most difficult jobs of the school principal. Because of this, principals are also culture leaders as they are charged with shaping the school’s culture through

shared leadership while assuming the responsibility for positively molding and changing classroom improvements in an effort to change the school's image (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011).

Principals are now required to be the primary instructional leader who is responsible for driving and improving the instructional program (Pope, 2010). Instructional leadership includes all actions and functions that support effective and successful academic improvement. While the responsibilities concerning instructional leadership, school management, diverse populations, and accountability mandates continue to intensify, studies show that today the primary role the principal must play is that of the leader for student learning (Bouchard, et al, 2002). According to Shoemaker (2010) school leaders are expected to demonstrate bottom-line results; therefore, they must know academic content, pedagogical techniques, and work with teachers to strengthen their instructional skills. The research suggests that in this era of accountability there is enormous pressure on the school leader to deliver results demonstrating progress in student academic achievement (Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). Mendels (2012) believes "the principal's job today is not as it was in recent past, to sit at the apex and attend to administrative tasks, but to work collaboratively and unleash potential" (p. 58).

Louis, Dretzke, and Wahlstrom (2010) claims that "there is increasing evidence that leadership makes a difference in schools" (p. 315). As the role of the principal continues to transform, the idea of shared, collaborative or distributive leadership has provoked much attention, controversy and debate in the leadership field (Harris, 2011). A distributive leadership perspective suggests a fundamental change in the role of the building principal. According to Harris (2011), distributive leadership represents one of the most influential ideas to emerge in the educational leadership field in the past decade. In this distributive leadership paradigm, principals consciously share leadership responsibilities in order to extend their leadership capacity within the school while making a personal transformation in leadership in an effort to nurture the growth of other leaders (2011).

According to Louis and Wahlstrom (2011), schools are no longer in need of a single leader who directs others to work from a position of authority. School communities desire strong leaders who can develop and cultivate a "culture of interconnectedness" (2011, p. 53). There is a sense of responsibility for the profession to establish ways to propagate and pass on knowledge from seasoned administrators to those who are new or aspiring to become instructional leaders (O'Mahoney, 2002).

Perception of the Principalship as a Career Option

The principalship is in a precarious position according to Lauder in an article published in the National Association of Secondary Schools Principals (NASSP, September 2000). Many educational experts acknowledge that the current role of the principalship is growing in its duties and responsibilities without intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (2000). Unfortunately this appears to be the leading cause of an insufficient pool of qualified and interested applicants to fill the large number of pending vacancies across the country (Robertson, 2007). According to Tucker & Coddling (2003), principals are rapidly leaving the profession and the pool of candidates willing to replace them is scarce. In addition, some of the teachers that are participating in principal preparation programs are doing it more so for the increase in salary associated with the training and have little intention of becoming an administrator for the long haul (Robertson, 2007).

Current research supports the notion that the principalship is not viewed as an attractive career option for teachers as it once was due to a host of factors including the increased workload and stress associated with the position (Robertson, 2007). Lashway (2003) noted that much of the administrators' stress arises from a complicated set of interrelated variables including the demands of the constituents, a fast-moving environment, feelings of personal inadequacy and the isolation created by the role. Robertson (2007) also contends that because of the on-going demands of the school leader, principals are retiring at a younger age, consequently resulting in the need for an increase in strong instructional leaders who can also effectively manage the school building. If people are not attracted to the principalship and or the assistant principalship, it becomes more difficult to generate sufficient applicants for vacancies and exacerbates the shortage of qualified applicants for future vacancies (Pope, 2010).

The need to produce more effective school leaders is greater than ever (Wenglingsky, 2002). Recognizing and encouraging exemplary leadership in America's schools is paramount (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, NPBEA, 2001). According to Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007) exemplary programs should have a research based curriculum with a focus on instructional leadership, organizational development and change management. Exemplary leadership programs should demonstrate a strong relationship between local school divisions and university programs "with a clear focus on a shared mission and a specific vision of instructional reform" (p. 64).

Educational Leadership Policy Standards and the formation of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)

According to Mendels (2012), “standards for principals are the foundation on which everything else rests” (p. 49). Over the years, critical publications and calls for reform in public education have led to a push for national standards. Under the auspices of the Council of Chief State Schools Officers (CCSSO), the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) created the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). ISLLC is a collaborative group with representation from 26 states with a collective interest in the field of educational leadership. These participating states recognize that schools and districts would not meet the demanding requirements for improving student achievement without effective leaders. Through a collaborative effort, the 1996 ISLLC Standards were built primarily from literature on productive leadership, research on school improvement, and from the emerging conceptions of school leadership for the 21st century (Robertson, 2007).

According to the NBPEA, prior to the development of the 1996 ISLLC Standards, there was little consensus on the characteristics of good school leaders, the role principals played in improving student achievement, and the policies and best practices for expanding the nation’s pool of effective administrators (CCSSO, 2008).

In order to reflect a decade of change in policy experience and significant political and social changes since 1996, educational state representatives asked the consortium council to update the ISLLC Standards. The original 1996 ISLLC Standards were deemed too restrictive and limiting; thus they were revised in 2008 in an effort to address changes in the field of education and to respond to input from practitioners and policy leaders. As a result, the 2008 standards were redesigned to build a better vision for leadership. The new ISLLC Standards attempts to answer questions such as

How do schools of education know what education leaders need to know as it relates to every child meeting academic achievement standards; how can schools of education effectively convey that knowledge in a coherent fashion; how does a district or school evaluate the skills and dispositions of a candidate to improve student performance; how does one evaluate appropriate continuing education programs or mentoring of new principals; and how does one evaluate existing school leaders in meeting accountable goals (CCSSO, 2008, p. 5).

The new standards also respond to the concern that the 1996 standards inhibited leadership preparation programs (CCSSO, 2008). The 2008 standards are policy standards that

are specifically designed to be discussed at the policymaking level when trying to establish set policy and a clear vision.

The revised ISLLC Standards represent the latest set of high-level policy standards for educational leadership and reflect lessons learned in the field about leadership. They reinforce the proposition in the original ISLLC Standards that the school leader's primary responsibility is to improve teaching and learning for all children (CCSSO, 2008). The new standards acknowledge the changing role of the school leader and reflect an understanding of the centrality of student learning.

There are six ISLLC Standards for improving leadership that represent the broad, high-priority, themes that education leaders must address in order to promote the success of every student. The revised 2008 educational leadership policy standards call for

- Standard 1** an education leader to promote the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders;
- Standard 2** an education leader to promote the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- Standard 3** an education leader to promote the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
- Standard 4** an educational leader to promote the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- Standard 5** an educational leader to promote the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and
- Standard 6** an educational leader to promote the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal and cultural context (CCSSO, 2008, p. 18).

Principal Preparation Programs

Much attention in the literature has been directed towards the principal preparation programs and the complex and demanding nature of the principalship (Hansford & Ehrich,

2006). In a professional development study conducted by Lutz (2008), she shares that “principals today are often assigned administrative roles with little to no guidance regarding how to create a thriving learning environment” (p. 2). According to Levine (2005), due to the inadequacy of the principal preparation programs, fewer of today’s instructional leaders are prepared to handle the demands of the job of principal. Levin also maintains that principal preparation programs are not providing graduates with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead and manage a school, and it is due to no fault of their own.

Many training programs, be that of university, state, or local programs do not adequately prepare principals to lead improvements in teaching and learning (Shelton, 2010). According to a recent report from The Wallace Foundation (2012) “out of about 500 university principal training programs, you’ve got about 200 that are pretty solid” (Mitgang, 2012, p. 15). Conventional procedures for training and certifying school administrators are failing to produce a sufficiency of leaders whose vision, energy, and skill can successfully raise the educational standards of children (Ballenger, et al., 2009).

According to Bunch (2006), seven out of ten degree program participants told higher education institutions that they were out of touch with the realities of what it takes to function in today’s world as principal. According to a study conducted by Lutz (2008), most principals are assigned administrative roles with little or no guidance of how to create an effective learning environment that improves student achievement; therefore, they require specific and on-going professional development training in order to provide successful school leadership.

By reputation, principal preparation programs are not highly effective (Lashway, 2003). According to a survey conducted by the Public Agenda (2001), 69 percent of principals and 80 percent of superintendents believed that typical leadership programs are out of touch with reality when it comes to understanding what makes a school district run effectively. Over 85 percent of both groups believed that overhauling preparation programs would help to improve school leadership (Gross, 2008). Principals are often placed in administrative positions without receiving the necessary training in leadership skills, improving student achievement, and developing or changing a school culture (Lutz, 2008). Others believe that a change in principal preparation at the collegiate level has been slow. Faculties are not always connected with the field and are sometimes complacent about adopting new standards (Norton, 2002).

Principals themselves have acknowledged that they are not prepared for their jobs (Cheney & Davis, 2011). According to Cheney and Davis (2011), “in a 2003 survey by Public Agenda, two-thirds of the principals polled reported that the leadership programs in graduate

schools of education are out of touch with what principals need to know” (p. 14). The literature acknowledges that there are few programs that offer strong clinical training experiences of significant length to enable aspiring principals to assume leadership positions that give them real responsibility and development skills to make changes in culture, manage and develop teachers and impact student learning (Cheney & Davis, 2011). According to Cheney & Davis, there are only a few programs that provide opportunities for aspiring principals to work directly with effective principals in school contexts similar to the ones they will lead. The general consensus is that principal preparation programs are too theoretical and unrelated to the daily demands on contemporary principals (Gutmore, Strobert, & Gutmore, 2009). The quest for enhanced knowledge, skills and dispositions to improve educational leadership preparation programs continues. According to Gill (2012), the quality of the principal training program and the support they receive is important and deserves investment. “There are early indications that suggest that investing in better leadership training programs can pay off in higher student performance and lower principal turnover” (Gill, 2012, p. 25). With changes in the principal’s role, the heightened expectation for aspiring principals will require more intense and relevant preparation.

University programs in select states are required by the state to redesign leadership preparation programs with standards that are relevant to the role of the principal as the instructional leader (Miller, 2013). Miller maintains that there are common sense steps that must be taken by those responsible for developing instructional leaders. They include

Ensuring that admission to principal training programs for school leaders focus on improving classroom instruction; reshaping future pre-service training programs for school leaders to focus on improving classroom instruction, not just managing a building; providing principals with high quality mentoring programs and professional development training based on performance assessments; and motivating states to exercise their power of influence to encourage quality leadership training programs that offer certification, accreditation or financial support to highly qualified candidates (p. 80).

Critical debates are taking place at the national, state and local levels questioning the best methods to prepare leaders for our future schools (2013). The preparation and continued development of school leaders, and in particular the principal, has gradually become an issue of major concern. The challenges of the principalship have not only led to principals’ shortage, but have placed more pressure on the principal preparation programs (Robertson, 2007). Not surprisingly, this situation has led to a shortage of qualified principals with fewer and fewer teachers entering principal preparation programs (Wenglinsky, 2002).

ISLLC Standards and Alignment with Principal Preparation Programs

In accordance to the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, the 2008 ISLLC Standards are now ready for policy makers to adopt and develop coherent education leadership policies that encourage and promote student success. The ISLLC Standards place emphasis on the need to assist schools in developing instructional programs that are conducive to student learning and staff professional growth (CCSSO, 2008). The standards are designed to provide appropriate and powerful leverage to school leaders to ensure that all leadership preparation and professional development programs are prepared to support leaders who have the capacity to improve student learning (2008). These ISLLC Standards provide for high-level guidance and insight regarding the traits, functions of work, and responsibilities expected of district school leaders (CCSSO, 2008). ISLLC posits that effective principal preparation programs must be aligned with the Standards for School Leaders to ensure that the focus of the school leader remains on instructional leadership and improvement, and to serve as a guide for the work of future principals while providing focus for leading learning as it is translated into leadership practices (CCSSO, 2008).

The 2008 ISLLC Standards are designed to assist states and local school districts with developing first-rate leaders by creating a common language when discussing expectations for educational leaders. The implementation of the standards brings greater consistency to education leadership policy while providing guidance that can serve as the foundation for other portions of the system. States must do more to comprehensively monitor and report the impact that preparation and professional development programs are having on the quality of education leadership (CCSSO, 2008). Several states have taken the lead to ensure that their principal preparation training programs are in line with the ISLLC Standards.

Spanneut', et al., (2012) asserts that several states have changed their credentialing and principal preparation process for future principals (2012). According to a report by the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2007), principal training programs (both university and non-university based programs) in Iowa are reviewed prior to accreditation approval to ensure that they are aligned with the Iowa for School Leader; in Kentucky the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders have been adopted in addition to the National Technology of Standards for School Administrators; and in New Jersey their EXCEL's School Leaders Standards Framework includes the six ISLLC Standards as well as a seventh standard for technological leadership (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2007).

The National Council for Accreditation of Teachers Education (NCATE) Standards for Leadership is also aligned with the ISLLC Standards. This unified set of standards called Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership, were developed by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC). The ELCC is an example of leadership standards used for the review and accreditation of educational leadership training programs (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2007). According to research it is important that the states adopt leadership standards that are aligned with the ISLLC Standards that emphasizes the principal's central role, provides a framework for revising principal preparation programs and professional development, and creates performance based assessments based on the ISLLC Standards for licensure of school superintendents, principals, and other school leaders. States must also align the national standards with the state and local expectations that clarify what leaders need to know to improve teaching and learning. ISLLC Standards, now adopted in more than 35 states, have caused a shift in the expectation of the building principal's role from that of building manager to instructional leader.

Professional Development

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) defined professional development as “a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement” (Hirsh, 2009, p. 12). The NSDC affirms that good professional development

- fosters collective responsibility for improved student achievement;
- is aligned with rigorous student academic achievement standards;
- is conducted among educators at the school level and facilitated by well-prepared school principals or other key leaders;
- occurs several times per week among established teams of teachers, principals and other instructional staff members;
- evaluates student, teacher and school learning needs;
- defines a clear set of the educators’ learning goals based on the rigorous analysis of data;
- achieves the educator’s learning goals by implementing sustained, and evidence-based learning strategies;
- provides job-embedded coaching to support the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the classroom;

- assesses the effectiveness of the professional development in achieving identified learning goals regularly; and
- informs on-going improvements in teaching and student learning (Hirsh, 2009, p. 12).

According to Lindstrom and Speck (2004), professional development can be defined as a lifelong, collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through daily, job-embedded, learner-centered, and focused approach. The literature asserts that professional development is often easy to recognize but difficult to define; however, Grande (2012) maintains that while professional development should be present in every venue of the landscape, its presence does not insure that learning, insight, or changes in the practices of teachers or school leaders will occur (2012). Almost everything that goes on in the school facility could be defined as continuous professional development (Collin, Van der Heijden, & Lewis, 2012). In a competitive workforce professional development could be the key to staying in the race as the qualifications for the job of principal become more challenging and complex (2012).

According to Guskey & Yoon (2009), the most effective training for the instructional leaders occurred during participation in workshops or during summer institutes. The results of the study indicated that most of the workshops presented were centered on the implementation of “research-based instructional practices, involved the educators participating in active-learning experiences, and provided opportunities for the participants to adapt the practices to their own classroom” (p. 496). The report also asserts that instructional improvements centered around ideas obtained through their involvement of outside experts; however, an issue that continues to be a longstanding problem is the of lack of sufficient time for staff members to engage in high-quality professional learning experiences. This study conducted by Guskey and Yoon, like many other studies, also addressed the need for follow-up activities and time for the educators to have “just-in-time, job-embedded assistance to adapt to new curricula and or other new instructional practices” (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 497). According to Guskey and Yoon (2009), practitioners tend to respond favorably to professional development training that is trustworthy, verifiable, and replicable and has comparative data. The study concluded with the researchers acknowledging “any new professional development training should begin with a small scale controlled pilot studies that are designed to test effectiveness” (p. 498).

On-going, In-service Professional Development for Principals

The research supports the notion that teaching experience, formal principal preparation programs or experience as a building level administrator provides little opportunity for principals

to learn the necessary skills to be an instructional leader of learning; therefore, principals must engage in on-going professional development training for their learning (Grande, 2012). Levine (2005) maintains that the educational environment is rapidly changing; therefore, principals must take charge in leading and redesigning their school or school division. Levine contends that the time has come to develop a program that will inspire administrators and superintendents to grow on the job as they gain experience and additional skills (2005).

In a report from the Center for Public Education, Hull (2012) maintains “that the impact on principal professional development programs has been met with mixed reviews.” According to the National Policy Board of Educational Administration (2011), to maintain clear direction our focus must change from the traditional method of preparing principals for the field (NPBEA, 2011). The NPBEA also asserts that the establishment of an independent, free standing, voluntary system of advanced certification would recognize how accomplished principals are in their field while strengthening their educational leadership skills. Efforts should be directed towards recognizing and honoring the effective and experienced leader, not just how proficient a novice administrator might be (2011). This advanced leadership certification program is patterned after the National Board Certification Program for Teachers. The author of this article contends that this type of program will send an important message about the critical importance of educational leadership.

In a research study conducted by O’Mahoney (2002), he describes the evolution of the beginning principal as seen through their eyes. What emerged from this study was the extent to which brand new principals felt forced to become self-independent and self-directed in their new role. This study examined the phases of the beginning principal’s role development and the importance of mentoring during this development. Research found that principals go through four distinct phases during their first year of socialization into the role of the principal. The first phase is idealization where the new principal tends to romanticize their future role and tend to enter into it with a passion to make a difference. Phase two is that of immersion. According to O’Mahoney, immediately after the romance ends, the new principal tends to fall in the immersion stage. After accepting the position as principal, the transition tends to be accompanied by the shock of feeling overwhelmed by the monumental problems and information overload. In this stage there are also some disillusion and questioning over their competence and ability to handle their new job responsibilities.

During the latter two phases of establishment (to seek out and align themselves with other key principals) and consolidation (feeling comfortable and no longer in need of a mentor),

O'Mahoney (2002) asserts that the new principals are better able to cope and deal with the reality and demands of their role. O'Mahoney also contends that perspective principals tend to learn their craft in the workplace; first as a teacher assigned to a specific school and then as a member of a school's administrative team, handling the daily issues in the life the school. The powerful and influential person for a new principal was the principal from their previous school. While previous principals were often seen as important to beginning administrators, the previous principals often did not realize the impact and the significance of their informal mentoring role (O'Mahoney, 2002).

Beginning principals indicated that the most prominent source of learning was not the professional leadership development courses but more through the workplace learning accompanied by significant work relationships. Mentoring programs have been put into place as a developmental tool to improve the quality of principal preparation and performance in many countries (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). Saelen (2008) suggests that on-going professional development opportunities are essential to allowing principals to be able to develop and maintain informal networking relationships that can positively impact their role as the school leader.

Miller (2013) contends that professional development training programs for principals are failing to keep the tempo with the ever-changing principalship. Miller maintains that "to ensure that schools can help children develop the skills they need, we need principals with sharper skills and who have more professional development training" (p. 80).

The Need for Professional Development

School leaders are crucial to improving instruction and raising student achievement (ISLLC, 2008). There is consistent evidence in the research that shows that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction when it comes to improving student achievement (ISLLC, 2008; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010; The Wallace Foundation, 2010;). In a study conducted by Saelen (2008), it was noted that the need for professional development is essential in order for building administrators to remain up-to-date on current teacher pedagogy, strategies and assessments. Therefore, "principals are expected to be the instructional leaders with a collective goal of improving student achievement" (Lutz, 2008, p. 7).

Federal legislative accountability measures have heightened the awareness of the need for schools to demonstrate their ability to improve student learning and hold educators accountable for the student academic growth (Oleszewski, Shoho & Barnett, 2012). This accountability movement coupled with legislation from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

has placed emphasis on the importance and significance of the need for improved student learning.

According to the literature now, “more than ever before, there is a need for strong, effective principals who can lead their schools to excellence (NAESP, 2003, p. 7). Lindstrom and Speck (2004) maintain that professional development training for school leaders is a critical leverage point for sustained change that will produce the expected results. Research studies have concluded that the need for effective school leadership ranks second only to teacher quality when it comes to improving student achievement (Mendels, 2012). Therefore, “principals require specific professional development training to provide successful leadership on an on-going basis” (Lutz, 2008, p. 3). The literature affirms that “professional development is a powerful means to improving schools and student achievement, and the principal is the key leader influencing the quality of teaching and learning” (Lindstrom and Speck, 2004, p. 136). Lindstrom and Speck (2004) also contend that in an effort to promote improved student achievement, all principals are in need of a journey map for professional development outlining a visual summary of high quality professional development components into the daily work and learning of the principal as the professional development leaders (2004).

According to Sparks (2012), school systems that required high quality teaching and student academic improvement desire sustained and well-designed professional development leadership programs. Lindstrom and Speck (2004) contend that the rapid pace in schools and in society today has paved the way for the need for continuous, high-quality, and aligned professional development training programs for principals. Spanneut', et al., (2012) affirms this by stating that “high quality professional development is critical to the process of improving the quality of instruction and leadership in our school systems” (p. 83). Hirsh (2009) believes that several research studies over the last decade have concluded that the length and focus of the professional development training activities has had a significant impact on and improved student achievement. Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007) assert that schools which participated in an average of 49 hours of professional development training in one school year, specifically on the curriculum taught, and experienced a 21 percentage point gain. In a study entitled *What Works in Professional Development*, researchers Guskey and Yoon (2009) affirm that when it comes to professional development for instructional leaders, there is a significant relationship between professional development training for and improved student achievement.

Government and policy makers have begun to realize the importance and significance of the need for quality professional development training programs for school leaders. Political

officials in Washington are looking intently at school leadership through its funding efforts, including Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants (Mendels, 2012). In a study conducted by Matthes (2008) it was noted that district-level administrators expressed the need to provide professional development activities and training programs that engaged principals in job-embedded activities that focused on teaching and learning.

Self-expressed Professional Development Needs of Principals

The research supports the notion that principals are charged with supporting teachers' learning and growth; however, many principals today are not equipped nor feel supported to meet the growing needs of the job (Drago-Severson, 2007). According to Spanneut', et al., (2012), principals have expressed interest in receiving professional development training to improve their leadership skills and abilities. However, better determination of the types of professional development training programs needed requires an investigation in into the perceived needs of the state, individual school districts, and the principals in each school facility (2012). In a study conducted by Matthes (2008) it was noted that

The need for professional development for principals emerged in a 2000 study conducted by the Educational Research Service, which found that principals repeatedly express a desire to augment their expertise and personal skills, but found current professional activities lacking at their schools (Matthes, 2008, p. 22).

Lutz (2008) shared that principals discussed the need for professional opportunities as means of networking and communicating with peers and colleagues. They desired training that provided opportunities for long-term learning as opposed to the format of "sit and get" (Lutz, 2008, p. 88). This study also revealed that regardless of the venue, having time to talk with colleagues about the daily occurrences of the job was needed. The results of Lutz's study also disclosed that principals felt that in order to effectively monitor classroom instruction, there was a need for them to learn the same content and programs that were being taught and required for teachers (Lutz, 2008).

ISLLC Standards and Alignment with Professional Development

There is a resounding call to improve the professional development training programs for principals (Spanneut' et al., 2012). In a study conducted by the state of New York, the research acknowledges that states have begun identifying professional development needs of school leaders based on the ISLLC Standards (2012). The purpose of this study was to examine the

sustainability of a process through which principals were able to self-identify their professional development needs based on the ISLLC Standards.

Current Assessments of Professional Development for Principals

Louis et al., (2010) used a quantitative analysis to obtain a greater understanding of how school districts' efforts to strengthen principals' instructional leadership capacity to influence schools and students. Specifically the study asked: how do principals assess the professional development and support their districts provide; how does professional development, as principals experience it, effect principals' collective sense of efficacy; and how is professional development, as principals experience it, associated with student learning. The results of the study revealed that overall principals have a positive perspective regarding school districts professional development efforts, believing that their school districts "provided professional development training opportunities that encouraged administrators and teachers to act on what they had learned during their professional development training; encouraged school administrators to work together to improve instructional leadership; and that school districts worked with school administrators who were struggling to improve their leadership" (p. 141). Overall the finding of the study suggests that school districts should invest in instructional leadership development training for principals. However, "professional development of school leaders will have limited effects on efficacy and student achievement unless districts provide clear goals for improvement" (p. 145). Establishing targets and stressing the importance of achieving them will unlikely yield positive results for students unless the educational initiatives are supported by professional development training that school leaders perceive as beneficial (2010).

In contrast, according to a report in the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL, 2000), principals find very little in their professional development programs that adequately prepare them for their role. The report also maintains that "principals do not feel supported in their leadership role by their districts, which had expected them to do no more than follow orders, oversee staff concerns and handle conflicts" (IEL, 2000, p. 3).

The need to properly equip school leaders for the new pressures and challenges facing the building principal today is critical. The Wallace Foundation (2012) report denotes that the principal is in the position to impact the greatest change on student achievement by ensuring that excellent teaching and learning are a part of all classrooms. According to Mitgang (2012),

“successful school reform depends largely on having principals who are well prepared to change schools and improve instruction” (p. 3).

The research supports the belief that principals play a vital role in setting the tone and direction for successful schools; however, existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates is sparse (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Districts leaders are being called upon to take the lead in redesigning their schools and school districts in order to improve school leadership.

Principals and superintendents today have the task of not only managing our schools, but also leading them through an era of social change that has required us to rethink what schools do and how they do it (Education Research Project, 2005). According to Levine, our nation faces the challenge of retooling current principals and superintendents while preparing a new generation of school leaders to take their places (2005).

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is an organization representing sixteen states. SREB asserts improving school leadership requires states to create a learning-centered school leadership system. This type of system will require principals to be focused on curriculum and instruction first in order to ensure that they know and understand how to provide instruction support to teachers that can guide teaching and learning in schools (SREB, 2007). The demands of the 21st century call for principals to gain a deeper understanding of how students learn and at what level they need to learn. The SREB contends that “schools must have principals who are passionate about helping students to learn, who can provide teachers with the leadership skills and knowledge identified as important for success and who keep a relentless focus on instructional improvement” (p. 1).

In 2002, the Southern Regional Education Board used six standards to determine if school districts could be identified as a learning-centered school district (SREB, 2007). In 2007, the SREB examined the progress in each of the sixteen SREB states and the region as a whole to determine if every school has a leader who can help to improve student achievement. The SREB Learning-Centered Leadership Program reviewed research and worked with states education agencies, universities, leadership academies, and local school districts to determine how progress on the standards should be measured. The resulting rating system was defined as some progress, little progress, promising progress. According to the SREB, some progress is being made in creating a school leadership system that can improve student performance. The results of the survey in the sixteen state region indicated that progress has been made in creating school leaders that can improve student performance compared to the last survey in 2002 (SREB, 2007).

While, generally speaking, progress was made, the report revealed that the number of indicators in which each state demonstrated progress was uneven.

Of the six indicators for developing a learning-centered school leadership system, four of the sixteen states had improved their progress rating since 2002. Three of the sixteen states had made progress in three of the six leadership standard indicators; four of the sixteen states had made progress in two of the leadership standard indicators; and three of the sixteen states made progress in only one of the six leadership standard indicators. Alabama made progress in five of the six standard indicators; however, Louisiana was the only state, of the sixteen states represented, to demonstrate progress in all six of the progress indicators.

According to the SREB report a few of the states are building learning-leadership systems at a rapid and strong pace. Others are moving at a moderate pace or too slow (SREB, 2007). The report denotes that 13 of sixteen SREB states have only reached some progress as an overall rating on all six leadership standard indicators. The three states with the most significant progress are Alabama, Louisiana, and Maryland. In nearly all SREB states fewer than 40 percent of school leaders' responsibilities, as defined by states' standards, are directly related to student learning (SREB, 2007). The study revealed that Virginia did make some progress in four of the six indicators as did Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas as compared to Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina who all made substantial progress compared to other states (*see Table 1*).

Table 1

SREB's Assessment of States' Progress Towards Learning-Centered Leadership Programs.

State	Indicators	Progress
Alabama	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Promising Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning.	Promising Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Promising Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Some Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Some Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Promising Progress
Arkansas	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	No Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student learning.	Promising Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Promising Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Some Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Some Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Promising Progress

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

State	Indicators	Progress
Florida	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Some Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student learning.	Some Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Little Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	No Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Some Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	
Georgia	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Promising Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student learning.	Promising Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Some Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Some Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	No Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Promising Progress

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

State	Indicators	Progress
Kentucky	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Some Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning.	Some Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Promising Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Some Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Some Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Some Progress
Louisiana	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Promising Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student learning.	Promising Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Promising Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Promising Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Promising Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Promising Progress

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

State	Indicators	Progress
Maryland	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Some Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning.	Promising Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Promising Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Some Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Promising Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Some Progress
Mississippi	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Some Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student learning.	Some Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Some Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Some Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Promising Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Little Progress

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

State	Indicators	Progress
North Carolina	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Some Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning.	Some Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Some Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Little Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Some Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Some Progress
Oklahoma	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	No Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student learning.	Some Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Some Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Little Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Promising Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Some Progress

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

State	Indicators	Progress
South Carolina	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Some Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning.	Some Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Some Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Little Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	No Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Promising Progress
Tennessee	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Some Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student learning.	Promising Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Some Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Promising Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	No Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Some Progress

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

State	Indicators	Progress
Texas	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	No Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning.	Some Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Promising Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Little Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Some Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools	Some Progress
Virginia	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	Some Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student learning.	Promising Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Little Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Some Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Some Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Some Progress

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

State	Indicators	Progress
West Virginia	1. Recruit and select future school leaders.	No Progress
	2. Redesign principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning.	Some Progress
	3. Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.	Some Progress
	4. Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.	Some Progress
	5. Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.	Some Progress
	6. Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.	Promising Progress

The SREB maintains that improving student achievement requires each state to create a learning-centered school leadership system that is focused on improving the skills and abilities of principals to guide teaching and learning (SREB 2007). The SREB also contends that professional development training should be available in all school districts that are designed to strengthen the principal's abilities to improve curriculum and instruction in order to build a highly effective organization. According to the SREB local professional development training should focus on building strong leadership teams within the school (SREB, 2007).

The Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (2007) *Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Lessons from exemplary leadership development programs* report examined eight exemplary pre-and in-service professional development programs that prepared strong school leaders (see Table 2).

The study revealed that states who had the opportunity to create robust and “systematic learning opportunities for school leaders helped to develop the skills needed to lead and transform” modern schools (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007, p. 282). The study also contends that principals, district leaders and policy makers at the state level are all intertwined together and are most effective when they can collaboratively work together towards clear and common educational goals (2007).

Table 2

Exemplary Leadership Development Programs

Pre-Service Programs	In-service Program	Program Description
Delta State University (MS)		Program focuses on instructional leadership and features a full-time internship and financial support preparing principals to transform schools.
University of Connecticut's Administrator Preparation Program. (UCAPP)		The UCAPP program focuses on transforming high-quality, traditional university based programs into innovative programs that increasingly integrates graduate coursework with field experience.
	Hartford (CT) Public School District	This program uses leadership development to leverage reforms vital to moving beyond state takeover. Centered on instructional leadership.
The Principals Institute of Bank Street College (NY)	Region I of the NYC Public Schools	Through collaboration these programs developed a continuum of leadership preparation programs aimed at creating leadership for improved teaching and learning.
Jefferson County (KY) Public Schools		Working with universities, this division developed leadership development programs tailored to the needs of the principals working in the division. The partnership crafted a pathway from the classroom to the principalship and provided on-going support for practicing principals.
Educational Leadership Development Academy(ELDA) at University of San Diego	San Diego (CA) Unified School District	San Diego's continuum of leadership preparation and development reflects closely aligned school/university partnership. Focuses on the development of leaders within the district supported by strong internship, networking and coaching.

Conclusions and Implications

Research supports the idea that the role of the school principal has drastically changed over the years (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007; Grande, 2012; Matthes, 2008; The Wallace Foundation, 2010). Many educational experts acknowledge that the current role of the principal is forever evolving and growing in its duties and responsibilities without intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Matthes, 2008; Sparks, 2009). Shoemaker (2010) maintains that the demand for high standards and schools' accountability required by federal legislative mandates have created pressures and a shift in the role and responsibilities of the building principal. Therefore, the principalship, which was previously grounded in school management and relationship building, has been transformed to more of an instructional leader (Pope, 2010). The literature supports the notion that the principal must be able to effectively lead a community of change as well as be a leader for student learning.

There is increasing evidence that leadership matters and makes a difference in schools (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007; Louis, Dretzke & Wahlstrom, 2010; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Mitgang, 2012; Pope, 2010; Shoemaker, 2010). The literature affirms that school leadership and instructional leadership are significant factors in facilitating, improving and promoting student academic growth (Marzano, 2005; Pope, 2011).

A great deal of attention has been focused on the professional development needs of the building principal and its impact on student achievement. School districts recognize and acknowledge the need for professional development training for principals. The literature supports the notion that there are links between strong leadership and improved student achievement (Christie, 2009; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Louis, et al, 2010). The literature also maintains that with well-established goals that support instructional initiatives, professional development training for school leaders can positively impact instructional practices and overall student achievement (Louis, et al., 2010). The principal is in the position to affect attitudes, social climate, morale, and student academic progress and must thus be able to improve the learning environment for teachers by stimulating innovative behaviors (2010).

According to Guskey (2006), policymakers, legislators and school leaders want to see improvements in student assessment results, increased attendance and decrease in the dropout rate; however, presently principals find very little in their professional preparation programs that adequately prepare them for their changing role (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007; The Wallace Foundation, 2001; IEL, 2000). Because of this, many principals are

retiring early and fewer leaders are entering the field, ultimately leading to a critical shortage of qualified principals (Robertson, 2007).

The Wallace Foundation (2004) contends that effective principal preparation programs are essential to the overall success of the school leader. With the multiplying demands and changes in the role of the school principal, no longer does the job entail simply managing the building and overseeing personnel. Today the principal must also be a strong instructional leader who not only provides the vision for optimum learning, but is also perceived and received as the leader for student learning. The research affirms that the principal of today must know academic content, pedagogy and be able to work with teachers to help to develop their instructional skills (Pope, 2010).

ISLLC Standards serve as the foundation for what school leaders should know, do, and be like. Educational leadership organizations such as National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) adopted the revised Educational Leadership Policy Standards: 2008 ISLLC Standards. These standards provide clear direction to guide state policy relevant to everything from administrative licensing to professional development training principal professional development programs (2008). Studies have acknowledged that the standards capture the entanglement of the principal's role and provide direction for professional development training (Knuth, 2004). According to the literature, several states have begun using the ISLLC Standards as the basis for assessing leaders, improving performance, and redesigning training programs (The Wallace Foundation, 2009).

The literature supports the assertion that effective principal preparation programs are aligned with the Standards for School Leaders developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (CCSSO, 2008). These professional standards, which focus on instructional leadership and school improvement, are designed to guide the work of future principals and provide a focus for leading learning as they are translated into leadership practice.

The review of literature affirms that sustained and well-designed leadership development training programs are essential in helping school leaders to create cultures that promote on-going improvements in teaching and learning (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Lindstrom & Speck, 2004; Lutz, 2008, Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss & Sharpley, 2007; Miller, 2013). However, the literature also maintains that professional development training programs for principals are failing to keep the momentum with the ever changing role of the principalship and the development of high quality teaching and learning (Louis, Dretzke & Wahlstrom, 2010; Sparks, 2009).

Given the emergent themes in the literature, the researcher will examine the professional development offerings at the division level in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The examination of professional development would include identifying what is offered to principals, what format is used to deliver the professional development, and to what extent are the professional development offerings aligned with the ISLLC Standards in Virginia public schools. A better understanding of current offerings will inform new topics within the professional community.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the types and formats of professional development provided to principals in Virginia public school divisions and to examine to what extent the professional development offerings are aligned with the ISLLC Standards. The results of this study could provide school division leadership with a better understanding of the types of trends across the Commonwealth and encourage collaboration across school divisions in developing relevant training aligned with best practices as defined by the ISLLC Standards.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What professional development sessions do school divisions provide for principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia?
 - a. What topics are included in the professional development sessions?
 - b. In what format are these sessions delivered?
 - c. How do professional development offerings vary by superintendents' regions, urbanicity and division size?
2. What types of professional development are offered to support new principals in their role as the instructional leader?
3. What types of professional development are offered to support veteran principals in their role as the instructional leader?
4. To what extent are the professional development sessions offered in the Commonwealth of Virginia aligned to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards?

Research Design and Methodology

A quantitative, non-experimental research survey methodology was chosen to identify, describe, investigate and document the professional development information offered from school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia (McMillan & Wergin, 2010). The information from the survey was compiled in Excel and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and measures of central tendency in order to ascertain the types of

professional development sessions school divisions were providing for principals; what professional development sessions were offered and in what format; what types of professional development sessions were offered to support new principals in their role as the instructional leader; what types of professional development sessions were offered to support veteran principals in their role as the instructional leader; and to what extent were the professional development sessions provided for principals in the Commonwealth aligned with the ISLLC Standards.

Research Design Justification

A quantitative research methodology best allowed for direct investigation of the research questions producing an explicit thread that will make data analysis simple, logical, and powerful (Butin, 2010). This quantitative non-experimental research study was “conducted to describe phenomena and/or to investigate relationships among variables” (McMillan & Wergin, 2010, p. 14). This methodology allowed the researcher to “search for patterns, themes, and distinctive perspectives” of the participants surveyed (Butin, 2010, p. 97) and to obtain information from all 132 public school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The use of the quantitative analysis also allowed for the collection of a variety of data and helped to strengthen the validity of the final conclusion (Butin, 2010).

Population Sample and Procedures

Every school superintendent representing one of the 132 public school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia was contacted for permission to collect data. Upon granting permission superintendents were asked to identify one representative from their school division to respond to the survey instrument, an individual with knowledge of professional development offerings for principals. Given the variety of roles and responsibilities of the central office staff, usually based on school division size, participants responding to the survey included directors, coordinators, specialists of professional or staff development or another division representative who was responsible for the oversight of professional development, such as an assistant superintendents or the superintendent.

Data Collection Procedure

Upon being granted approval to proceed with the study from the doctoral committee, the researcher submitted an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in order to comply with the federal regulations and guidelines related to conducting research with human subjects.

Following the review of the Research Protocol, the Internal Review Board determined that VT IRB approval was not necessary since the information collected was not about people, but about school divisions and their offerings. Prior submission of the request to the IRB, the researcher participated in the required Training for Human Subjects Protection and received the Certificate of Completion (*see Appendices A and B*).

The researcher made the initial contact with the superintendent of schools in each school division via email to share the purpose of the study and to request permission for the school division to participate in the study, and to obtain the name and the email address of the professional development director/coordinator or the individual responsible for the oversight of the school division's professional development program (*see Appendix C*). If no reply was received after a two-week period of sending the initial request, a follow-up reminder email message was sent (*see Appendix D*). Subsequent reminder messages were sent and telephone calls were made to school divisions if no response to the initial request was received after a four-week period. Immediately after receiving a reply from the superintendent or designee, a thank you message was emailed to each respondent (*see Appendix E*).

Once the name of the designee was received, an email message was sent to the designated contact person requesting a list of names and characteristics of all the professional development training sessions provided for principals the 2012-2013 school year (*see Appendix F*).

A statement of informed consent was included in the initial email request to the designee informing the study participants of the research purpose, procedures, risks and assurance of confidentiality to the extent possible (Butin, 2010). Data collection for this study began in mid-October 2013.

Instrument Design

In an effort to obtain information regarding the types of professional development offerings for school principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and their alignment with the ISLLC Standards, the *Survey of Professional Development Offerings for Principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia* survey instrument was developed. The instrument was designed based on the review of literature and the identification of reoccurring themes relevant to the evolving role of the principal, principal preparation programs, the impact of the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and their relevancy to principal professional development programs, and the need for professional development (*see Appendix G*).

Gathering Data

After receiving the requested information, the researcher aggregated in an Excel spreadsheet the data using a matrix and table chart in an excel spreadsheet. The use of this format allowed the researcher to gather and analyze the data, using descriptive statistics. While gathering the data, the researcher searched for patterns, themes and distinct perspectives of the participants surveyed. After compiling the data, emphasis was placed on examining patterns in the characteristics of the professional development sessions (topics, target audience, delivery format, type of presenter, duration of training, and the attendance requirement) as well as the extent of the alignment between the sessions and the ISLLC Standards.

Data Treatment

Upon receiving the data, the information was analyzed in order to uncover patterns and themes. At the conclusion of the data entry into Excel, the information was stored in a locked box in the researcher's home in order to maintain anonymity, ensure confidentiality and protect the research participants. Those data will be shredded at the conclusion of a successful defense.

Data Management

A survey instrument was developed to assist the researcher in recording the responses from the division designees in a consistent manner that would allow for obtaining all necessary characteristics of each professional development session. To stimulate ease of response and to encourage participants to speak freely and openly the survey questions were placed in a chart format (Alday, 2011). The instrument is included in Appendix G.

Validity

The survey questions used in this study were developed by the researcher and derived from the literature. To check for understanding a preliminary draft of the survey instrument was shared with two former school principals. Revisions to the content and format were made based on the feedback received. To ensure that the questions were consistently understood among the participants the survey instrument was validated by a group of professional educators to include: a retired director of staff development, current school division directors, building level administrators, and an assistant superintendent.

Data Analysis Technique

To assist with identifying common themes and to verify alignment of the professional development offerings to the ISLLC Standards, the researcher extracted major themes using the *Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 At a Glance* matrix (see Appendix H). The researcher began the quantitative data analysis by analyzing the data simultaneously as the data were being received from the study participants. The researcher used a table and chart format to summarize the data in aggregate form. Using the chart format, emphasis was placed on how to construct categories and research findings by looking at the categories that signify that the professional development offering are aligned with the ISLLC Standards (Merriam, 2009). The researcher used “frequencies, percentages, averages and other simple statistics to provide a description of the data collected” (McMillan & Wergin, 2010, p. 14).

To verify accuracy in data entry, to ensure consistency in coding, and to validate the alignment of professional development offerings with the ISLLC Standards, the researcher collaborated with two other research assistants. The researcher, a data analysis specialist, and a mathematics supervisor all coded the sessions by ISLLC standard independent of one another, analyzed the data and compared results using a matrix format (see Appendix I).

The researcher entered the data from the survey instrument into an Excel spreadsheet to examine the data in aggregate form. Statistical procedures were repeated for subcategories of data by: superintendents’ regions, school division size and urbanicity classification.

Timeline

After receiving permission to proceed with the study, the initial email contact was made with division superintendents in mid-October requesting permission to participate in the study and the name of the person designated to complete the survey instrument. The survey instrument and a letter of explanation detailing the purpose of the study were sent to the school divisions’ professional development representative as identified by the superintendent (see Appendices C and F). The researcher requested that survey responses be returned no later than two weeks after receiving the initial request for participation. A reminder email notification was sent approximately two weeks after the original request to those school divisions who were unable to respond to the initial request. Subsequent reminder messages were sent and telephone calls were made as needed. The analysis of data was completed by the end of January 2014.

Methodology Summary

Based on the review of literature, the researcher developed a table-formatted survey instrument to gather information regarding the topics and characteristics of professional development sessions offered across the Commonwealth. Designees from participating school divisions returned the survey instrument, and the data were coded for alignment with the ISLLC Standards. The resulting data set was analyzed descriptively in aggregate form and subsequently disaggregated by superintendents' regions, school division size, and urbanicity classification. The results of this analysis are discussed in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four

Results of the Study

Division level administrators are confronted with the challenge of designing and implementing professional development programs that provide training in instructional leadership and assessment for new and veteran building level principals (Matthes, 2008). The purpose of this study was to investigate the types and formats of professional development provided to principals in Virginia public school divisions and to examine to what extent the professional development offerings are aligned with the ISLLC Standards.

The results of this study are presented in four sections to include an analysis of (a) the types of professional development offerings provided for principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia, (b) the types of professional development offered to support new principals in their role as the instructional leaders, (c) the types of professional development offered to support veteran principals in their role as the instructional leader and, (d) the extent to which the professional development offerings provided in school divisions are aligned with the ISLLC Standards. As a part of the analysis, the researcher also examined trends by Superintendents' Region, urbanicity classifications, and the size of the school division.

Response Rate to the Survey

The researcher contacted superintendents in all school divisions ($n=132$) across the Commonwealth of Virginia requesting the names of a point of contact for principal professional development. Of the 132 prospective participants, 70 (53.03%) responded to the request for participation in the study. Of the 70 respondents 51 (72.86%) completed the survey instrument as requested. Five (7.14%) of the 70 respondents provided a response to the questions but did not use the survey instrument; five (7.14%) identified a school division's designee to complete the survey instrument, however, the response was not provided within the window of time allowed; and nine (12.86%) of the 70 respondents declined participation in the study. As shown in Table 3, there is representation from each superintendent's region in this research study.

Table 3

Response to Survey by Superintendents' Regions:

Superintendents' Regions	School Divisions in each Region	Participating School Divisions	Percentage of school divisions participating in the study by superintendents' region
Region 1	15	8	53.33%
Region 2	16	8	50%
Region 3	17	6	35.29%
Region 4	19	7	36.84%
Region 5	20	7	35%
Region 6	15	4	26.67%
Region 7	19	6	31.58%
Region 8	12	5	41.67%
	n = 132	51	38.64%

Analysis of all professional development programs provided for principals by school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A survey was used to identify the professional development offerings provided by school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia (*see Appendix G*). The results of the survey revealed that 364 professional development sessions were offered to principals across the 51 school divisions that responded to the survey. The number of professional development sessions in a school division ranged from 1 to 34. The mean or average number of professional development offerings was 7, the median was 5 and the mode was 3.

Information provided through the survey instrument regarding the professional development sessions was checked for alignment with the ISLLC Standards using key words from the 2008 *Educational Leadership Policy Standards* (*see Appendix H*). As shown in Table 4, the analysis of data revealed that of the 364 professional development sessions offered throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, 100% were aligned with one or more of the ISLLC Standards. Of the 364 sessions offered, 69 sessions overlapped with multiple ISLLC Standards.

The professional development topics covered a broad range of topics that included educational leadership; organizational management; instructional leadership; technology; collaboration; leading with integrity and ethics; and school community relations. The data indicated that professional development topics were delivered to new and veteran principals using online, hybrid, and face-to-face formats, with the vast majority of sessions taking place face-to-face. School divisions participating in the study used both internal and external presenters to lead the professional development sessions, and the length of these sessions ranged in duration from 30 minutes to 5,460 minutes (or 91 hours), indicating a wide range commitment to professional development initiatives.

Table 4

Professional Development Sessions Alignment with Primary ISLLC Standards in Participating Divisions

ISLLC Standards	Keywords/Phrases	Number of sessions aligned with primary ISLLC Standards	Number of sessions overlapping with multiple ISLLC Standards	Percentage of Sessions
Standard 1	Articulation of shared vision; school improvement	70	1	16.40%
Standard 2	Instructional leadership; technology; curricular	239	23	60.51%
Standard 3	Management; safe, efficient and effective learning environment	37	13	11.55%
Standard 4	Collaboration; data analysis	5	14	4.39%
Standard 5	Legal/ethical matters; acting with integrity	12	6	4.16%
Standard 6	Understanding, responding to and influencing political matters	1	12	3.00%
		n= 364	Total = 69	Total = 100.01%

The data revealed that of the eight superintendents' regions 55 (15.11%) of the professional development sessions were offered in region 1; 86 (23.63%) were offered in region 2; 40 (10.99%) were offered in region 3; 49 (13.46%) were offered in region 4; 33 (9.07%) were offered in region 5; 34 (9.34%) were offered in region 6; 35 (9.62%) were offered in region 7; and 32 (8.79%) were offered in region 8 (see Figure 2).

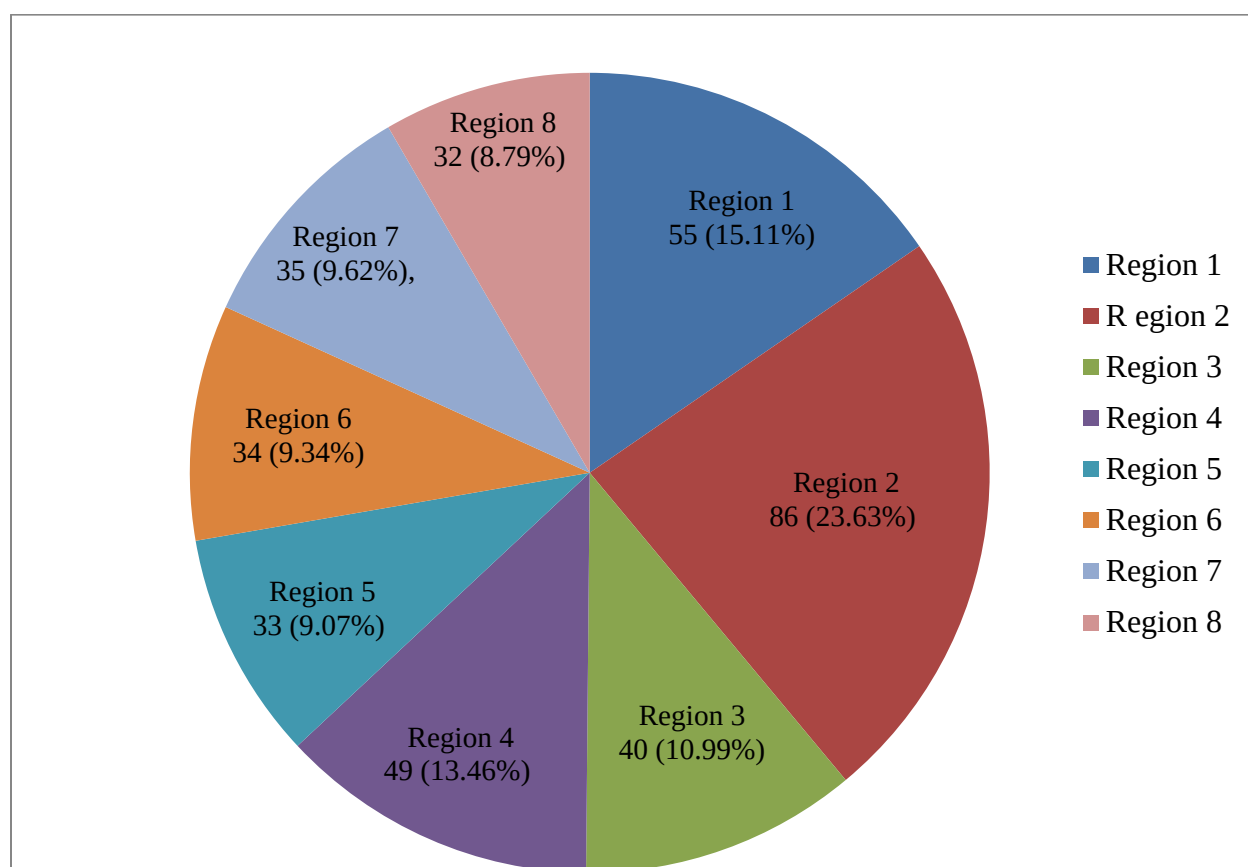


Figure 2. Proportional representation of the reported professional development sessions for the 8 superintendents' regions.

In what format were topics delivered? According to the survey results, professional development sessions were provided to principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia using a variety of formats. Of the 364 sessions, 331 (90.93%) were delivered using a face-to-face or in-person format. Five (1.37%) of the sessions were presented using an online format and 28 (7.69%) of the professional development sessions were delivered using a hybrid model consisting of some combination of online and in-person interactions (see Figure 3).

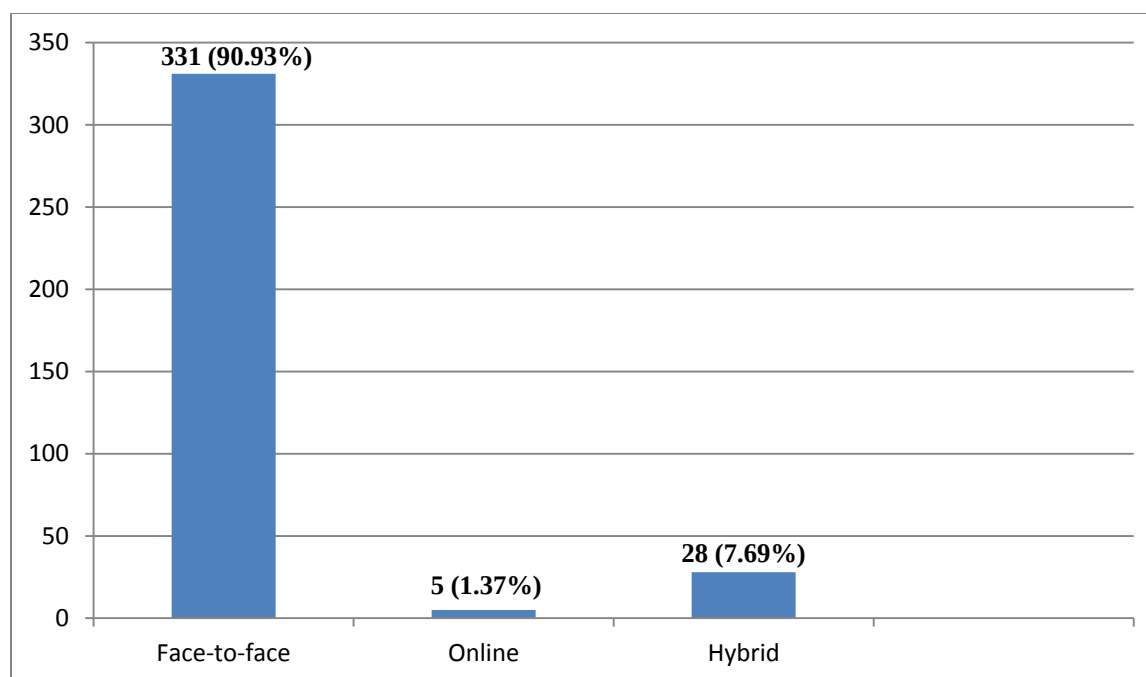


Figure 3. Types of professional development format used in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Duration of the Professional Development Sessions

Participants provided information regarding the length of training sessions in minutes for all but two sessions. The duration of the 362 (99.45%) sessions ranged from 30 minutes to 5,460 minutes. For the purpose of this study any professional development session estimated as having lasted more than 840 minutes (equating to 14 hours or approximately 2 days in duration) was designated as “on-going.” Sessions ranging from 30 minutes to 840 minutes were considered to be one-time or “one shot” professional development opportunities. Of the 364 sessions reported across the Commonwealth, 78 (21.43%) of the professional development sessions were on-going; 285 (78.30%) of the offerings were categorized as one-time or one shot professional development, and one (0.27%) of the school divisions did not report the duration of the professional development sessions offered. The range in duration of the “one shot” sessions was 30 minutes to 840 minutes with a mean of 289 (or 4.82) hours, the median of the “one shot” sessions was 180 minutes (or 3 hours), and the mode of the “one shot” sessions was 120 minutes or 2 hours (*see Figure 4*).

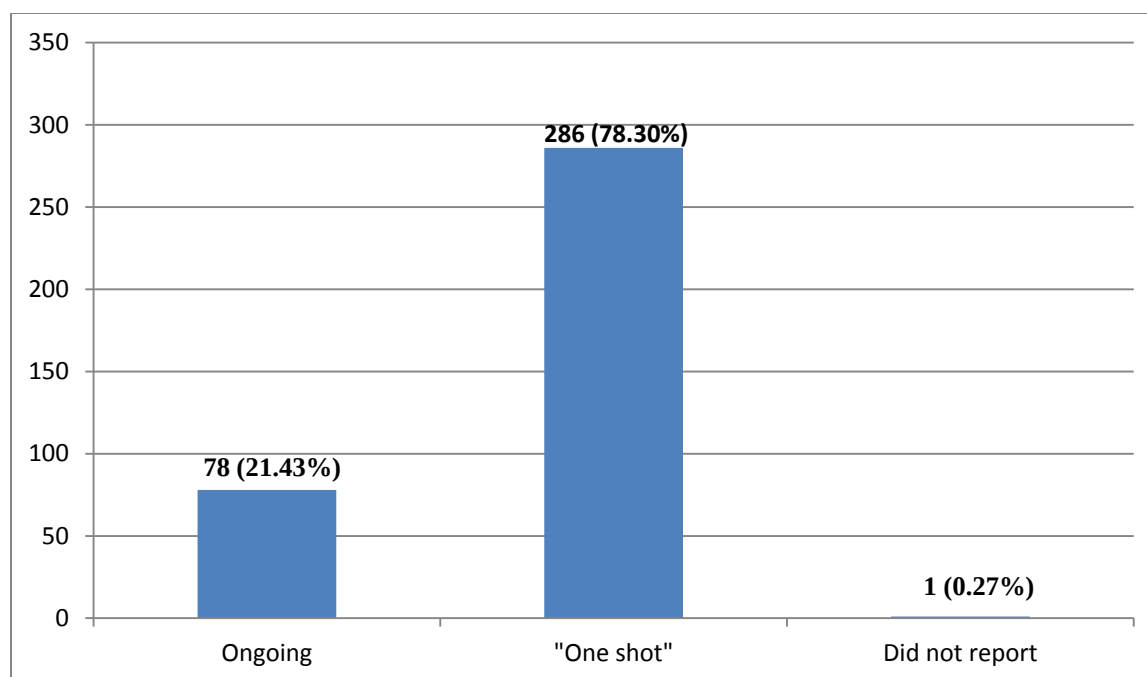


Figure 4. Duration of professional development sessions in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Professional Development Attendance Requirements

Survey participants were also asked to share if the professional development sessions offered to principals were mandatory or optional. Figure 5 revealed that of the 364 sessions reported, 256 (70.33%) required mandatory participation while 108 (29.67%) allowed for optional attendance.

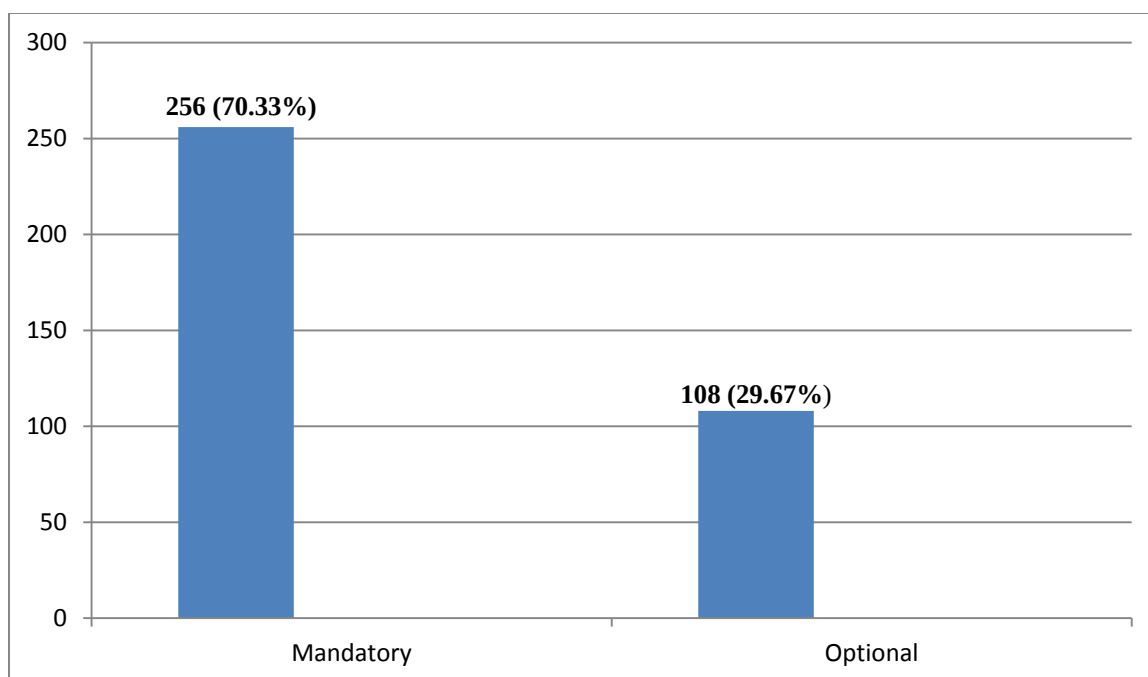


Figure 5. Attendance requirement for professional development sessions in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Types of Professional Development Presenters

The survey responses indicated that participating school divisions used both internal and external presenters to provide the professional development sessions for the principals. The survey results revealed that of the professional development sessions provided 21 (5.79%) of the 364 sessions overlapped thus using both internal and external presenters, including the overlapping designations 167 sessions (43.38%) were delivered by external presenters and 218 sessions (56.62%) were delivered using internal or in-house presenters (*see Figure 6*).

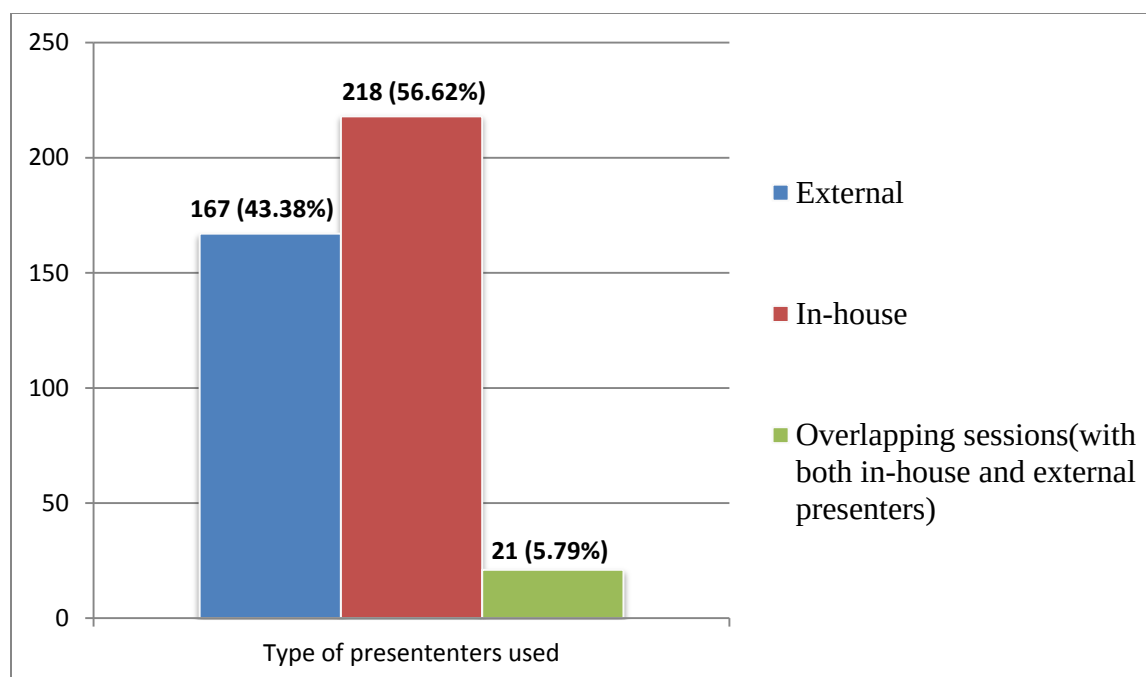


Figure 6. Types of presenters used to deliver professional development sessions.

What types of professional development were offered to support new principals in their role as the instructional leader? Of the 364 professional development sessions offered in the Commonwealth, 33 (9.07%) were specifically designed for new principals. As shown in Table 5, of the 33 professional development sessions offered for new principals across the Commonwealth, all of the sessions were directly aligned with the ISLLC Standards and several of the sessions offered for new principals overlapped with multiple ISLLC Standards. Twenty-one (67.74%) sessions were directly aligned with Standard 2 of the ISLLC Standards which focuses specifically on instructional leadership and improved student learning. Of the 33 sessions for new principals, 13 (39.39%) required mandatory attendance. Sixteen (31.37%) of the 51 responding school divisions, nearly one-third, had at least one professional development session for new principals.

Table 5

Professional Development Sessions Offered for New Principals

ISLLC Standards	Keywords/Phrases	Number of sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards	Number of sessions overlapping with multiple ISLLC Standards	Percentage of Sessions
Standard 1	Articulation of shared vision; school improvement	3	0	9.09%
Standard 2	Instructional leadership; technology; curricular	15	2	45.45%
Standard 3	Management; safe, efficient and effective learning environment	8	1	24.24%
Standard 4	Collaboration; data analysis	3	3	9.09%
Standard 5	Legal/ethical matters; acting with integrity	3	1	9.09%
Standard 6	Understanding, responding to and influencing political matters	1	2	3.03%
		n = 33	n = 9	n = 99.99%

What types of professional development sessions are offered to support veteran principals in their role as the instructional leader? Of the 364 professional development sessions, 20 (5.49%) were held for veteran principals with 19 (95%) requiring mandatory attendance. Eleven (55%) of the 20 professional development sessions offered for veteran principals were directly aligned with Standard 2 of the ISLLC Standards, which focuses on instructional leadership. Two (10 %) of the 20 professional development sessions offered for veteran principals were aligned with Standard 1 of the ISLLC Standards; four (20%) of the

sessions offered for veteran principals were aligned with Standard 3 and none were aligned with Standard 4 (see Table 6).

Table 6

Professional Development Offerings for Veteran Principals

ISLLC Standards	Keywords/Phrases	Number of sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards	Percentage of Sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards	Number of sessions requiring mandatory attendance
Standard 1	Articulation of shared vision; school improvement	5	25%	2
Standard 2	Instructional leadership; technology; curricular	12	60%	0
Standard 3	Management; safe, efficient and effective learning environment	3	15%	0
Standard 4	Collaboration; data analysis	0	0	0
Standard 5	Legal/ethical matters; acting with integrity	0	0	0
Standard 6	Understanding, responding to and influencing political matters	0	0	0
n = 20				

To what extent are the professional development training/programs offered in the Commonwealth of Virginia aligned to the Interstate School Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards? Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 intentionally crafts educational standards that are broad in scope, as they are designed to define the characteristics of strong administrative school leadership under six standards (ISLLC, 2008). The six ISLLC Standards represent high priority educational themes that school leaders must address in order to promote the success of every student (2008). The researcher used key words as identified in the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 (*see Appendix H*) to check for alignment. The data revealed that all 364 professional development sessions offered by the 51 participating divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia were directly aligned to one or more of the six ISLLC Standards. The results of the data affirmed that 100% of the 364 professional development sessions offered by the 51 study participants across the Commonwealth of Virginia was directly aligned to one or more of the six ISLLC Standards. Standard 1: setting a widely shared vision for learning yielded 70 (19.23%) sessions of 364 that were aligned with standard 1; Standard 2: Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff growth resulted in 239 (65.66%) of the professional development offering aligned with Standard 2; Standard 3: Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation and resources for a safe efficient, and effective learning environment resulted in 37 (10.16%) of the professional development offerings aligned with Standard 3; Standard 4: Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources yielded 5 (1.37%) of the professional development offerings aligned with Standard 4; Standard 5: Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner resulted in 12 (3.30%) ; and Standard 6: Understanding, responding to and influencing the political, social, legal and cultural contexts resulted in 1 (0.27%) of the professional development offerings aligned with Standard 6 (*see Table 7*).

Table 7

Professional Development Sessions Offered Aligned with ISLLC Standards

ISLLC Standards	Keywords/Phrases	Number of sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards	Percentage of Sessions Aligned with ISLLC Standards
Standard 1	Articulation of shared vision; school improvement	70	19.23%
Standard 2	Instructional leadership; technology; curricular	239	65.66%
Standard 3	Management; safe, efficient and effective learning environment	37	10.16%
Standard 4	Collaboration; data analysis	5	1.37%
Standard 5	Legal/ethical matters; acting with integrity	12	3.30%
Standard 6	Understanding, responding to and influencing political matters	1	0.27%
		n = 364	n= 99.99%

Data disaggregation by subcategories. The data were disaggregated by superintendents' regions, division size and urbanicity designation to examine potential variation based on geography, organizational infrastructure, population and concentration. The results from the analysis will be reported by subcategory.

Professional Development Offerings by Superintendents' Regions

Region 1. Region 1 includes 14 school divisions in Central Virginia. Eight (57.14%) divisions in Region 1 chose to participate in the research study, and of the 364 professional development sessions offered to principals across the Virginia, 55 (15.11%) took place here. Twenty-one of the 55 sessions were aligned with multiple ISLLC Standards resulting in a total of 76 codes for the 55 sessions.

The distribution by ISLLC Standards affirmed that 7 (10%) of the professional development sessions offered were aligned with Standard 1; 46 (60.53%) of the professional development standards were aligned with Standard 2; 12 (15.79%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 3; 4 (5.26%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 4; 4 (5.26%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 5; and 3 (3.95%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 6.

Of the 55 professional development sessions offered in Region 1, none of them specifically targeted veteran principals; 3 (5.45%) of the sessions were designated for new principals and 52 (94.55%) were designated for all principals in the school division. None of the sessions were delivered using an online format; only 4 (7.27%) of the professional development sessions were delivered using a hybrid model, and 51 (92.73%) of the sessions were delivered face-to-face or in-person.

The school divisions from Region 1 represented in the study chose to use both in-house and external presenters to deliver the professional development sessions to principals. Of the 55 sessions provided 26 (43.43%) were presented using external presenters from outside of the school division, and 34 (56.67%) of the sessions were presented by in-house personnel working in the school division. The data revealed that 5 (9.09%) of the sessions had an overlap in presenter type, indicating that both external and in-house presenters were used to deliver the professional development information.

The duration of the professional development sessions in this region ranged from 30 minutes to 5,660 minutes. Of the 55 sessions offered in Region 1, 7 (12.73%) were categorized

as on-going; 48 (87.27%) had a duration of 840 minutes or less and were considered “one shot” professional development. The “one shot” sessions ranged from 60 to 840 minutes in length with a mean of 530.63 minutes or 8.84 hours, a median of 360 minutes or 6 hours, and a mode of 120 minutes or two hours. Attendance was mandatory at 41 (74.55%) of the sessions, with attendance being optional at the remaining 14 (25.45%).

Region 2. Region 2 includes 16 school divisions in the Tidewater Region of Virginia. Eight (50%) of the school divisions in Region 2 chose to participate in the research study, and of the 364 professional development sessions offered to principals across Virginia, 86 (23.62%) took place here. Fifteen (17.44%) of the 86 sessions were aligned with multiple ISLLC Standards resulting in a total of 101 codes for the 86 sessions.

The distribution by ISLLC Standards affirmed that 15 (15.84%) of the professional development sessions offered were aligned with Standard 1; 59 (58.42%) of the professional development standards were aligned with Standard 2; 13 (12.87%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 3; 6 (5.94%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 4; 4 (3.96%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 5; and 3 (32.97%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 6.

Of the 86 professional development sessions offered in Region 2, 3 (3.49%) specifically targeted veteran principals; 18 (20.93%) of the sessions were designated for new principals and 65 (75.58%) were designated for all principals in the school division. The format used for delivering the professional development sessions included 79 (91.86%) face-to-face sessions; 1 (1.16%) session was delivered using an online format; and 6 (6.98%) delivered using a hybrid model format.

The school divisions from region 2 represented in the study chose to use both in-house and external presenters to deliver the professional development sessions to principals. Of the 86 sessions provided, 23 (25.27%) utilized external presenters and 68 sessions (74.73%) were presented by in-house personnel. Five (5.81%) of the sessions had an overlap, indicating that both external and in-house presenters were used to deliver the professional development.

The duration of the sessions in this region ranged from 60 to 840 minutes. Of the 86 sessions offered in Region 2, 14 (16.28%) were categorized as on-going and 72 (83.72%) were categorized as “one shot” professional development with a duration of 840 minutes or less. The length of the “one shot” sessions ranged from 60 to 840 minutes with a mean of 492.52 minutes or 4.92 hours, a median of 300 minutes or 5 hours, and a mode of 120 minutes or two hours.

Attendance was mandatory at 64 (74.42%) of the sessions with attendance being optional for the remaining 22 (25.58%).

Region 3. Region 3 includes 17 school divisions in the Northern Neck section of Virginia, including the six school divisions (35.29%), who chose to participate in the research study. Of the 364 professional development sessions offered to principals across Virginia, 40 (10.99%) took place here. Nine (22.5%) of the 40 sessions were aligned with multiple ISLLC Standards resulting in a total of 49 codes for the 40 sessions.

The distribution by ISLLC Standards revealed that 10 (20.41%) of the professional development sessions offered were aligned with Standard 1; 28 (57.14%) of the professional development standards were aligned with Standard 2; 5 (10.2%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 3; 1 (2.04%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 4; 3 (6.12%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 5; and 2 (4.08%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 6.

Of the 40 professional development sessions offered in Region 3, 1 (2.5%) specifically targeted veteran principals; 4 (10%) of the sessions were designated for new principals and 35 (87.5%) were designated for all principals in the school division. Two of the sessions were delivered using an online format, 1 session (2.5%) utilized a hybrid model format, and the remaining 37 sessions (92.5%) were delivered face-to-face.

The school divisions from Region 3 represented in the study chose to use both in-house and external presenters to deliver the professional development sessions to principals. Of the 40 sessions provided 25 (59.52%) were presented using external presenters from outside of the school division and 17 (40.48%) of the sessions were presented by in-house personnel working in the school division. The data revealed that 2 (5%) of the sessions had an overlap in presenter type indicating that both external and in-house presenters were used to deliver the professional development information.

The duration of professional development sessions in this region ranged from 60 to 840 minutes. Of the 40 sessions offered in region 3, 16 (40%) were categorized as on-going; 24 (60%) had a duration of 840 minutes or less and were considered “one shot” professional development. One of the professional development sessions was identified as occurring annually, which the researcher chose to report separately, not placing it in either on-going or one shot categories. The “one shot” sessions ranged from 60 to 840 minutes with a mean of 473.23 minutes or 7.89 hours, a median of 180 minutes or 3 hours, and a mode of 120 minutes or two

hours. Attendance was mandatory at 21 (52.5%) of the sessions, with attendance being optional at the remaining 19 (47.5%).

Region 4. Region 4 includes 20 school divisions in the Northern Virginia area of the Commonwealth. Seven (35%) divisions chose to participate in the research study, and of the 364 professional development sessions offered to principals across Virginia, 49 (13.46%) took place here. Seven of the 49 sessions (15.22%) were aligned with multiple ISLLC Standards resulting in a total of 56 codes for the 49 sessions.

The distribution by ISLLC Standards revealed that 10 (17.86%) of the professional development sessions offered were aligned with Standard 1; 40 (71.43%) of the professional development standards were aligned with Standard 2; 5 (8.93%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 3; 1 (1.79%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 4; 0% of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 5; and 0% of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 6.

Of the 49 professional development sessions offered in Region 4, 12 (24.49%) specifically targeted veteran principals, 4 (8.16%) of the sessions were designated for new principals, and 33 (67.35%) were designated for all principals in the school divisions. Two of the sessions were delivered using an online format, 2 (4.08%) using a hybrid format, and 45 (91.84%) were delivered face-to-face.

The school divisions in Region 4 chose to use both in-house and external presenters to deliver the professional development sessions to principals. Of the 52 sessions provided in Region 4, 30 (57.69%) were presented using external presenters from outside of the school division, and 22 (42.31%) of the sessions were presented by in-house personnel. Three (6.12%) of the sessions had an overlap, indicating that both external and in-house presenters partnered together to deliver the professional development.

The duration of professional development sessions in this region ranged from 30 to 840 minutes. Of the 49 professional development sessions offered in region 4, 15 (30.61%) were categorized as on-going; 34 (69.39%) had a duration of 840 minutes or less and were considered “one shot” professional development. The “one shot” sessions ranged from 30 to 840 minutes with a mean of 533.04 minutes or 8.9 hours, a median of 360 minutes or 6 hours, and a mode of 120 minutes or two hours. Attendance was mandatory at 22 (44.90%) of the sessions, with attendance being optional at the remaining 27 (55.10%).

Region 5. Region 5 includes 21 school divisions in the Valley area of Virginia including the 7 divisions (33.33%) in Region 5 who chose to participate in the research study, and of the

364 professional development sessions offered to principals across the Commonwealth, 33 (9.24%) were offered to the principals here. Of the 33 sessions, 7 (21.21%) were aligned with multiple ISLLC Standards resulting in a total of 40 codes for the 33 sessions.

The distribution by ISLLC Standards affirmed that 9 (22.5%) of the professional development sessions offered were aligned with Standard 1; 21 (52.5%) of the professional development standards were aligned with Standard 2; 2 (5%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 3; 2 (5%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 4; 3 (7.5%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 5; and 3 (7.5%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 6.

Of the 33 professional development sessions offered in Region 5, 4 (12.12%) specifically targeted veteran principals, no sessions were designated for new principals, and 29 (87.88%) were designated for all principals in the school division. All 33 (100%) of the professional development sessions were presented using the face-to-face format.

The school divisions from Region 5 represented in the study chose to use both in-house and external presenters to deliver the professional development sessions to principals. Of the 35 sessions provided in Region 5, 18 (51.43%) were presented using external presenters from outside of the school division, while 17 (48.57%) of the sessions were presented by in-house personnel. Two sessions (6.06%) had an overlap in sessions indicating that both external and in-house presenters delivered the professional development together. The duration of professional development sessions in this region ranged from 60 to 840 minutes. Of the 35 sessions provided 18 (51.43%) were presented using external presenters from outside of the school division while 17 (48.57%) of the sessions were presented by in-house personnel.

Of the 33 sessions offered in region 5, 6 (18.18%) were categorized as on-going; 26 (78.79%) had a duration of 840 minutes or less and were considered “one shot” professional development. The duration of one (3.03%) of the professional development sessions was unknown. The “one shot” sessions ranged in duration from 60 to 840 minutes with a mean of 508.21 minutes or 8.5 hours, a median of 300 minutes or 5 hours, and a mode of 120 minutes or 2 hours. Attendance was mandatory at 25 (75.76%) sessions, with attendance being optional at the remaining 8 (24.24%).

Region 6. Region 6 includes 15 school divisions in the Western Virginia area of Virginia. Four divisions (26.67%) in Region 6 chose to participate in the research study, and of the 364 professional development sessions offered to principals across the Commonwealth, 34 (9.34%)

were offered here. Seven (20.59%) of the 34 sessions were aligned with multiple ISLLC Standards resulting in a total of 41 codes for the 34 sessions.

The distribution by ISLLC Standards affirmed that 10 (24.39%) of the professional development sessions offered were aligned with Standard 1; 22 (53.66%) of the professional development standards were aligned with Standard 2; 6 (14.63%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 3; 2 (4.88%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 4; one (2.43%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 5; and none of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 6.

Of the 34 professional development sessions offered in Region 6, none specifically targeted veteran principals; 2 (5.88%) of the sessions were designated for new principals; and 32 (94.12%) were designated for all principals in the school divisions. All 34 (100%) of the sessions in Region 6 were delivered in a face-to-face with no sessions utilizing online or hybrid formats.

The school divisions in Region 6 represented in this study chose to use both in-house and external presenters to deliver the professional development sessions to principals. Of the 35 sessions, 14 (40%) were presented using external presenters from outside of the school division and 21 (60%) of the sessions were presented by in-house personnel. One (2.94%) of the sessions had an overlap indicating that both external and in-house presenters were used to deliver the professional development, resulting in 35 sessions presented.

The duration of professional development sessions in this region ranged from 60 to 840 minutes. Of the 34 professional development sessions offered in region 6, 5 (14.71%) were categorized as on-going; 29 (85.29%) had a duration of 840 minutes or less and were considered “one shot” professional development. The “one shot” sessions ranged from 60 to 840 minutes with a mean of 555.45 minutes or 9.25 hours, a median of 360 minutes or 6 hours, and a mode of 120 minutes or two hours. Attendance was mandatory at 27 sessions (79.41%), with attendance being optional at the remaining 7 (20.59%).

Region 7. Region 7 includes 19 school divisions in the Southwest area of Virginia. Six divisions (31.58%) chose to participate in the research study, and of the 364 professional development sessions offered to principals across the Commonwealth, 35 (9.61%) were offered here. Five (14.29%) aligned with multiple ISLLC Standards resulting in a total of 40 codes for the 35 sessions.

The distribution by ISLLC Standards revealed that 3 (7.5%) of the professional development sessions offered were aligned with Standard 1; 25 (62.5%) of the professional

development standards were aligned with Standard 2; 5 (12.5%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 3; 2 (5%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 4; 3 (7.5%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 5; and 2 (5%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 6.

Of the 35 professional development sessions in Region 7, none of them specifically targeted veteran principals, nor were any of the sessions designated for new principals; all 35 (100%) sessions were designated for all principals in the school division. All 35 (100%) of the professional development sessions were delivered using the face-to-face format with none of the sessions utilizing an online or a hybrid format.

The school divisions from Region 7 represented in the study chose to use both in-house and external presenters to deliver the professional development sessions to principals. Of the 35 sessions provided 14 (36.84%) were presented using external presenters from outside of the school division, and 24 (63.16%) of the sessions were presented by in-house personnel. The data revealed that 3 (8.51%) of the sessions had an overlap in presenter type, indicating that both external and in-house presenters were used to deliver the professional development information.

The duration of professional development sessions in this region ranged from 45 to 720 minutes. Of the 35 sessions offered in region 7, 6 (17.14%) were categorized as on-going; 29 (82.86%) had a duration of 840 minutes or less and were considered “one shot” professional development. The “one shot” sessions ranged from 45 to 720 minutes with a mean of 488.32 minutes or 8.14 hours, a median of 240 minutes or 4 hours, and a mode of 120 minutes or two hours. Attendance was mandatory at 34 (97.14%) sessions, with attendance being optional at the remaining 1 (2.86%) session.

Region 8. Region 8 includes 13 school divisions in the Southside area of Virginia. Five divisions (38.46%) chose to participate in the research study, and of the 364 professional development sessions offered to principals across the Commonwealth, 32 (8.79%) took place here. Of the 32 sessions, 5 (15.63%) aligned with multiple ISLLC Standards resulting in a total of 37 codes for the 32 sessions.

The distribution by ISLLC Standards revealed that 6 (16.22%) of the professional development sessions offered were aligned with Standard 1; 25 (67.57%) of the professional development standards were aligned with Standard 2; 4 (10.81%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 3; 2 (5.41%) of the professional development sessions were aligned with Standard 4; and 0% of the professional development offerings were aligned with Standard 5 or Standard 6.

Of the 32 professional development sessions offered in Region 8, none of them specifically targeted veteran principals; 2 (6.25%) of the sessions were designated for new principals, and 30 (93.75%) were designated for all principals in the school division. None of the sessions were delivered using an online format; 2 (6.25%) of the professional development sessions were delivered using a hybrid model format, and the remaining 30 (93.75%) sessions were delivered face-to-face or in-person.

The school divisions from Region 8 represented in the study chose to use both in-house and external presenters to deliver the professional development sessions to principals. Of the 32 sessions provided, 17 (53.13%) were presented using external presenters from outside of the school division, and 15 (46.88%) of the sessions were presented by in-house personnel. No school divisions in region 8 indicated that they used a combination of both external and in-house when presenting the professional development.

The duration of professional development sessions in this region ranged from 120 to 840 minutes. Of the 32 sessions offered in Region 8, 9 (28.13%) were categorized as on-going; 23 (71.88%) had a duration of 840 minutes or less and were considered to be “one shot” professional development. The “one shot” sessions ranged from 120 to 840 minutes with a mean of 489.62 minutes or 8.16 hours, a median of 330 minutes or 5.5 hours and a mode of 120 minutes or 2 hours. Attendance was mandatory at 22 (68.75%) sessions, with attendance being optional at the remaining 10 (31.25%) Table 8 provides a summary of the distribution of professional development offerings by superintendents’ regions.

Table 8

Distribution of Professional Development Offerings by Superintendents' Regions

Superinten- dents' Regions	Number of sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards	Number of sessions overlapping with multiple ISLLC Standards	Percentage of sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards including overlap	Percentage of target audience: veteran; new or all principals	Format: In-person; Online or hybrid	Presenters: In-house; external or partnership of both	Percentage of the duration of time: On-going; "one shot"	Percentage of attendance: mandatory or optional
Region 1	Standard 1: 7	Standard 1: 0	9.21%	Veteran: 0	In-person	In-house	On-going	Mandatory
	Standard 2: 40	Standard 2: 6	60.53%	New	(92.73%)	(56.67%)	(12.73%)	(74.55%)
	Standard 3: 6	Standard 3: 6	15.79%	principals:	Online (0)	External		
	Standard 4: 0	Standard 4: 4	5.26%	(5.45%)	Hybrid	(43.33%)	"One-shot"	Optional
	Standard 5: 2	Standard 5: 2	5.26%	All	(7.27%)	Partnership of both	(87.27%)	(25.45%)
	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 3	3.95%	principals:				
				(94.55%)		(9.09%)		
Region 2	Standard 1: 15	Standard 1: 1	15.84%	Veteran:	In-person	In-house	On-going	Mandatory
	Standard 2: 53	Standard 2: 6	58.42%	(3.49%)	(91.86%)	(25.27%)	(116.28%)	(74.42%)
	Standard 3: 11	Standard 3: 2	12.87%	New	Online	External		
	Standard 4: 4	Standard 4: 2	5.94%	principals:	(1.16%)	(74.73%)	"One-shot"	Optional
	Standard 5: 2	Standard 5: 2	3.96%	(20.93%)	Hybrid	Partnership of both	(83.72%)	(25.58%)
	Standard 6: 1	Standard 6: 2	2.97%	All	(6.98%)			
				principals:		(5.81%)		
				(75.78%)				
Region 3	Standard 1: 10	Standard 1: 0	20.41%	Veteran:	In-person	In-house	On-going	Mandatory
	Standard 2: 24	Standard 2: 4	57.14%	(2.5%)	(92.5%)	(40.48%)	(40%)	(52.50%)
	Standard 3: 4	Standard 3: 1	10.20%	New	Online	External		
	Standard 4: 0	Standard 4: 1	2.04%	principals:	(5.0%)	(59.52%)	"One-shot"	Optional
	Standard 5: 2	Standard 5: 1	6.12%	(10%)	Hybrid	Partnership of both	(60%)	(47.50%)
	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 2	4.08%	All	(2.5%)			
				principals:		(5.0%)		
				(87.50%)				

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

Superinten- dents' Regions	Number of sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards	Number of sessions overlapping with multiple ISLLC Standards	Percentage of sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards including overlap	Target Audience: Veteran; new or all principals	Format: In-person; Online or hybrid	Presenters: In-house; external or partnership of both	Duration of time: On-going; "one shot"	Percentage of attendance: mandatory or optional
Region 4	Standard 1: 10	Standard 1: 0	17.86%	Veteran:	In-person	In-house	On-going	Mandatory
	Standard 2: 35	Standard 2: 5	71.43%	(24.49%)	(91.84%)	(42.31%)	(30.61%)	(44.90%)
	Standard 3: 4	Standard 3: 1	8.93%	New	Online	External		
	Standard 4: 0	Standard 4: 1	1.79%	principals:	(4.08%)	(57.69%)	"One-shot"	Optional
	Standard 5: 0	Standard 5: 0		(8.16%)	Hybrid	Partner-ship	(69.39%)	(55.10%)
	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 0	0	All	(4.08%)	of both		
			0	principals:		(6.12%)		
				(67.35%)				
Region 5	Standard 1: 9	Standard 1: 0	22.50%	Veteran:	In-person	In-house	On-going	Mandatory
	Standard 2: 19	Standard 2: 2	52.5%	(12.12%)	(100%)	(48.57%)	(18.18%)	(75.76%)
	Standard 3: 2	Standard 3: 0		New	Online (0)	External		
	Standard 4: 0	Standard 4: 2	5%	principals:	Hybrid	(51.43%)	"One-shot"	Optional
	Standard 5: 3	Standard 5: 0		(0)		Partner-ship	(78.79%)	(24.24%)
	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 3	5%	All	(0)	of both		
			7.5%	principals:		(6.06%)		
			7.5%	(87.88%)				
Region 6	Standard 1: 10	Standard 1: 0	24.39%	Veteran: (0)	In-person	In-house	On-going	Mandatory
	Standard 2: 19	Standard 2: 3	53.66%	New	(100%)	(60%)	(14.71%)	(79.41%)
	Standard 3: 4	Standard 3: 2	14.63%	principals:	Online (0)	External		
	Standard 4: 1	Standard 4: 1	4.88%	(5.88%)	Hybrid	(40%)	"One-shot"	Optional
	Standard 5: 0	Standard 5: 1	2.43%	All		Partner-ship	(85.29%)	(20.59%)
	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 0		principals:	(0)	of both		
				(94.12%)		(2.94%)		

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

Superintendents' Regions	Number of sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards	Number of sessions overlapping with multiple ISLLC Standards	Percentage of sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards including overlap	Target Audience: Veteran; new or all principals	Format: In-person; Online or hybrid	Presenters: In-house; external or partnership of both	Duration of time: On-going; "one shot"	Percentage of attendance: mandatory or optional
Region 7	Standard 1: 3 Standard 2: 24 Standard 3: 5 Standard 4: 0 Standard 5: 3 Standard 6: 0	Standard 1: 0 Standard 2: 1 Standard 3: 0 Standard 4: 2 Standard 5: 0 Standard 6: 2	7.5% 62.5% 12.5% 5% 7.5% 5%	Veteran: (0) New principals: (0) All principals: (100%)	In-person (100%) Online (0) Hybrid (34.29%)	In-house (63.16%) External (36.84%) Partnership of both (8.57%)	On-going (17.14%) "One-shot" (82.86%)	Mandatory (97.14%) Optional (2.86%)
Region 8	Standard 1: 6 Standard 2: 25 Standard 3: 1 Standard 4: 0 Standard 5: 0 Standard 6: 0	Standard 1: 0 Standard 2: 0 Standard 3: 3 Standard 4: 2 Standard 5: 0 Standard 6: 0	16.22% 67.57% 10.81% 5.41% 0 0	Veteran: (0) New principals: (6.25%) All principals: (93.75%)	In-person (93.75%) Online (0) Hybrid (6.25%)	In-house (46.88%) External (53.13%) Partnership of both (0)	On-going (28.13%) "One-shot" (71.88%)	Mandatory (68.75%) Optional (31.25%)

Professional Development Offerings by Division Size

In order to thoroughly examine the variation in professional development offerings for principals across the Commonwealth, the researcher disaggregated the data by three categories of division size. Division size categories were determined by figures as provided by the Virginia Department of Education 2012-2013 Fall Membership Report (VDOE, 2014). School divisions with student populations of 0 - 5,000 were designated as “(small)”; 5,001 - 20,000 “(medium)”; and 20,001 plus or more “(large)” school divisions. Of the 51 participating school divisions, 29 (56.86%) are classified as small; 16 (31.37%) are classified as medium size school divisions; and 6 (11.76%) are classified as large school divisions. Table 9 summarizes the analyses by ISLLC Standards; the audience for which the professional developments sessions were provided; the format used for the professional development sessions; the type of presenters; the duration of the sessions; and the required attendance for session participants. State-level figures are provided to aid in comparisons.

Table 9

Analysis of Data According to Size of School Divisions Compared to State

	Small Divisions n=29	Medium Divisions n=16	Large divisions n=6	Total divisions participating in study n=51
Number of primary professional development sessions	176	116	72	364
Primary sessions aligned with ISLLC Standards	Standard 1: 36 (20.45%)	Standard 1: 23 (19.83%)	Standard 1: 11 (15.28%)	Standard 1: 70 (19.23%)
	Standard 2: 117 (66.48%)	Standard 2: 77 (66.38%)	Standard 2: 45 (62.5%)	Standard 2: 239 (65.66%)
	Standard 3: 14 (7.95%)	Standard 3: 14 (12.07%)	Standard 3: 9 (12.5%)	Standard 3: 37 (10.16%)
	Standard 4: 0	Standard 4: 1 (0.86%)	Standard 4: 4 (5.56%)	Standard 4: 5 (1.37%)
	Standard 5: 9 (5.11%)	Standard 5: 1 (0.86%)	Standard 5: 2 (2.78%)	Standard 5: 12 (3.30%)
	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 1 (1.39%)	Standard 6: 1 (0.27%)
Audience	Veteran only: 17 (9.66%)	Veteran only: 3 (2.59%)	Veteran only: 0%	Veteran only: 20 (5.49%)
	New principal only: 9 (5.11%)	New principal only: 5 (4.31%)	New principal only: 19 (26.39%)	New principal only: 33 (9.07%)
	All principals: 150 (85.23%)	All principals: 108 (93.1%)	All principals: 53 (73.61%)	All principals: 311 (85.44%)
Format	In person: 167 (94.89%)	In person: 98 (84.48%)	In person: 66 (91.67%)	In person: 331 (90.93%)
	Online: 3 (1.70%)	Online: 1 (0.86%)	Online: 1 (1.39%)	Online: 5 (1.37%)
	Hybrid: 6 (3.41%)	Hybrid: 17 (14.66%)	Hybrid: 5 (6.94%)	Hybrid: 28 (7.69%)

(continued)

Table 9 (continued)

	Small Divisions n=29	Medium Divisions n=16	Large divisions n=6	Total divisions participating in study n=51
Presenter	External: 109 (58.6%)	External: 50 (40.65%)	External: 8 (10.52%)	External: 167 (43.49%)
	In-house: 77 (41.4%)	In-house: 73 (59.35%)	In-house: 68 (89.47%)	In-house: 217 (56.51%)
	Partnership of the two: 10 (5.68%)	Partnership of the two: 4 (5.56%)	Partnership of the two: 4 (5.56%)	Partnership of the two: 21 (5.79%)
Duration of Time	On-going: 38 (19.53%)	On-going: 28 (24.14%)	On-going: 12 (16.67%)	On-going: 78 (21.43%)
	840 minutes or less: 138 (78.41%)	840 minutes or less: 88 (75.86%)	840 minutes or less: 60 (83.33%)	840 minutes or less: 285 (78.30%)
	Time unknown/not reported: 1 (0.57%)	Time unknown/not reported: 0%	Time unknown/not reported: 0%	Time unknown/not reported: 1 (0.27%)
Time	Range of “one shot” sessions: 30 to 840 minutes	Range of “one shot” sessions: 45 to 840 minutes	Range of “one shot” sessions: 60 to 840 minutes	Range of “one shot” sessions: 30 to 840 minutes
	Mean of “one shot” sessions: 382 minutes = 6.3 hours	Mean of “one shot” sessions: 502.27 minutes = 8.4 hours	Mean of “one shot” sessions: 486.06 minutes = 8.1 hours	Mean of “one shot” sessions: 289 minutes = 4.82 hours
	Median of “one shot” sessions: 180 minutes = 3 hours	Median of “one shot” sessions: 360 minutes = 3 hours	Median of “one shot” sessions: 240 minutes = 4 hours	Median of “one shot” sessions: 180 minutes = 3 hours
	Mode of “one shot” sessions: 120 minutes = 2 hours	Mode of “one shot” sessions: 120 minutes = 2 hours	Mode of “one shot” sessions: 120 minutes = 2 hours	Mode of “one shot” sessions: 120 minutes = 2 hours
Attendance	Mandatory: 107 (60.8%)	Mandatory: 94 (81.03%)	Mandatory: 55 (76.39%)	Mandatory: 256 (70.33%)
	Optional: 69 (39.2%)	Optional: 22 (18.97%)	Optional: 17 (23.61%)	Optional: 108 (29.67%)

Analysis of Data Based on Urbanicity Classification

In order to thoroughly examine the variation in professional development offerings for principals across the Commonwealth, the researcher disaggregated the data by four categories of urbanicity used in the Rural Policy Research Institute's (2008) classifications of rural, urban, mixed rural and mixed urbanicity areas as defined by Isserman's Geographical Classifications and used by the U.S. Census (2008).

A rural community is one in which the county's population density is less than 500 people per square mile, and 90 percent of the county's population is in a rural area or the county has no urban area population of 10,000 or more. An urban county is one in which the county's population density is at least 500 people per square mile, 90 percent of the county population lives in urban areas, the county's population in urbanized areas is at least 50,000 or 90 percent of the county's population. A mixed urban county is one which meets neither the urban nor the rural county criteria, and its population density is less than 320 people per square mile. A mixed urban county is one which meets neither the urban nor the rural county criteria, and its population density is at least 320 people per square mile. (p. 37).

Of the 364 professional development sessions offered to principals across the Commonwealth of Virginia 159 (43.68%) were offered in school divisions geographically classified as rural; 97 (26.65%) in urban; 84 (23.08%) in mixed rural; and 24 (6.04%) in mixed urban (*see Figure 7*).

The analysis of data affirmed that there was no proportional relationship between the professional development sessions offered in the rural, urban, mixed rural or mixed urban geographical locations in the Commonwealth of Virginia

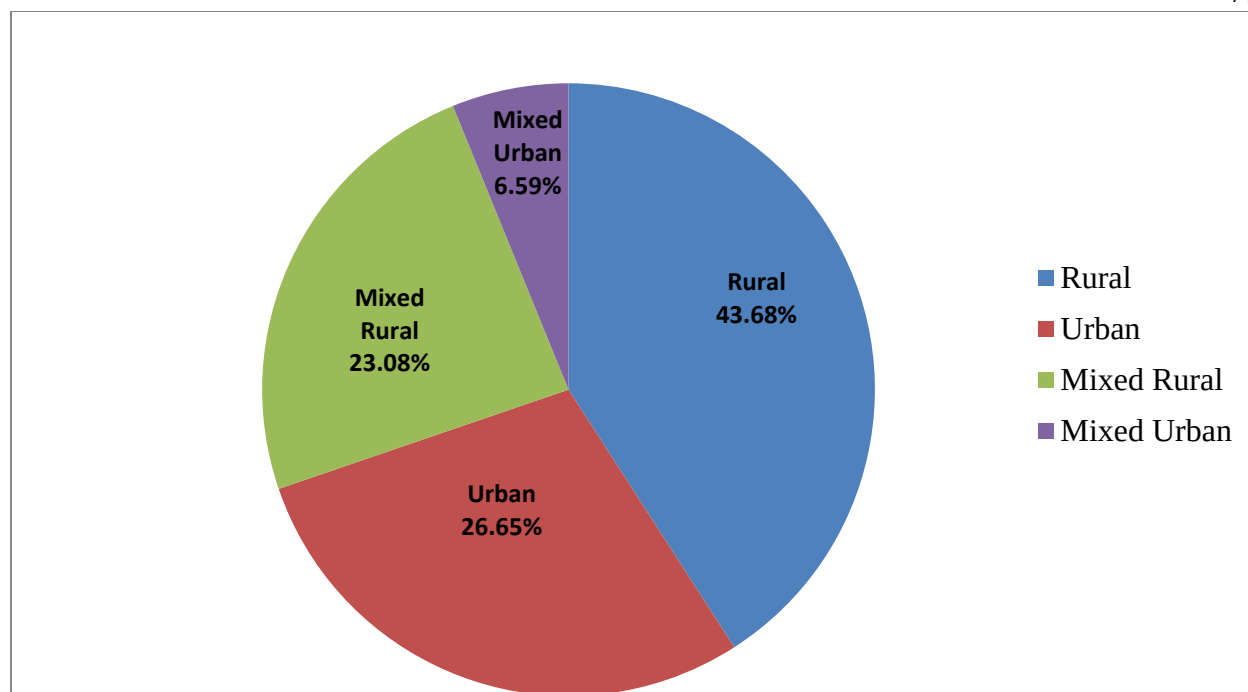


Figure 7. Professional development sessions by urbanicity classification.

Urbanicity Classification

The researcher examined the data for each of the 51 participating school divisions in accordance to their urbanicity classification; in relationship to its alignment to the ISLLC Standards; the intended audience participating in the professional development sessions; the type of format used; the type of presenter; the duration; and participant's required attendance. Table 10 provides a summary of this analysis.

Table 10

Summary of Analysis by Urbanicity Classification Compared to State

	Rural Areas	Urban Areas	Mixed Rural Areas	Mixed Urban Areas	Number of sessions State
Number of sessions offered by Urbanicity	n =159	n= 97	n = 84	n = 24	n =364
Professional Development Sessions Aligned with ISLLC Standard	Standard 1: 31(19.50%)	Standard 1: 20 (20.62%)	Standard 1: 14 (16.67%)	Standard 1: 5 (20.83%)	Standard 1: 70 (19.23%)
	Standard 2: 106 (29.12%)	Standard 2: 59 (60.82%)	Standard 2: 58 (69.05%)	Standard 2: 14 (58.33%)	Standard 2: 239 (65.66%)
	Standard 3: 15 (9.43%)	Standard 3: 11 (11.34%)	Standard 3: 9 (10.71%)	Standard 3: 4 (16.67%)	Standard 3: 37 (10.16%)
	Standard 4: 0	Standard 4: 4 (4.12%)	Standard 4: 1 (1.19%)	Standard 4: 0	Standard 4: 5 (1.37%)
	Standard 5: 7 (1.92%)	Standard 5: 2 (2.06%)	Standard 5: 2 (2.38%)	Standard 5: 1 (4.17%)	Standard 5: 12 (3.30%)
	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 1 (1.03%)	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 0	Standard 6: 1 (0.27%)
Audience	Veteran : 17 (10.69%)	Veteran: 0	Veteran: 3 (3.57%)	Veteran: 0	Veteran: 20 (5.49%)
	New principal: 10 (6.29%)	New principal: 16 (16.49%)	New principal: 5 (5.95%)	New principal: 4 (18.18%)	New principal: 33 (9.07%)
	All principals: 132 (83.02%)	All principals: 81 (83.51%)	All principals: 76 (90.48%)	All principals: 20 (83.33%)	All principals: 311 (85.44%)
Format	In person: 143 (89.31%)	In person: 86 (88.66%)	In person: 81 (96.43%)	In person: 23 (95.83%)	In person: 331 (90.93%)
	Online: 2 (1.26%)	Online: 3 (3.09%)	Online: 0	Online: 1 (4.16%)	Online: 5 (1.37%)
	Hybrid: 14 (9.43%)	Hybrid: 8 (8.24%)	Hybrid: 3 (3.57%)	Hybrid: 0	Hybrid: 28 (7.69%)

(continued)

Table 10 (continued)

	Rural Areas	Urban Areas	Mixed Rural Areas	Mixed Urban Areas	Number of sessions State
Presenter	External: 85 (51.83%)	External: 28 (26.17%)	External: 43 (48.31%)	External: 11 (47.83%)	External: 167 (43.59%)
	In-house: 79 (8.17%)	In-house: 79 (73.83%)	In-house: 46 (51.69%)	In-house: 12 (52.17%)	In-house: 218 (56.51%)
	Partnership of the two: 5 (3.14%)	Partnership of the two: 10 (10.99%)	Partnership of the two: 5 (5.95%)	Partnership of the two: 1 (4.55%)	Partnership of the two: 21 (5.79%)
Duration of Time	On-going: 34 (21.38%)	On-going: 15 (15.46%)	On-going: 19 (22.62%)	On-going: 8 (36.36%)	On-going: 78 (21.43%)
	840 minutes or less: 123 (77.36%)	840 minutes or less: 82 (84.54%)	840 minutes or less: 65 (77.38%)	840 minutes or less: 14 (63.64%)	840 minutes or less: 285 (78.30%)
	Time unknown/not reported: 1 (0.63%)	Time unknown/not reported: 0	Time unknown/not reported: 0	Time unknown/not reported: 0	Time unknown/not reported: 1 (0.27%)
	Range of “one shot” sessions: 300 to 840 minutes	Range of “one shot” sessions: 60 to 840 minutes	Range of “one shot” sessions: 60 to 840 minutes	Range of “one shot” sessions: 120 to 840 minutes	Range of “one shot” sessions: 30 to 840 minutes
	Mean of “one shot” sessions: 387 minutes = 6.46 hours	Mean of “one shot” sessions: 483.7 minutes = 8 hours	Mean of “one shot” sessions: 498.05 minutes = 8.3 hours	Mean of “one shot” sessions: 515.4 minutes = 8.6 hours	Mean of “one shot” sessions: 289 minutes = 4.82 hours
	Median of “one shot” sessions: 180 minutes = 3 hours	Median of “one shot” sessions: 240 minutes = 4 hours	Median of “one shot” sessions: 360 minutes = 6 hours	Median of “one shot” sessions: 360 minutes = 6 hours	Median of “one shot” sessions: 180 minutes = 3 hours
	Mode of “one shot” sessions: 120 minutes = 2 hours	Mode of “one shot” sessions: 120 minutes = 2 hours	Mode of “one shot” sessions: 120 minutes = 2 hours	Mode of “one shot” sessions: 840 minutes = 14 hours	Mode of “one shot” sessions: 120 minutes = 2 hours
Attendance	Mandatory: 107 (67.30%)	Mandatory: 75 (77.32%)	Mandatory: 57 (67.86%)	Mandatory: 15 (68.18%)	Mandatory: 256 (70.33%)
	Optional: 53 (32.70%)	Optional: 22 (22.68%)	Optional: 27 (32.14%)	Optional: 7 (31.82%)	Optional: 108 (29.67%)

Summary of Chapter Four

The analysis of the data revealed that of the 132 school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia 70 (53.03%) responded to the request for participation in the study and of that 70, 51 (72.86%) completed the survey instrument. The results have been reported in this chapter.

Data analysis revealed that all 364 of the professional development sessions offered to principals across the Commonwealth of Virginia were aligned with one or more of the ISLLC Standards. With regards to the characteristics of these sessions, a majority of them were delivered using the traditional face-to-face format, with a small percentage using online or hybrid formats. The study revealed that the majority of the professional development sessions were considered “one shot” offerings with very few ongoing sessions, and overall required mandatory attendance. The data revealed that there was almost an even divide in the type of presenters used to provide professional development sessions for principals-either in-house or external guest presenters. Very few sessions were provided using a combination of both in-house and external presenters and an overwhelming majority of the professional development sessions were offered to all principals with little to no differentiation of offerings for new or veteran principals.

The data were further disaggregated and analyzed according to superintendents’ regions, division size, and urbanicity designation. A detailed summary of the findings, implications for practitioners and recommendations will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

Summary and Conclusions

Second only to classroom instruction, the principal is the most powerful factor in determining school climate and improving student achievement (Leithwood, Anderson, Mascall, Strauss, & Moore, 2010). A review of the literature supports the notion that in order to effectively bridge the gap between instructional leadership and student achievement, principals are in need of on-going and relevant professional development training. The results of the data dispels this notion.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the types and formats of professional development provided to principals in Virginia public school divisions and to examine to what extent the professional development offerings are aligned with the ISLLC Standards. The findings of this study, the related interpretations, and the connection with the literature base are presented below.

Findings

This research study produced several findings that were supported by the literature and data collected.

1. Professional development offerings for principals across the Commonwealth of Virginia are aligned with national standards.

The research study revealed that 364 (100%) of the professional development sessions reported by school divisions participating in the study were aligned with one or more of the national ISLLC Standards and approximately 69 (15.94%) were aligned with two or more ISLLC Standards. With that said, not all standards were equally addressed.

Across the Commonwealth of Virginia, regardless of a division's region, urbanicity or division size, a vast majority of professional development offerings (including overlapping sessions in one or more standards) indicated that 262(60.51%) of the sessions focused on Standard 2 of the ISLLC Standards, addressing instructional leadership and improved student learning. Standard 1 focuses on attention on the educational leader promoting student success(71 or 16.40%) and Standard 3 emphasizes the educational leader's ability to manage the organization and provide resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment (ISLLC, 2008). The data revealed that little to no professional development training was provided to address Standards 4 through 6. Of the sessions provided for Standard 4, that focuses on collaborating to promote the success with faculty and community members, 19 (4.39%) of the

professional development sessions targeted this standard. Standard 5 focuses attention on the educational leader acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner while promoting the success of every student. According to the study results only 18 (4.16%) of the sessions targeted this standard, and 13 (3%) of the professional development sessions offered focused on Standard 6 that addresses the educational leader's ability to respond to and influence the political, social, legal and cultural context while promoting the success of every student.

Although the ISLLC Standards are broad in nature, they represent high-priority themes that educational leaders must address in order to promote the success of all students. According to Mendels (2012), the ISLLC Standards for principals are the foundation on which everything else should rest. These standards provide clarity of what leaders should know and what they must do to improve teaching and learning. The Commonwealth of Virginia is one among many states in the nation that have shifted its focus by creating a common language when discussing the expectations for building leaders based on the ISLLC Standards.

2. School divisions in the Commonwealth provided professional development opportunities for principals with a heavy emphasis on instruction as well as shared vision and school culture.

The data confirmed that division level leadership in Virginia's public school divisions is keenly aware that the primary role of the principal is that of an instructional leader. More than half (60.51%) of the professional development sessions offered primarily focused on building strong leadership and instructional programs that are conducive to student learning and staff growth, aligning with ISLLC Standard 2. The data also indicated that 71 (16.40%) of the participating school divisions had a keen interest in ensuring that principals receive information relevant to facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning shared by all stakeholders, aligned with ISLLC Standard 1. The results of the study revealed that 100% of the participating school divisions provided professional development sessions that were relevant to improving instructional leadership. The data consistently revealed this trend across all superintendents' regions, urbanicity categories and the division size categories.

It appears that the school divisions' focus is on creating and maintaining school leaders who create cultures for success through participation in active-learning experiences (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). The literature supports the idea that principals need to learn how to identify good teaching by learning and understanding curriculum and instruction (SREB, 2010).

Research affirms school leaders are second only to classroom teachers when it comes to factors that influence student outcomes leadership (CCSSO, 2008; Leithwood, 2004). In this era of school divisions' and state accountability, principals are required to be the primary instructional leader who drives and leads the instructional program (Pope 2010). Continued emphasis must be placed on requiring principals to focus on curriculum and instruction first in order to ensure that they know how to provide instructional leadership that can guide teaching and learning in schools (SREB, 2007).

3. There is a low level of differentiation of professional development offerings for principals based on interest or individualized need.

The data revealed that the professional development sessions provided for principals were primarily determined by central office administration, allowing principals little to no say as to whether they should or should not attend the sessions. Across the Commonwealth, more than 70% of the professional development sessions were designated as mandatory for all principals to attend with only 29% being optional. In the Northern Neck region approximately 48% and in the Northern Virginia region approximately 55% of the principals were allowed optional participation based on their level of interest. In the remaining superintendents' region almost all of the professional development sessions required mandatory attendance regardless of the topic presented.

Federal legislation has heightened the awareness of the need for states, school divisions to demonstrate their ability to improve student learning (Oleszewski, Shoho & Barnett, 2012). The heightened accountability movement has place significant pressure on all educators at all levels to improve student learning. Although the research supports the idea of the need for professional development opportunities to be collaborative in nature, in light of the federal and state mandates school leaders may feel compelled to maintain control over the professional development offerings in an effort to monitor participation and required attendance.

4. The professional development training sessions in the Commonwealth mostly consisted of “one shot” sessions with few on-going learning opportunities.

The study revealed that majority of the professional development sessions offered 285 (78.30%) were considered “one-shot” opportunities where training was provided to principals for a period of two days or less. The results of the study indicated that across the Commonwealth there was a high frequency of shorter professional development sessions for principals with a low degree of differentiation by interest. The results affirmed that there was little to no continuation or follow- up provided for the professional development sessions offered.

The focus of the principalship has shifted from simply being a school administrator to becoming a school leader that creates a culture for continuous student learning and one who should model lifelong learning. In order to meet the growing challenges, changes and demands of the profession principals are in need of high quality, relevant, job-embedded and on-going professional development (Hess and Kelly, 2006).

Lutz (2008) indicated that if the expectations remain for principals to be the instructional leaders with a collective goal of improving student achievement, no longer can school divisions afford to provide “one shot” opportunities for building leaders and expect substantial academic and professional growth. Principals need opportunities that will allow for continuous updates and to be able to review and reflect on their own performance. According to Louis, et.al (2012) principals are in need of time to collaborate and learn from one another. Regardless of the venue and the method of presentation researchers believe that in effort to strengthen instructional leadership, time should be allotted for principals to talk with colleagues about the daily occurrences of the job (Lutz, 2008). Hirsh (2009) maintained that solid professional development must foster a collective responsibility for improved student achievement and informs on-going improvements in teaching and student learning.

5. The majority of the professional development sessions offered to principals were provided by either external or in-house presenters with few examples of internal and external partnerships.

The result of the study revealed that school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia were fairly even in terms of how they delivered professional development sessions to principals using relatively even numbers of in-house and external presenters. At the state level there was minimal use of partnerships between school divisions and university partnerships, businesses, other outside agencies. The analysis of the data by regions indicated that medium and large size school divisions with the appropriate infrastructure exercise the choice of using more in-house presenters to deliver the professional development in a face-to-face setting. The data affirmed that of the smaller size school divisions 109 (58.6%) used external presenters most often to provide professional development for building-level leaders. Perhaps this could be due in part to the organizational structure wherein central office resources are minimal in smaller size divisions.

The National Staff Development Council affirms that good professional development is conducted among educators at the school level and facilitated by well-prepared school principals or other key leaders (Hirsh, 2009). In a study conducted by Guskey and Yoon (2009), they

contend that instructional improvements are centered around ideas obtained primarily through outside experts. However, there is some research that supports the argument that professional development workshops that are presented by external facilitators from the outside of academia are largely useless and an unnecessary expense (Keathley, 2012) due to the inability to sustain efforts once the presenters leave.

6. School divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia provided professional development training sessions to principals relying heavily on face-to-face interaction and minimally utilized technology to transform the format of professional development training opportunities.

The results of the study revealed that 331 (90.93%) of the professional development sessions were presented using the face-to face format when delivering professional development sessions. The results consistently points out that irrespective of the geographical location, the superintendents' region, or the size of the school divisions the utilization of the face- to-face format was the method of choice. The study results indicated that less than 10% (7.69%) of the participating school divisions across the Commonwealth used a hybrid format and less than two percent of the school divisions chose to use the online format when delivering professional development training opportunities. The data revealed that two of the superintendents' regions, representing 21.57% of the responding school divisions, used all face-to face presenters with no online or hybrid models. The findings revealed that even in well-connected technology regions of the state, with a strong technology infrastructure, school divisions chose to forgo the opportunity to incorporate moderate to heavy use of technology when providing professional development training sessions.

According to research, there is a need for greater initiatives to be taken to prepare administrators for 21st century learning. No longer can school leaders be naïve about technology and still be considered a good school leader. Mehlinger and Powers (2002) maintains that in order for school leaders to lead and sustain a culture that meets the needs of digital learners and to assist with improving student achievement, principals must become comfortable collaborating as co-learners with colleagues in their learning. When providing professional offering for principals, central office administrators must encourage presenters to model the behavior that is expected of school leaders by increasing the use of technology to deliver professional development training. The literature supports the notion that principals require specific professional development training to provide successful leadership on an on-going basis and technology could be one avenue to provide this on-going support in the context of time

constraints. They also desire training opportunities that will provide for long-term learning as opposed to the format of “sit and get” (Lutz, 2008, p.88). Today, school divisions that fail to utilize technology as a tool to provide professional development training opportunities engage in a missed opportunity to strengthen and improve principals’ leadership skills and abilities.

7. Not all school divisions maintain records of professional development offerings for principals.

Five of the 70 (7.14%) division representatives participating in the study did not complete the survey instrument to provide data on professional development sessions; however, four of the five (80%) did provide comments regarding their inability to locate information relevant to the professional development offerings in their school divisions.

One school division representative responded by stating, “Because we are a small school division, we only have the opportunity to use a highly individualized and needs-based approach to professional development. Regrettably we do not have access to the information that you are requesting.” Another school division representative replied, “We had a change in leadership this past summer. The only record of professional development offerings that I can find was of the opportunities provided for teachers. Nothing for administrators has been documented.” A third school division representative responded by sharing, “We did not keep this [sic] data last year, however we are planning to record this information beginning in the 2013-2014 school year.” A fourth school division representative indicated that they only maintained records of schools that were identified as focused schools by the Virginia Department of Education, and therefore, “no specific professional development was offered for the other principals.” Finally a fifth school division responded by sharing “because we are small and in a rural area we do not have the capability of doing a lot of professional development. We only do what is required by the state.”

Two (40%) of the five school divisions that reported not having data are located in superintendent’s region 4; two (40%) of the five school divisions are located in region 6; and one (20%) of the five school divisions is located in region 3. The sizes of the school divisions represented in this group of five consisted of three small size school divisions (60%) and two medium in size school divisions (40%). With regards to urbanicity, of the five 2 (40%) were designated as urban, two (40%) were located categorized as rural, and one (20%) of the five school divisions was located in a mixed rural location of Virginia.

The location and size of these school divisions could have impact on the divisions’ ability to employ an adequate amount of staff that could assume the responsibility of maintaining records or overseeing professional development offerings for principals. However, divisions

located in the same superintendent's region have the opportunity to transform the culture of learning for principals. Through the use of technology, increased learning opportunities for professional development could aid school divisions in building capacity through a collaborative culture with direct focus on student outcomes- not just in one school division, but within regions and across the Commonwealth. This system could also allow for records of professional development offerings to be better maintained and housed regionally.

Implications for Practitioners

1. Schools and school divisions should provide on-going, job-embedded and relevant professional development opportunities for principals.

Today more than ever before building administrators must remain current with developments in pedagogy, instructional strategies and assessments. In light of federal, state, and local accountability mandates and expectations there is a sense of urgency for principals to engage in on-going, relevant and job-embedded professional development training for learning in order to effectively lead their schools to excellence.

The results of this research study have many implications for educational leaders both at the state and local division levels. Throughout the literature researchers have affirm the need for school divisions to provide on-going, job embedded and relevant professional development training opportunities for principals (Grande, 2012, Hirsh, 2009, Lindstrom & Speck, 2004, Lutz, 2008). School divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia should be recognized for their efforts in placing a great deal of emphasis on the need to strengthen principals' instructional focus through participation in targeted training sessions designed to improved student learning.

The literature supports the concept that school leaders need and desire professional development training on meaningful topics that will engage them in job-embedded teaching and learning. However, the result of this study maintains that school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia are missing the mark when it comes to providing such professional development opportunities for instructional leaders. As reflected in the data, there is a resounding call for division leaders to discontinue the practice of solely providing "one shot" professional development training opportunities and further engage building leaders in on-going and job-embedded learning practices that support opportunities for long-term learning as opposed to the format of "sit and get"(Lutz, 2008). Principals tend to embrace professional development offerings that of interest and relevant. There is a need for increased differentiation of professional development offerings for principals that are relevant and based on the level of interest and the specific needs of their school. In addition, instructional leaders need time to

practice what they have learned, engage in collaborative dialogue with their peers, and receive division-level coaching and support through an on-going monitoring program.

In some school divisions and superintendents' regions across the Commonwealth a great deal of "one shot" professional development opportunities were offered, with little to no follow-up. Division leaders should be reminded that the mere presence and participation in professional development sessions does not ensure that learning, insight and changes in instructional practices will occur that support the overall goal of improving student achievement (Grande, 2012). Providing professional development sessions that are on-going, job-embedded and relevant must also be effectively monitored to ensure the expected outcomes.

2. School division leaders should invest their resources in providing continuous and job embedded professional development opportunities for principals

There is value in helping principals to develop their leadership skills and behaviors therefore school divisions must invest in instructional leadership development training for school principals. However, strengthening the school division's budget to allow for increased opportunities for professional development learning does have financial implications for superintendents. Progressing from the "one shot" professional development sessions to job-embedded and relevant coaching could come at a price for many school divisions.

The results of this study revealed that more than 90% of the participating school divisions are not taking full advantage of the technology tools that could be used to enhance, strengthen and or deliver professional development learning opportunities for principals. In this age of the digital learner, school divisions could increase the use technology as a means to electronically link administrators together (school to school or division to division) to build capacity and allow for remote access to educational opportunities for collaboration and follow-up to professional development offerings. According to Fullan (2006) this could establish lateral capacity building in which schools and school divisions could learn from one another.

The results of this study also revealed that some school divisions in the Commonwealth are limiting their principals' access to professional development training sessions by not taking full advantage of the opportunities for online learning or the incorporation of a hybrid model for professional development growth. Many school divisions have access to technology in their localities that could be better used to reinforce and/or allow for increased implementation of the much needed on-going, job-embedded professional development training and coaching. Also through the use of technology school divisions could increase opportunities for learning by

creating a collaborative culture within the superintendent's region that could build capacity with an explicit focus on division and regional student outcomes.

3. Schools and school divisions should provide greater opportunities for training through the use of in-house presenters and community partnerships

The data indicated that nearly all of the professional development sessions for principals in the Commonwealth were provided by in-house and external presenters as opposed to blending division and community resources. Of the 364 sessions offered 167 (43.49%) were presented by external presenters outside of the school divisions, 218 (56.51%) were presented by in-house professional development trainers while 21 (5.79%) were presented using a partnership with other business or community partners. Research asserts that practitioners tend to respond more favorably to external presenters who provide professional development training opportunities that are perceived as trustworthy, verifiable and replicable (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). The challenge with this format is the lack of time that instructional leaders have to engage in training provided by external presenters and the cost associated with bringing in external presenters to school divisions, often with no budget or structural allowance to sustain or to allow for follow-up sessions.

School divisions should explore the economic feasibility of using well-prepared key school leaders within the division with sparing use of outside presenter. Follow-up training could be done electronically with monitoring to ensure progress. School divisions could partner together to leverage their strengths and resources to deliver professional development sessions, foster permeable connectivity and lateral capacity building (Fullan, 2006), increase offerings and create structures for collaborative learning through-out the school year.

The data from this study revealed that a few school divisions (5.49%) are taking advantage of the opportunity to partner with colleges, universities or other business partners when presenting professional development for principals. School divisions should investigate the feasibility of partnering with community businesses and or local colleges and universities more often to assist in providing professional development training, and to obtain access to the latest technology while using the community partner's facility as a hub for instructional leaders to gather to receive training and follow-up sessions.

4. Schools and school divisions should provide professional development training that is relevant and of interest to the instructional leader.

Principals have acknowledged that they sometimes feel ill-prepared for their job as the instructional leader. The theoretical information learned in principal preparation programs did

not adequately prepare them for position for which they were hired. Leaders at the state level have acknowledged the importance of the principals' role as they have adopted the national ISLLC Standards and developed leadership policies that encourages and promote student success.

The results of this research study affirmed that school divisions across the Commonwealth are providing professional development opportunities for principals with an instructional focus and that many of the current professional development offerings are provided due to state and federal mandates, and require mandatory attendance. However, according to the research study there is low differentiation of offerings relevant to principals' interest.

Just as individualized instruction is needed and provided for students and instructional staff members based on their specific needs, the same should hold true for building leaders. Principals want to be successful in their position as the instructional leader. Efforts should be directed towards allowing principals to create a culture of learning by exercising their voice in the type of professional development training needed to make them more effective in the workplace. In addition to the required division level professional development trainings, division leadership should explore the feasibility of providing principals with the autonomy to assess their schools' instructional needs and allow division leaders to provide professional development training that is relevant, on-going and that would allow for collaboration with other schools with the same instructional needs and or with liked or similar interests. This training should include a required monitoring component from the central administration representatives to aid in assessing its effectiveness.

Researchers like Lindstrom and Speck (2004) affirm that the principal is the key leader influencing the quality of teaching and learning. If principals are involved in identifying their own instructional needs and participating in training viewed as relevant and of value, perhaps this process can transcend to the school level and ultimately teachers too may be a part of this culture of collaborative leadership and feel a sense of ownership in planning meaningful staff development training for their school that improve student achievement.

5. Schools and school divisions should explore the capacity to change or increase the delivery methods that could enhance opportunities for collaboration among other schools and school divisions across the Commonwealth

Schools and school divisions across the Commonwealth who participated in the study are providing professional development opportunities for principals; however, the data revealed that some school divisions are providing significantly more or less than others. The research supports

the notion that principals have the desire to learn the necessary skills in order to be an instructional leader of learning (Grande, 2012). Providing increased opportunities for school divisions to collaborate more often could foster professional learning communities from school to school and school division to school division that encourage principals to interact across schools in a manner that could establish a professional network (Fullan, 2006). Incorporating this change could shift the focus from the principal's primary concern for their own school's success to a collective concern for all schools within the professional learning community. This delivery method could promote mutual interaction and influence, within the collaborative culture, across multiple school divisions, in particular among smaller rural school divisions, and ultimately aid in improving student achievement across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Recommendations for Further Research

School leaders have the task of ensuring that excellent teaching and learning is prevalent in all school facilities. However improving student achievement is not just the principals' job, but a shared responsibility among all school leaders. There must be a clear instructional focus on teaching and learning of curriculum and instruction by all who are associated with improving student achievement. In this era of educational change further studies are needed to ensure maximum changes are occurring to invite quality instruction in the classroom. The following are recommendations for further research:

1. Examine the professional development offerings for assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and their effect on preparing them for the principalship.
2. Examine the professional development offerings for superintendents and central office personnel and their effect on preparing them for administrative leadership positions.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the current use of technology and its relevancy to enhancing professional development training opportunities for school leaders in the Commonwealth.
4. Explore the instructional impact of offering "one shot" professional development training versus on-going, relevant and job-embedded professional development training and consider the effect of professional development duration on improved student achievement.
5. Examine the relationship among the relevance, quality, duration, format and differentiation of professional development for principals and variables such as accreditation status and student achievement.

6. Explore the relationship between the level of Title II funding and the relevance, quality, duration, format and differentiation of principal professional development within a school division.
7. Examine the impact of using internal professional development presenters versus external professional development presenters as it relates to successful instructional leadership, sustainability and improved student achievement.
8. Explore the cost of providing on-going, job-embedded and relevant professional development training for principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
9. Examine the roles, resources available to, and return-on-investment benefits of employing professional development directors in the Commonwealth related to principal training aligned with the ISLLC Standards.

Reflection

I initially set out on my investigative journey to examine to what extent professional development training sessions were aligned with the ISLLC Standards. After meeting with my dissertation committee and conducting an extensive review of the literature, my interest in the topic of professional development broadened greatly. As a result of conducting the research and delving into the data I realized that there was so much more that needed exploring. I must admit that as a life-long educator, who was employed before the implementation of the ISLLC Standards, my knowledge base has strengthened tremendously regarding the inception of the standards and how they can and should be used as a road map for what educational leaders should know, do and be like to improve student achievement.

With the information learned about professional development training programs, I have been able to share with my superintendent and director of professional development for our school division, not only the value of offering professional development programs that are sound and of substance, but also the benefits of involving principals in the process. As a member of the superintendent's curriculum and instruction staff, I was also able to share the benefits of not just providing professional development opportunities but monitoring their effectiveness.

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Appendix A
IRB Certificate



Appendix B
Letter from IRB

Good Morning,

Thank you for your IRB protocol.

Following review of your Research Protocol, the IRB has determined that VT IRB approval is not necessary since the information you are collecting is not about people. Instead it's about the school division and its offerings.

You may move forward without approval. We ask that you please cancel your IRB protocol after you receive this e-mail.

Have a good day!

Carmen T Papenfuss
Associate Director and IRB Administrator
ctgreen@vt.edu
[\(540\) 231-4358](tel:(540)231-4358)
Office of Research Compliance
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
<http://www.irb.vt.edu>

Appendix C
Request for Participation in Study

October, 2013

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Debbie Hunley-Stukes and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute University. My doctoral dissertation is entitled, "A survey of professional development offerings for principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia".

The purpose of this correspondence is to respectfully request permission for me to include your school division in my study. As a component of my data collection, I am requesting the completion of the table attached (see attached) on the content and context of **professional development offerings for school principals in your division from last school year (2012-2013)** from each of the 132 public school divisions. Please be assured that your responses will be kept strictly confidential. All data will be reported in aggregate at the state-level, and neither the name of division nor the name of the division-level contact will be released.

With your permission, I would like to contact the individual assigned to overseeing the professional development program for your school division and ask that they share professional development offerings for last school year. ***All completed surveys returned within two weeks after initial receipt, the division's name, for the person completing the survey, will be entered into a drawing for a \$50.00 VISA gift card.*** At the completion of my study, (should you desire) I will be happy to share the results of my findings.

Thank you in advance for your support and assistance with completing my dissertation study. If I do not hear from you within two weeks of receiving this correspondence, I will assume that you are comfortable with your school division being a part of this important study. Should you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With Gratitude,

Debbie Hunley-Stukes

Mailing address:

4020 Cedar Grove Crescent
Chesapeake, Va. 23321

Phone: 757-620-1124

Email: Deb60vt.edu or stukes34us@aol.com

Fax: 757-547-1346

Appendix D
Follow-up Letter to Superintendents

Dear,

My name is Debbie Hunley-Stukes and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute State University. My doctoral dissertation is entitled "A Survey of Professional Development Offerings for Principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia."

In preparation for the data collection portion of my study, I sent a request to you on October 15, 2013, asking permission to contact the person in your school division who is responsible for overseeing staff / professional development offerings for principals in your school division (see attached). As a part of my data collection process, I would simply compare the list of professional development offerings you provided to your principals during the 2012-2013 school year with the ISLCC standards to check for alignment. The results of my study could provide school divisions with a master list of professional development offering provided across the Commonwealth that are aligned with national standards, which according to the research, could ultimately assist with improving student achievement. As mentioned in my letter, I will be more than willing to share the findings of my study with your school division.

Please know that I understand how busy you and your staff are this time of the school year. If you prefer not to complete the survey and return it, if you could provide the name of your contact person, I would be more than happy to contact the individual via phone and record the list of professional development offerings provided to your principals during the 2012-2013 school year.

Thank you again for considering my request. Should you have questions, please contact me via email or by phone at 757-620-1124 or 757-546-3121.

Forever Grateful,

Debbie Hunley-Stukes
Doctoral Student VT

Appendix E

Thank You Letter to Superintendents

Dear ,

Thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to assist me in completing the survey for my dissertation study. As previously mentioned I will be more than willing to share the findings of my study if you are interested. Again, please know how much I appreciate your assistance. Have a great day.

Sincerely,

Debbie Hunley-Stukes

Virginia Tech

Doctoral Student

Appendix F

Reminder Letter for the Superintendent's Designee

November 11, 2013

Dear Professional Development Designee:

My name is Debbie Hunley-Stukes and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. My doctoral dissertation is entitled "*A Survey of Professional Development Offerings for Principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia.*"

As a component of my data collection, I am gathering information regarding the content and context of principal professional development offerings for school divisions across Virginia ***from the 2012-2013 school year***. Your superintendent has identified you as the professional development contact for your division. I would greatly appreciate it if you would **complete the enclosed table on last year's professional development offerings for school principals in your division**. Please provide the full title/topic of each professional development session, along with a brief description of the information offered to principals in your division last school year, and then check all descriptors that apply in the categories of audience, delivery format, presenter(s), duration, and attendance requirements.

Please be assured that the responses will be kept confidential; therefore, the name of your school division will not be released nor identified in the study. By completing the survey, consent for participation in the study will be implied. Please return the completed survey via email, fax, or mail on or before November 19, 2013.

With gratitude,

Debbie Hunley-Stukes
Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Appendix G

A Survey of Professional Development Offerings for Principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Instructions: Please provide the full title/topic of each professional development session offered, along with a brief description of the information covered, for **all professional development offerings for school principals (only) in your division** from **last school year (2012-2013)**. Then **check all descriptors that apply** in the categories pertaining to the audience, delivery format, presenter, duration, and attendance requirements. **Reminder: If you return this survey by November 8, 2013, you will be entered in a drawing for a \$50.00 VISA® gift card.**

School Division's Name											
Professional Development Topic for Principals (include a brief description of the training offered)	Audience			Delivery format			Presenter		Duration	Attendance Requirement	
	Veteran principals only	New principals only	All principals	In person	Online	Hybrid (in person/online combination)	External presenter	In-house presenter	Training length (specify number of hours, days, months or on-going nature)	Mandatory	Optional

Please return to Email: Debor60@vt.edu **or** Stukes34us@aol.com, by October 30, 2013
Mailing address: 4020 Cedar Grove Crescent, Chesapeake, Va. 23321 Phone: 757-620-1124

Appendix H

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC at a Glance: 2008

Appendix 2: ISLLC 2008 at a Glance

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008

An education leader promotes the success of every student by...

STANDARDS

FUNCTIONS

1 Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders	A. Collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission	B. Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning	C. Create and implement plans to achieve goals	D. Promote continuous and sustainable improvement	E. Monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans	
	A. Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations	B. Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program	C. Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students	D. Supervise instruction	E. Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress	F. Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff
2 Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth						G. Maximize time spent on quality instruction
						H. Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning
3 Ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment	A. Monitor and evaluate the management and operational systems	B. Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources	C. Promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff	D. Develop the capacity for distributed leadership	E. Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning	
4 Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources	A. Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment	B. Promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources	C. Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers	D. Build and sustain productive relationships with community partners		
5 Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner	A. Ensure a system of accountability for every student's academic and social success	B. Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior	C. Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity	D. Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making	E. Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling	
6 Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context	A. Advocate for children, families, and caregivers	B. Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning	C. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies			
7 Monitoring and evaluating the impact of the instructional program						

Appendix I
Professional Development Offerings and ISLCC Standards Alignment Matrix
Alignment Matrix

Educational Leadership (ISLCC) Standards	Key Functions of Specific Standard	Professional Development offerings	Format (Online, Hybrid, in person)	Audience (VP, P, All)	Region of Virginia
Standard 1. Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.	a) Collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission. b) Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning. c) Create and implement plans to achieve goals. d) Promote continuous and sustainable improvement. e) Monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans.				

(continued)

Educational Leadership (ISLCC) Standards	Key Functions of Specific Standard	Professional Development offerings	Format (Online, Hybrid, in person)	Audience (VP, P, All)	Region of Virginia
Standard 2. Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.	a) Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations. b) Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program. c) Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students. d) Supervise instruction. e) Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress. f) Develop the instructional leadership and capacity for staff. g) Maximize time spent on quality instruction.				

(continued)

Educational Leadership (ISLCC) Standards	Key Functions of Specific Standard	Professional Development offerings	Format (Online, Hybrid, in person)	Audience (VP, P, All)	Region of Virginia
Standard 2. (continued)	h) Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning. i) Monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program.				
Standard 3. Ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.	a) Monitors and evaluate the management and operational systems. b) Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources. c) Develop the capacity for distributive leadership. d) Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning.				

(continued)

Educational Leadership (ISLCC) Standards	Key Functions of Specific Standard	Professional Development offerings	Format (Online, Hybrid, in person)	Audience (VP, P, All)	Region of Virginia
Standard 4. Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.	a) Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment. b) Promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse culture, social, and intellectual resources. c) Build and sustain positive relationships with family and caregivers. d) Build and sustain productive relationships and community partners.				

(continued)

Educational Leadership (ISLCC) Standards	Key Functions of Specific Standard	Professional Development offerings	Format (Online, Hybrid, in person)	Audience (VP, P, All)	Region of Virginia
Standard 5. Acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.	a) Ensure a system of accountability for every student's academic and social success. b) Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior. c) Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making. d) Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling.				

(continued)

Educational Leadership (ISLCC) Standards	Key Functions of Specific Standard	Professional Development offerings	Format (Online, Hybrid, in person)	Audience (VP, P, All)	Region of Virginia
Standard 6. Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal and cultural context	a) Advocate for children, families, and caregivers. b) Act to influence local, district, state and national decisions affecting student learning. c) Access, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies.				

