

A CASE STUDY OF:
A PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM
IN ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

By

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(ABSTRACT)

The primary role of the principal has expanded over the past two decades from one of manager to one of manager and instructional leader. With the expanded role of instructional leader, the principal of the twenty-first century is faced with increased levels of accountability for student achievement as evidenced by national legislation, revised state standards, and an ever-increasing scrutiny by shareholders. Six years ago research indicated that approximately one fourth of practicing principals were eligible for retirement in the next three to four years (Lauder, 2000). School districts across the country are finding it more and more difficult to attract qualified candidates with the requisite instructional leadership skills for available principal positions and have chosen to address this crisis by creating principal preparation programs aligned with current needs and based on key practices.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine whether school personnel who participate in AAA Public School's leadership training program are better prepared for the principalship than those school personnel who did not participate in this leadership training program. Data collection included (a) focus group interview comprised of a random sample of assistant principals and principals who had participated in the leadership training program (N = 6), (b) focus group interview comprised of a random sample of assistant principals and principals who had not participated in the leadership training program (N = 6), (c) focus

group interview with the population of assistant superintendents who evaluate principals (N = 4), (d) leadership academy training documents, and (e) observations. Study results found that administrators who participated in this leadership training program were better prepared, more confident in their leadership, and were more knowledgeable in the roles and responsibilities which principals face.

Dedication

I dedicate this paper to my wife and family. There is an old adage that states “Behind every great man is a great woman” and my wife Debbie is a living testament to the truth of this statement. From the first time I met Debbie and throughout our life together, she has continued to support and guide me as I progressed in my career. Her willingness to provide me the time to pursue my masters and doctoral degree by giving up her personal time to watch over our two boys could not have been easy yet she never, ever complained. During the times when I was most stressed out and feeling overwhelmed, she knew just what to say to get me refocused or what to do to help me realize that I have what it takes to complete the dissertation. I am who am I today because of Debbie’s support and guidance.

I also would like to dedicate this paper to my two boys, Kyle and Sean, as well as to my parents, Don and Karen Robertson. To my boys, I say that hard work pays off and that there is no substitute for education. They have been without me on many weekends, assumed responsibilities at home, and learned the value of quality time. Despite my absence, Kyle and Sean have continued to perform well in school, on the athletic field, and at home during the past four years. I look forward to spending more time with my two boys as they progress through school. To my parents, I say your support and encouragement throughout my entire life led me to believe that I could accomplish anything and that boundaries were only temporary. My father was particularly instrumental in my life as he taught me the value of hard work, character, and integrity. My mother’s guidance provided me the confidence to achieve anything I set my mind on and the comfort to know she was but a phone call away.

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

School effectiveness is of paramount concern to a host of constituents from parents, teachers, school boards, and politicians, to homeowners and industry. Of particular importance is the role principals play in improving the condition and education of students in their schools. The impact of principal leadership has been discussed in great detail in research conducted by Michael Fullan, Douglas Reeves, Richard Dufour, and Mike Schmoker. A recurring theme from these authors is that the leadership provided by the principal plays a vital role in any school improvement process.

Until recently, principals received their training in either a college or university degree program in educational administration. However, a gap exists between the theoretical knowledge gained in college and the practical knowledge required to be an effective school leader. Prior to the 1980s, school systems did little to provide principals with staff development specifically designed to close this gap in knowledge.

In April 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education reported on the state of education in America in its report, *A Nation at Risk*. This report used such adjectives as decline, threats, deficiencies, and afflictions to describe the state of American public schools. This report led to a bevy of school improvement initiatives commonly referred to as the Excellence Movement. A common characteristic of the Excellence Movement was for schools to simply do more. The result for many school divisions was adding days to the school year, lengthening the school day, and requiring students to earn more credits for graduation. In 1990, the United States Department of Education reported the efforts of school

divisions had failed and that more of the same was not the answer to school reform (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

Over the past six years, the state of education has been subjected to several national reform programs. *Goals 2000, No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*, and the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disability Education Improvement Act (IDEA)* have all had a tremendous impact on schools and students. Characteristics of all three federal mandates included increased state accreditation standards, increased accountability for student learning, and an increased emphasis on the principal as a school leader. As such, principals must be cognizant of current trends and best practices that lead to school improvement and assist staff in meeting all federal and state mandates (Diamantes & Rayfield, 2004; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Recently, more and more school divisions are deciding to look within their own schools for solutions. Improvements in staff development, an increase in collaborative and collegial practices, and the institution of leadership academies were the result of many school divisions' efforts to create a base of qualified candidates to fill vacancies in leadership positions (Tracy & Weaver, 2000; Kaplan, Owings, & Nunnery, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Each year over the past decade, the demands of the principalship have become increasingly more complex (Fullan, 2001). M. Christine DeVita, President of the Wallace Foundation, issued her opinion on the complexities of the principalship when she wrote "... they need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual,

and policy mandates and initiatives” (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Meyerson, 2005, p. 1). Fullan (2001) further expanded on the state of the principalship:

Wanted: A miracle worker who can do more with less, pacify rival groups, endure chronic second-guessing, tolerate low levels of support, process large volumes of paper and work double shifts (75 nights a year). He or she will have *carte blanche* to innovate, but cannot spend much money, replace any personnel, or upset any constituency (p. 141).

Jo Lynne DeMary, former Virginia State Superintendent of Public Instruction, stated in the November 2000 Report on Supply and Demand of Instructional Personnel in Virginia, that “Nationally, and in Virginia, the issues of shortages have taken center stage for teachers and more recently for administrators” (p. ii). In the 2002 version of this state report, were statewide projections that estimated the supply of teachers and administrators over the next five years will provide little relief for the current shortages. The Virginia General Assembly addressed this issue in 2001 by enacting House Bill 252 and House Bill 1589, which amended the *Code of Virginia* to require the State Superintendent to survey all school divisions annually as a means to identify critical shortages in the areas of administrative and instructional personnel in Virginia (Virginia Department of Education, 2002).

In the examination of the review of literature, several questions emerged on issues with the current state of the principalship: (1) Are we facing a principal shortage in our community?, (2) What data do we have to help answer this question?, (3) What reasons do principals give for leaving the position?, (4) What reasons do teachers give for not pursuing the principalship?, (5) Are our principal recruitment practices sufficient to meet the need for qualified and effective leaders for student learning?, (6) What standards or requirements do

we have in place for new principals?, (7) Do these criteria guarantee effective leaders for student learning?, (8) Do principals receive high-quality preparation?, (9) Is that preparation closely tied to the daily realities and needs of schools?, (10) How do school officials rate the effectiveness of this preparation in meeting the needs of students?, and (11) What can we learn from other communities like ours, who are experiencing success filling vacancies with effective school leaders? The answers to these questions are presented in the review of literature and serve as a basis for the conceptual framework and study methodology.

Research Question

The overarching research question answered in this study: Are school personnel who participate in a formal school division sponsored leadership training program better prepared for the principalship than those personnel who have not had any additional school division sponsored leadership training?

Sub-questions related to this include: (1) How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in attracting, training, and recommending school personnel for administrative positions?, (2) How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in preparing school administrators to handle specific issues related to school leadership (fiscal, plant operations, human resources, curriculum and instruction)?, and (3) Has the Futures Leadership Academy been equally effective for school administrators at the elementary, middle, and high school levels?

Conceptual Framework

Miles and Huberman (1984) explained that a conceptual framework may be presented graphically or in narrative form. The conceptual framework should include the key factors, variables, or specific topic of study. Englebart (1962) described a conceptual model in terms

of the essential components of the system to be studied. The researcher will present his conceptual framework in a narrative form.

This review of literature helped the researcher create a conceptual framework to describe the process for principals to receive certification and training. Historically, principals earned a Masters Degree in Administration at a college or university-based educational leadership program. Components of this type of program include theory based classroom instruction followed by an internship placement in a school. However, successful principals in today's schools must possess not only a strong knowledge base, but also must possess the skill to apply that knowledge in the context of their own school. The movement now for many school divisions is to focus on the other dimensions critical to success in the principalship (Lauder, 2000).

Over the past 10 years, an increasing number of school divisions have developed leadership academies to train employees who have an interest in the principalship. These programs utilize a formal application and selection process for candidates followed by a specially designed program in an effort to prepare effective school leaders. Components of these programs include seminars and activities based in the daily aspects of the job as well as mentoring and internships (Virginia Beach, 2006a; Chesapeake, 2006; Fairfax, 2006). In addition, a small number of these programs offer certification in administration for graduates (Chicago, 2006; New York, 2006).

Principal Shortage

The U.S. Department of Education and the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) compiled 1999-2000 data from the Schools and Staffing Survey. Data, specific to the age and degree status of principals, from this compilation was reported in the *Public*,

Private, and Charter School Principal Survey and revealed that 23.7% of principals were age 55 or above and that 53.7% were above 50 years of age. In addition, 8.8% of current principals had less than a Masters Degree. Of note, is that this percentage is similar to the percent of principals with a doctorate (9.8%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

In Virginia, the most recent data on supply and demand for teachers and administrators is from the 1999-2000 school year. No information on principal vacancies is available from the Virginia Department of Education (VADOE) for school years 2001-2004.

In 1999, 405 (or 9%) of all Virginia administrators were new hires. Over the period from 1997-2000, the number of newly hired administrators experienced an annual growth of eight percent. In raw numbers, 288 new administrators were hired in 1997-98, 366 in 1998-99, and 405 in 1999-2000. Yet, VADOE data revealed that 36 administrative positions (principal and assistant principal) either went unfilled or were filled by unendorsed personnel in 1999-2000. The hardest hit area was Virginia's Region 1 (Southeast of Richmond, VA) with 13 positions unfilled or filled by unendorsed personnel (Virginia Department of Education, 2002).

Data revealed that 9.8% of new administrative hires in 1999-2000 had 25 or more years of experience. Concurrently, 35.1% of all current administrators in 1999-2000 had 25 or more years of experience. From 1997-2000, over 60% of administrators left the profession due to retirement. The data showed an aging population of administrators nearing retirement over the next five years. In fact the number of administrator retirements increased each year from 1997 (248) to 1998 (292) to 1999 (303) (Virginia Department of Education, 2002).

Principal Preparedness

The Institute for Educational Leadership (2005) brief, *Preparing and Supporting School Leaders: The Importance of Assessment and Evaluation*, surmised, “The bottom-line of all leadership preparation and professional development programs is to prepare and support leaders who have the capacity to improve student learning” (p. 2).

Leadership programs designed with research-based standards ensure that the pedagogy implemented will lead to improvements in student learning. The New Leaders for New Schools leadership program and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) are two national efforts aimed at standardizing the preparation of future school leaders based in the practices of effective principals (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). The six ISLLC standards have been adopted by 24 states and are highlighted in Table 1. These standards are student centered with the singular focus of improving student achievement and were used by the school division under study to create the goals and objectives of its Leadership Academy.

Table 1

Six Standards of Effective Principals as defined by the ISLLC

- Standard 1 A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- Standard 2 A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
- Standard 3 A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- Standard 4 A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- Standard 5 A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

table continues

Table 1 (continued)

Standard 6 A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Note: ISLLC = Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. From “Standards for School Leaders,” by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (1996), for the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Research is emerging on evaluation models for leadership programs across the country, including the models used by Thomas Guskey, Michael Patton, and Douglas Reeves, to assess the effectiveness of professional development programs on student learning. This research led to eight themes for evaluation and assessment of leadership programs:

- Theme 1 Start with an explicit theory of change
- Theme 2 Focus simultaneously on program results and design
- Theme 3 Build on existing knowledge and available research
- Theme 4 Work to fill knowledge gaps and disseminate best practices
- Theme 5 Context matters: New leaders go to old systems
- Theme 6 Inform, engage, and collaborate with key policymakers
- Theme 7 Listen to practitioners
- Theme 8 Take program assessment and evaluation seriously

(Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005).

The researcher used the six ISLLC standards and the eight themes for evaluation of leadership academies as comparison models to further analyze the components and evaluation criteria of the Futures Leadership Academy.

Intent and Focus of this Study

The intent of this case study was to assess the impact of AAA Public School's Futures Leadership Academy on aspiring administrators and to determine if central office administrators believe they have a higher level of preparedness because of the components of this program. It should be noted that the intent of this study was not to assess the effectiveness of the Futures Leadership Academy nor was it a program evaluation study. For the purpose of this study an administrator was defined as an assistant principal or principal. The focus of the study involved the organization, methodology, curriculum, and participant selection process of the Futures Leadership Academy. These characteristics were compared to other principal preparation programs to determine common themes and practices that have been deemed successful in preparing successful school leaders. Gathering data from program graduates in the same school division provided insight into the success of this program in training future administrators.

The Futures Leadership Academy

Futures Leadership Academy participants are selected and organized into cohorts of 20-25 people. Each cohort attends seven, day and a half sessions, over a six-month period. The first part of each session is an evening meeting from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., followed by the second part of each session the following day from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Each session is structured in an organized manner to allow participants to learn in an environment conducive

to the goals of the academy. Appendix F presents the pedagogical framework of a typical Academy group.

During the 2002-03 school year, AAA Public School's Department of Organizational Development (OD) welcomed its first cohort, Academy I, into the school division's leadership training program for aspiring administrators. Since that time, eight more cohorts have completed and graduated from the program. The odd numbered cohorts were comprised of assistant principals while the even numbered cohorts were predominantly comprised of teachers who aspired to the role of assistant principal. In the fall of 2006, OD welcomed the next cohort; Academy X. Academy X was the first "hybrid" cohort group to include a combination of teachers, assistant principals, and coordinators.

Over the past five years, the academy has continued to evolve based on participant feedback and school division needs. Since its inception with Academy I, several major changes have taken place. Changes include the addition of a component on student discipline specifically designed for assistant principals, a change in the induction component from *Walk the Talk* (Academy I-VII) to *Leading with Your Strengths* (Academy VIII), and the addition of a special education administrative component in Academy X. Appendix G provides a complete list of major pedagogical changes in Academy I through Academy X.

Futures Leadership Academy graduates, as of the start of the 2006-07 school year, served in numerous leadership positions in AAA Public Schools. In fact, 76% of assistant principals and 17% of principals working in AAA Public Schools in 2006 were academy graduates. A three year trend of promotions from 2004 to 2006 revealed the strength of the academy in preparing school personnel to assume leadership roles. In 2004, 33 of 36 (or 92%) of new school-based administrative appointments were academy graduates. In 2005, 25

of 26 (or 96%) of new school-based administrative appointments were academy graduates. Finally, in 2006, 14 of 16 (or 88%) of new school based administrative appointments were academy graduates. Currently, 61 graduates are eligible to become assistant principals and 92 graduates are eligible to become principals. Appendix H presents promotion data for Academy graduates from the 2002-03 school year to the 2006-07 year.

Significance of the Study

Study results will prove beneficial to AAA Public Schools as they consider making informed decisions in the selection of future curriculum, methodology, and organization for the Futures Leadership Academy to ensure that program graduates are well prepared administrators, ready to fill impending vacancies within the school division. In terms of a budgetary impact, it should be noted that AAA Public Schools spends approximately \$1000 to train each program participant and is thus financially vested in the program's success (O. Herron and S. Adams, personal communication, July 8, 2006). In addition, the school board reviews all administrative appointment recommendations to determine whether they graduated from the Academy. Finally, study results provided the school division with an abundance of information to analyze the impact of this program on filling administrator vacancies with personnel prepared to lead.

Definitions

The principalship, in the context of this study, is defined as the act of fulfilling the responsibilities of an assistant principal or principal. The construct "better prepared" is defined using the principles covered in seminar topics in the Futures Leadership Academy. They include a principal's knowledge of vision, communication strategies, management of

school finances, management of human relations, application of emotional intelligence concepts, and instructional leadership.

Limitations

Study limitations included threats to internal validity based on school division employees answering truthfully to questions assessing a division supported staff development program. The focus group, comprised of non-Academy graduates who have received promotions since 2001, is a small population. However, this population does offer sufficient size to have 6-10 participants. As of the start of the 2006-07 school year, 76% of the current assistant principals in the school division are Futures Leadership Academy graduates and often discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the program with non-Academy administrators present, thereby presenting a diffusion threat to internal validity. Threats to external validity included treatment and setting. Study participants work in one school division; therefore, study results can not be generalized to other school divisions.

Overview of the Dissertation

This study has been organized into five chapters. Chapter I contains the overview of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, conceptual framework, background, intent and focus of the study, significance and limitations of the study, and overview of the dissertation. Chapter II contains a thorough review of literature in the area of principal preparation and how this preparation is affected by issues that currently impact the principalship.

Chapter III contains the research methodology. Topics include an overview of the methods, research design, setting and participant selection process, data collection procedures, data quality and data analysis procedures, and a summary of the methodology.

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study and Chapter V presents a summary of the findings as well as the conclusion and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature in the area of principal preparation programs to identify current research and emerging trends in education that have shaped existing preparation programs at the school division level. This research begins with an in-depth review of the “why” does a need exist to supplement university-based administrative degree programs as well as the “how” are school divisions meeting the needs of their principals as their roles continue to evolve and change. Secondly, the review of literature captures the essential components from case studies conducted on several school divisions that operate a formal or informal principal preparation program. This is followed by an analysis of selected current school division principal preparation programs of interest to the researcher. Finally, this chapter concludes with characteristics of formal principal preparation programs focusing on their implementation, participant application and selection methodology, pedagogy, and resulting principal and school division satisfaction.

This review of literature includes conceptual research on principal preparation programs and case studies involving principal preparation programs for administrators. Study selection criteria included principal preparation programs, leadership academies, and programs that analyzed the changing role of the principal. ProQuest was used as the main search engine to access peer reviewed articles and research journals. The Virginia Tech library database was used to access doctoral dissertations involving programs that trained or supported principals. Other research sources included texts on educational leadership, the principalship, and data analysis.

The most successful key words/phrases used for the search were *principal*, *principal preparation*, *school leadership*, *principal preparation programs*, and *school administration*.

The literature chosen for selection in Chapter II represents a list of documents that helped form the basis of the research topic. The inclusion of selected peer reviewed studies, articles from scientific journals, and educational textbooks provided the researcher the opportunity to gather the necessary documentation to build a strong basis of rationale for the researcher's study and the methodology components.

The Critical Role of the Principal

"The principalship is in a precarious position," states Ann Lauder in an article published in September 2000 in the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Bulletin. Current educational experts point to the growing role and increased responsibilities of principals, without the matching intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, as the leading cause of an insufficient pool of qualified and interested applicants to fill the large number of pending vacancies in school districts across the country (Dipaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Childress, Cunningham, & Goodwin, 2003; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

Principals play a critical role in establishing the direction for a successful school was one of the key findings in the widely reviewed 1996 NASSP and Carnegie Foundation's national report, "Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution." Research clearly indicates that learning does not happen without leadership (Kaplan et al., 2005; Childress et al., 2003; Davis et al., 2005), yet research is scarce in terms of what are the best methods to prepare and develop highly qualified principal leaders. A study currently being conducted by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute will investigate: (a) What are the essential

elements of good leadership?, (b) How are successful leadership development programs designed?, (c) What program structures provide the best learning environment?, and (d) What governing and financial policies are needed to sustain good programming? Once the effective processes have been identified, school divisions can replicate these into their own staff development (Davis et al., 2005).

Schools of the twenty-first century will require a principal well-versed in the art of instructional leadership, community leadership, and visionary leadership (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Tracy & Weaver, 2000). All three components are critical to meet the universal goal of student learning. The Educational Research Service (2000) concluded in a recent study of the principalship, “Researchers, policy makers, and educational practitioners agree: good school principals are the keystone of good schools. Without the principal’s leadership, efforts to raise student achievement cannot succeed” (p. 6). To accomplish this goal, new leadership models that are malleable in an atmosphere of constant change, must be created to equip principals with the necessary support to meet the increased demands in accountability for academic achievement and safety for all students (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

As early as 1998, the Educational Research Service (ERS), in conjunction with the NASSP and National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), predicted a continuing decline in qualified applicants for principal vacancies and suggested that school districts begin to look for alternative methods to identify and train administrators within their own divisions (Tracy & Weaver, 2000). The Institute for Educational Leadership’s Task Force reaffirmed the impending crisis of a shortage of qualified principals in their 2000 report, *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship*. This report presented

the results of a 1998 NAESP survey of 403 school superintendents, who had at least one principal vacancy, stating that 50% of the superintendents felt a shortage of qualified principal candidates existed (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000). Some cities and some states, like Ohio, have been forced to fill principal vacancies with personnel practicing with emergency certification status due to the large number of available positions and the small number of qualified applicants (Diamantes & Rayfield, 2004).

“Why does a shortage of principal candidates exist?” was the question examined at the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration leadership conference in Burlington, Vermont, in 2002. The ensuing report indicated the job of a principal has become more complex and difficult with many duties identified as a major cause of poor job satisfaction (Diamantes & Rayfield, 2004). New responsibilities are added yet none are deleted; thus an overwhelming feeling of pressure exists to meet the needs of parents, students, teachers, school boards, and state and federal mandates (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Childress et al., 2003). In 2000, the U.S. Department of Labor estimated that the need for school administrators will increase 10 – 20% by 2005. Combine this fact with a 1999 University of Minnesota study that estimated that 75% of Minnesota principals will be out of the profession by 2010 (Sheldon, 1999). With this in mind, many proactive school divisions are looking for creative alternatives to promote the principalship and identify potential school leaders. Mentoring, coaching, cohorts, and field-based opportunities are all applicable to building a strong pool of qualified candidates (Virginia Beach, 2006a; New York, 2003; Chicago, 2006; Fairfax, 2006; Chesapeake, 2006).

Examples of such programs can be found across the United States. In Mississippi, Wake County Public Schools holds monthly meeting with new principals and their mentors

to discuss challenges and share best practices. In North Carolina, the Nash-Rocky Mount Public School District has instituted a Futures Academy designed to identify, develop, and place candidates in key administrative roles (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000). In New York City, the Aspiring Principal Program represents the school division's concerted effort to place principal leadership as the core goal to improve academic achievement for all students (New York, 2003). In Georgia, principals receive training in the area of quality leadership via a cohort model where principals remain together over an extended period of time. In Illinois, the Chicago Leadership Academy for Supporting Success provides year-long internships for aspiring administrators (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). In Ohio, the Aspiring Leaders Academy was created to address the needs of assistant principals and principals through a year-long course of study. The year-long program is focused on four core components: A rigorous selection process, multiple learning events, ongoing mentoring, and collaborative study among participants (Tracy & Weaver, 2000). Finally, the Profile Evaluation System and the PrincipalInsight™ (Gallup Organization) are two programs frequently used by school divisions to identify potential principal candidates. These represent just a few of the many programs that school divisions have created to meet the growing demands of the principalship.

Current trends in effective principal preparation programs have an appeal and attractiveness to educators and incorporate training methodologies founded in research and best practices. Components of such programs include entrance requirements aligned with the demands of the principalship, cohort models, clear performance-based standards, opportunities for individualization, development and assessment skills with an emphasis on reflective practice and continuous program review with input from current practitioners

(Lauder, 2000). These methods, in conjunction with a formal preparation program, will help to ensure that school divisions will have the leaders necessary to guide their schools in a time of change (Kaplan et al., 2005; Childress et al., 2003).

During the 1998-99 school year, Dr. Timothy Jenney, Superintendent of Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS), initiated a Leadership Round Table to discuss and investigate how VBCPS would handle the potential crisis of a shortage of qualified principals in a school division under continued growth. This project led to a proposal in February 2001 of a principal leadership development academy. The goals of this academy were to identify and train current VBCPS personnel to fill future administrative positions. The Academy program would emphasize the values, knowledge, and skills necessary to match the vision and mission of VBCPS and would focus on best practices based on current research (O. Herron, personal communication, January 14, 2006). Virginia Beach's Futures Project Principals' Academy welcomed its first class of aspiring administrators in 2002. Since that time, 127 program graduates have assumed the role of assistant principal or principal within the VBCPS.

Principal Preparation Programs

The twenty-first century principal is faced with increased levels of accountability, expanded roles of responsibility, and increased demands from politicians and stakeholders. Concurrently, school divisions are tasked with finding quality administrative candidates who have the requisite abilities to lead in a time of change. The combination of these two issues has created a profession under stress that requires immediate and effective solutions (Childress et al., 2003; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Kaplan et al., 2005). Each of the selected studies addressed one or more issues related to this problem.

Recruitment and retention of qualified and certified administrators are quickly becoming one of the greatest challenges facing school divisions across the nation. Many school divisions have initiated shortcuts to licensure through alternative certification programs. A study conducted by DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) examined the working conditions and concerns of principals in Virginia to determine their experiences and perceptions on the growing shortage in the principalship. Questions answered in this study included (a) How has the principalship changed?, (b) What are the major job components of the principalship?, (c) What were the respondent's most valuable means of preparation for the principalship?, and (d) What are the most important needs of principals?

A survey was developed by an advisory board comprised of the executive directors of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP), the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP), and selected elementary, middle, and high school principals to assess current principals' views of the principalship in Virginia. The advisory board compiled and analyzed survey questions, and from this pool of possible questions, selected one hundred seventy-six questions, measured on a Likert scale to assess principal's satisfaction, for use in the survey (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

These questions investigated the conditions and challenges of principals' work and were mailed to 4,237 assistant principals and principals with a cover letter stating the purpose of the study and that those respondents would retain anonymity. One thousand five hundred forty-three surveys, representing a 38% return rate, comprised the final usable total. The respondents included a balanced mix of men (49%) and women (51%), although more women (62%) served in elementary schools, whereas more men (71%) served in high schools. Forty-four percent of respondents served in suburban schools, thirty-six percent in

rural schools, and nineteen percent in urban schools. Fifty-two percent of the respondents were above the age of 50 and had more than 25 years of experience in education whereas only five percent had nine or fewer years of experience, thus providing the researchers with a highly experienced group of principals (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Results were categorized under five general headings: preparation for the principalship, conditions of employment, problems or issues in the field, the changing role of the principal, and supply and demand. These headings represented the major themes when analyzing survey results. In terms of preparation for the principalship, 71% of respondents had a Masters degree, 39% had a Masters Degree plus additional coursework, eight percent had an Educational Specialist endorsement, and 11% had a Doctorate. In terms of the value of his/her preparation for the principalship, 88% listed graduate school as “of much value” or “of some value.” Eighty-seven percent listed their experience as a teacher similarly. Seventy-two percent of current principals rated their experience as an assistant principal as of much or some value. Ninety-five percent of respondents had classroom experience prior to entering the principalship, 73% served as assistant principals, 14% came for central office positions, and 13% came from supervisory or curriculum specialist roles (Dipaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Principals cited the length of the work week as a major problem with the conditions of employment. Eighty-four percent of respondents reported working more than 50 hours per week, 31% reported working between 50 and 54 hours per week, 25% reported working 55 to 59 hours per week, and 16% reported working more than 60 hours per week. Principal hours increased as a principal moved from elementary to middle to high school. Principal salaries compounded this issue as increases in salary for administrators have not kept pace

with salary increases for teachers. Principals noted the sources of job satisfaction come from the rapport they have with students, the relationships they have with teachers and peers, followed by the relationship they have with parents and community leaders (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Problems and issues facing principals included instructional leadership, organizational management, communication and professionalism, and professional development. The most significant problem within instructional leadership was the pressure to increase student achievement on standardized tests, followed by effective use of instructional time, analyzing classroom practices, faculty and staff development, curriculum alignment, and improving staff morale. The top issues within organizational management were special education law and implementation, legal issues, and non-academic behavior. In the area of communication, the top issues were working with families and inadequate time to network and collaborate with peers. In the area of professionalism, principals noted issues with enhancing leadership skills and managing stress. The significant need in professional development was for training in special education law followed by training in increasing student achievement on standardized tests. Data-driven decision making, assessment using multiple criteria, and strategies for faculty and staff development were also identified as professional development needs (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Principals reported an increase in paperwork, email communication, and special education meetings as expanded roles of their position. Seventy-five percent discussed the increased focus on test scores, accountability, and closing achievement gaps as having a significant impact on their daily practices. Principals noted the need for more assistance,

clerical and administrative, to properly adhere to each new responsibility (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Data revealed a growing concern in regards to the number of principals who plan to retire in the next few years and the lack of interested, quality candidates for these impending vacancies. Research indicated the declining numbers of assistant principals who aspire to the role of principal. In fact, greater than 56% of current assistant principals and principals in this study indicated they plan to retire in the next eight years (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Data from this study indicated a “profession under stress” (p. 55). The role of the principal has expanded due to increased standards based on state and federal mandates such as State Accreditation and No Child Left Behind. The National Center for School Leadership (NCSL) has identified five key roles for effective principals: (a) defining and communicating a school’s educational mission, (b) coordinating curriculum, (c) supervising and supporting teachers, (d) monitoring student progress, and (e) nurturing a positive learning climate (Blasé, 1987). Study results showed support for the five NCSL roles of effective principals, yet these five roles are not inclusive according to this study.

Research from this study revealed that principals need training and assistance to meet the demands of the expanded roles of the job. Study suggestions included adding more clerical or administrative support, restructuring the job description, and providing additional training. Finally, the researchers noted that accomplishing these tasks makes the position unattractive to potential candidates and causes anxiety in school officials faced with filling the impending vacancies (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Decades of research indicate a significant positive relationship between principal effectiveness and student achievement. Further, research concludes that successful schools are invariably led by dynamic, knowledgeable, and focused leaders. A study conducted by Kaplan, Owings, and Nunnery (2005) addressed three questions: (a) Is there a relationship between measured principal quality and student achievement?, (b) Are lower-quality principals placed in lower socioeconomic status schools?, and (c) Does principal quality have differential effects at the elementary, middle, and high school levels?

This study used a random sample of principals from Virginia public schools to investigate the relationship between principal quality and student achievement. One hundred sixty schools, where principals had more than five years of experience in the particular school beginning no later than 1988, met this criteria and were selected for this study. Each principal's superintendent and immediate supervisor was asked to complete a questionnaire based on the six standards of effective principals developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) to assess principal quality (Kaplan et al., 2005).

The researchers developed a questionnaire in a rubric format to assess each of the six ISLLC standards (a) vision, (b) best practices, (c) managing the organization, (d) community involvement, (e) integrity and fairness, and (f) influencing the larger context using a four-point performance scale to create a grid listing descriptors of appropriate principal behavior. The authors secured construct validity by sharing the questionnaire with ten national educators who were involved in the development of the ISLLC standards (Kaplan et al., 2005).

One hundred sixty principals participated in the study: 44 from high school, five from primary school, 61 from elementary school, and 50 from middle school. Principals were rated according to student performance on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests at each level. Their superintendent and immediate supervisor rated 62 principals, whereas 98 principals were only rated by one of their supervisors. Both sets of results were used in the findings (Kaplan et al., 2005).

Study results indicated that principals rated high in principal quality served in high achieving schools while principals rated low in quality served in low achieving schools. Data revealed a significant main effect for principal quality on student achievement at the third and fifth grade levels. Principals rated in the first and second quartiles had significantly higher student achievement than principals rated in the fourth quartile. Data did not support a significant main effect at the eighth grade level. However, differences were found in terms of student achievement when considering a school's poverty level (Kaplan et al., 2005).

Data from this study quantifiably showed that principal quality has a direct link to student achievement. However, readers should use caution when reviewing these results to determine if a causal relationship exists between principal quality and student achievement. Researchers noted that other extraneous variables must be considered when reviewing these data. These variables include the free and reduced lunch student population, teacher experience, teacher/student turnover within the building, and a school's socio-economic-status. Further implications of this study suggest that principal quality needs to be operationally defined in a rubric using the six ISLLC standards. Superintendents might then refocus professional development training to target areas of weakness for principals. These

training programs might include instructional leadership, assessment and accountability, hiring and supervising personnel, and effective communication (Kaplan et al., 2005).

Childress, Cunningham, and Goodwin (2003) analyzed the results of a national study that focused on the role of the principal and how that role has changed and how it should change. Anecdotal and empirical evidence suggest that although a sufficient number of candidates exist, there is a shortage of applicants for principal vacancies. Reasons for this shortage include the increased responsibility coupled with the decreased autonomy and authority in the job, and the increased time spent on the job.

This study of the secondary principalship was conducted in two stages. A Delphi technique was used in the first stage to gather information from a panel of thirty-eight, 2000-2001 State High School Principals of the Year, to develop a description of the changing role of the principal. Forty-five descriptors were identified and used to create a survey for the second stage of the study. These results were used to validate the findings of the Delphi study. An analysis revealed four main themes: role conflict, accountability conflict, autonomy conflict, and responsibility conflict. The survey, Principal's Role Questionnaire (PRQ), was presented electronically and by mail to 375 randomly selected secondary principals who were members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). Using a four-point Likert scale, 375 principals indicated their level of confidence in each of the 45 role descriptors (Childress et al., 2003).

Data were collected, analyzed, and placed into four categories or "themes." The four themes included role conflict, accountability conflict, autonomy conflict, and responsibility conflict (Childress et al., 2003).

Role conflict included instructional leadership, organizational leadership, strategic leadership, and community and political leadership. Respondents indicated that the increased requirements of state and federal standards have forced the principal to become more of an instructional leader with a deep understanding of benchmarks and strategies to improve student achievement. Organizational leadership revolved around the need for principals to provide high quality professional development opportunities for all staff to stay current with regulations and learning strategies. Strategic leadership involved matching instructional and organizational leadership to ensure that personnel are placed in positions where success can be achieved. Community and political leadership involved gathering support from the community and from politicians to help meet both student and school needs (Childress et al., 2003).

Accountability conflict noted a principal's conflict between being inclusive and being accountable, and between meeting the needs of a diverse population and meeting high standards. Principals commented on the enormous stress that is caused by the increase in state standards and federal mandates as administrators and teachers attempt to meet these benchmarks and, at the same time, meet the growing social, emotional, and physical needs of students (Childress et al., 2003).

Autonomy conflict emerged as principals emphasized the need for more autonomy in hiring staff and resource management. Further, principals noted that autonomy conflict extended to impact their strategic, instructional, organizational, and political leadership decision making. Finally, autonomy concerns also impacted principals as they attempted to balance legislative and bureaucratic mandates with their sense of responsibility to build relationships and nurture student growth (Childress et al., 2003).

Responsibility conflict involved the complexity of the principalship and the conflict between the increase in job responsibilities and the need for both professional and clerical assistance. A recurring theme emerged as principals discussed the expanded workload necessary to manage a school effectively. Components of this theme included the need for more help, more resources, and the suggestion that the role of the principal should be restructured in a more realistic manner (Childress et al., 2003).

Professional literature has established that student achievement is directly related to the role of the school leader (Kaplan et al., 2005). The principals in this study (Childress et al., 2003) validated the importance of their roles in leading a school. However, they also noted the increased demands of the position caused additional stress and contributed to the shortage of qualified applicants for vacancies. One principal summed it well:

The current role of the principal is all encompassing. In many districts, we are faced with inadequate budgets with increased demands. In addition, the pool of applicants for teaching positions, and, just as serious, for immediate supervisors, is dwindling. Add to this the increased standards and testing that most states have required, the demands for increased security in the wake of Columbine, 9/11, and now New Bedford. All these issues find their way into the principal's office (p. 33).

Even though these conflicts created frustration, principals overwhelmingly stated that they value their work, believe in what they do, and, if they had to do it all over again, would accept the job as principal (Childress et al., 2003).

The results of this study validated the importance of the principal's role as the strategic leader of the school. School divisions should strongly consider the role and function of effective principals and devise regulations and policies for professional development,

certification, recruitment, and evaluation of principals. Policy objectives should target how to assist current principals as well as how to “sell the principalship” (p. 33) to outstanding teacher leaders (Childress et al., 2003).

Each of the three aforementioned studies clearly illustrated the need for principal support, whether that support comes via a formal or informal program, or from a school division’s leadership academy that trains aspiring administrators in best practices. In fact, each of the studies recommended the creation of a focused principal preparation program, based on best practices, as a successful means to prepare administrators (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Kaplan et al., 2005; Childress et al., 2003). Components of each of these studies can serve as a conceptual framework to build a strong support program for principals who are currently serving in the role of principal, or for school divisions who have decided to proactively address preparing principals for expanding leadership roles.

Principal Preparation Program Models

In the 1980’s researchers began to identify the need for more extensive training for principals to supplement what is learned in a university program. In a 1983 survey conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics, researchers found that school administrators needed improved and expanded training to meet the demands of the job (Danielson, 1983). The interim report of the Institute for Educational Leadership’s Task Force on the Principalship (2000) documented the need for additional formal training for principals and concluded that systemic efforts based on best practices are keys to the preparation of principals to lead the schools of tomorrow. These efforts include programs and activities that promote principal networking, provide leadership training to improve student learning, and utilize a cohort model which includes mentoring and internship models.

The review of literature identified several principal preparation programs currently in use throughout the United States. The researcher focused on five program models to present as a representative sample of successful programs from a cross-section of the country and the state of Virginia. These include the Assistant Principal Portfolio Program in Fairfax, VA; the Leadership Academy in Chesapeake, VA; the Futures Project Principals' Academy in Virginia Beach, VA; the New York City Leadership Academy in New York, NY; and the Principal Preparation and Development program in Chicago, IL. Each program will be presented in terms of its mission, characteristics, and benefit to the school division.

Assistant Principal Portfolio Academy: Fairfax, VA

The Assistant Principal Portfolio Academy's primary goal is "to develop assistant principals through a reflective approach focused on leadership experiences and results in the assistant principal role" (p. 3). The program's purpose is to provide staff development for assistant principals to earn promotions to higher ranking assistant principals. The program involves building assistant principal's essential knowledge and skills so that they may become successful school leaders with the requisite skills to assume the position of principal (Fairfax, 2006).

Eligibility requirements include only current Fairfax City Public School assistant principals who have one year experience and have received an evaluation with a minimum of *Meets Standards* on all five administrative standards: Planning and Assessment, Instructional Leadership, Safety and Organizational Management, Communication and Community Relations, and Professionalism (Fairfax, 2006).

Assistant principals who wish to participate must complete and submit a portfolio to a panel of administrators for review. The portfolios must include a letter of intent, a

supervisory certification form, a current professional resume, a current job responsibility listing, a documentation of activities, a professional development plan, a current evaluation, and a staff opinion survey. In addition, candidates must adhere to the timeline for submission of portfolio components in this process (Fairfax, 2006).

A Leadership Review Board comprised of current principals from all levels and at least one assistant principal, all of whom serve a 2-3 year term, serve as the selection panel for this program. The board is trained in the selection process and the rubric used for scoring the portfolio assessments. The board ensures a high degree of interrater reliability is achieved by grading the portfolios together and comparing the scores. Candidates who meet all requirements are then promoted from Assistant Principal I to Assistant Principal II and are then eligible for promotion to the position of principal (Fairfax, 2006).

Leadership Academy: Chesapeake, VA

The Chesapeake school division created four leadership academies in the 2004 school year to help aspiring and current administrators gain the necessary requisite skills to seek employment advancement in leadership roles within the division. Three of the four programs (Administrative Leadership Academy, Advanced Leadership Academy, and Entry-Level Leadership Academy) deal with preparing aspiring administrators or improving the skills of current administrators to lead in an age of accountability. Candidates for all three leadership academies complete an application and interview process and are selected by a panel of administrators and central office personnel. Participants in this program are exposed to seminars based on the goals and purpose of each academy (Chesapeake, 2006).

The Administrative Leadership Academy provides current administrators with training to strengthen their instructional leadership skills, share best practices with

colleagues, and to obtain the most current information on state and federal policies. The Advanced Leadership Academy provides current administrators with the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on effective leadership practices and to participate in problem-solving activities. The Entry-Level Leadership welcomed 15 participants in 2005 and 25 in 2006. The purpose of this program is to help aspiring administrators learn the necessary requisite skills of the principalship and to build their leadership skills (Chesapeake, 2006).

The Futures Project Principals' Academy: Virginia Beach, VA

The Futures Project Principals' Academy was developed to “support and challenge educational leaders through high-quality professional development facilitating students' academic achievement” (p. 1). This academy welcomed its first class of aspiring administrators in 2001 with a primary goal to train current school personnel, who have an interest in administration, and in the mission and core values of VBCPS (Virginia Beach, 2006a).

The program follows a cohort model with between 20 and 25 participants who meet for seven one and a half day sessions over a one-year period to receive training in the key aspects of the principalship. Candidates are current VBCPS personnel who complete a thorough application process that includes writing samples, three letters of recommendation, and the *PrincipalInsight*[™] and the *Discover Your Strengths E-Learning* poll. Candidates are selected by a panel of central office personnel who review all components of the application process. Academy pedagogy includes required reading from selected texts and seminars in areas such as budget/finance, personnel policies, staff evaluation, student safety, media and communications, and special education (Virginia Beach, 2006a).

Since its inception in 2002, the Futures Project Principals' Academy has provided the school division with 185 graduates, trained in the key roles of the principalship. In addition, 50% of Academy graduates have received promotions in VBCPS or in other school divisions. This includes 26 teachers to administrative assistants, 13 teachers to coordinator or teacher specialists, 21 administrative assistants to assistant principals, and 14 assistant principals to principals. Finally, in 2005-06, 96% of new school-based administrative appointments were academy graduates. For 2006-07, 88% of administrative appointments went to academy graduates (Virginia Beach, 2006a).

New York City Leadership Academy: New York, NY

In January 2003, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Chancellor Joel I. Klein, created the NYC Leadership Academy as part of the Children First reform effort to “recruit, train, and support a new generation of outstanding principals” (p. 1). The goal of this program is to develop a cadre of 1,400 principals who serve as instructional leaders and who can inspire and lead staff, students, and parents within their school community. Training revolves around improving student achievement by developing instructional leadership and management skills based on best practices (New York, 2006).

Candidates must have earned a minimum 3.0 GPA in their undergraduate or graduate degree program, completed a minimum of five years teaching experience, complete an application, participate in an interview, and meet all admission deadlines. Seven percent of applicants in 2005-06 were accepted into the program. Since the program's inception, 95% of graduates serve in a leadership role in NYC schools and over the last two years, 20% of principal vacancies have been filled by program graduates (New York, 2006).

Three leadership tracks are available to selected school personnel: Aspiring Principals' Program, First Year Support, and New School Intensive Program. The Academy consists of a rigorous three phase fourteen-month program where participants receive a salary and graduates can earn enough credits to qualify for state certification. Phase one is the Summer Intensive Preparation, phase two is Residency, and phase 3 is Planning Summer. Pedagogy is based on NYC's definition of instructional leadership with an emphasis on the role of the principal changing from manager of stability to manager of change (New York, 2006).

Principal Preparation and Development: Chicago, IL

On February 25, 2004, the school board of Chicago Public Schools approved a policy establishing requirements for the selection of Chicago Public School principals. This policy mandated a performance-based standards candidate selection process to ensure the availability of a pool of high quality principal candidates to fill impending vacancies. The mission of this program is three fold: (a) to identify and develop aspiring principals to meet the challenges of a Chicago Public School principal, (b) to develop and support new principals, and (c) to provide continual professional development for experienced principals (Chicago, 2006).

Candidates for the Principal Preparation and Development program are subjected to a rigorous application process. Components of the application process include the submission of (a) an application, (b) an official transcript of master's degree coursework, (c) a copy of a valid administrative certificate, (d) an on-line writing sample with proctor's verification, (e) a Chicago Public Schools Competencies Portfolio, (f) a background check, (g) a copy showing completion of the general program of study, (h) a written examination on Board policies and

relevant Illinois School Code provisions, and (i) an oral interview. Candidates who meet all of the requirements of the application process are accepted into one of three Principal Preparation Programs: (a) The Leadership Academy and Urban Network for Chicago (LAUNCH), (b) New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS), or (c) University of Illinois at Chicago Ed.D. in Urban Education Leadership (UIC) (Chicago, 2006).

Currently, 551 graduates of the Principal Preparation and Development program are eligible to be considered by a Local School Council (LSC) for principal vacancies. Since the inception of this program in 2004, student achievement has risen dramatically as evidenced by a gain of 18% in math, 14.8% in science, and 12.1% in reading on the Illinois Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT). The improvement in student achievement over the past two years supports the Principal Preparation and Development program's vision of what effective leadership can do to improve and sustain the quality of education for all students (Chicago, 2006).

Strengths of a Formal Principal Preparation Program

Research on measuring the success of a formal principal preparation program in better preparing school leaders is a relatively new concept and thus little data on current programs exist. However, Davis et al. (2005) noted promising research from the *Goals 2000 principal leadership development program: Final Report* which found that principals who participate in a formal principal preparation program that “is concept driven, cohort based, and consisting of a year-long and carefully mentored field-based internship..., received higher performance evaluation ratings by supervisors, and were perceived by teachers as being more effective...” (p. 12). Patricia West (2002) also found that a formal mentoring program can improve the performance of first year principals as they acclimate themselves to

the principalship. Aspiring Leaders Academy graduates noted the usefulness of seminars to learn and share information, network with colleagues, improve communication, and developed a better understanding of administrative roles (Tracy & Weaver, 2000). The strength of a formal principal preparation program was summed up by a 2003-04 graduate of the NYC Leadership Academy who wrote:

I just wanted to let you know that the overall experience has been quite rewarding. I have learned so much from the team as well as from my colleagues. We have grown over the past months – sharing successes and failures. Many bonds have been formed, and we look to each other for support. Thank you for creating this program. It has helped me to stay focused on what is most important – the education of our children.

(p. 2)

Weaknesses of a Formal Principal Preparation Program

As previously stated, research in this area is a relatively new concept. However, research has noted that not all outcomes of a formal principal preparation program are positive. West (2002) and Tracy and Weaver (2000) found problems with the mentoring relationship in certain cases where lack of clarification of responsibilities led to poor communication and stress. The Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) noted that successful principal preparation programs must continuously redesign their program to ensure that it meets the ever changing role of the principal. Programs that do not follow a systematic process to help principals meet the growing demands of the position will be doomed to failure (Institute for Educational Learning, 2005).

Characteristics of Formal Principal Preparation Programs

Through the literature review which follows, the researcher has identified several characteristics that are used by the formal principal preparation programs in many school divisions. These include components of the application and selection process, pedagogy, and activities. The researcher has selected a representative sample consisting of five school divisions' programs to present characteristics of a principal preparation program.

Program Candidate Application Process

The cornerstone of any successful program is in the selection of participants (Fullan, 2001). A formal, comprehensive application process is well-written, easy to follow, and will help to identify the most deserving candidates for consideration for the program.

Components of a comprehensive application process include the candidate's submission of a letter of interest, resume, letter(s) of recommendation or reference list, writing sample, and a timeline for submission of all documents. Additional components used in the application process include interviews, staff surveys, and the most recent performance evaluation (Virginia Beach, 2006a; Chicago, 2006; Chesapeake, 2006; New York, 2006; Fairfax, 2006; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000). Table 2 presents a comparison of five school division principal preparation programs application requirements.

Table 2

Application Requirements of five Principal Preparation Programs

Requirement	VBCPS	CHICAGO	NYC	CPS	FCPS
Letter of Interest	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Resume	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Letter of Recommendation or Reference List	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Application	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Writing Sample	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Professional Growth Indicator	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interview	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
PrincipalInsight™	Yes	No	No	No	No
Current Evaluation	No	No	No	Yes	No
Portfolio	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Note. Information was compiled based on the application requirements of Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS), Chicago Public Schools (CHICAGO), New York City Public Schools (NYC), Chesapeake Public Schools (CPS), and Fairfax City Public Schools (FCPS). ™ is the trademark for the Gallup organization's PrincipalInsight poll.

Program Participant Selection Process

The selection process is the final critical component to help identify the strongest candidates. Characteristics of the selection process include a review of all application documents required by the particular school division. This review is conducted by a trained panel of school administration staff comprised of current principals and central office staff. Many divisions utilize a rubric for scoring candidates applications with components of the application process assigned point values by level of importance (Virginia Beach, 2006a; Chicago, 2006; New York, 2006; Chesapeake, 2006; Fairfax, 2006). After the screening process is complete, candidates in some divisions participate in a formal interview to further delineate who will be admitted into the program and who will not (New York, 2006; Chicago, 2006; Chesapeake, 2006). It should be noted that constraints of the selection process exist with all programs and often revolve around the limited number of available openings in a particular program (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

Program Pedagogy

The Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) stated that school divisions must “Revamp principal preparation programs to focus on instructional, community and visionary leadership roles in improving student learning in real schools” (p. 10) to ensure high quality leaders. The review of literature provided the researcher with an array of pedagogy used in principal preparation programs. Pedagogy includes the curriculum and methodology of instruction used by principal preparation programs.

The review of literature found that formal principal preparation programs vary in program length. Chesapeake (2006) has programs that require as little as four months to

complete and as long as two years. Virginia Beach (2006a) has an eight month program, New York City (2006) has a 14-month program, and Fairfax (2006) has a 16-month program. These are representative of the programs reviewed by the researcher in terms of length of study.

Cohort models have become a preferred option for businesses and schools because of the additional benefit of having a support group to aid in the learning or training process (Lauder, 2000; Tracy & Weaver, 2000). Lauder (2000) defines a cohort as “a group learning together, from and with each other” (p. 24). Cohort models were used by three of the school divisions (Virginia Beach, New York City, and Chesapeake) reviewed in this chapter.

The curriculum and method of instruction vary between school divisions cited in this chapter. Chicago’s Principal Preparation and Development program of study has two components for participants. They are the General Program of Study where sessions focus on unique aspects of the principalship in Chicago, followed by an Individualized Program of Study designed to be a part of the principal’s competency portfolio. New York City’s Leadership Academy offers differentiated instruction based on participant needs as part of its curriculum package. Virginia Beach’s Principals’ Academy, Chesapeake’s Leadership Academy, and Fairfax’s Portfolio program follow a curriculum that incorporates seminars and activities based in “real” roles of the principalship. All five of the programs offered seminars to supplement their curriculum. Topics covered in seminars include effective leadership, budget and finance, personnel, school law, school safety, instructional strategies, and media and communication (Virginia Beach, 2006a; Chesapeake, 2006; Chicago, 2006; Fairfax, 2006; New York, 2006).

Field-based experiences were only used in New York City (2006). In fact, part of the requirement for completion of the program in New York City is to participate in an internship (residency) at the school level for one year with the building principal serving as a mentor. Virginia Beach (2006a) and Fairfax (2006) utilize the mentor relationship as one of the components of their program. Formal internships, outside of New York City, were not used by the school divisions cited herein.

Benefits of a Formal Principal Preparation Program

Research is emerging on the positive impact a formal principal preparation program can have on student achievement as well as on providing a high quality pool of school leaders prepared to fill administrative vacancies. In recognition of this fact, the Council of Chief State School Officers commissioned the ISLLC with developing national performance standards for school leaders (Interstate, 1996). The six components of the ISLLC report were presented earlier in this chapter. Davis et al. (2000) applauded the large gains in reading and mathematics scores for its students on national achievement tests in North Carolina and Connecticut, two states that developed a comprehensive professional development program for teachers and administrators to target improving student achievement. New York City leaders attribute the improvements in student achievement to the success of the school division's Leadership Academy (New York, 2006).

The benefits of a formal principal preparation program can be seen by the large number of program graduates that receive promotions to fill vacancies within a school division. Virginia Beach's Futures Project Principals' Academy graduates have filled 112 assistant principal positions and 15 principal positions since 2002 (S. Adams, personal communication, April 14, 2006). Further, Olwen Herron, Director of Organizational

Development in VBCPS, stated that as of the completion of Academy IX, virtually all of VBCPS current assistant principals will have graduated from the academy (O. Herron, personal communication, June 15, 2006). Graduates of the New York City Leadership Academy currently serve in 95% of leadership positions in the Department of Education and over the past two years more than 20% of all newly appointed principals are graduates of the program (New York, 2006).

The programs in place in Fairfax, Chesapeake, and Chicago are all designed to prepare future school leaders trained in the vision and mission of the school division to fill impending vacancies (Fairfax, 2006, Chesapeake, 2006, Chicago, 2006). New York City as part of the selection process requires a five-year commitment to serve in the school division as a means to ensure that the division has a sufficient base of trained applicants to fill vacancies (New York, 2006).

Summary

The twenty-first century principal is faced with increased levels of accountability, expanded roles of responsibility, and increased demands from politicians and stakeholders. Concurrently, school divisions are tasked with finding quality administrative candidates who have the requisite abilities to lead in a time of change. The combination of these two issues has created a profession under stress that requires immediate and effective solutions (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Childress et al., 2003; Kaplan et al., 2005, Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

Fullan (2001) concluded “the role of the principal has in fact become dramatically more complex, overloaded, and unclear over the past decade” (p. 137). This point was supported throughout the literature review and noted as the “expanding” or “changing” role

of the principal. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) reported that 75% of principals noted the increased focus on test scores, accountability, and closing achievement gaps as having a significant impact on their daily practices. Childress et al. (2003) also found these same issues as they relate to the principal as instructional leader. Similarly, DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) reported the increase in paperwork, email communication, and special education meetings as expanded roles affecting principals' daily tasks. Childress et al. (2003) discussed autonomy conflict as a daily problematic role facing principals. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003), Kaplan et al. (2005), and West (2002) discussed the "main" or "core" "roles" or "standards" of the contemporary principal. Similarities within these standards included defining and communicating a school's mission or vision, managing the organization, monitoring student progress, and nurturing a positive learning climate.

Problems and issues noted throughout the literature review included the increased number of hours principals worked each week to complete job responsibilities, the increased responsibilities in instructional leadership and accountability, and the increased professional development needs of staff (Diamantes & Rayfield, 2004; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Kaplan et al., 2005). Eighty-four percent of principals in the DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) study reported working more than 50 hours per week and 16% reported working more than 60 hours per week. Principals noted issues with instructional leadership and the pressure to raise scores on standardized tests as well as providing staff development that targets data-driven decision making, differentiated instruction, and technology in the classroom. Childress et al. (2003) illustrated the conflict principals face with accountability and balancing resources between meeting state standards and federal mandates and meeting the needs of a diverse group of learners. The need for focused principal preparation programs

based on best practices was a recurring theme throughout the literature review (Dipaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Childress et al., (2003); Kaplan et al., 2005, Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

The review of literature herein describes the various roles of the principalship and documents the need for additional assistance by school divisions to help meet the needs of current principals as well as to create opportunities for aspiring school leaders to receive the requisite training to experience success on the job. Components of each of the school program models can serve as a conceptual framework to build a strong support program for principals who are currently serving in the role of principal, or for school divisions who have decided to proactively address preparing principals for expanding leadership roles. Duke (1992) reasoned that the needs of current administrators can not be met only by the knowledge derived from coursework and theory but must be supplemented from another source.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Methods

Chapter 3 contains a description of the methodology used to conduct a qualitative case study of a suburban school division's aspiring administrators' leadership academy. Specifically, the purpose of this research study was to determine whether graduates of the school division's leadership academy were better prepared for the principalship than those assistant principals and principals within the division who did not participate in the leadership academy. The seven major components of this chapter include the assumptions and rationale for a qualitative study, setting and participant selection procedures, informed consent and permission procedures, data collection procedures, data quality procedures, data analysis procedures, and a brief summary. In addition, subheadings within each section provide detailed descriptions which include the role of the researcher, assurance of confidentiality, focus group protocols, and the credibility and dependability of study results.

Research Questions

Four specific questions guided this study: (1) Are school personnel who participate in a formal school division sponsored leadership training program better prepared for the principalship than those personnel who have not had any additional school division sponsored leadership training?, (2) How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in attracting, training, and recommending school personnel for administrative positions?, (3) How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in preparing school administrators to handle specific issues related to school leadership (fiscal, plant operations, human

resources, curriculum and instruction)?, and (4) Has the Futures Leadership Academy been equally effective for school administrators at the elementary, middle, and high school level?

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

Type of Design

A qualitative design was selected to conduct a case study of a school division's leadership academy. Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as "...an inquiry process of understanding based on methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a social or human problem" (p. 15). Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting and seeks to explore human behavior within the context of a bounded program. The qualitative researcher wants to answer the "what" and the "how" questions. The "what" question may involve a phenomenon, a person, or a program; whereas, the "how" question looks at the effects of the study focus on all stakeholders within a bounded system (Hatch, 2002).

A case study approach was selected based on its usefulness and appropriateness for this particular study. According to Yin (1994), a case study is a special kind of qualitative work that investigates a contextualized, contemporary phenomenon within a specified boundary. Merriam (1988) presented examples of a bounded phenomenon in education as "...a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group" (p. 13). Case study characteristics include examining a particular subject bounded in time and space, providing a detailed description of contextual material about the case setting, gathering extensive material from multiple sources to provide an in-depth picture of the case, and using the researcher as an instrument of data collection (Creswell, 1998).

This qualitative case study was conducted using the philosophical assumptions of *Epistemology* and *Methodology*. The *Epistemology* research paradigm examines the

relationship of the researcher to the research and involves the researcher as a data collection instrument. The goal is for the researcher to get close to the subject being researched. The researcher is able to meet this goal due to his position in the field of study as he is considered an “insider” by the participants. The *Methodology* research paradigm involves the rich descriptions of the case and its setting as well as the use of an inductive data analysis approach. *Methodology* also requires a study to be conducted within its context using an emerging design. The researcher followed this process in data collection and analysis (Creswell, 1998; Hatch, 2002).

In summary, the researcher’s selection of a qualitative case study provides the best method to study a school division’s leadership academy for the following reasons. First, the system to be studied is a bounded system unique to this particular school division. Second, a case study approach allows the researcher to serve as a data collection instrument when conducting interviews or observations. Third, the program under review is described in great detail by the researcher. Fourth, the researcher organized and analyzed the data according to general themes first before honing in on the most salient themes. Finally, the results are presented in such a manner to benefit the school division as they continue to modify the leadership academy program to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

Role of the Researcher

Creswell (1998) defined the role of the researcher in qualitative research: “The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15). Merriam (1988), Yin (1994), Patton (1990), and Hatch (2002) cite the role of the researcher in qualitative research as a

data collection instrument. Data collected by the researcher in this study includes interviews, observations, field notes, and document reviews.

The researcher in this case study not only works in the school division but also has participated in and graduated from the leadership academy under review. Thus, the researcher considered the concept of *Reflexivity* as an essential component to ensure the integrity of the study. Hatch (2002) defined *reflexivity* as the researcher's ability "to keep track of one's influence on a setting, to bracket one's biases, and to monitor one's emotional responses" (p. 10). Therefore, it was imperative for the researcher to admit his positive attitude about his experiences in the leadership academy.

The researcher's personal experiences in the leadership academy included two distinct components of the leadership academy. The first involved the principal preparation program and occurred during the researcher's first year as an assistant principal. This experience helped the researcher more effectively complete the daily responsibilities of his position and at the same time exposed him to specific aspects of the role of a building principal. The researcher's second encounter with the leadership academy was during his first year as a building principal. The researcher participated in seminars and activities designed to help new principals meet the demands of the job. In addition, the researcher was assigned a veteran principal to serve as his mentor for the entire year.

The leadership academy provided the researcher with the ability to handle a myriad of responsibilities on a daily basis. These responsibilities included budget, personnel, school law, instructional leadership, supervision of staff and students, and community relations. The anxiety level with some of these tasks was enormous and the researcher was grateful to his school division for creating a leadership academy for aspiring principals and a mentorship

program for first-year principals to use as a resource in times of need. The opportunity to participate in such a program designed to teach “real” tasks associated with the principalship was of great value to the researcher.

To control for any bias, *Epoche* will be employed. Patton (1990) discussed epoche in terms of the researcher’s need to become completely aware of personal bias and to control this bias to gain clarity or eliminate preconceptions. This clarity of awareness is necessary for the researcher to bracket or separate any preconceptions about the effectiveness or importance of the leadership academy (Moustakas, 1994).

Setting and Participant Selection Procedures

Selection Process

The study selection process emerged from the research documented in the review of literature as well as the work experience of the researcher. The review of literature illustrated the need for school divisions to (a) supplement the training provided by traditional university-based principal preparation programs, (b) create training programs for personnel who aspire to move into school leadership positions, and (c) offer alternative licensure pathways for interested individuals who either do not have the requisite university degree or who work outside of the public school setting. The researcher was fortunate enough to work in a school division that has such a program. The combination of the review of literature and the researcher’s work experience framed the selection of the school division and the program for review in this study.

Setting

This study was conducted in a large suburban public school division (hereafter referred to as AAA Public Schools) in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The

school division is located in a city that covers over 310 square miles with a population of approximately 441,000. In 2006-07, AAA Public Schools served approximately 72,000 students housed in 87 schools. The operating budget for 2006-07 was \$672,876,989 representing an increase of approximately \$70 million from 2005-06. In 2006-07, for the second consecutive year, one hundred percent of AAA Public Schools met full state accreditation standards and the school division met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined by No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

In 2006-07, AAA Public Schools operated 56 elementary schools, kindergarten through grade five, housing approximately 32,000 students. Thirteen middle schools, grades six through eight, housed approximately 17,000 students and 11 high schools, grades nine through twelve, housed approximately 23,000 students. AAA Public Schools also operated seven alternative centers and ten academies. The alternative centers consisted of programs designed for students who struggled academically, had severe discipline problems, or had a vocational interest. The academies operated within selected schools and provided a more focused curriculum in the areas of math and science, health sciences, law, visual and performing arts, global studies, technology, and International Baccalaureate.

The organizational structure of AAA Public Schools comprised eight main departments: School Administration, Human Resources, Curriculum and Instruction (C & I), Accountability, Technology, Administrative Support Services, Budget and Finance, and Media and Communications. An 11 member elected school board oversees all operations of the school division. The leadership of AAA Public Schools included the superintendent, deputy superintendent, eight assistant superintendents, 23 directors, and 86 school principals or directors.

For purposes of this study, the Department of School Administration (DOSA) will be of particular importance. Within DOSA is the Office of Organizational Development (OD). Organizational Development is comprised of one director, 11 specialists, and 10 full time staff that are tasked with designing staff development activities for all instructional staff based on best practices. The Office of Organizational Development's primary function is to initiate, sponsor, and manage professional development for all employees in AAA Public Schools. One component of professional development offered by OD is the Futures Leadership Academy. The Futures Leadership Academy is a program for current and aspiring administrators designed to develop school leaders with the requisite skills to promote continuous school improvement.

Participants

The researcher selected a purposeful sampling method in conjunction with criterion and stratified sampling to select study participants. Purposeful sampling is a logical and powerful sampling method that allows for relatively small samples to be selected purposefully. Purposefully means the selection of information-rich cases that are subjected to in-depth study (Patton, 1990). Patton noted that information-rich cases are cases where the researcher "...can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (p. 169).

The researcher included criterion sampling as the method to select a purposeful sample of information-rich cases. Patton (1990) found that utilizing more than one sampling method, or mixed method, would further contribute to sample reliability. Criterion sampling is a quality assurance approach that allows the researcher to study cases that meet certain predetermined criterion of importance. The researcher has established specific criterion,

Figure 1, for participation in the study. First, study participants must have been employees of the school division and must have served in an administrative capacity at some time between 2001-2007. Second, the administrators were separated into groups based on their position, level of administration, and academy status. From this group the researcher selected the members of the two administrative focus groups using stratified random sampling. Third, the four assistant superintendents who evaluate principals were selected to participate.

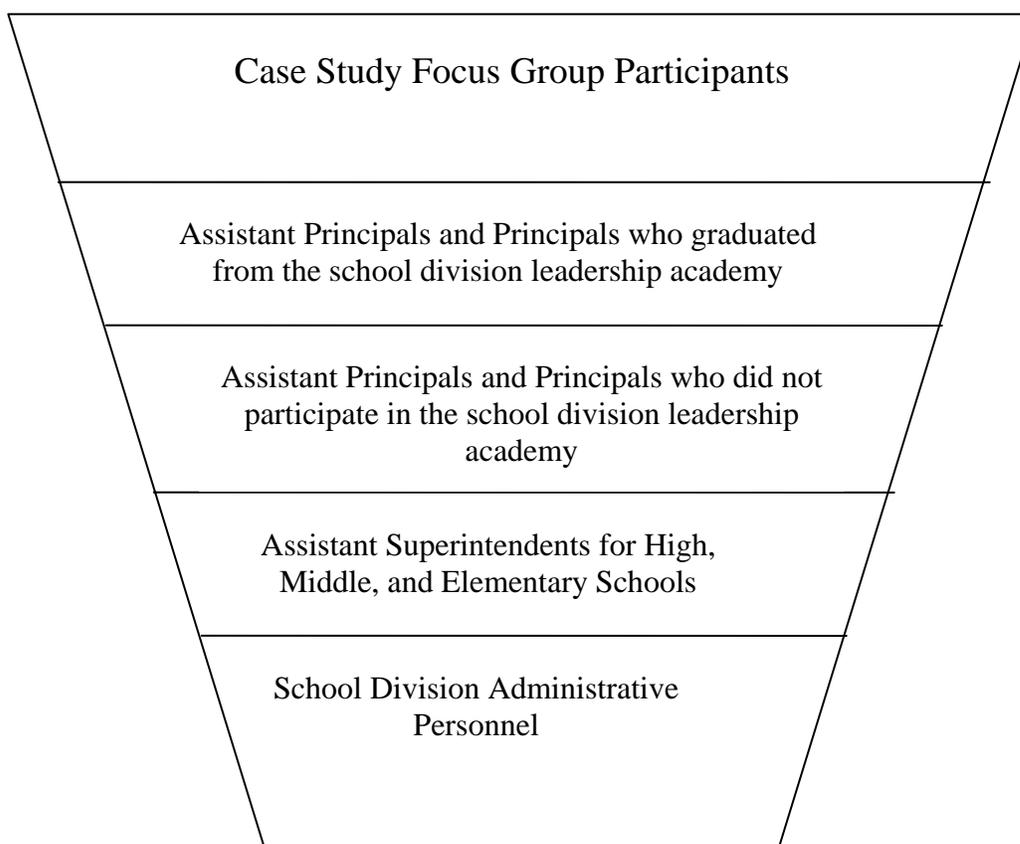


Figure 1: *Criterion Sample Selection Matrix*

Study participants were selected from a population of 147 assistant principals and 88 principals/directors employed by AAA Public Schools in the 2006-07 school year. At the time of the study, out of 235 school level administrators, 127 (112 assistant principals and 15 principals/directors) had completed the school division's leadership academy and were eligible for selection in focus group one. Six of the 127 were randomly sampled to include

one assistant principal and one principal from the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Focus group two was drawn from a population of 108 (35 assistant principals and 73 principals/directors) school level administrators who had not participated in the school division's leadership academy. Six of the 108 were randomly sampled to include one assistant principal and one principal from the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The random sampling procedure for selection of focus group one and focus group two is as follows: Prospective participants were separated into stratified groups according to (a) principal or assistant principal, (b) level of administration (ES, MS, HS), and (c) academy graduates and non-academy graduates. The researcher assigned each prospective participant from each of the stratified groups a number beginning with one and continuing sequentially until all potential participants had been assigned a number. A random number generator was then used to select the random sample for inclusion into focus group one and focus group two. Focus Group Three consisted of the four assistant superintendents who evaluate principals. Appendix J lists the characteristics of participants in each of the three focus groups. Finally, the researcher reserves the option to conduct a fourth focus group if saturation is not reached at the conclusion of the interviews.

Informed Consent and Permission Procedures

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher reviewed the ethics and procedures for conducting research presented by Patton (1990) and Lock et al. (2000). Full and complete disclosure to all participants at all times during the study was followed. The researcher strictly adhered to all procedures and regulations prescribed by the school division and the university. Specifically, the researcher completed the necessary paperwork to gain the

approval of AAA Public Schools to conduct research within their school division as well as to complete all requirements set forth by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

With the approval of both parties, the researcher then selected participants for the study and sought their permission using all prescribed procedures. Participants were given an informed consent form to sign that follows Creswell's (1998) model for gaining consent approval. Components of this approval include: (a) participation in the study is voluntary, (b) the participants right to withdraw at any time from the study, (c) the purpose of the study and the data collection procedures to be used, (d) an assurance of confidentiality statement, (e) a statement listing any risks to the participants, (f) any expected benefits to the participants, and (g) a signature and date line giving permission to participate in the study.

The final stage in the informed consent process involved the researcher providing all consent form signed documents (AAA Public Schools and IRB approval) to all participants prior to the interview. The researcher instructed the participants to review the documents carefully and to ask questions if they did not understand any part of the documents. On the day of the interview, the researcher again reviewed the documents and provided an opportunity for questions prior to beginning the formal interview. Finally, a copy of the consent form is included in the appendix of this document.

Assurance of Confidentiality

The researcher took every precaution to ensure the confidentiality of participants. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim; however, the researcher used a coded system when presenting interview question responses to protect the identity of participants. No information was released to any party listing the actual name of the respondent without

the express written consent of said respondent. Finally, the audiotapes were destroyed at the completion of the study.

Gaining Access and Entry

The researcher first contacted the Director of Organizational Development to obtain permission to conduct a study on the principal preparation program operated by AAA Public Schools. When permission was given, the researcher then contacted the Department of Accountability to determine the requirements for conducting research within the school division. Requirements to conduct research in AAA Public Schools include: (a) an application to conduct research, (b) a copy of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the researcher's university, (c) a concise description of the study purpose, research design, methodology, plan for analyzing data, and value to the school system, (d) a copy of the informed consent letter for participants and the data collection instrument, and (e) a signed agreement to abide by all conditions set forth in school board policy.

Data Collection Procedures

Focus Groups

Focus group research involves an organized group interview that allows the researcher to obtain several perspectives on the same topic in a relatively small amount of time (Patton, 1990). Powell et al (1996) defines a focus group as "A group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research" (p. 499). Focus groups are generally comprised of a homogenous group, with regard to specific characteristics, of six to ten people (Powell & Single, 1996; Patton, 1990). The researcher will follow focus group protocols when selecting participants for this study.

Focus group research has both benefits and limitations to be considered by the researcher. The benefits of focus groups to the researcher include the opportunity to conduct multiple interviews at the same time as well as to gain the insight and data produced by the interaction between participants. Limitations to be considered are the difficulty in keeping participants focused on the topic, ensuring that all group members have the opportunity to provide input, and outcomes which can not be easily predetermined (Gibbs, 1997).

Patton (1990) concludes that focus group interviews are indeed interviews and therefore require the same quality controls as a one-on-one interview. Conducting a focus group interview requires the researcher to carefully plan for a structured approach in five areas: (a) preparing for the session, (b) developing the questions, (c) planning the session, (d) facilitating the session, and (e) ending the session (McNamara, 1999).

Preparing for the session involves identifying the major objectives of the meeting, notifying participants of the exact time and location of the interview, and gathering all needed materials for recording the interview session. Developing the questions involves a careful review of the topic and literature to create questions that are clear, concise, and designed to gather the necessary data for the study. Planning the session involves several items which include: (a) scheduling a one to two hour time period to conduct the interviews at a convenient time for all participants, (b) selecting a comfortable location with preferably a large circular table, (c) providing name tags and refreshments for the participants upon arrival, (d) establishing the ground rules in advance, (e) developing and sharing a comprehensive agenda, and (f) securing all equipment needed to audiotape the interview (McNamara, 1999).

Facilitating the session involves a general introduction of participants and an ice-breaker activity. This is followed by a detailed explanation of interview protocols, agenda review, and answering any questions which the participants may have. Next, the question and answer period begins and the researcher, referred to as a moderator in focus group research, is tasked with ensuring that each question is accurately presented and that even participation of group members exists. Finally, the researcher closes the session by reviewing the occurrences of the meeting, thanking the participants for attending, and adjourning the meeting (McNamara, 1999). Immediately after the session the researcher must complete several tasks. These tasks include verifying the tape recorder captured the entire interview, clarifying any notes made during the session, and noting any unusual occurrences or comments from the interview.

Focus Group Interview Protocol

In a focus group setting the researcher serves as the facilitator or moderator. Gibbs (1997) discussed the important role the moderator plays in focus groups, “The role of the moderator is a demanding and challenging one, and moderators will need to possess good interpersonal skills and personal qualities, be good listeners, non-judgmental and adaptable” (p. 5). Hatch (2002) and Patton (1990) presented the role of the moderator as the group facilitator who encourages participants to engage in high quality dialogue centered on the topic of interest. The use of a field test provided the researcher the opportunity to practice his group interview skills.

Interview procedures that are research based were used and all protocols were strictly followed. The researcher followed Creswell’s (1998) model for an interview protocol. Components of the interview protocol include the title of the project; the date, time and place

of the interview; the name of the interviewer and the interviewee; a brief description of the project; the interview questions; and a closing remark thanking participants for their time.

Focus Group Interview Questions

The researcher used open-ended questions to solicit the opinions of participants. Patton (1990) noted “the purpose of open-ended questions is not to put things in someone’s mind, but to access the perspectives of the person being interviewed” (p. 278). Research questions were correlated with interview questions to ensure that data from the interviews would yield findings that corresponded with the research questions. Table 3 presents a matrix illustrating this correlation.

Content validity for the interview instrument was reached through the use of a panel of experts to assess potential questions followed by a field test of the instrument with a select group of administrators. The panel included the Director of Organizational Development and the Director of the Leadership Academy. Results of the field test allowed the researcher to assess the clarity, readability, and reliability of all questions. Field test results yielded the required 80% benchmark for clarity, readability, and reliability thus, no changes were made to the questions.

Table 3

Chain of Evidence Matrix

Research Question	Focus Group One	Focus Group Two	Focus Group Three	Document Review
1. Are school personnel who participate in a formal school division sponsored leadership training program better prepared for the principalship than those personnel who have not had any additional school division sponsored leadership training?	<p>1. (Everyone in this group is a graduate of the Futures Leadership Academy). Discuss how you felt this experience helped prepare you for your present role.</p> <p>2. (In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader). How did you obtain the skills that you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?</p> <p>3. Discuss your knowledge of school finance. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p> <p>4. (Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required). Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p> <p>5. (Management of human resources is another requirement for us all). Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>1. (In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader). How did you obtain the skills that you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?</p> <p>2. Discuss your knowledge of school finance. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p> <p>3. (Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required). Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p> <p>4. (Management of human resources is another requirement for us all). Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>3. Do you think the Futures Leadership Academy has been effective in preparing principals? If yes, how? If no, why?</p> <p>4. What differences do you see in principals who participated in the Futures Leadership Academy and those who did not?</p> <p>5. How successful do you feel the Futures Leadership Academy has been in providing AAA public schools with a high quality pool of potential administrators?</p> <p>6. What do you see as the strengths of the Futures Leadership Academy?</p> <p>7. What weaknesses do you see or what changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of the Futures Leadership Academy?</p>	N/A

table continues

Table 3 (continued)

Chain of Evidence Matrix

Research Question	Focus Group One	Focus Group Two	Focus Group Three	Document Review
1. Are school personnel who participate in a formal school division sponsored leadership training program better prepared for the principalship than those personnel who have not had any additional school division sponsored leadership training?	6. Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you? 7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your Academy experience, your university coursework, your experience on the job, or a combination of the three?	5. Where did you obtain your essential knowledge and skills that allow you to handle the daily tasks of the principalship? 7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your Academy experience, your university coursework, your experience on the job, or a combination of the three?		
2. How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in attracting, training, and recommending school personnel for administrative positions?	1. (Everyone in this group is a graduate of the Futures Leadership Academy). Discuss how you felt this experience helped prepare you for your present role. 2. (In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader). How did you obtain the skills that you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader? 3. Discuss your knowledge of school finance. Where did you receive this knowledge?	N/A	3. Do you think the Futures Leadership Academy has been effective in preparing principals? If yes, how? If no, why? 4. What differences do you see in principals who participated in the Futures Leadership Academy and those who did not? 5. How successful do you feel the Futures Leadership Academy has been in providing AAA public schools with a high quality pool of potential administrators? 6. What do you see as the strengths of the Futures Leadership Academy?	2006-07 Academy graduate promotion data report provided by the Office of Organizational Development

table continues

Table 3 (continued)

Chain of Evidence Matrix

Research Question	Focus Group One	Focus Group Two	Focus Group Three	Document Review
2. How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in attracting, training, and recommending school personnel for administrative positions?	<p>4. (Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required). Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p> <p>5. (Management of human resources is another requirement for us all). Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p> <p>6. Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you?</p>			
3. How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in preparing school administrators to handle specific issues related to school leadership (fiscal, plant, human resources, curriculum and instruction)?	<p>1. (Everyone in this group is a graduate of the Futures Leadership Academy). Discuss how you felt this experience helped prepare you for your present role.</p> <p>2. (In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader). How did you obtain the skills that you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?</p>	N/A	<p>3. Do you think the Futures Leadership Academy has been effective in preparing principals? If yes, how? If no, why?</p> <p>4. What differences do you see in principals who participated in the Futures Leadership Academy and those who did not?</p> <p>6. What do you see as the strengths of the Futures Leadership Academy?</p>	Futures Leadership Academy Pedagogy and Seminar Topics (see Appendix F and G)

table continues

Table 3 (continued)

Chain of Evidence Matrix

Research Question	Focus Group One	Focus Group Two	Focus Group Three	Document Review
3. How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in preparing school administrators to handle specific issues related to school leadership (fiscal, plant, human resources, curriculum and instruction)?	<p>3. Discuss your knowledge of school finance. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p> <p>4. (Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required). Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p> <p>5. (Management of human resources is another requirement for us all). Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p> <p>6. Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you?</p>			
4. Has the Futures Leadership Academy been equally effective for school administrators at the elementary, middle, and high school level?	<p>6. Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you?</p> <p>8. After completing your masters program and the Futures Leadership Academy, in what areas would you like to have more training?</p>	N/A	<p>3. Do you think the Futures Leadership Academy has been effective in preparing principals? If yes, how? If no, why?</p> <p>4. What differences do you see in principals who participated in the Futures Leadership Academy and those who did not?</p>	N/A

Open-Ended Interview Questions (Focus Group One)

1. Everyone in this group is a graduate of the Futures Leadership Academy. Discuss how you felt this experience helped prepare you for your present role.
2. In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader. How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?
3. Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?
4. Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?
5. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?
6. Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you?
7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your Academy experience, your university coursework, your experience on the job, or a combination of the three?
8. After completing your masters program and the Futures Leadership Academy, in what areas would you like to have more training?

Open-Ended Interview Questions (Focus Group Two)

1. In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader. How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?
2. Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?
3. Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?
4. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?
5. Where did you obtain your essential knowledge and skills that allow you to handle the daily tasks of the principalship?
6. Why have you not participated in the Futures Leadership Academy?
7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your university coursework, your experience on the job, or a combination of the two?
8. After completing your masters program and other school sponsored professional development, in what areas would you like to have more training?

Open-Ended Interview Questions (Focus Group Three)

1. Discuss your role as an assistant superintendent focusing on the methods you employ to evaluate principals.

2. What is your role in the Futures Leadership Academy?
3. Do you think the Futures Academy has been effective in preparing principals? If yes, how? If no, why?
4. What differences do you see in principals who participated in the Futures Leadership Academy and those who did not?
5. How successful do you feel the Futures Leadership Academy has been in providing AAA public schools with a high quality pool of potential school administrators?
6. What do you see as the strengths of the Futures Leadership Academy?
7. What weaknesses do you see or what changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of the Futures Leadership Academy?

Field Test

The interview instrument used in the three focus groups was field tested by a select group of principals and assistant principals. The field test group included two principals and two assistant principals who graduated from the school division's Futures Leadership Academy as well as one assistant principal (one assistant principal was unable to attend) and two principals who did not participate in the academy. Field test group responses were used to assess the clarity and reliability of questions in measuring the respondent's level of preparation for the principalship. Feedback from the field test group did not require the researcher to edit the interview questions.

Data Quality Procedures

The researcher used prescribed data quality procedures to ensure that the study was credible and valid, the results are transferable, and the methods are dependable. The

combination of the three lends rigor to the study and provides support to the results (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1984). This section details the procedures used to ensure credibility and validity in conducting the study and presenting results.

Credibility

The goal of qualitative inquiry is to provide high quality data that are credible, accurate, and true to the subject under study. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher serves as the data collection instrument and requires that he/she carefully reflect on, deal with, and report potential sources of bias and error. Credible research requires that the researcher remain neutral at all times with regard to the subject under study. The researcher in this study entered data collection with no predetermined outcome theory. Further, the researcher was committed to reporting results accurately with the sole purpose of fully understanding the study under review.

The researcher added to the validity of this study through data triangulation. Patton (1990) notes that triangulation is an important way to strengthen a study design. Data triangulation involves collecting data from a variety of sources. Patton concludes, “Combinations of interviewing, observation, and document analysis are expected in much social science fieldwork” (p. 187-188). The researcher triangulated his data by conducting interviews in focus groups, completing observations of the academy program, and reviewing appropriate academy program documents to add to the validity of this study. Results were reported in a thorough manner noting all processes for gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data.

Data Analysis Procedures

Miles and Huberman (1984) list three concurrent flows of activity in data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The researcher's challenge is to make sense out of a massive amount of data, to organize the data by patterns or themes, and to communicate the essence of what the data reveals (Patton, 1990; Hatch, 2002). The researcher used three areas to present his plan for data analysis. They are data management, data analysis, and data representation. This section details the methods used to organize and reduce raw data into meaningful pieces, and to transform the meaningful pieces into results.

Data Management

In this case study, the researcher collected data from three sources that included focus group interviews, document analysis, and observations. Creswell (1998) suggests that the researcher decide early on how he or she will store data in a structured, organized format, and in a safe location to ensure its protection from damage. The researcher exercised care to accurately and systematically collect and protect data throughout the duration of the study.

The researcher's purpose in the focus group interviews was to investigate whether academy program graduates are better prepared for the principalship than non-academy graduates. To collect focus group interview data, the researcher used two tape recorders to record the interview session and had a secretary take anecdotal notes. The researcher made this decision based on the nature of conducting focus group interviews. In focus group interviews, the researcher acts as a moderator or facilitator who has specific responsibilities to follow (Patton, 1990; Hatch, 2002; Gibbs, 1997). The researcher did not feel comfortable taking notes and moderating the interview session at the same time. Therefore, the researcher

enlisted the assistance of a secretary to take notes during the interviews to add to the richness of data collection.

At the conclusion of the focus group interviews, the researcher had the secretary type her notes and transcribe verbatim the audio-taped interviews. Focus group participants were coded according to a number (1-16) and a letter (A-C) given by the researcher prior to the start of the interview. The number sequence represents the 16 participants in the three focus groups. The letter designation represents each of the three focus groups. The participant referred to himself as “1A” or “2C” depending on the number and group they are in.

The researcher’s primary purpose in reviewing documents was to investigate whether the original goals of the academy program to provide the school division with effective school leaders has been reached. To gather the necessary information, the researcher extensively reviewed all documents with regards to the Futures Leadership Academy. Documents for review included the academy program’s implementation process, mission statement, budget, design, methodology, staff characteristics, and graduate statistics. The researcher organized this portion of data collection into three general themes: implementation (to include mission and budget), methodology (to include design and staff characteristics), and graduate statistics (to include the number of promotions).

The researcher’s purpose in conducting observation was to provide a third data source to add to the depth, richness, and validity of study results. Observations included a review of the researcher’s anecdotal notes from his experience in the academy program as well as a visit by the researcher to the newest program cohort, Academy X. At the conclusion of the observation, the researcher organized his notes according to prescribed data collection methods. The researcher followed Creswell’s (1998) suggestion to use an initial sorting

process of field notes into some means that allow the researcher to recognize recurring patterns or themes from the data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in a qualitative case study consists of a detailed description of the case and the setting (Creswell, 1998) in conjunction with a structured approach at analyzing results. The researcher used the constant comparative method of data collection to identify general themes first followed by a detailed discussion of the most salient themes. The constant comparative method is a detailed organizational data analysis process where the researcher follows a prescribed format. This format, endorsed by Maykut and Morehouse (1994), includes: (a) reading and coding each data piece carefully, (b) organizing each data piece into categories, (c) comparing each new data piece to existing categories to determine whether the new data fit an existing category or falls into a new category, (d) looking for emerging themes within each category, and (e) repeating the process for finding the most salient themes. Patton (1990) refers to this type of analysis as inductive. Inductive analysis allows categories “...to emerge from patterns found in the case under study” (p. 44). The researcher used the constant comparative analysis with the focus group interviews, document reviews, and observations.

Data collected from each focus group was first organized by group. Within each group, the researcher looked for categories to emerge that help determine if academy program graduates are better prepared for the principalship. Next, the researcher compared the categories from each focus group to identify recurring themes that help illustrate the level of preparedness of academy program graduates. These themes were then compared to find the most salient themes affecting principal preparation.

Data collected from document reviews and observations were used to supplement the focus group interviews. Specifically, the researcher reviewed each of the documents and observations to determine where they fit into the emerging themes found in the focus groups. The triangulation of data allowed the researcher to present a rich, detailed description of the academy program as well as add support to study conclusions.

Data Representation

The final piece of data analysis involves representing and reporting results. Creswell (1998) refers to this phase of data analysis as the "...packaging of what was found in text, tabular, or figure form" (p. 145). Merriam (1988) noted that "There is no standard format for reporting case study research" (p. 193). The real issue is to accurately portray the results in such a form to thoroughly educate the reader on the subject under study (Patton, 1990).

The researcher used a combination of methods to represent and report findings in this study. A narrative format was used to provide the reader with detailed descriptions of the academy program as well as direct quotations to provide the reader access to the thoughts of the participants. Tables and figures were used to enlighten the reader to contextual data and to illustrate theme development. The goal of the researcher was to present a report that is both readable and understandable.

Summary

This chapter began with an overview of the methods and a list of questions that led the researcher to his research question. The researcher presented his rationale for selecting a qualitative inquiry using a case study approach to conduct his study followed by his philosophical assumptions, Epistemology and Methodology, and how they fit into the case

study method. Next, the role of the researcher was presented with a discussion of how reflexivity and epoche will impact this role.

The setting and participation selection process detailed the researcher's decision to select this school division's leadership academy and its graduates as the subject of study. Purposeful sampling using a specific criterion to select participants was chosen to provide the researcher with an information-rich group from whom to collect data. Further, a detailed description of the academy program was provided to give the reader a sense of the significance of this program to the school division.

The procedures used by the researcher to gain access and entry from the school division, approval from the IRB, and informed consent from participants followed. A description of focus groups and interview protocols were then presented. In addition, the researcher presented the interview questions and the methods for validating the interview instrument.

Data were collected from focus group interviews, documents, and observations. The subsequent data were then gathered and reported in a truthful fashion using prescribed research-based methods to add credibility and validity to results. Next, data were coded and organized in a systematic fashion to help the researcher reveal the most salient themes. Finally, a narrative approach in conjunction with tables and figures was used by the researcher to present findings.

CHAPTER IV

DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine if graduates of a school division sponsored leadership academy program were better prepared for the principalship than non-graduates. Four research questions investigated whether academy program graduates were better prepared for the principalship than non-program graduates. Data were gathered in the form of focus group interviews, document reviews, and observations. Three focus groups were formed from a sample ($N = 16$) of academy program graduates, non-program graduates, and central office personnel. Documents for review included the academy program's implementation process, mission statement, budget, design, methodology, staff characteristics, and graduate statistics (see Appendix F, G, H, & I). Observations included a review of the researcher's anecdotal notes from his experience in the academy program as well as a visit by the researcher to the current program cohort, Academy X (see Appendix K).

The sample for focus group one ($N = 6$) was drawn from a population of 127 administrators who were graduates of the academy via a random number generator. Each of the administrators was assigned a number between 1 and 127. Six numbers were drawn and the corresponding administrator was invited to participate. Five agreed and one declined. The researcher used the next number from the randomly generated list to select the sixth participant who agreed to participate, thus providing the researcher with his sample of six for focus group one.

The sample for focus group two ($N = 6$) was drawn from a population of 108 administrators who had not participated in the academy via a random number generator. Each of the administrators was assigned a number between 1 and 108. Six numbers were drawn

and the corresponding administrator was invited to participate. Three agreed and three declined. The researcher used the next three numbers from the randomly generated list to select three more participants. Two agreed and one declined. The researcher again used the next number from the randomly generated list to select the sixth candidate who agreed to participate, thus providing the researcher with his sample of six for focus group two.

Focus group three was comprised of the complete population of assistant superintendents (N = 4). The four assistant superintendents were selected based on their role in conducting evaluations of principals.

For all focus groups, participants were provided a copy of their own transcribed comments to review and edit for accuracy. This provided the researcher with content validity in reporting participant responses.

Results reported in chapter IV are in both a narrative and tabular form. The findings section includes a narrative presenting the results from each focus group interview, followed by a report by question according to common themes. From the list of common themes, the researcher presents the emerging themes. Data from reviewed documents and observations are included where applicable in the results. Finally, the summary section concludes the report of findings and previews Chapter V.

Findings

Focus Group One

Focus group one was comprised of six academy graduates and included one assistant principal and one principal from each school level (ES, MS, HS). The results for each question are reported in a narrative format. Raw data from each question can be found in Appendix M.

1. Everyone in this group is a graduate of the Futures Leadership Academy. Discuss how you felt this experience helped prepare you for your present role.

All six participants noted how networking and collaboration in the academy was a benefit in preparing each for the principalship. Participant 3A stated, “You don’t often get the opportunity to network with colleagues because we are so isolated in our schools.” In addition, all six noted the overall professional experience in the academy as either beneficial or very beneficial in preparing for the principalship. Comments included, “I found Futures very helpful,” “Futures provided the big picture of the division,” “It was very beneficial to have first hand information from leaders who presented at Futures”, and finally “The Futures academy was a very rewarding experience for me.”

Four of six noted how exposure to the various departments, who the leaders of those departments were, and how the departments operated in the academy was a benefit in preparing for the principalship. Participant 5A stated, “It was an opportunity for me to see how each of the departments worked together.” Participant 4A noted, “The different departments told us what they do.” Finally, four of six noted how exposure to the key school division players/leaders in the academy was a benefit to each in preparing for the principalship. Participant 1A noted the benefit of exposure to “everybody in a leadership position....” Participant 2A stated, “Overall I think the learning experience from the sitting principals and assistant superintendents helped again and gave us more specific ideas about what the division expects from aspiring principals and assistant principals.” Participant 6A concurred, “I think it gave you a sense of confidence, and you certainly benefited by hearing from the voices of experience.”

Appendix L provides a summary of evaluative feedback by academy cohort and reveals that greater than 78% of academy participants, in eight of nine sessions, felt that the information presented exceeded their expectations. Summary data also reveals the mean of all academy cohorts, by session topic, to be greater than 91%, with a high of 99% in Role of the Assistant Principal, in exceeding participant expectations.

2. In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader. How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?

Five of six noted how the academy's strong emphasis on serving as an instructional leader helped each prepare for the principalship. Participant 5A stated, "The instructional leadership segment was very beneficial to me." Participant 1A concurred, "Futures definitely emphasized being an instructional leader," and 2A noted, "Futures helped me with regards to giving me emphasis on prioritizing instruction above all things."

Three of six noted how exposure to current principals as they discussed the key elements and importance of being an instructional leader in the academy was a benefit in preparing for the principalship. Participant 3A noted, "Having principals at the Futures Academy speak to instruction and their experiences with instruction was very beneficial." Participant 5A concurred. In addition, three of six noted how the instructional leadership sessions in the academy helped each develop instructional monitoring and evaluation skills. Participant 2A stated, "It gave me a lot of innovative ideas for instructional monitoring." Participant 3A noted, "The Futures Academy did a nice job of touching on the key points of specific pieces to look for when evaluating instruction."

In contrast, three of six noted their own experience in conducting classroom observations rather than their academy experience as an important method in developing

as an instructional leader. Participant 1A stated, “I tell you, there is no better tool to hone your instructional leadership skills than by sitting in a classroom observing teachers and helping them become better.” Finally, two of six noted how their own teaching experience has helped each develop into an instructional leader. Participant 6A stated, “I think prior experiences as a teacher can serve as a good foundation as we continue to learn about instruction.”

Evaluative Summary data (see Appendix L) reveals that greater than 87% of academy participants in Instructional Leadership I and greater than 83% of academy participants in Instructional Leadership II felt that the information presented exceeded their expectations. The mean of all academy cohorts in Instructional Leadership I revealed that 95% of participants felt that these sessions exceeded expectations. Similarly, 91% of participants in Instructional Leadership II felt that these sessions exceeded expectations.

3. Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?

Five of six noted that their first exposure to school finances was in the academy and further noted how this experience helped each prepare for the principalship. Participants 1A, 3A, and 5A called the experience an “eye opener” and 2A noted that “I had very little knowledge of school finances until the Futures Academy.” Four of six noted the exposure to the presentations of different budget accounts and item costs in the academy was a benefit in preparing for the principalship. Participant 3A supported this, “I didn’t realize the high dollar value of some of the items that we spend day-to-day and I didn’t realize the different accounts, the many different accounts that are included in a school budget.”

Three of six noted how the academy in-class school finance activities and presentations helped each prepare for the principalship. Participant 3A stated, “I thought

the activities that were presented in the Futures Academy were very beneficial.”

Participant 6A noted “[how] going back to the handbook from Futures and looking at things” has helped her. In addition, three of six noted how the presentations between the principal and his/her bookkeeper, helped each prepare for the principalship. Participant 2A noted how a current principal “discussed his budget priorities” and 4A noted the academy simulation between a principal and his bookkeeper “was very beneficial for me.” Finally, two of six noted how the academy stressed the importance of having a good relationship between the principal and his/her bookkeeper as well as having a working knowledge of the school business manual as a benefit in preparing for the principalship. Participant 1A noted the academy taught him, “It’s working closely with your school bookkeeper and reading the school business manual.”

Evaluative summary data (see Appendix L) reveals that greater than 78% of academy participants in Management of School Finance felt that the information presented exceeded their expectations. The mean of all academy cohorts in Management of School Finance revealed that 92% of participants felt that the sessions exceeded expectations.

4. Management of the school’s physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school’s physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?

All six noted on-the-job training and their own organizational/management style as a keystone to developing their strategies to manage the school’s physical plant operations. Participant 2A stated, “I think I just use my common sense.” Participant 6A concurred, “A bit of common sense, but primarily I see this as on the job experience.” Finally, 1A

noted, “School plant and the maintenance of your facility ... comes from a very strict organizational style.”

Two of six noted how exposure to school plant personnel and their departments in the academy was a benefit in preparing each for the principalship. Participant 2A presented these benefits, “We met with the director of school plant and actually visited the school plant facility to get a first-hand look.”

Evaluative summary data (see Appendix L) reveals that greater than 82% of academy participants in effective communication (this session covered management of the school’s physical plant and operations) felt that the information presented exceeded their expectations. The mean of all academy cohorts in effective communication revealed that 91% of participants felt that the sessions exceeded expectations.

5. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?

All six noted how beneficial the dismissal and compliance presentations in the academy were in preparing for the principalship. Participant 4A stated, “The compliance components were exceptional.” Participant 3A noted, “You knew who to go to in the event that you had to call upon compliance.” Finally, 1A stated, “The compliance piece and the handouts that were provided were very useful.”

Four of six noted how the information on conducting interviews in the academy helped each prepare for the principalship. Participant 2A noted, “Futures reinforced ... conducting legal interviews.” Participant 5A supported this benefit, “The knowledge was received in Futures especially with conducting interviews, questions to ask, and question

that are not legally acceptable.” Three of six noted how academy presentations regarding legal issues within human relations were beneficial in preparing for the principalship.

Participant 6A stated, “I think this is a strength of Futures that was handled very well.”

Finally, two of six noted the presentation by human resources in the academy helped them prepare for the principalship. Participant 5A stated, “Overall the human resources portion was very helpful.” One of six noted how this segment helped him develop team building and collaboration skills. Participant 2A stated, “It gave [me] a lot of innovative ideas for developing a collaborative approach to team building.”

Evaluative summary data (see Appendix L) reveals that greater than 82% of academy participants in Management of Human Resources felt that the information presented exceeded their expectations. The mean of all academy cohorts in Management of Human Resources revealed that 95% of participants felt that the sessions exceeded expectations.

6. Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you?

Five of six noted the value of the practical application of the information in the academy as a benefit in preparing for the principalship. Participant 2A stated, “I think the practical application of the theories that we learned in the academy was beneficial.”

Participant 3A concurred and noted how useful the “more practical” application of information was and 4A stated, “What the Futures Academy did was it gave me the big picture.”

Three of six reiterated networking with other school personnel in leadership positions in the academy as helpful in preparing for the principalship. Participant 6A supported this, “The first thing that comes to mind is the networking ... you made these

relationships with people.” In addition, three of six noted the value of the Booth Survey used in the academy as a benefit in helping each hone their leadership style. Participant 3A stated, “I think it [Booth Survey] helped me to focus in on my leadership style.” Finally, three of six noted the support and value of the academy as a benefit in helping each prepare for the principalship. Participant 1A stated, “This academy really provided you with a great foundation to be successful.” Participant 5A noted, “I was treated royally. I really felt special and that was important.” Finally, one of six noted the role playing activities in the academy as a great benefit in helping each prepare for the principalship. Participant 5A stated, “The role playing of what to do in an emergency or in a crisis situation was helpful.”

7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your Academy experience, your university coursework, your experience on the job, or a combination of the three?

Four of six noted how the academy helped refine their leadership style. Participant 2A stated, “I think the biggest impact for the academy is its actually identifying your strengths and weaknesses.” Participant 1A concurred, “The academy really lets you be the leader you wanted to be ... [and] you are able to come away with other ideas about your own leadership style.”

Three of six noted the combination of the academy and on the job experience helped refine their leadership style. Participant 3A stated, “The combination of the academy experience and on the job experience has been very beneficial to me and it has helped me refine my leadership role.” Finally, three of six noted a combination of the three served to refine their leadership style. All three respondents ranked the university coursework as

the least important in refining their leadership style. Participant 6A noted, “I think it is a combination of the three ... [with] the university coursework at the bottom of the three.”

8. After completing your masters program and the Futures Leadership Academy, in what areas would you like to have more training?

Four of six noted the need for further training in the area of school finance. Three of six noted the need for further training in the area of compliance. Two of six noted the need for further training in the area of special education. Finally, two of six noted the need for further training in the area of instructional leadership.

To support these responses, a review of academy documents shows changes to the pedagogy (see Appendix G) based on participant feedback such as the inception of a special education component in Academy X. Further, compliance and instructional leadership are listed as current areas of training in the academy pedagogy (Appendix F).

Focus Group Two

Focus group two was comprised of six administrators who had not participated in the academy program and included one assistant principal and one principal from each school level (ES, MS, HS). The results for each question are reported in a narrative format. Raw data from each question can be found in Appendix N.

1. In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader. How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?

All six noted their teaching experience as the main avenue for obtaining their instructional leadership skills. Participant 4B noted how his teaching experience helped develop his instructional skills. He stated, “I taught anywhere. I was a social studies teacher. I taught from 6th grade to 12th grade in a middle school, a junior high, and a

high school.” Likewise 6B attributed her classroom experience as the cornerstone of helping to develop instructional leadership skills when she stated, “sixteen years of teaching both junior high and high school.”

Four of six noted how observing teachers helped each develop their instructional leadership skills. Participant 1B stated, “I spend a lot of time in classrooms and I share back and forth from teacher to teacher and grade level to grade level.” Participant 5B noted how observing teachers helped to develop his instructional leadership skills when he stated, “I have worked with teachers at all different levels ... and served as a supervisor to student teachers for many of those years.”

Three of six noted their experience as an assistant principal helped each develop their instructional leadership skills. Participant 4B discussed the various roles he had served in as an assistant principal that helped him acquire the skills necessary to be an instructional leader. In addition, three of six noted participation in staff development as a benefit in developing their instructional leadership skills. Participant 3B noted, “Our [staff development] training on how to evaluate teachers ... helped me learn more about instructional strategies.” Finally, three of six noted how collaborating with colleagues helped each develop their instructional leadership skills. Participant 6B noted, “I have had the pleasure to work with some very smart people.” Participant 4B stated, “It was almost like an apprenticeship thing where I went to that person and learned”

Two of six noted their experience in curriculum and instruction as a benefit in helping each hone their instructional leadership skills. Participant 1B stated, “I worked as a curriculum specialist for three years and was able to see the framework of our school division.”

One of six mentioned each of the following as helping them hone their instructional leadership skills: (a) observations of their principal; (b) experience as a college teacher; (c) experience as an assistant principal; (d) experience as a department chairperson; (e) experience as an activity sponsor; and, (f) experience as a parent.

2. Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?

Five of six noted their knowledge of school finance as a great weakness. Participant 1B noted, "I agree it's definitely the weakest area when entering the principalship." Participant 3B concurred with the lack of training, "I have to tell you one of the drawbacks in becoming a principal was the money, the finance piece." All three principals noted this lack of knowledge as a major area of concern.

Four of six noted they received their finance training via college coursework. All three assistant principals noted their knowledge came from college coursework compared to only one of three principals. Participant 2B understood from his college coursework, "what part was from the state, what part was from the federal government, and what part was from the local government." In addition, four of six noted they received their knowledge of school finances via mentorship with other principals. Participant 4B, an assistant principal, noted "Several principals I have worked with basically were trying to help the assistant principals get some idea of what or how finances work in the building." Participant 6B, a principal, noted "Talking with other principals who were more experienced than me helped." All three principals noted how mentorships helped each learn school finance. Finally, four of six noted working with their bookkeeper as a key to learning school finance.

All three principals noted the importance of having a good bookkeeper. Participant

3B noted, “I inherited a bookkeeper who ended up stealing from me and that has been a valuable lesson.” Participant 1B stated, “I am very fortunate to have one [bookkeeper] now that I work with faithfully every day and we look at money on a regular basis.” All three principals noted the business manual as helping each learn the finance piece. Participant 6B noted, “Communication with Business Services has been very helpful to me.” Two of six noted how their experiences with finance outside of school were helpful in a broad sense. One of six noted on the job training while another noted his central office experience as beneficial to learning school finance.

3. Management of the school’s physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school’s physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?

Four of six noted establishing high expectations with staff as the main strategy they use to manage the school plant. Participant 3B stated, “I walk around the building with my assistant principal and custodial staff and am very demanding and wanting things done meticulously.” Participant 1B noted, “I let them (the custodial staff) know that I have very high expectations and I will demonstrate cleaning an area that was not done properly.” In addition, four of six noted their communication skills as a key strategy to manage the school plant. Participant 1B noted, “About once every sixty days we actually sit down with the custodians as a group to talk about their issues/concerns.”

Three of six use spot checks to manage the school plant. Participant 2B noted, “we monitor the restrooms, hallways ... to ensure papers are picked up and the little dust

bunnies out of the corner are gone.” Two of six noted each of the following: (a) working hand-in-hand with their custodial staff as a strategy to manage the school plant; (b) learning from a previous principal was the main strategy for managing the school plant; (c) using experience in the military as the basis for managing the school plant; (d) using an organizational approach to managing the school plant; and, (e) noting the importance of working with school plant personnel to help manage the school plant.

4. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?

All six noted on the job training as a key to learning about conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Participant 3B stated, “You know how this is a big part of being a leader and it is on the job training.” Participant 6B attributed her intuition to acquiring this knowledge noting, “My gut, I have learned to rely on it, from practice.”

Four of six noted how collaborating with other principals or with mentors is where they honed the skills in these areas. Participant 5B stated, “The most meaningful things I have learned have been from working with other principals.” Participant 4B concurred, “You went out and found somebody who was the expert in that area, who had the best knowledge, and you talked to them on how they did it”

Three of six discussed the value of the Compliance Office in assisting with developing a knowledge base. Participant 1B stated, “I work closely with the compliance specialist and they really guide you on how to do it” Two of six noted

how ongoing staff development has helped each gain knowledge in these areas.

Finally, one of six noted his experience in the military and another noted her college coursework as helping each acquire knowledge in these three areas.

5. Where did you obtain your essential knowledge and skills that allow you to handle the daily tasks of the principalship?

Five of six noted how prioritizing their day helps them handle their daily tasks. Participant 2B stated he sets his “priorities and sticks with them.” Participant 1B stated, “You make a plan everyday.” Three of six stated on the job training as how they obtained their essential knowledge and skills. Participant 5B stated, “It’s mostly just on the job training.” In addition, three of six noted considering the benefits to students when making decisions as a skill they use in completing daily tasks.

Participant 4B stated, “It’s all about doing things for kids.” Finally, three of six noted their instincts as how they obtained the skills to complete the daily tasks. Participant 5B stated, “[Completing] daily tasks involves going with your instincts and trusting yourself in what you have learned.”

The following skills were mentioned once as a method in obtaining the skills used to complete daily tasks: parenting, military experience, combination of experience and coursework, organization, and teamwork.

6. Why have you not participated in the Futures Leadership Academy?

Four of six noted they did not participate in the academy because of the time factor involved. Participant 1B stated, “It was a time issue, my children and my school were more important....” Participant 3B concurred, “Other than ... I guess it’s just a time factor.”

Three of six noted they had no desire to move to the principalship as the reason why they did not participate. Participant 2B stated, “I had no desire to be a principal.”

Two of six noted the fact that the academy did not exist until late in their career as to why they did not participate. Participant 6B stated, “When I wanted to be an administrator, there was no Future’s Leadership Academy so that’s why I did not participate. However, I have participated in the Future’s Leadership Academy as a teacher.” In addition, two of six noted they were already serving as a building principal at the academy’s inception.

7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your university coursework, your experience on the job, or a combination of the two?

All six stated how on the job training refined their leadership style. Participant 3B stated, “I think on the job training.” Participant 2B noted, “It’s definitely on the job training, because I don’t think there is any textbook or any coursework that could set you in line for what you could experience in any one day.” None of the six mentioned their university coursework as helping to refine his/her leadership style.

8. After completing your masters program and other school sponsored professional development, in what areas would you like to have more training?

Four of six noted the need for additional training in special education. Participant 5B stated, “The one area that I constantly work on and always appreciate more training is in special education.” Three of six noted the need for more instructional training in closing achievement gaps. Participant 3B asked, “How do we close that gap and what is the best methodology out there to close the gap.” Participant 1B concurred with the need for more instructional training, “We get the lists of best practices ... [but] we don’t get the

specifics....” The need for more training in school finance was mentioned by one of six and the need for training in making data-driven decisions was mentioned by one of six.

Focus Group Three

Focus group three was comprised of four assistant superintendents who evaluate principals at each school level (ES, MS, HS). The results for each question are reported in a narrative format. Raw data from focus group three can be found in Appendix O.

1. Discuss your role as an assistant superintendent focusing on the methods you employ to evaluate principals.

All four discussed conducting on-site visitations as a key method in evaluating principals. Participant 3C stated, “I go into classrooms to look at student engagement, how teachers are presenting the lessons, and the structure of the classroom.” Participant 2C noted, “Are they [principals] evaluating their staff regularly? Do they [principals] have an instructional model they [principals] are using to get the most out of their staff?”

Three of four mentioned reviewing the school’s continuous improvement model as a key method in evaluating principals. Participant 2C stated, “I review their Continuous Improvement Model to see if they [principals] are using the correct strategies to achieve what they need to achieve.” In addition, three of four mentioned using the five division approved standards for evaluating principals as a key method in evaluating principals. Participant 1C stated, “We use guided questions ... and the division’s evaluation instrument to assess them [principals].” Finally, three of four mentioned reviewing student achievement (SOL scores, AYP) as a key method in evaluating principals. Participant 3C noted, “We look at their SOL scores and their formative assessments on local testing.”

Two of four mentioned reviewing stakeholder (parents, students, teachers) feedback as a method in evaluating principals. Participant 4C noted, “We get feedback from parents, students, and teachers about the various leadership pieces of the building.” In addition, two of four mentioned reviewing the principal’s communication plan as a method in evaluating principals. Participant 2C stated, “Are they responding to the public? Are they dealing with issues in the school that they are supposed to be dealing with?”

One of four mentioned each of the following as a method in evaluating principals: reviewing the school’s annual report card, talking with curriculum and instruction personnel, and reviewing the school’s budget.

2. What is your role in the Futures Leadership Academy?

All four engage in the screening process for selecting participants for the academy and either serve as a presenter or as a panel member in each academy session. Two of four were involved in the development and implementation stages of the academy. Finally, one of four mentioned each of the following: member of the academy review team, presenter of the academy at national conferences, and an advocate for the program.

3. Do you think the Futures Academy has been effective in preparing principals? If yes, how? If no, why?

All four supported the academy in preparing principals and mentioned the knowledge provided by the academy in the areas of the school division’s core values and mission. Participant 3C stated, “Having the academy graduates understand the mission, the vision, and core values of the school division is a very important relationship to becoming a future leader of the school division.” Participant 2C concurred, “The graduates seem to have a deeper knowledge of the school system.”

Three of four noted the professional experiences of the academy as helping prepare principals. Participant 2C stated, “It is very evident in the way they [academy participants] answer questions and the way they demonstrate their knowledge.”

Participant 4C noted the value of the academy, “It’s hand-on, practical experiences from individuals who work in the job.” One of four mentioned how the academy helped graduates learn to capitalize on his/her strengths and how to create an effective learning environment.

4. What differences do you see in principals who participated in the Futures Leadership Academy and those who did not?

All four stated academy graduates had a higher skill set and were better problem solvers. Participant 1C noted, “They [academy graduates] are better problem solvers.” Participant 2C noted, “They [academy graduates] seem to understand the larger picture” and 4C stated, “I guess number one, the skill set and the knowledge.”

Three of four stated academy graduates are more confident. Participant 3C stated, “They [academy graduates] seem more confident in their job and are very willing to take risks.” Participant 4C noted, “You can definitely tell the difference. It starts back with the interview process in that you can really see a difference in those individuals you interview for a position who have not gone through the academy and those who have.” In addition, three of four stated the advanced networking capabilities of academy graduates. Participant 1C stated, “That concept of networking, it’s a very comfortable environment for them ... not to be isolated, and to not be afraid to ask colleagues or others for advice.”

Finally, three of four noted the advanced knowledge of the school division which academy graduates possess. Participant 3C stated, “I would say a knowledge of the

school division.” Participant 4C concurred, “It’s their depth of knowledge, their knowledge of the culture of the school division and knowledge of what we consider to be important.”

5. How successful do you feel the Futures Leadership Academy has been in providing AAA public schools with a high quality pool of potential school administrators?

All four felt the academy had been highly successful in providing the school division with a highly qualified pool of administrative applicants. Participant 2C stated, “Excellent quality.” Participant 1C concurred, “I would say the academy has been highly successful.” Participant 3C agreed, “The academy has been extremely successful.” In addition, all four noted the success of the academy in identifying a pool of high quality administrative applicants. Participant 3C stated, “The academy has also provided the school division with the knowledge of the potential number of candidates that would be available to fill open positions.” The number of academy graduates (Appendix H) who have been promoted to administrative positions since 2003 quantitatively supports the success of the academy in this area.

Three of four noted the leadership skills evident in academy applicants. Participant 2C noted, “I can’t think of anyone I have brought forward from the academy that hasn’t excelled, done wonderfully.” Participant 3C stated, “It provides an opportunity to look at, so to speak, in a laboratory setting and to see candidates and to see how well they interact with each other.”

Over the past five years, 84% (106 of 126) of administrative promotions have been filled by academy graduates (see Appendix H). Further, this data showed that 57% (106 of 185) of all academy graduates have received promotions during the past five years.

6. What do you see as the strengths of the Futures Leadership Academy?

Two of four mentioned the pedagogy used in the academy as a strength. Participant 2C noted, “I think the main strength is its excellent syllabus that devised the training. It was done by educators.” Two of four noted the practical experiences as a great strength. Participant 3C stated, “The practical hands-on experiences are definitely a strength. For example, surviving a crisis, budget and finance....” Two of four noted the strength of the cohort philosophy. Participant 1C stated, “The camaraderie of the academy spreads that sense of the strength of the group far beyond just one person.” Finally, two of four noted the outstanding organization of the academy as a strength. Participant 4C called the academy “a very professionally done and organized opportunity....”

One of four also mentioned each of the following as a strength of the academy: the reflective writing component, the training occurring during school hours, and the constant feedback from presenters and participants alike.

7. What weaknesses do you see or what changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of the Futures Leadership Academy?

All four did not see any weaknesses in the academy. Participant 2C stated, “I don’t see any weaknesses in the program, I don’t think I would change anything. It’s just been a great program.” Three of four did offer suggestions for improvements in the area of continuing to use participant feedback to improve the academy. Participant 4C stated, “I think the challenge is to continue to change with the times ... recently somebody mentioned that special education knowledge was needed ... and that topic is being added in the next academy.” Participant 3C concurred, “The goal is to continue the ongoing assessment and the evaluation process so that the academy can be as effective as

possible.” One of four suggested addressing the misconception that academy graduates automatically move into a principalship.

Common Themes

Table 4 presents common themes that emerged from the focus group responses to the interview questions. Two or more responses to an interview question identified a common theme. The table contains four columns. Column one presents the question, which is further identified by focus group and question number (i.e. 1.1 identifies focus group one, question one). Further, the themes include the number of times (n) each response was listed.

Table 4

Common Themes by Question

<u>Question</u>	<u>Focus Group-One (N=6)</u>	<u>Focus Group-Two (N=6)</u>	<u>Focus Group-Three (N=4)</u>
1.1- Discuss how you felt this experience helped prepare you for your present role. 3.3- Do you think the Futures Academy has been effective in preparing principals? If yes, how? If no, why?	1. networking and collaboration (n = 6) 2. overall experience in the Futures Academy was beneficial (n = 6) 3. exposure to the various departments and leaders of (n = 4) 4. exposure to the key players/leaders in the school division (n = 4)	N/A	1. Yes (n = 4) 2. provided participants with the first hand knowledge of the school division's core values and mission (n = 4) 3. provided participants with professional experiences of the position (n = 3)
1.2/2.1- How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?	1. strong emphasis of serving as an instructional leader (n = 5) 2. exposure to current principals as they discussed the importance of being an instructional leader (n = 3) 3. Futures Academy's instructional leadership sessions (n = 3) 4. conducting classroom observations (n = 3) 5. prior teaching experience (n = 2)	1. teaching experience (n = 6) 2. observing teachers (n = 4) 3. experience as an assistant principal (n = 3) 4. participation in staff development (n = 3) 5. collaborating with colleagues (n = 3) 6. experience in curriculum and instruction (n = 2)	N/A
1.3/2.2- Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?	1. knowledge acquired via exposure to school finance through the Futures Academy (n = 5) 2. knowledge acquired via exposure to the different budget accounts and item costs through the Futures Academy (n = 4)	1. noted their knowledge of school finance as a great weakness (n = 5) 2. knowledge/ training acquired via university coursework (n = 4)	N/A

table continues

Table 4 (continued)

Common Themes by Question

<u>Question</u>	<u>Focus Group-One (N=6)</u>	<u>Focus Group-Two(N=6)</u>	<u>Focus Group-Three (N=4)</u>
1.3/2.2- Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?	<p>3. knowledge acquired via in-class activities through the Futures Academy (n = 3)</p> <p>4. knowledge acquired via exposure to principals and their bookkeeper through the Futures Academy (n = 3)</p> <p>5. knowledge acquired via working closely with bookkeeper (n = 2)</p>	<p>3. knowledge acquired via mentorship's with other principals (n = 4)</p> <p>4. knowledge acquired via working closely with bookkeeper (n = 4)</p> <p>5. knowledge acquired via school business manual (n = 3)</p> <p>6. knowledge acquired via outside school experience (n = 2)</p>	N/A
1.4/2.3- Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?	<p>1. on the job training and their own management style (n = 6)</p> <p>2. knowledge acquired via exposure to School Plant personnel in the Futures Academy (n = 2)</p> <p>3. knowledge acquired via presentations on communication and organization skills in the Futures Academy (n = 2)</p>	<p>1. setting high expectations with staff (n = 4)</p> <p>2. communication skills (n = 4)</p> <p>3. periodic "spot" checks of the building (n = 3)</p> <p>4. working with custodial staff, learning from previous principal, military experience, using an organizational approach, working with school plant personnel (n = 2)</p>	N/A
1.5/2.4- Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?	<p>1. knowledge acquired via the dismissal and compliance presentation in the Futures Academy (n = 6)</p> <p>2. knowledge acquired via information on conducting interviews in the Futures Academy (n = 4)</p>	<p>1. on the job training (n = 6)</p> <p>2. collaborating with other principals or mentors (n = 4)</p> <p>3. use of the compliance office and staff (n = 3)</p>	N/A

table continues

Table 4 (continued)

Common Themes by Question

<u>Question</u>	<u>Focus Group-Two (N=6)</u>	<u>Focus Group-Two (N=6)</u>	<u>Focus Group-Three (N=4)</u>
1.5/2.4- Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?	3. knowledge acquired via presentation by Human Resources in the Futures Academy (n = 2)	4. ongoing staff development from the school division (n = 2)	N/A
1.6- Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you? 3.6- What do you see as the strengths of the Futures Leadership Academy?	1. the practical application of the position (n = 5) 2. a networking base (n = 3) 3. useful information on his/her own leadership style/abilities via the Booth Survey (n = 3) 4. a valuable support system (n = 3)	N/A	1. provided participants with practical experiences (n = 2) 2. provided participants with a useful curriculum (n = 2) 3. provided participants with a cohort of colleagues to work with now and in the future (n = 2) 4. provided participants with a well-organized Academy experience to further their skills (n = 2)
1.8/2.8- After completing your masters program and (FG One-the Futures Leadership Academy; FG-Two- other school sponsored professional development), in what areas would you like to have more training? 3.7- What weaknesses do you see or what changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of the Futures Leadership Academy?	1. additional training in school finance (n = 4) 2. additional training in the area of compliance (n = 3) 3. additional training in special education (n = 2) 4. additional training in the area of instructional leadership (n = 2)	1. additional training in special education (n = 4) 2. additional training in closing achievement gaps (n = 3) 3. additional training in curriculum and instruction (n = 3)	1. no weaknesses noted (n = 4) 2. continue to use participant feedback to make changes in the program to meet the needs of the position (n = 3)

table continues

Table 4 (continued)

Common Themes by Question

<u>Question</u>	<u>Focus Group-One (N=6)</u>	<u>Focus Group-Two (N=6)</u>	<u>Focus Group-Three (N=4)</u>
2.5- Where did you obtain your essential knowledge and skills that allow you to handle the daily tasks of the principalship? 3.4- What differences do you see in principals who participated in the Futures Leadership Academy and those who did not?	N/A	1. prioritize their day (n = 5) 2. on the job training (n = 3) 3. keeping the needs of the students first in decision making (n = 3) 4. using his/her instincts (n = 3)	1. Academy graduates have a higher skill set and were better problem solvers (n = 4) 2. Academy graduates were more confident (n = 3) 3. Academy graduates acquired advanced networking capabilities via the cohort and exposure to the key leaders in the school division (n = 3) 4. Academy graduates acquired greater knowledge of the school division (n = 3)

Emerging Themes

For the purposes of this study, the researcher has defined emerging themes as those common themes which are mentioned by greater than or equal to 50% of the respondents in at least two of the three focus groups. The emerging themes include networking, on the job training, professional experiences, management of human resources, school finance, and instructional leadership. Each emerging theme is presented to include the focus group/question, total number of questions, total number of focus groups, and the number of questions by focus group containing a reference to the theme as well as participant comments supporting the theme.

Networking, to include collaboration, was discussed in questions 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.4, and 3.6 for a total of nine questions. All three focus groups referenced networking: focus group one, four questions; focus group two, three questions; and, focus

group three, two questions. Participant comments supporting networking included: (a) exposure to various departments and the leaders of these departments; (b) exposure to the key leaders in the school division; (c) exposure to practicing principals as they discussed the various aspects of the principalship; (d) collaborating with colleagues; and, (e) informal mentorships with other principals. An observation by the researcher of an academy session (see Appendix K) conducted on December 13, 2006, supported the development of a networking base between the academy cohort and the academy staff/presenters. A syllabus (see Appendix F) presents the pedagogical framework and supports the number of sessions where the academy cohort is exposed to networking with presenters from a wide range of school division departments.

On the job training was discussed in questions 1.4, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.7 for a total of eight questions. Two of three focus groups referenced on the job training: focus group one, two questions; and focus group two, six questions. Participant comments supporting on the job training included: (a) observation of teachers; (b) assistant principal experience; (c) teaching experience; (d) close work with the bookkeeper; and, (e) on the job experience.

Professional experiences were discussed in questions 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.6 for a total of eight questions. Two of three focus groups referenced professional experiences: focus group one, five questions; and focus group three, three questions. Participant comments supporting professional experiences included: (a) providing academy participants with professional experiences of the principalship via in-class activities; (b) providing academy participants with practical applications of acquired knowledge in the principalship; and, (c) providing academy participants with interactive scenarios in the area

of human relations. The researcher's observation (see Appendix K) supports the professional experiences provided to the academy cohort.

Management of Human Resources was discussed in questions 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 2.3, and 3.6 for a total of five questions. All three focus groups referenced management of human relations: focus group one, three questions; focus group two, one question; and, focus group three, one question. Participant comments supporting management of human relations included: (a) providing academy participants with knowledge of dismissal and compliance policies; (b) providing academy participants with strategies for conducting legal interviews; and, (c) using the compliance office and staff for support. The syllabus (see Appendix F) confirms the inclusion of Management of Human Relations in the academy pedagogy.

School finance, to include managing a school budget, was discussed in questions 1.3, 1.8, 2.2, and 3.6 for a total of four questions. All three groups referenced school finances: focus group one, two questions; focus group two, one question; and, focus group three, one question. Participant comments supporting school finances included: (a) providing academy participants with practical knowledge of school finance and managing a school budget; (b) exposing academy participants to the working relationship between a principal and his/her bookkeeper; and (c) acknowledging school finance and the budget process as a great weakness. The syllabus (see Appendix F) confirms the inclusion of School Finance in the academy pedagogy.

Instructional leadership was discussed in questions 1.2, 2.1, 2.4, and 3.6 for a total of four questions. All three focus groups referenced instructional leadership: focus group one, one question; focus group two, two questions; and, focus group three, one question. Participant comments supporting instructional leadership included: (a) strong emphasis in the

academy on serving as an instructional leader; (b) participation in school sponsored professional development; and, (c) academy graduates have a higher skill set and knowledge in this area. The syllabus (see Appendix F) confirms the inclusion of Instructional Leadership in the academy pedagogy.

Summary

Chapter IV presented the results of the three focus group interviews in a narrative format by focus group for each question. This was followed by the presentation of common themes in tabular form by question and by focus group. Finally, the emerging themes from the focus group interviews were presented in narrative form. Additional data from documents and observations were included to support the common and emerging themes.

Chapter V will include a summary of the study as well as the study conclusions, recommendations, and reflections. The conclusion section will present an analysis of the findings presented in Chapter IV as they relate to answering the four research questions followed by the researcher's recommendations and reflections.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, FUTURE STUDIES, AND REFLECTIONS

Chapter V presents a summary of the study followed by the findings and the recommendations drawn from an analysis of the data detailed in Chapter IV. The summary, findings, and recommendations are followed by the researcher's recommendations for future study and his personal reflections.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine whether participants of a school division sponsored leadership training program were better prepared for the principalship than those personnel who did not participate in such a program. A qualitative case study design was selected to gather data through focus group interviews, document reviews, and an observation of a current academy session. Focus group interviews included assistant principals and principals (N = 12), purposefully selected to include an equal number of academy graduates and non-academy personnel as well as representatives from elementary, middle, and high school. In addition, a focus group interview was conducted with the four assistant superintendents who evaluate principals, thus providing the researcher with a comprehensive data source. Data were also collected from academy documents as well as from an observation completed by the researcher. The collection of data provided additional information that contributed to the researcher reaching saturation.

Findings have been presented as they relate to each of the four research questions in order of significance. The research questions that guided this study include: (1) Are school personnel who participate in a formal school division sponsored leadership training program better prepared for the principalship than those personnel who have not had any additional

school division sponsored leadership training? (2) How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in attracting, training, and recommending school personnel for administrative positions? (3) How effective has the Futures Leadership Academy been in preparing school administrators to handle specific issues related to school leadership (fiscal, plant operations, human resources, curriculum and instruction)? (4) Has the Futures Leadership Academy been equally effective for school administrators at the elementary, middle, and high school level?

These research questions were based on the construct “better prepared,” defined as the principles covered in seminar topics in the Futures Leadership Academy. They include a principal’s knowledge of vision, communication strategies, management of school finances, management of human resources, application of emotional intelligence concepts, and instructional leadership.

Findings

Finding 1: School personnel who participated in the academy program are better prepared for the roles and responsibilities of the principalship than those school personnel who had not participated in the academy program.

The leadership academy was developed to support and challenge educational leaders through high-quality professional development with a primary goal to train current school personnel who have an interest in administration in the mission and core values of AAA Public Schools. The academy utilizes a cohort model with between 20 and 25 participants drawn from AAA Public Schools who meet for seven, one and a half day sessions over a one-year period to receive training in the key aspects of the principalship. Academy pedagogy supports the academy’s mission and includes required reading from selected texts

as well as seminars in areas such as budget/finance, personnel policies, staff evaluation, student safety, media and communications, and special education.

A review of the data analysis in Chapter IV confirms the value of the academy in preparing school personnel for the principalship. Preparation, as defined in this study, includes the development of a networking base, the opportunity to participate in sessions designed to provide participants with professional experience, and a pedagogy based in the requirements of the position.

A networking base, developed through collaborative activities in each academy cohort, provided participants with critical information to improve their overall efficiency and effectiveness. In a minimum of one interview question, 100% of academy participants and 75% of assistant superintendents in this study noted the value of networking and collaboration as a great benefit in preparing participants for the principalship. Participant comments supporting networking and collaboration included, "It was very beneficial to have first hand information from leaders who presented at Futures." Another stated, "You don't often get the opportunity to network with colleagues because we are so isolated in our schools," and "Overall I think the learning experience from the sitting principals and assistant superintendents helped again and gave us more specific ideas about what the division expects from aspiring principals and assistant principals." In contrast, in a minimum of one interview question, only 67% of the non-academy group noted the benefit of networking and/or collaboration. Finally, an observation conducted by the researcher of an academy session (see Appendix K) on December 13, 2006, supported the collaborative environment of the session as the presenters interacted with the cohort to develop a networking base between the academy cohort and the academy staff/presenters.

In a minimum of one interview question, 100% of academy participants and assistant superintendents in this study noted the great benefit of the professional experiences provided to participants during academy sessions. Participant comments supporting professional experiences included, “I think the practical application of the theories that we learned in the academy was beneficial,” and, “It’s hands-on, practical experiences from individuals who work in the job.” The researcher’s observations (see Appendix K) further support the professional experiences provided to the academy cohort in its session on responding to the media in a crisis.

All of the assistant superintendents in this study commended the academy for a job well done in preparing participants for the principalship. Comments from the assistant superintendents included, academy graduates “understand the mission, the vision, and core values of the school division,” “have a deeper knowledge of the school system,” and “are better problem solvers” than non-academy graduates.

Appendix L provides a summary of evaluative feedback by academy cohorts and shows that greater than 78% of academy participants, in eight of nine sessions, confirmed that the information presented exceeded their expectations. Too, the academy pedagogy has continued to evolve based on identified needs of the participants and the school division. The addition of seminar topics on effective strategies in student discipline, diversity training, and special education (included in Academy X) confirm the school division’s willingness to adapt the academy program of study to prepare participants for the demands of the principalship. One of the assistant superintendent participants noted, “The goal [of the academy program] is to continue the ongoing assessment and the evaluation process so that the academy can be as effective as possible.”

Research supports the above findings. Lauder (2000) found that current trends in effective principal preparation programs have an appeal and attractiveness to educators and incorporate training methodologies founded in research and best practices. Components of such programs include entrance requirements aligned with the demands of the principalship, cohort models, clear performance-based standards, opportunities for individualization, development and assessment skills with an emphasis on reflective practice, and continuous program review with input from current practitioners (Davis et al., 2005; Tracy & Weaver, 2000). Kaplan et al. (2005) and Childress et al. (2003) noted that these methods, in conjunction with a formal preparation program, will help to ensure that school divisions will have the leaders necessary to guide their schools in a time of change.

Finally, the findings support the need for a structured principal preparation program as presented in each of the three studies reviewed in Chapter II. These studies illustrated the need for principal support, whether that support comes via a formal or informal program, or from a school division's leadership academy that trains aspiring administrators in best practices (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Kaplan et al., 2005; Childress et al., 2003).

Finding 2: The leadership academy has been effective in attracting, training, and recommending school personnel for administrative positions.

A review of the data analysis in Chapter IV reveals the positive impact the academy has had on both academy participants and the school division in attracting, training, and placing school personnel in administrative positions. All of the assistant superintendents in this study agreed that this leadership training program has greatly benefited the school division by providing AAA Public Schools with a high quality pool of administrative candidates to fill impending vacancies. One assistant superintendent concluded, "The

academy has provided the school division with the knowledge of the potential number of candidates that would be available to fill open positions.”

Since its inception in 2002, the Futures Project Principals’ Academy has provided the school division with 185 graduates trained in the key roles of the principalship. Over the past five years, 84% of administrative promotions in AAA Public Schools have been filled by academy graduates (see Appendix H), including 18 teachers to administrative assistants, 13 teachers to coordinator or teacher specialists, 32 administrative assistants to assistant principals, and 17 assistant principals to principals. Most recently, 96% (2005-06) and 88% (2006-07) of new school-based administrative appointments were academy graduates. In addition, the current academy cohort consists of 25 participants who will be added to the pool of highly qualified candidates ready to fill impending administrative vacancies.

Research supports the positive impact a formal principal preparation program can have in providing school divisions with a high quality pool of school leaders prepared to fill administrative vacancies. Principal preparation programs currently in place in Fairfax, VA; Rocky Mount, NC; New York City, NY; and Chicago, IL, are all designed to prepare future school leaders. Data from each division shows the success each program has had in placing program participants into administrative vacancies within their own school divisions.

Studies conducted by Dipaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003), Childress et al. (2003), and Kaplan et al. (2005) noted the need for focused principal preparation programs based on best practices as a key method for school divisions to proactively address impending administrative vacancies. Duke (1992) and Fullan (2001) also noted the needs of current administrators cannot be met solely by the knowledge derived from coursework and theory but must be supplemented from another source.

Finding 3: The leadership academy has been very effective in preparing school administrators to handle specific issues related to school leadership.

The academy pedagogy specifically targets four key areas of school leadership: Instructional Leadership, School Finance, Effective Communication, and Management of Human Resources. Each area is covered in sessions that last one and a-half days to include seminar presentations and hands-on activities conducted by AAA Public School personnel. Participants are provided with a binder containing all necessary supplemental materials to use in class and to refer back to when the program is completed. Finally, additional topics vital to school leadership are included in each appropriate session. Examples of these topics include media and communication, managing the school's physical plant, student discipline and safety, the role of the assistant principal, evaluation of instruction, and special education.

A review of the data analysis in Chapter IV supports the effectiveness of the academy in the four aforementioned areas of school leadership. Document analysis from the executive summaries from each academy cohort (see Appendix L) reveals that greater than 78% of participants felt these sessions exceeded his or her expectations. Further, the mean response rate for "exceeded expectations" ranged from 91% to 95%. Participants rated sessions titled Instructional Leadership I and Management of Human Resources as the highest (95%), followed by Management of School Finance (92%), and Effective Communication and Instructional Leadership II (91%).

Participant responses articulate the value of these sessions. Eighty-three percent of academy participants and 100% of the assistant superintendents in this study noted the benefit of the instructional leadership training sessions. Participants statements discussing the instructional leadership sessions included, "The instructional leadership segment was very

beneficial to me,” and “The Futures Academy did a nice job of touching on the key points of specific pieces to look for when evaluating instruction.” In contrast, 100% of the non-academy group lacked the instructional leadership training of academy participants and relied instead on their teaching experience. Another 67% relied on conducting observations of teachers as the method used to develop their instructional leadership skills. Non-academy participants stated, “I taught school for 14 years, so I think that gave me a lot of hands on opportunities to learn instruction,” and “I spend a lot of time in classrooms and I share back and forth from teacher to teacher and grade level to grade level.”

Data revealed the benefit of the school finance sessions to academy participants. One hundred percent of academy participants noted the value of the school finance sessions. Participant statements included, “I had very little knowledge of school finances until the Futures Academy,” and “I thought the [school finance] activities that were presented in the Futures Academy were very beneficial.” In contrast, 83% of the non-academy group noted knowledge of school finance as a significant weakness. Participant comments included, “I have to tell you one of the drawbacks in becoming a principal was the money, the finance piece,” and “I agree it’s definitely the weakest area when entering the principalship.”

Data also revealed the benefit of the sessions on effective communication to academy participants. Appendix L reveals that greater than 82% of academy participants agreed the sessions on effective communication were beneficial (met their expectations). Statements from the executive summary document for participants of Academy III noted the academy increased their knowledge of “crisis intervention and media relations,” “the need for communication plans,” and “the role of various individuals in media and communications.” In contrast, 67% of the non-academy group used their “on the job” experiences and

communication skills to communicate with staff. Participant statements included, “I consider myself a people person and I simply follow the golden rule,” and “My military background taught me the importance of communicating effectively.”

Finally, data revealed the benefit of the sessions on management of human resources to academy participants. One hundred percent of academy participants noted the usefulness of the various sessions encompassed under management of human resources. Participant statements included, “Overall the human resource portion was very helpful,” and “The compliance piece and the handouts that were provided were very useful.” In contrast, 100% of the non-academy group noted “on the job” training as where they developed their skills to manage human resources at the building level. Participant statements included, “You know this is a big part of being a leader and it is on the job training,” and another noted that human resource knowledge came from her intuition, stating “I have learned to rely on it [intuition], from practice.”

All of the assistant superintendents in this study concurred with academy participant statements in regards to the effectiveness of the academy training sessions in preparing principals in instructional leadership, school finance, effective communication, and management of human resources. Comments from the assistant superintendents supporting the impact of training sessions on participants included, “I think the main strength [in the academy] is its excellent syllabus that devised the training. It was done by educators,” and “You can definitely tell the difference. It starts back with the interview process in that you can really see a difference in those individuals you interview for a position who have not gone through the academy and those who have.”

Research supports principal preparation programs for developing effective school leadership skills. The components of this academy are supported by the research noted in the literature review in Chapter II. The academy goals and objectives were developed using the six ISLLC standards as a basis. These standards shaped the academy pedagogy and helped to define the role of an effective school administrator.

The Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) suggested that school divisions “revamp principal preparation programs to focus on instructional, community and visionary leadership roles in improving student learning in real schools.” Examples of such programs were referenced in Chapter II and included Chesapeake, VA; Fairfax, VA; and Chicago, IL. These principal preparation programs offer seminars to supplement their training. Topics covered in seminars include effective leadership, budget and finance, personnel, school law, school safety, instructional strategies, and media and communication.

Finding 4: The leadership academy has been effective for school administrators at the elementary, middle, and high school level.

The academy was designed to target the needs of all administrators regardless of school level (elementary, middle, and high). The academy pedagogy targets areas that are inclusive of the roles and responsibilities of school administrators at each of these levels. An academy cohort group is comprised of a balanced mix of school administrators from each school level. Academy staff purposefully integrates administrators from each school level during in-class activities to help create an understanding of the different school level perspectives on relevant issues.

A review of the data analysis in Chapter IV supports the premise that school administrators from elementary, middle, and high found the academy to be equally effective.

One hundred percent of academy participants and assistant superintendents in this study noted the effectiveness of training minimally in at least one area of the academy program. An elementary principal in focus group one noted the effectiveness of the academy when she stated, “I found Futures very helpful.” This comment was supported by a middle school assistant principal who stated, “Futures provided the big picture of the division,” and a high school principal who concurred, “This academy really provided you with a great foundation to be successful.” The high school assistant superintendent stated, “I would say the academy has been highly successful,” and the middle school assistant superintendent agreed when he stated, “I can’t think of anyone I have brought forward from the academy that hasn’t excelled.” One of the two elementary school assistant superintendents stated that academy graduates “are more confident in their job.”

Studies conducted by DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) and Kaplan et al. (2005) involving principals at the elementary, middle, and high school level found that principals at all levels face the same issues. The DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) study cited common problems and issues facing principals at all levels including instructional leadership, organizational management, communication and professionalism, and professional development. Kaplan’s et al. (2005) study included principals from 44 high schools, 61 elementary schools, and 50 middle schools. Conclusions from this study indicated the need for school divisions to create training programs that include instructional leadership, assessment and accountability, hiring and supervising personnel, and effective communication for principals at all school levels.

Finding 5: Additional training is needed in the areas of school finance, special education, and effective classroom instructional practices for all principals.

A review of the data analysis in Chapter IV reveals that 33% of academy participants and 67% of non-academy participants requested training in special education. Sixty-seven percent of academy participants and 83% of non-academy participants requested additional training in the area of school finance. Finally, 33% of academy participants and 50% of non-academy participants requested additional training in the area of effective classroom instructional practices.

The leadership academy staff is aware of these concerns and has made changes to the pedagogy to reflect the needs of participants. A special education training component has been added to the pedagogy for Academy X. The school finance training has continued to evolve based on participant feedback. Finally, a diversity and differentiation component, designed to meet the needs of all learners, has been added to the instructional leadership training.

Finding 6: The leadership academy has continued to evolve based on feedback from participants and on needs identified by the school division.

The academy has continued to honor its mission statement “to support and challenge educational leaders through high-quality professional development facilitating students’ academic achievement.” Each academy session concludes with participants completing a plus/delta evaluation instrument to provide their assessment of the session and to offer any suggestions for improvement. Changes to academy pedagogy based on participant feedback and division needs have included the addition of an “assistant principal only” cohort group, a

session on effective discipline, a second instructional leadership session, and a session on special education.

The Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) and the Educational Research Service (2000) concluded that professional development models must be created to equip principals with the necessary skills and support to meet the increased demands of the position. Further, the need for professional development training for principals to meet the changing role of the principalship as well as the added demands and responsibilities of the position was noted in studies conducted by DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003), Childress et al. (2003) and Kaplan et al. (2005).

Finding 7: Additional professional development training for current principals is needed to help them prepare to handle the changing role of the principalship and to be conscious of new educational mandates at the federal, state, and local level.

Principals require professional development to remain current with educational trends as well as to be rejuvenated as they share and learn from colleagues. AAA Public Schools recognizes this by offering principals the opportunity to attend a professional development conference each year at no cost to the individual.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are presented by the researcher based on each of the aforementioned study findings.

Recommendation 1: The leadership academy should continue as a professional development opportunity specifically designed to prepare school personnel for the principalship. The Institute for Educational Leadership (2005) reported, “The bottom-line of all leadership preparation and professional development programs is to prepare and support leaders who

have the capacity to improve student learning.” Lauder (2000) suggested that components of this type of program should include theory based classroom instruction designed to build a strong knowledge base with the challenge to apply that knowledge in the context of the school. Over the past five years, the leadership academy has been highly effective in preparing school personnel for the principalship by continuing to evolve based on participant feedback and school division needs.

Recommendation 2: The leadership academy should continue as a mechanism to attract and train school personnel to fill impending administrative vacancies. State and National data on the number of impending administrative vacancies projects a significant decline of qualified administrative applicants in school divisions (Virginia Department of Education, 2002). The benefits of a formal principal preparation program can be seen by the large number of program graduates that receive promotions to fill vacancies within a school division (Virginia Beach, 2006a; New York, 2003; Chicago, 2006; Fairfax, 2006; Chesapeake, 2006).

Recommendation 3: The leadership academy should continue as a professional development opportunity for school personnel to develop needed skills in the area of instructional leadership, school finance, effective communication, and human resources. Studies conducted by Kaplan et al. (2005), Childress et al. (2003), and DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) confirm the need for additional training in the areas noted above to assist principals in leading school improvement efforts.

Recommendation 4: The leadership academy should continue as a professional development opportunity designed to meet the needs of principals at every school level. In a study conducted by Childress et al. (2003), results found similarities at the elementary, middle, and

high school level in regards to the importance of the principal in improving student achievement.

Recommendation 5: The leadership academy should expand training in the areas of special education, school finance, and effective classroom instructional practices. Academy participants asked for additional training in these areas to help each become better leaders and make more informed decisions.

Recommendation 6: The leadership academy should continue to evolve based on feedback from participants and on needs identified by the school division. A key strength of the academy program is the willingness of the academy's leadership staff to accept feedback from participants, the school division, and to make adjustments to the product as necessary.

Recommendation 7: AAA Public Schools should continue to offer professional development opportunities to all principals focusing on the roles and responsibilities of the principalship.

Recommendation 8: AAA Public School should require all new administrative hires, who have not been through the leadership academy, to participate in the leadership academy within one calendar year.

Future Studies

Recommendation 1: Conduct a mixed-method study in three to five years to measure the effectiveness of the academy in preparing participants for the principalship utilizing pre- and post-test assessment data, implemented with Academy X that was not available to the researcher.

Recommendation 2: Conduct a quantitative study in three to five years to examine student achievement at schools led by academy graduates compared to schools led by non-academy graduates.

Recommendation 3: Conduct a longitudinal study in five to ten years to examine the retention rates of principals who went through the academy program and those who did not.

Reflections

The leadership academy provided an invaluable service to me in preparing for the principalship and made my choice of this program to study an easy one. My experiences in this program offered an array of benefits to learn about the principalship and served to help me develop the necessary skills to lead a school. As a result of my positive feelings towards the academy, it was necessary for me to control for my bias when collecting data and conducting interviews. Nonetheless, the results of this study confirmed my intuition that academy graduates are better prepared for the principalship than non-academy participants. This conclusion is based not only on the data herein but also through my research and interactions with academy and non-academy administrators during the study.

From the onset of this study, academy graduates distinguished themselves from non-academy participants. As a moderator of focus groups, it was painfully evident that non-academy participants did not engage in high quality dialogue centered on the question. Instead, their responses rarely deviated from the first respondents, were less succinct, and showed a lack of knowledge on the issue when compared to academy graduate answers. Non-academy respondents, themselves, were not aware of the dramatic demarcation from their peers who were academy graduates. Clearly, non-academy participants learned from

experience and unfortunately, in some instances, from their mistakes when left to their own devices.

When interviewed, academy participants, on the other hand, showed an in-depth knowledge of each issue and merely enhanced responses by bundling academy knowledge with personal experiences. In addition, academy participants answered questions in a detailed and succinct manner. Academy participants were able to provide concrete examples and could verbalize in such a way to confirm their knowledge of the subject at hand. Assistant Superintendents noted academy graduates “hit the ground running” in so many ways when placed in a leadership role. Unwittingly, responses of the assistant superintendents indicated that academy participants required less supervision than non-academy participants. School Board members perhaps unwittingly also recognize the value of the academy when prior to approving administrative appointments, Board members inquire whether the candidate is an academy graduate. Is this due to information gained through informal conversations with central office administrative personnel, their own experiences when interacting with academy and non-academy participants, or from stakeholder comments?

The data from this study leads me to conclude that administrators who participate in a formal principal preparation program are better prepared, more confident in their leadership, and are more knowledgeable in the roles and responsibilities which principals face. Outliers to this conclusion do exist. The few non-academy participants who were well-versed in the principalship all had worked for or with a strong mentor. Two non-academy study participants, who had worked with strong mentors, spoke highly of the value of their mentorship. One stated, “I worked with a principal who took the time to show me various

aspects of the job and this became my basis for making decisions when I became a principal.”

In conclusion, when principal preparation programs have these benefits, a school division would be remiss if it did not capitalize on the value of this type of training program for all current and aspiring administrators.

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Appendix A

Participant Contact Letter (Academy Graduate)

2217 Brushwood Terrace
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456
[Date]

[Participant Name and Address]

Dear [Participant]:

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech conducting research for my dissertation. The purpose of my study is to assess the effectiveness of the Futures Project Principals' Academy on preparing school administrators. As a graduate of this Academy, you have firsthand knowledge of the impact of this program on your role as a school administrator. Your thoughts can provide the school division with valuable information on the effectiveness of this program in preparing school administrators.

Dr. Jared Cotton, Assistant Superintendent, and the Institutional Review Board at Virginia Tech have granted me permission to conduct research in this area. I am asking that you agree to participate in a focus group interview during the first week of November. This focus group, comprised of six participants (1 assistant principal and 1 principal from ES, MS, HS), will meet at Salem High School in the afternoon for approximately two hours. The interviews will be audio-taped and your responses, coded to ensure anonymity, will be kept strictly confidential. At the conclusion of the study, the audiotapes will be destroyed.

I would be very grateful if you would agree to participate in this study. Please complete the informed consent form enclosed and return to me at Salem High School via interoffice mail. Feel free to contact me via email at derobert@vbschools.com or by phone (757) 474-8481 if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Robertson

Appendix B

Participant Contact Letter (Non-Academy Graduate)

2217 Brushwood Terrace
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456
[Date]

[Participant Name and Address]

Dear [Participant]:

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech conducting research for my dissertation. The purpose of my study is to assess the effectiveness of the Futures Project Principals' Academy on preparing school administrators. Even though you did not participate in the Academy, the experiences that prepared you for school administration as well as your thoughts on the requirements of the principalship can provide valuable information to the researcher.

Dr. Jared Cotton, Assistant Superintendent, and the Institutional Review Board at Virginia Tech have granted me permission to conduct research in this area. I am asking that you agree to participate in a focus group interview during the third week of November. This focus group, comprised of six participants (1 assistant principal and 1 principal from ES, MS, HS), will meet at Salem High School in the afternoon for approximately two hours. The interviews will be audio-taped and your responses, coded to ensure anonymity, will be kept strictly confidential. At the conclusion of the study, the audiotapes will be destroyed.

I would be very grateful if you would agree to participate in this study. Please complete the informed consent form enclosed and return to me at Salem High School via interoffice mail. Feel free to contact me via email at derobert@vbschools.com or by phone (757) 474-8481 if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Robertson

Appendix C

Participant Contact Letter (Supervisor)

2217 Brushwood Terrace
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456
[Date]

[Participant Name and Address]

Dear [Participant]:

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech conducting research for my dissertation. The purpose of my study is to assess the effectiveness of the Futures Project Principals' Academy on preparing school administrators. Your role as Assistant Superintendent provides the researcher with the opportunity to obtain your perceptions of Academy graduates versus Non-Academy graduates in terms of their preparation and level of performance as school administrators.

Dr. Jared Cotton, Assistant Superintendent, and the Institutional Review Board at Virginia Tech have granted me permission to conduct research in this area. I am asking that you agree to participate in a focus group interview during the first week of December. This focus group, comprised of four participants (assistant superintendents from ES, MS, HS), will meet at Salem High School in the afternoon for approximately two hours. The interviews will be audio-taped and your responses, coded to ensure anonymity, will be kept strictly confidential. At the conclusion of the study, the audiotapes will be destroyed.

I would be very grateful if you would agree to participate in this study. Please complete the informed consent form enclosed and return to me at Salem High School via interoffice mail. Feel free to contact me via email at derobert@vbschools.com or by phone (757) 474-8481 if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Robertson

Appendix D

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Informed Consent Protocol

Title of Project: A Case Study of a Formal Principal Preparation Program in One School District

I. Purpose of the Project

The Purpose of this research is to determine if school personnel who participated in the school division's formal principal preparation program were better prepared for their role as an assistant principal or principal than those assistant principals and principals who did not participate in a formal principal preparation program.

II. Procedures

The procedures for this study include focus group interviews, observations, and collection of documents. Focus group interviews will be conducted with three different groups of administrators. Group one will include a combination of six assistant principals and principals from each school level (HS, MS, ES) who participated in and graduated from the school division's leadership academy. Group two will include a combination of six assistant principals and principals from each school level (HS, MS, ES) who did not participate in the school division's leadership academy. Group three will include the four assistant superintendents who evaluate principals. Each focus group interview will last approximately 90-120 minutes. The interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed verbatim by a secretary who will take notes during the interview sessions. Each participant will be provided the opportunity to review his transcribed statements for accuracy and make changes if necessary.

III. Risks

There are no risks to the participant in this study.

IV. Benefits of this Project

The benefits of this study include providing the school division with qualitative data to assess the effectiveness of the leadership academy in better preparing administrators and to help the school division make informed decisions to improve the program.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

The identity of all participants in this study will be confidential. Each participant will be referred to using a combination of a number and letter. Only the researcher will be able to identify you individually after the data is collected. The audiotapes and subsequent transcriptions will remain in the researcher's position except during transcription by a secretary. All documents will then be stored in a safe location for two years.

VI. Compensation

The participants will not receive any monetary compensation in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

Participants are free to withdraw from this study at any point without penalty. Participants have the right to refuse to answer any question during the interview or to have their answers removed from the data after interviews have been completed.

VIII. Approval of Research

This research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and by the school division.

IX. Participant's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I will participate in a focus group interview, review my transcribed remarks after the interview, and be available for any follow-up questions from the researcher.

X. Participant's Permission

I have read and understand the conditions of this research study and my role in data collection. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers. I hereby give my voluntary consent for participation in this study.

Signature

Date

Should I have any pertinent questions about this study, I may contact:

Donald E. Robertson
Researcher

(757) 474-8484
derobert@vbschools.com

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Eugene Soltner
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Appendix E

District Consent Letter

2217 Brushwood Terrace
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456
October 13, 2006

Dr. Lisa Banicky, Research Specialist
Department of Accountability
Virginia Beach City Public Schools
P.O. Box 6038
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456-0038

Dear Dr. Banicky

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech conducting research for my dissertation. The purpose of my study is to assess the effectiveness of the Futures Project Principals' Academy on preparing school administrators. I am respectfully requesting your permission to conduct research in Virginia Beach City Public Schools as set forth in School Board Policy 5-67 and School Board Regulation 5-67.1.

I have enclosed a copy of my Informed Consent Protocol, the application to conduct research, a copy of my prospectus, and a copy of the application submitted to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University's Institutional Review Board to conduct research. It is my intention to conduct the research in November and December of this year.

I believe that the results of this research will benefit VBCPS by providing data that will support and enhance the effectiveness of the Futures Project Principals' Academy. At the conclusion of my study, I will provide VBCPS with a final copy of the study results.

Feel free to contact me via email at derobert@vbschools.com or by phone (757) 474-8481 if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Robertson

Appendix F

Futures Leadership Academy Pedagogical Framework

Session 1	Induction Luncheon Ropes and Initiatives
Session 2	Effective Communication
Session 3	Management of School Finances
Session 4	Management of Human Resources
Session 5	Emotional Intelligence Leading to High Performance
Session 6	Instructional Leadership I
Session 7	Instructional Leadership II and Graduation

Note: Training sessions are separated into two parts on consecutive days: Part one is a night session from 4:30 – 7:30 p.m., followed by part two the next day from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Appendix G

The Major Pedagogical Changes in the Futures Leadership Academy

- 2002 OD uses a focus group comprised of graduates of Academy I, II, and III to provide feedback on the program and offer suggestions for improvement.
- 2003 Based on the focus group data, Academy IV offers the first session on student discipline specifically designed for assistant principals focusing on knowledge and procedure.
- 2005 Academy VII is the first cohort to change from the school division's Principal Perceiver to the nationally researched Principal Insight™ Pedagogy includes an increased emphasis on diversity awareness of the instructional leader.
- 2005 Academy VIII changes the first day induction exercise from *Walk the Talk* to *Leading with your Strengths*. *Leading with your Strengths* ties participant's leadership style to his/her strengths.
- 2006 Academy IX participants take a pre- and post-test to measure his/her knowledge growth.
- 2006 Academy X will introduce the first session on Special Education.

Appendix H

Futures Leadership Academy Graduates Promotion Rates

School Year	Academy Graduates
2002-2003	54% (13 of 24)
2003-2004	88% (21 of 24)
2004-2005	92% (33 of 36)
2005-2006	96% (25 of 26)
2006-2007	88% (14 of 16)

Appendix I

Futures Leadership Academy Mission Statement, Budget, Design, and Staff Characteristics

Mission Statement: The mission of the Futures Leadership Academy in AAA Public Schools is

to support and challenge educational leaders through high-quality professional development facilitating students' academic achievement.

Budget: The Futures Leadership Academy invests approximately \$1000/program participant.

Program Design: The Futures Leadership Academy is designed to develop current and aspiring

administrators in accordance with the vision of AAA Public Schools.

Staff Characteristics: The Futures Leadership Academy staff includes the director of OD, the Futures program director, an assistant Futures program director, central office personnel, administrative support services personnel, principals, and selected school staff.

Appendix J

Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

Focus Group One	Focus Group Two	Focus Group Three
Elementary Assistant Principal	Elementary Assistant Principal	Elementary Assistant Superintendent
Elementary Principal	Elementary Principal	Elementary Director
Middle School Assistant Principal	Middle School Assistant Principal	Middle School Assistant Superintendent
Middle School Principal	Middle School Principal	High School Assistant Superintendent
High School Assistant Principal	High School Assistant Principal	
High School Principal	High School Principal	

Appendix K

Futures Leadership Academy Observation

Notes taken during an observation of an Academy session conducted by the researcher on Wednesday, December 13, 2006, from 4:30 – 7:30 PM.

Session Topic: Media and Communication

Session Agenda:

- I. Ice Breaker Activity- Dinner provided by OD, participants talking with one another during meal
- II. Session topic introduction
 1. Participants provided with the mission statement and an overview of Media and Communications
 2. Participants exposed to the many services and introduced to the key leaders in Media and Communication
 3. Participants given a notebook with all related material to be presented in the session
- III. Session- Part One
 1. Participants, seated in groups of 5, are involved in an interactive lesson on handling the media
 2. Session topic concepts are tied to research from Stephen Covey, Douglas Reeves, Rick DuFour, and Robert Marzano
 3. Session presenters utilize “real” examples to illustrate dealing with the media in a crisis situation
- IV. Session- Part Two
 1. Presenter, an academy graduate, introduces the topic of Community Relations
 2. A presenter from Partners in Education speaks to class about this program and answers questions from cohort
 3. A presenter from Volunteers in Education speaks to class about this program and answers questions from cohort
 4. A presenter from the Education Foundation speaks to class about this program and answers questions from cohort
- V. Session- Closure
 1. Participants are provided a plus/delta feedback form to complete as an exit pass
 2. Presenters remain to answer questions as participants leave the class

Appendix L

Summary of Evaluative Feedback by Academy Cohort

Academy Modules	Failed to Meet Expectations	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Range	Mean
Induction I- Vision		IX- 11% VIII- 6% VII- 4% VI- 11% V- 2% IV- 5% III- 14% II- 6% I- 3%	IX- 89% VIII- 94% VII- 96% VI- 89% V- 98% IV- 95% III- 86% II- 94% I- 97%	86% - 98%	93%
Induction II- Ropes and Initiatives Course		IX- 4% VIII- 3% VII- 0% VI- 2% V- 0% IV- 1% III- 3% II- 2% I- 3%	IX- 96% VIII- 97% VII- 100% VI- 98% V- 100% IV- 99% III- 97% II- 98% I- 97%	96% - 100%	98%
Effective Communication		IX- 18% VIII- 10% VII- 9% VI- 4% V- 2% IV- 12% III- 13% II- 4% I- 7%	IX- 82% VIII- 90% VII- 91% VI- 96% V- 98% IV- 88% III- 87% II- 96% I- 93%	82% - 98%	91%
Management of School Finances		IX- 12% VIII- 12% VII- 22% VI- 5% V- 0% IV- 3% III- 22% II- 0% I- 0%	IX- 88% VIII- 88% VII- 78% VI- 95% V- 100% IV- 97% III- 78% II- 100% I- 100%	78% - 100%	92%

table continues

Appendix L (continued)

Summary of Evaluative Feedback by Academy Cohort

Academy Modules	Failed to Meet Expectations	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Range	Mean
Management of Human Resources	VII- 2% II- 1%	IX- 18% VIII- 5% VII- 9% VI- 0% V- 0% IV- 1% III- 4% II- 3% I- 0%	IX- 82% VIII- 95% VII- 89% VI- 100% V- 100% IV- 99% III- 96% II- 96% I- 100%	82% - 100%	95%
Role of the AP		VIII- 1% VI- 0% IV- 3%	VIII- 99% VI- 100% IV- 97%	97% - 100%	99%
Emotional Intelligence		IX- 29% VIII- 1% VII- 11% VI- 2% V- 0% IV- 0% III- 0% II- 10% I- 13%	IX- 71% VIII- 99% VII- 89% VI- 98% V- 100% IV- 100% III- 100% II- 90% I- 87%	71% - 100%	93%
Instructional Leadership I		IX- 12% VIII- 13% VII- 4% VI- 0% V- 2% IV- 2% III- unavailable II- 5% I- 0%	IX- 88% VIII- 87% VII- 96% VI- 100% V- 98% IV- 98% III- unavailable II- 95% I- 100%	87% - 100%	95%
Instructional Leadership II		IX- 14% VIII- 17% VII- 6% VI- 12% V- 3% IV- 2% III- 20% II- unavailable I- 2%	IX- 86% VIII- 83% VII- 94% VI- 88% V- 97% IV- 98% III- 80% II- unavailable I- 98%	83% - 98%	91%

Note. Data for this table were tabulated from the Executive Summaries for each of the nine Academy Cohort groups. These summaries included mean response data and relevant comments from participants.

Appendix M

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
<p>1. Everyone in this group is a graduate of the Futures Leadership Academy. Discuss how you felt this experience helped prepare you for your present role.</p>	<p>1A: The Principal Academy I felt was a very rewarding experience for me. It brought forth many facets of a leadership position. He developed a good cohort. You're exposed to just about everybody in a leadership position in the school division and you were able to network and to gather basic information. As far as the individual sessions in the Academy, everyone, I felt, played some role in preparing me for my position.</p> <p>2A: I feel the Academy allowed me to learn specific issues that the school division emphasizes, have discussions w/my peers, and allowed us to collaborate and bounce ideas off each other. Overall I think the learning experience from the sitting principals and assistant superintendents helped again and gave us more specific ideas about what the school division expects from aspiring principals and the assistant principals now.</p> <p>3A: I think the main thing the Futures Academy did for me was it gave me an orientation for the school division itself, the different departments and how these departments work together and how they support the individual school whether it be the principal or the assistant principal. It also allowed for a lot networking. You don't often get the opportunity to network with our colleagues because we are so isolated in our schools. So that enabled me to get a feel of what other schools are doing and to see how we work together as a division.</p> <p>4A: When I started w/the Futures Academy I thought there was a lot of redundancy. I thought it was what we had already been through when we were appointed as assistant principals and we had to go and listen to the all the different departments tell us what they do. I think they went in more depth w/the principals, Futures Academy so I gained some insight there in some areas. I would say that I had mixed feelings about it, as you can tell. I think it was beneficial. I probably appreciate it more now than I did when I got out of it initially when we graduated. I did enjoy the camaraderie and listening to what other associates had to say, what was going on and I really felt it was very beneficial to have first hand information from leaders in the school district as opposed to an article or something in one of our news letters.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
<p>1. Everyone in this group is a graduate of the Futures Leadership Academy. Discuss how you felt this experience helped prepare you for your present role.</p>	<p>5A: As a new administrator to Va. Beach school division, I found Futures very helpful since I had not worked in the division before so it was an opportunity for me to see how each of the departments worked together and could help me network, not only w/my colleagues but w/these departments. The most beneficial part of the Leadership Academy to help me right now would be the Booth survey. After I got the results of that I could make changes immediately in my leadership style and that is something that has really helped me through the year since I graduated from the Academy.</p> <p>6A: I think it is very helpful from the aspect, that you get that big picture of the division. I came in to it while I was still a teacher, so it gave me a lot of information I needed before moving into an administrative position. I feel like no matter how long you do it, you can't learn everything you need to know about this position, but this was a way it helps you, because you certainly acquired a good bit of knowledge. I think it gave you a sense of confidence, and you certainly benefited by hearing those voices of experience from the principals that gave information that you felt like you could learn from the mistakes others had made and to help you be more prepared.</p>
<p>2. In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader. How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?</p>	<p>1A: The Future's Academy definitely emphasized being an instructional leader. That was placed in the forefront. But, I concur with 6A, in regard to additional training and staff development, we received, over the past few years, in regard to observation and evaluation. I tell you, there is no better tool to hone your instructional leadership skills, than sitting in a classroom and observing teachers and helping them become better. I think most people in instructional leadership positions, principalships, or administrative positions feel that they were pretty good classroom teachers. But, you don't really realize how many good teachers there are out there and what you can learn from just sitting in a classroom and watching teachers doing what they do best.</p> <p>2A: I feel that the Futures Academy really helped me with regards to giving me emphasis on prioritizing instruction above all things. It just kept reiterating what the sitting principals said, that you have to make time for evaluations and observations and making instruction as a focus. It gave a lot of innovative ideas for instructional monitoring and collaborative approach in team building, so I'm actually taking this into effect (action) when I'm going into departments and working with them to work on their collaborative approaches.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
<p>2. In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader. How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?</p>	<p>3A: I have to concur with 6A and 1A. I feel that because instruction is such a huge piece, the Future's Academy did a nice job of touching on the key points of specific pieces to look for when evaluating instruction. But it is simply not enough time to embody what in a true instructional leader needs do in that form. I do think that having principals at the Futures Academy speak to instruction and their experiences with instructions was very beneficial, that to me was the most beneficial piece of the Futures Academy dealing with instruction.</p> <p>4A: Well, I think this is one of the areas of the Future's Academy that was very beneficial as an overview. I was also very fortunate to work with an instructional leader, whose focus is on instruction. He gave me a lot of information coming into the assistant principal position and as career health and p. e. teacher, I was pretty oblivious to what was out there in the other core areas, it was a learning experience from him and the Futures did assist with that.</p> <p>5A: The opportunity to take part in Futures, under the instructional leadership segment was very beneficial to me, because I felt before I came to the academy, I was doing a lot of crisis management and with not being in the classroom as much as I would have liked, when I heard the presenters make statements like on in classes everyday, a good portion of the day, I really thought I had a guide as to where I really should be, and knowing inside that I wasn't. So I thought that was very helpful to me and that now I am in a different situation and I've kept that with me, and now I can observe everyday, even for short little walk-through, but at least I feel that I'm in the classrooms much more than I had been before. I think that Futures made me aware of getting in the classroom regularly.</p> <p>6A: While I think Futures gave me a good bit of information on being an instructional leader, I think I received just as much, if not more from the on going staff training that we receive at other conferences and things that we attend. I think prior experiences as a teacher can serve as a good foundation as we continue to learn about instruction. I think because of that being such a changing thing, I always knew things we can learn, so I probably didn't see Futures as strong in that category.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
3. Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?	<p>1A: I agree with 3A and 6A, that the principal's academy did provide a great overview. However, once we spent a day and a half on finance, and it was an eye opener. But I immediately went back to my principal and mentor at the time and he and I had several sit downs. But as far as learning school finance, you really have to work close with your bookkeeper and you really have to read that school business manual. Because, it is pretty much OTJ, on the job training for school finances and it is an evolving situation, things change daily in that manual and new policies and procedures are presented and you really just have to read the policies working closely with the Office of Business Services. There is only so much they can provide you with in a day and a half and again to be effective or have a strong knowledge, its working closely with your school bookkeeper and reading the school business manual. That is where you are going to gain most of your knowledge.</p> <p>2A: I concur with the others about the lack of time for the coverage necessary and I had very little knowledge of school finances until the Future's Academy. It was very beneficial. We had a high school principal, George Parker, come in as a new principal and discussed his budget priorities. We also a new middle school principal, Kay Thomas at that time, and she discussed the same. I was a little surprised at the cost of paper and how much is put into it. My only other experience with that was as a summer school principal, just a smaller budget. But, along the same lines, it still gave you a little background to it.</p> <p>3A: I think Futures Academy is the first time I've had any dealings w/school finances other than a principal telling me you have x amount of dollars to spend. I thought Futures Academy was an eye-opener to the importance of managing your school budget and managing your funds. I thought the activities that were presented at Futures Academy were very beneficial. Again, though, I think that's not something you're going to learn in a day and a half of the Futures Academy, however it was a wonderful orientation. What I took away mainly from that Academy was I didn't realize the high dollar value of some of the items that we spend day-to-day and I didn't realize the different accounts, the many different accounts that are included in a school budget. So I'd have to say where I received this knowledge, it started with the Futures Academy.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
3. Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?	<p>4A: What I said before, I had prior knowledge from a principal that I worked with, he shared information, made us part of the process of where the monies were going and how we could use the account. So, I had a foundation for the Futures. I thought Sammy Cohen did a good job of the big picture district wide and all that. But, I really felt the benefit of it was we met with Mr. Phillips who presented for us and her bookkeeper and the exchange between the bookkeeper and the principal and the relationship and the chemistry of the whole thing and making it successful. This was beneficial for me.</p> <p>5A: Before Futures, I had very little knowledge of school finances. I felt that the presentation from the retiring principal was excellent. However, since I graduated which was a year ago, I really haven't used school financing opportunities at all. So, I would have to start all over again if I became a principal. So I think the time element is a little frightening. But, what I was given was an eye opener.</p> <p>6A: I think this is an area that we get no experience in or incredibly little experience in prior to becoming a principal, so it is a weakness for a lot of people. Futures gave a lot of good information, but I agree with 3A that you just cannot absorb everything in that bit of time. Now since then I have taken to going back to the handbook from Futures and looking at things. But a lot of this is just learned on the job. I ended up with a major mistake in my first year, which when I went back there it was in the handbook, we had covered it in Future's.</p>
4. Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?	<p>1A: School plant and the maintenance of your facility, basically in my opinion or at least in my case, comes from a very strict organizational style. Everybody has a job and responsibilities and they are expected to do it. As far as maintaining the building and managing repairs and what not, we have an assistant principal and we have a custodial staff that has a very long tenure, in my school. They take great pride in the facility and work really hard. I've been in situations where you've got a building that is spotless everyday, and I've been in situations where I had a building that I had issues and there was really no direction for custodial staff upon my arrival. I think outlining everybody's duties and making sure that everybody knows what they're suppose to be doing, whose responsible for what and providing time lines and deadlines is critical. Just staying on top of the game, I think if you communicate your vision and your expectations of what you want your school to be, then everybody will follow suit and do the very same.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
<p>4. Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>2A: I believe also, that there wasn't much discussion in school for physical plant operations. I believe the knowledge I do have, I acquired during the Futures Now, when we met with Fran Foster and actually visited the school plant to get a first hand look. I have very little to do with the building, I think I just use my common sense and just assist the assistant principal, who's in charge of the building, by talking to my departments in any areas that I see that needed help.</p> <p>3A: I don't think they really touched much in Futures about the facility. What I took away from it was that you have to have a plan in your building, so that your teachers knew what process to follow if there is something that needs fixed or there is a maintenance issue in the classroom or in the school. The other thing they did do at the Futures Academy was introduce you to the faces, so you could put the face with the name. But again, when you look at the Futures Academy, I go back to the overall theme was to introduce you to the different departments and to get you to see how the division works together. I think they accomplished that in terms of the support department.</p> <p>4A: Well, I'm kind of task oriented, I like everything to have a schedule and accountability, so pretty much, and I do have the physical plant at the school and all work orders and we have a very strong student activity individual and he keeps a tight reign on use of the building, so we don't have a lot of groups coming in there unless they are credible groups so that helps on it. All of my custodians have areas of responsibility and accountability. One of them has to keep the risograph stocked; somebody has to keep the bathroom stocked. If they aren't then we know who to go too. So, it is easy to track down what isn't getting done. And of course, the new principal that's come back this year has zero tolerance for any dirt and lack of effort in keeping the building. So, he has really supported me tremendously, and got us back on track. I can't say I got the knowledge from anybody other than I like to have a clean well run building so I've pretty much used my organizational skills to do that.</p> <p>5A: I don't really recall any information in Future's about the physical plant. But I do remember that I was invited being a graduate of Future's, to a summer institute, that was like maybe a day, day and a half. At that presentation I remember hearing a lot from Fran Foster about what to do. I would say that it would be more on the job training where I got the information on maintaining the school plant.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
<p>4. Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>6A: I concur with everyone that it wasn't something specifically dealt with in depth with Futures. I think the aspects of the communication skills we learned about in relationship building come into play here because I think that's the important aspect but if you have that good relationship and communication w/your custodial staff and good organizational skills of following up on things that need to be done. Basically, a bit of common sense, but primarily I see this as an on the job experience.</p>
<p>5. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>1A: The compliance piece in the Futures Academy and the handouts that were provided were very useful. The presentation team was very knowledgeable and answered all the questions well. I believe that this session may have evolved slightly from the earlier principal's academy or later academy's, I am not a hundred percent sure. To be honest with you I don't recall a great deal but I do remember compliance and that was a critical piece, because everyone is always concerned about helping a teacher or an employee be the very best they can be. As far as interviewing and things of that nature, the assistance of my previous principal and mentor, he allowed me to sit on multiple interviews and assist him with the hiring process, in my former school.</p> <p>2A: I think Futures reinforced prior training that I had in regards to conducting legal interviews. Again, more specific to the Virginia Beach model. I felt very confident at the beginning of this school year when interviewing candidates for positions. As far as the dismissal and compliance issues, again it was very beneficial, not from just the role playing that was very good and the information that was given to us, but I think we learned more from the experiences of my cohort because we had varying experiences at the assistant principal level and we had new AP's like myself –some very experienced who had gone through all those so again it was very beneficial. Finally, it gave [me] a lot of innovative ideas for developing a collaborative approach to team building.</p> <p>3A: I found the most beneficial piece of that session in the Futures Academy was the handouts that were provided. Materials were helpful so that you could refer back to the materials so that you knew who to go to in the event that you had to call upon compliance. They did a bit of role playing which I also felt was beneficial.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
<p>5. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>4A: I would concur w/most everybody that the compliance components were exceptional. The handouts I've gone back and researched them and utilized them when necessary so I felt like that was a real strength. The interview part I also would agree with, I think, 3A that I learned a lot w/mentoring w/my principal and being part of the hiring interview process and observing the details of it so that was very beneficial for me. I would also say that I didn't know what a curriculum veto was until I went through that and realize I should put one together. Mr. Maloney did a great job w/us on the interview of applying for principalship and the letter of intent and the resume and what they look for and I was absolutely clueless on all that so that was a real eye opener for me and was very beneficial.</p> <p>5A: The knowledge was received in Futures especially with conducting interviews, questions to ask, questions that are not legally acceptable, and also keeping documentation of the interview and all the people who would be on the interview team. Dismissal and compliance issues I remember being given a format of the kinds of letters that you might need to use in those issues, the people who to contact, and I just found that overall the Human Resource portion was very helpful.</p> <p>6A: I think this is a strength of Futures that was handled very well, as previously mentioned it covers well how to conduct interviews, the legal issues. The compliance piece, I think you received good information, although we've since received other staff development on that. Having had to deal with that in my first year, it was advantageous to go back to that handbook and find the information that you needed right there.</p>
<p>6. Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you?</p>	<p>1A: I agree w/all three of the previous people here. It did provide a big picture and it was a practical application of knowledge. You know you can sit in a classroom and learn as much as you can from somebody who hasn't stepped foot in a school building for years and talks on all the fluff and all that stuff. But this Academy really provided you with a great foundation to be successful. They opened your eyes in all areas of the school division. And also in agreeing with 6A that it let me know that this school division thinks that much of their future leaders and they are going to do anything and everything possible to develop a professional development Academy to hone or grow their own leaders. The other thing is that they actually hire people that go through the academy; it is not just a do it and see what happens thing. People who go through that academy are deemed good enough to hold a leadership position in the school division.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
<p>6. Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you?</p>	<p>2A: I just have to agree with everyone, I think the practical application of the theories that we learned in the academy, again based on the Virginia Beach model, is needed specifically. The networking that was provided by meeting, not only our own peers, but also all the directors, superintendents, and sitting principals. I'd also agree, in regards to the Booth Survey: it helped me identify my strengths, my weaknesses, which is something that I would not sit back and identify myself. It was very helpful to have the different focus groups critique you. It was a great learning experience and I would like to see if it would be continued as an after type program for the Futures Academy.</p> <p>3A: I have to agree w/6A I thought it was more practical at the university level. Of course you get the theoretical piece. I think at the university level you experiment w/different types of leaderships. But the Academy in going through their tests, I think it may be honing in on w/my leadership style. I think it [Booth Survey] helped me to focus in on my leadership style. It also helped me see how my other leadership style can affect the way I run a building. The combination of the academy experience and on the job experience has been very beneficial to me and it has helped me refine my leadership role."</p> <p>4A: I would say it helped me to be stronger but I think it's still on the job training for me. I think I've learned more by being there. I think what the Futures Academy did was it gave me the big picture and I think we have to know what the big picture is in order to deal w/the little picture of our building.</p> <p>5A: I'd like to start off by saying I was treated royally, I really felt very special and that was important. The food was good and they always gave you the royal treatment. But, practically, the Booth Survey was life changing for me. When I got the results back, I knew there were some things I wanted to change and I could do it immediately. That has been with me for the year and a half since I've gotten that information. Also, I thought the role playing of what to do in an emergency or a crisis situation, was also very helpful. Those things just come to me every time we have a fire drill, an external lockdown, when we go to our audit, or have our safe school meetings. I just remember a lot of the things that we did in that emergency scenario. The networking is very valuable, especially because I was new to Virginia Beach, so I really didn't know anyone and this was an opportunity for me to meet peers on my level.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
6. Beyond your masters program, what benefit did the Futures Leadership Academy provide for you?	<p>6A: The first thing that comes to mind to me is the networking. That you made these relationships w/people that, at the time, you're not even aware that you'll need them down the road. But as the years go by, and things that come up, you have people to go back to share things with. And I think this is so positive w/what we deal with. I think the practical knowledge that we gained was so outstanding that I felt that most of my university coursework was just still more of the theoretical things. And coming out into the Futures is really things that you needed to know for when you're actually in the building doing the work. And the third benefit that I see from it is that it showed me that because the division was making such a commitment to the program, I realized the support that was behind me from moving into this position and that just made me feel stronger going into this position to know how many people there were there willing to help you for whatever issue could come up.</p>
7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your Academy experience, your university coursework, your experience on the job, or a combination of the three?	<p>1A: I do think that my leadership style was refined by going through the Academy. I do believe that on the job experience played a role in refining that as well because, you have certain idea of how you are going to do things when you first start a job in the administrative field and then once you get in there, you kind of realize, you may need to tweak this or tweak that. The Academy really lets you be the leader you wanted to be, you could express your views and your ideas and they let you build upon on them. But also, you learn from everybody else. You are able to come away with other ideas about your leadership style. In general, I wouldn't say my university course work did much for me, that is more you are sitting in class learning, listening to professors.</p> <p>2A: I would definitely say it is the combination of the three. My experience on the job as teacher, as an assistant principal, through my various internships, and working for different principals probably had the most impact. Course work helped me identify that there are different types of styles and what not. I think the biggest impact for the Academy is its actually identifying your strengths and weaknesses and I can look back and reflect on it and make changes as necessary or reinforce some of these strengths and try to decrease the weaknesses.</p> <p>3A: I couldn't agree more with 1A. I think the course work at the university level is enabling you to get the degree to move forward. I did find that, coupled with the job experience and the Academy, those two venues helped me redefine my leadership role. It continues with day to day experience on the job. But, I would say the combination of the Academy and the job experience has been beneficial to me and it has helped me redefine my leadership role.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
<p>7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your Academy experience, your university coursework, your experience on the job, or a combination of the three?</p>	<p>4A: Do I think my leadership style was refined by the Academy? I would say some what. I think I've always been a leader in my coaching and in different levels I have had in teaching. Going into this job, I thought being a leader, especially with the custodians, I thought they would be led, but little did I know..... I do believe that just because you are a leader does not mean you can lead. I think what the Academy did for me, it helped me to self evaluate my personality as a leader, and maybe reduce some of my expectations and stress level, and some things and kind of put more of a perspective that custodians are not wrestlers. So, anyway, I think it is a self evaluation and I think all that, plus my upbringing gives me a strong work ethic. So I think that all a part of my leadership.</p> <p>5A: I believe I needed the combination of all three that were mentioned. University course work, at that point in time that point in my life, was very helpful. However, then when I was hired as an administrator, using the experience on the job, and my experience from the Academy really made me, more well-rounded. I would say though that the Academy experience did really help me with the idea of being gentle with people but tough on issues. That was something that I don't think the other two gave me.</p> <p>6A: I think that it is a combination of the three. I think that when you are talking about your leadership style, it is such a multifaceted item, that it can't be narrowly assigned to any one separate category. It is an ongoing thing that keeps evolving. But, I do think that the Academy experience, it helped me focus more in to the learning style, itself, of what I needed to work on, it made you think and be more reflective of the impact of your style on what you wanted to have happen in your building. So, the University work would be at the bottom of the three, but, if I had to give a ranking, I would probably think from the actual learning leadership style work, I would go to the academy.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
<p>8. After completing your masters program and the Futures Leadership Academy, in what areas would you like to have more training?</p>	<p>1A: I think that the human relations piece is probably an area where you can have a little more time, just for the fact that you are dealing with adults. There are so many issues that arise on a daily basis and you are not really prepared for them all. A lot of times you have to sit down and listen and then take a little break and go back and look at it. I think the human relations piece and updating on compliance issues is important. That should happen for everybody not just the Future's Academy but in general. Also the finance piece, I think if they could spend a little more time with the finance to go a little more in depth. Because as stated by many members of this panel, an assistant principal just is not going to have the opportunity to work that much with school finance. I believe as one person stated, that they would need to basically, have a total refresher because, they went through it and now an assistant principal role and now if they became a principal they would have to go through it again. I agree the same would happen to me, I would definitely need some help there. But, in general this academy was very beneficial and I would recommend it for anybody, current administrators or teachers, it was fantastic.</p> <p>2A: I would definitely say finance, again, very little exposure to that and depending on your building principal, you may not have much to do with finance at all. I would also like to see more emphasis on instructional leadership, but again the time restraints kind of play into that.</p> <p>3A: I would have to say because it is constantly changing, I would have to say compliance and finance together. Rules are often being redefined and changing. The process is often being redefined and changing. One time we use to have what was called, a Letter of Concern and then you see that in the file, but no longer do we have the Letter of Concern. I think finance and compliance, but I don't think it is bad to have a refresher on everything. It is always beneficial.</p> <p>4A: As administrators we're supposed to be the instructional leaders. We can only spread ourselves so thin in that area. I attended a math in-service earlier this year and came out of there just so much more knowledgeable about math and the development and progression of the curriculum. I found this to be very informative. I personally would like to see more work w/the curriculum coordinators, and specialists. You can't have it all but I would like to have a little bit better knowledge of the progression and the development of the curriculum.</p> <p>5A: I would like more training with finance, compliance, special education issues, and a follow up to the Booth survey.</p>

table continues

Appendix M (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group One

Interview Question	Response
8. After completing your masters program and the Futures Leadership Academy, in what areas would you like to have more training?	6A: since I went through Future's as a teacher, coming out of that, I felt that the work I needed most to do was in knowing about in special education system. I felt that when I went in to that had I not had worked a little bit with the AP at my building in anticipation of getting a promotion, I would have been totally lost with everything that was involved there. The thing that I found after becoming a principal, so many times I felt I need more training in psychology type experiences. I think that so much of what I end up having to deal with, it doesn't involve education of children, it involves some kind dealing with other issues that impact education. There have been many times I've thought that is what I need to pursue more knowledge.

Appendix N

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>1. In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader. How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?</p>	<p>1B: I'll start by saying that I taught school for fourteen years, so I think that gave me a lot of hands on opportunities. I changed grade levels every couple of years and was able to experience different grade levels at work. I also worked as a curriculum specialist for three years and was able to see the framework of our school division and during that time I worked in many different buildings. This gave me an opportunity to see different principals at work. I worked as an assistant principal for six years under a brand new principal and I think it was a unique experience, because with him being brand new, he was not sure of what he was doing. I was a new assistant principal not sure about me, and we collaborated a lot more than I think might have been typical. During that time, we had a chance to rebuild a school and learned a lot about the inner workings of how you build schools, and the vendors, and the builders, and all that. I read a lot, I spend a lot of time in classrooms and I share back and forth from teacher to teacher and grade level to grade level, what's working for children. But I also think it's a natural process, because I always say, as a teacher, what would I like my principal to be able to do.</p> <p>2B: Basically, I have the same sort of experiences, but I have done mine differently. I've gone through different classes; I've been strictly mainly in the middle school. I've changed areas from reading to American history to social studies to Chapter One to ISS Co-coordinator. Outside of that just learning through the basic class enrollment, the different classes we attended as we were getting our degree in administration.</p> <p>3B: I'm the same as far as working in the classroom, that I taught physical education for fifteen years, totally different animal than spending time in the classroom and that was done in junior high, years ago, and high school. I ended up being an intern, administrative intern, in the middle school. I worked with a principal who took the time to show me various aspects of the job and this became my basis for making decisions when I became a principal. So spending time in the classroom, using my own personal experiences as well as reading, attending conferences and just that desire to learn more about what helps kids learn. I'll tell you something else when we did our training for how to evaluate teachers with our new evaluation system, a lot of insight came with that training. But I also found myself learning from programs that I have in my school that work well for children and help strengthen their learning such as the middle year's program, UBD, and really tapping in to the knowledge of people who use those skills.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>1. In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader. How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?</p>	<p>4B: I can ditto everything else, but also in light w/the master's courses and other courses I was taking, I had certain people w/in the system like an assistant superintendent who gave me an assignment to do a master schedule. He sent me to the best master scheduler in the system at that time who's a retired principal now, then a high school principal, and she taught me how to do a master schedule. It was almost like an apprenticeship thing where I went to that person and learned to do a master schedule. Then I sent to another person to learn how to do finances. I taught anywhere. I was a Social Studies teacher. I taught from 6th grade to 12th grade both in a middle school, a junior high, and a high school. So I had that varied experience there. And course work and almost like a tutelage mentor-type thing, where I was sent to certain people throughout the system to learn certain things, like in Special Ed., and scheduling. At that time when I became an assistant principal the system was looking at how we were evaluating and inter-rater reliability. We were basically trained the same way by a team from North Carolina. Remember the scripting we were doing in '95, '96, and '97. It helped me look at things in a different light in the classroom. It got us on the same sheet of music where we looked at everything that was going on in a class such as noting as measurable data the number of responses from students and from whom. My course work in college was excellent.</p> <p>5B: In addition to the teaching and the other things that have been mentioned, in my instance I taught college for seven years and served as a supervisor to student teachers for many of those years. So I've worked w/teachers at all different levels and actually ran across the curriculum in different subject areas. Then working in the central office for sixteen years here in the Beach I worked w/the schools at all levels evaluating programs. Being married to a teacher for thirty-five years I've gotten a lot of insight from listening to her and her colleagues talk about their administrators and what they liked and disliked so a variety of places like that.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>1. In our administrative roles we are required to be an instructional leader. How did you obtain the skills you use that help you in your role as an instructional leader?</p>	<p>6B: When I look at this question and it especially talks about instruction leadership I want to say this w/out sounding bodacious here but I'm a natural leader. I've been generally chosen to lead whether it was in my church or my community or when I was in high school and a college student and I've used a lot of those strategies in what I do currently. I think being a parent is another light that has truly helped me because I can flip roles. I can be the student, the teacher but also the parent. What is the parent thinking? I think in thinking in terms of your customers certainly is very import. Around the table I've heard lots of years of teaching. Sixteen years of teaching both junior high and high school. Also I'm an eleven year summer school teacher and summer school teaching you really learn to teach and I always listed that as laboratory experience. I could try new strategies, materials I didn't normally teach because I had to share them w/other folks. I was a grade level chairman so I got a chance to plan a lot of activities for students, and for teachers which shy away from field trips that were overnight and those kinds of things. I never coached but I sponsored almost anything you could think of; pep team, step team, culture clubs, classes, those kinds of things. You learn a lot by working w/children outside of the classroom and certainly you really get to spend a lot of time w/your administrators because you have to work w/them. I have, like some people around the table, worked in a variety of schools and as an instruction leader I have been able to see six through twelve. I was principal at the 6th grade campus where I really only had to focus on a small group of teachers and students. Then I moved to a fairly large middle school and then from middle school to a high school. When you can see six through twelve you really get a good vantage point of what's working well in each of those circumstances. I've just had the pleasure of working w/very smart people and I choose smart people to work w/because it makes me better.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
2. Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?	<p>1B: I agree it's definitely the weakest area when entering the principal ship and then go to that workshop for entering principals and they gave you the bookkeeper's guide. I do faithfully look in the book when I have a question or call downtown. Unfortunately when I first became a principal I inherited a bookkeeper who had a lot of challenges and I was told to either fix it or get rid of her. That was my first job that was given to me as a principal and so I was really worried I had to learn about the software program Manatee and the rules real quick. I met with the head audit person two or three times for guidance. Then I was mentored by a principal who actually runs her own set of books through a spreadsheet. She was showing me how to monitor money by running your own smaller version of Manatee and so I did do that briefly. I'm very fortunate to have one now that I work w/faithfully every day and we look at money on a regular basis as to where we are. We spend very frugally at the beginning of the year and as time goes on I think our staff members appreciate it because our budget does seem to blossom in the spring w/all the money we get through pictures and that kind of thing. But you've got to be careful, that's the hardest part about school finances.</p> <p>2B: I have to apologize for this one, because this is probably the downfall that I have by not going through training. The only finance course that I had was through the administration program, where you would go through and you took a basic finance course and that showed you where the monies came from. Like what part was from the state, what part was from the federal government and what part was from the local government? The basic or only finance that I know, was when I use to run the recreation association in this area, we would go through and set up a budget and would follow that budget and try to stick as close to it and when the funds ran out, the funds ran out. And that is basically my knowledge about finance. Whether that could equate back to school, you could probably equate that a little bit, but in one are, that is the one area I would be lacking, as an administrator, is in the finance part.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
2. Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?	<p>3B: I have to tell you one of the drawbacks in becoming a principal was the money, the finance piece. I was scared to death of the finance piece. I had a mentor who sat down w/me and showed me the money. When I went to high school I had another mentor sat down with me but it still doesn't come together until you really started working with that money yourself. I inherited a bookkeeper who ended up stealing from me and that has been a valuable lesson. And it goes back to you know you are trusting someone, even though you're looking over, but you are trusting that it is right. I have since gotten that whole process, which has been a bear, working w/the auditors. Now I have a bookkeeper who is fabulous; from spending time upon time w/that person reviewing records, that constant communication which I thought I had w/the other bookkeeper before she stole from me. You have to get in there, even the business manual, you read that and you are like, what does that mean, what's that all about? You have to get in there and you really have to work with it and build that budget know what you are doing.</p> <p>4B: I would say, first off as to courses, I had several very good instructors in school finance, who emphasized a practical orientation. What happens in a building, what happens in central administration, what are our expenditures and things of that nature were important. Knowledge also occurred during the years of working as an assistant principal. Several principals that I have worked with basically were trying to help the assistant principals get some idea of what or how finances worked with in the building. There was a great deal of instruction and help on that point from other principals.</p> <p>5B: Well, I've had the opportunity to take school finance in three states, so, I have had course work in Florida, Wyoming, and Virginia, on school finance. Then through the years in working in accountability and worked w/predecessors for accountability, I've done a lot of division-level reports for cost of full-day kindergarten and any kind of programs that the school board was interested in and so I worked a great deal at that level. So I have had a lot of experience on the division level and understanding state finances. But still when you get to the building it's a whole different ball game. So there's a whole lot of OJT there and there's a lot of dependence on the bookkeeper. And you know I'm still constantly learning about the nitty-gritty down at the building level just from that experience.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
2. Discuss your knowledge of school finances. Where did you receive this knowledge?	6B: That is probably the area, I think that all of us probably struggle with and get one course in our administrative program. I remember focusing on where the money comes from and how it is allocated and that kind of thing. The day to day you really have to live that. I remember once I became a principal, my assistant superintendent sat down and spent about two hours with me in one day and said, "spend up everything you can, spend it up quickly, get the money from downtown into your building to spend it. This gave me some really good quick tips. Talking w/other principals who were more experienced than me helped me. Again running my own budget at home, I have an understanding that you never spend money that you don't have and you spend it for students and on students. There's integrity in what you do because this is the public money. Having a good bookkeeper and spending an hour every day with that bookkeeper is helpful. We did not have the Future's Academy when I first became a principal but we did have kind of have a workshop or something on finances and that was quite helpful. Again not being afraid to ask questions, being in communication with business services has been very helpful to me and certainly in establishing a budget.
3. Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?	1B: When I came to my first situation, I reviewed the processes that already in place by the previous principal and talked to the custodial and cafeteria staff for input in what they saw that they needed to improve. I also realized that some people weren't pulling their weight so at that point in time I had to set some of them up on a tighter schedule to insure that the work was being done. I let them know that I had real high expectations and I also demonstrated how to do some cleaning that I thought was not being done properly. At the new school that I'm in though it's much easier because I was able to hire the people who had a strong work ethic. I had a custodian who treats the school better than her house and it looks that way. I have a custodial supervisor check in regularly. The A. P. and I do spot checks. We keep detailed calendars for facility use so that nothing is going on that we don't know about or that overlaps when we make mistakes. We also meet regularly in round table discussions, especially w/the custodians just to check in to see how they are getting along because sometimes when they're on that night duty you don't know how they're doing and you really need to check in and say, "How are you?" Are you enjoying working w/each other? Is there anything we need to change?" So about once every sixty days we actually sit down w/them as a group and kind of talk, "How's it going?"

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>3. Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>2B: This is the one thing I am probably most versed in, because I consider myself a people person and I simply follow the golden rule. You're being visited numbers of people, from school plant, from the busses, from parents, from the custodial services, and so forth. Basically what we do there, in this case, I'm just going to use random, because this is what we do. I met with the head custodian, we sat down, we talked about who are employees were, what were their best tactics, we've gone ahead and we assigned them jobs to that, both night and day crews. We basically feel that when the parent walks in that building, they want to see a clean foyer up front, they want to see a clean entrance way, because that's the first impression giving to those parents. If they happen to go to the restroom, they expect to have a clean restroom. So we, through out the day, monitor the restrooms, and the hallways. We have custodial people sweeping the hallways all day long. So the papers are picked up and the little dust bunnies out of the corner are gone, at least in the front area of the building, so when the parent comes in they can see that. Because, as 6B stated that that's basically where people get to see people, what they are doing, and we start appreciating them. Also, you get the people from school plant, there is nothing wrong with meeting them at the door, shaking their hand, talking to them, what are their problems, getting to know them on a personal relationship so they don't mind coming into your building and they know that they are going to be treated properly. Along with that we also provide are custodians with little gifts. Not gifts, but like this Friday we're cooking, the administrative staff is cooking for the custodial staff, day and night and they appreciate that.</p> <p>3B: My first experience really being responsible for the plant was an assistant principal on the high school level working with a very demanding principal who walked me around that building from the day I walked in the building until I left that building. Just staying ahead of him was a challenge. From that experience I am really working with my assistant principal to clean my building that was a mess. Getting that straight, that's where I initially learned about the physical plant and knowing what a terrazzo was, and the lighting, the fixtures, and working with a contractor on the roof, and that, I loved. Now I have an assistant principal whom I walk around the building with and very demanding and wanting things as meticulously done and a custodial staff that's phenomenal.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>3. Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>4B: Fortunately I have a lot of military experience in dealing with physical plants where I was in charge of building and operations. At the same time in my early career I had that task and I had two principals that worked with me who had also come from military backgrounds. My military background taught me the importance of communicating effectively. The biggest thing I realized that you're dealing with two or three different sub-groups of people that have different pulls or different views: the teachers, the clerical staff, the custodial staff all have different points of views in different things that are important to them. That's what I enjoyed doing was working with all three groups. Basically it's from a military background, and also having two very sharp assistant principals who walked me around the building. We all knew our roles because I was lucky that all three of us had come from military backgrounds and we knew what we could take from the military and apply it to the civilian life.</p> <p>5B: Similar types of things, like it's hard to mention. I had a number of years in the military and Marine Corps and supervised a lot of buildings, equipment and materials, so I was comfortable with that. As far as strategies, it is just to get the best people you can and work closely with them. Let them know that your supportive, I've emptied many a trash can and when they are working short, I try to help out any way we can, and I get the teachers to help out as well, because we want them to know that we appreciate what they do and we want to help keep the building clean and safe. Then I had the good fortune to work with most everybody in the school plant in different capacities, doing different types of things, I knew the folks down there very well, so I worked a lot with them to help us keep the building in good shape, I am comfortable calling them and telling them what the issues are and let them give me some direction as to what we should do next. Just taking advantage of all the expertise that's out there to help with the whole job.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>3. Management of the school's physical plant and its operations is also required. Discuss the strategies you use to manage the school's physical plant operations. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>6B: I would have to admit that's probably the area that I am the weakest because in each of my responsibilities an assistant principal I never was assigned a building. Anyone who wanted to be a principal, I would say to make sure that the responsibilities that you get as an assistant principal that that would be one of them because that is one of them because that is what you have to do. You have to be that instructional leader but you must be a manager as well. So if anyone said, "6B what is your weak point?" I would say the physical plant. I rely on other people quite a bit. So now I know that's my weakness so I try to explore my strength. My strength is to empowering others to do their job. The person who has the plant, that is your assistant principal and on the high school level you generally have four, I try not to pile a whole lot other stuff on that person because this a day to day operation. You also need to make that person feel that is a very important job. I do think people looking on the outside and sees this person jingling keys, just a key person and that is a very important job because the building must be clean, it must be safe, and it must be orderly or no instruction goes on.</p>
<p>4. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>2B: This is what I dealt with today, where I did learn it, it is on the job training. Basically, you know, I'll go on to a compliance issue, we had a situation in the building today that required me to call the compliance people as well as CPS. So we dealt with that, we called CPS. We got the situation lined up there; of course we notified the parents and all that other good stuff that goes along with that. Basically, this is something you learn as you go, on the job training. Conducting interviews, basically I did that basically with hiring a new custodian, I don't do much of the other interviews. But dismissal we have gone through and set up plans of action of those people who need plans of action. Follow the course, do weekly checks or checks with them. Bring them in, have them check their lesson plan and so forth. Team building issues, just the "rah rah" sort of stuff, get involved with that. That's basically all I have to say.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>4. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>1B: I think most of it has been said, I was just thinking about the interviews. I had some practice as a curriculum specialist doing some interviews. Then opening a new school building I felt like I needed to get very specific, so I went on-line and did a lot of research about good questions to ask and I actually developed a full notebook of interview questions for every job position at the elementary level, with a rubric included. Because I didn't want anything to come back to haunt with someone asking why didn't you choose me. We can look and see where we rated the people or where I rated them initially and then later on as I had a few people come on board we interviewed together. So that was a lot of research for that. Dismissal and compliance, you're right, you go to the workshop, and you think you are never going to have this happen. Had two brand new teachers in one year who had early commitments who probably shouldn't have been committed. But I was ready to be committed, but I did work closely with the compliance specialist and they really guide you how to do it respectfully, how to give them all the help you can give them. If you stick with the people who know what they are doing, it is a nice process where the people feel like you have done everything for them and they recognize "maybe you are right and this is not the place for me to be." As far as team building, we have had the luxury of a lot of workshops; we have had an awful lot of literature given to us throughout the school year and during our summer academy. And just good common sense about camaraderie and the importance of people coming together to work towards a common goal. Especially the office staff, that's a critical complaint when you talk about the initial look at the building, it's also the initial feel of how parents feel when they come into the office. So you need to do a lot of team building and make sure you have a group that they enjoy being together and they present that to the public, because I think that's is very effective.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>4. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>3B: You know, this is a big part of being a leader and it is on the job training. But, for me, it was also those mentors that I worked with and looking at how they handled certain situations. You have to have your people understand that if you have to go into a compliance issue, it is not personal, it's business. This is business, this is about the children, and this is business. I can love you, I can like you, I don't like what you have done, so understand that this is what I will have to do, this is business. That team building piece to me is real important. Because you have to have your team with you, you have to have some type of buy in to what ever it is that you are bringing to the table. You have to get their input, you might not like their input, and you make that final decision. But, they are part of your team and you build that team and that team can make you or break you. You need a strong administrative team with you and with out that they can stab you in the back and make these other issues very difficult, of going in to an interview, having that team with you, not going on just your feel, but everyone has some input. Of course, you make that final decision and you are looking for the best person for your team.</p> <p>4B: I can ditto everybody else, the only thing I can say is that I came from a military background in the infantry, so team building was the key thing. We identified ourselves as a group first, many people did a lot of different jobs; therefore, the emphasis was to get everybody to work together. The habit was not self-aggrandizement, but mission- success. Our effectiveness was based on cohesion that was built on trust and confidence in one another (someone has your back, so to speak). We were all here for something bigger than ourselves, which is the kids or the school and kids first. I have been very fortunate to work for principals that have that same type of concept. And like you said though, the other one is to learn by doing when it comes to compliance and personnel issues. One thing I can say there is that in our time period before the academy, you were directed to the expert or to find someone. who had the best knowledge in that area. You talked to them on how they did it that was the kind of training process in which we had to go talk to the experts, those that knew more about this than anybody else did in the system and I would call or see them. In turn I had Assistant Superintendent's and principal's who called me to help someone with doing a master schedule or testing.</p>

table continues

Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>4. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>5B: Hard to add anything to that list that she just gave you. Along with just the basic HR information that we learned when we take college courses and I'm sure a lot of us read business type books and the latest thinking in the business world team building and managing personnel. But probably the most meaningful things I've learned have been from working with other principals and watching problems they have learning from what they do and how they react to situations. Then adopting those good ideas and recognizing when someone has a problem how to avoid that problem in your own life. I think just having a basic respect for everyone that works for you and wants to work for you and recognizing that not everybody can teach. Sometimes you have to counsel people out of the profession and suggest that maybe this isn't their strengths are, But doing it in a respectful way. But that comes from having a basic respect for people that are working in education and treating them with respect but doing what you have to do. As has been said earlier, that sometimes it is a business and you just have to say, you know, this just isn't your thing.</p> <p>6B: Human resources, I would agree with everyone who has spoken before me, it can make or break your entire operation. I talked about my weakness if I were to look at all the things that I do it would be the plant piece because I never was really in charge of it. But, again I try to exploit what I think I'm good at and human resources might be one of them. And I think clear expectations, being fair and consistent, having worked with a lot of different principals and assistant principals who you borrow and so forth, steal those things that they do really well. And the things that you see them not do well, you say boy, I'll never do that. You may have had an administrator who will chastise an employee in public, I never do that. I will say stop, if I think you're doing something that is going to harm a child, and I need to step in. Generally, I'm going to do that and I'll praise in public. Those kinds of things, my gut, I've learned to rely on it, from practice.</p>

table continues

Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>4. Management of human resources is another requirement for us all. Discuss your knowledge of conducting interviews, dismissal and compliance issues, and team building. Where did you receive this knowledge?</p>	<p>6B (continued): You can almost tell when you have got someone really good in front of you that you are interviewing and someone that you don't. Those first impressions do last and when you go into that classroom that first year you are observing. What I've learned also, is that if you've got a weak teacher, get rid of that teacher that first year. It is more difficult to remove people who have been in the school system for a long time and have continuously gotten good evaluations. That's probably the most difficult. I never interview anyone alone. I just don't do that anymore, I use to do it. But I have found that you cannot do that. I never discuss anything contentious, without a witness. This is a great opportunity as a principal to train your assistants particularly if they are new. By bringing them in and seeing you work in a difficult situation, because I want a witness, I want someone to say they heard me say and how I said it. I think I have gotten some training, I think we all have in our school division, on human relations from compliance, and they have done some really good things for us I think. Especially with manuals, having employee guidelines is great; employee guideline manual is very helpful. But I think it is from practice, I think it's from your gut, going with it. If you know you have a snake, and I've said it to my assistant principals, kill it. Cut the head off the snake, don't send it to me. Don't let it slither into another area. That person that is gossiping and backstabbing, you need to call it what it is and hopefully they will stop it. And if it is a shark that's after you, when they see blood, they are going for you. And I know that sounds harsh, but I have had to learn those things, to come from a point of strength. I know that we have men and women in the room. I do think that women sometimes have to show that strength a little bit more than men do. Even with sometimes even your classified staff and non-classified staff. I've seen people come and ask my assistant principal for something who is a man, when really that question needs to be answered by me. If there is something about that, then the masculine thing working in leadership, but again trying to attack things being fair, being equitable, being consistent in what your saying and high expectations and I think going back to what someone else said earlier. This is about children.</p>

table continues

Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>5. Where did you obtain your essential knowledge and skills that allow you to handle the daily tasks of the principalship?</p>	<p>1B: I think he has an absolutely great answer because this was a hard one to think about because I don't think that there's any specific thing that you do. I don't second guess myself. People say well, you make a decision fast, for example when I was ordering material for furniture in the new building. The lady told me, "Well, you are the fastest chooser I've ever had," because w/in an hour I had picked all the fabric. I don't think long and hard about things, I think, well, this is what I think it should be and that is the way it is. So I feel like I do have pretty decent common sense. And just the things that you have grown up with, you know, treating others the way you expect to be treated, stay calm and remembering enough that it's kind of bad right now, but it is going to pass. To think about what's best for children and that's usually a good path to follow. Just the idea of an open door policy and try to address problems quickly because the longer you wait to address them, the bigger they become when they really probably are not, wouldn't have been as big as they have become. So just using good common sense and judgment and, like you say, you make a plan every day, but that plan, sometimes you didn't check anything off of your list because you had to react rather than be pro-active.</p> <p>2B: I want to say prioritization. Setting your priorities and sticking w/them and right on down that list and hopefully you get to two or three of them. But there are times that come up where that list has to be put aside and other things need to be. Or basically dealing with parents. I'm a parent and I think everyone here is a parent. If you can get in contact w/the parent and tell the parent basically what's going on w/their child, they want to help. They want to do the right things. They want to know. Basically that's where I come from. Being a parent and letting them know what's up front, what's going on w/their child is probably the number one thing. If you're going to make an error you make an error in favor of the child. What every one else had said, that' just one little thing I want to add.</p>

table continues

Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
5. Where did you obtain your essential knowledge and skills that allow you to handle the daily tasks of the principalship?	<p>3B: Everyone has said basically everything that I would say. In addition I think being a leader and running a school as an assistant principal, I think, is a gift. I think it's something that you are born with. Some people come in like you said who want to leave the classroom, this is not the place unless you really have a true love for children and want to do what's good for them. If you want to just whatever you feel towards them and they well and you want to spread that throughout that community, then this job is for you. I depend a lot on those coaching skills. As a coach I used a lot of those coaching skills and I stopped making a list. I have a plan and I never get to it. It's a good day if I can spend time with the kids. If I can spend time out in the hall, if I can spend time in the classroom, if I can spend time in the cafeteria, if I can serve a parent, if I can help a parent w/ a child that they don't know what to do with, they get rid of them- that's a good day for me. It's all about the kids, it's all about service, what can I do for that teacher, to make life better for that teacher? How can I help one of my assistant principals whose struggling? And it could be w/personal things. A guidance counselor, they're coming in sick, "Go home." You can't help; you can't do well if you're here, and ill. I really think being a leader and running a school, I think is a gift and you just use that gift. That's what you're born to do.</p> <p>4B: I ditto everybody a lot on that, especially what John was saying about priorities. Also looking at the kids. I had two pictures on my wall, one is a bunch of kids and that keeps me focused. Not for the kids to look at but it was for me to look at to keep me focused. And what it's all about is doing things for kids. If I can walk away each day with doing one good deed that helps a kid to succeed, and then I'm a happy camper. Like what Joe talked about, and you'll have talked about, all the same things, a combination of management, experience in courses, in classes, and practical experience. I go back to my military background when I was a unit leader in the military and stayed in reserves until about ten years ago. That gave me a different side of looking at things other than just a classroom as a teacher and how you handle and deal w/people. It gave me a little different perspective, but the key thing is in the time I've become an A.P. is what we have to deal with and how fast we have to deal w/them. The task has almost doubled and the time cut in half. The tasks and situation now and then are good for somebody's dissertation.</p>

table continues

Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>5. Where did you obtain your essential knowledge and skills that allow you to handle the daily tasks of the principalship?</p>	<p>5B: As far as handling the daily tasks I think the pace of the building administration is so fast that daily tasks are almost going w/your instincts and trusting yourself in what you have learned and knowing where the help is that you need and being comfortable in calling for help when you need it. We all have to react to so many situations that pop up every morning that we didn't anticipate or we didn't have in our daily planner that we just have to react and we have to have a sound foundation to react from and a clear vision of what our purpose is in this school so we don't loose sight of that and we remember what is important and where we're trying to go. It's mostly just on the job but it's building off of all those other things that you've done in life to get you ready for the job.</p> <p>6B: I could not have said that better, it was just great. It was so wonderful to hear the answers around the table. I think being in the present, this is the key for me. I just try to learn to be right here right now w/what I'm doing. The planning, and all of that, I need to do at another time. Daily tasks I need to be in the present, I need to be w/that teacher, that student, that parent, that administrator, etc. Having a good office manager, it helps. I really rely on my office manager to help me keep my calendar, and keep me at my pace, get me where I need to be, point me where I've got to go so I can be in the present. I also meet again with my bookkeeper, saying this needs to be done; these bills need to be paid. You've got these folks, that person I rely on as well. I meet regularly w/my team; keep me in on the loop. I meet w/them in group every week. We go through the principal's packet. We look at our calendar, who's on first base, who's on second base. There are a lot of people, the four assistant principals, I have a coordinator, I have a students' activities coordinator, a school improvement specialist, I have a guidance director. We all sit around the table and that keeps me abreast of what's going on and then I can prioritize that way. The other is I think that is so important is that I meet w/each of those people individually as to what is going on w/you, and what are your issues so that I can help them do what they need to do. I am here to serve and I always think of myself as a servant, not for somebody to serve me. So how can I serve my assistant principal to be more effective w/discipline? How can I help my bookkeeper get those felt pens quickly? Get these teachers to turn in money or in an orderly fashion, those kinds of things.</p>

table continues

Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
5. Where did you obtain your essential knowledge and skills that allow you to handle the daily tasks of the principalship?	6B (continued): Then yes, you've got to be able to multi-task, you've got to have high energy and stamina. I find that some people come into administration because they are tired of the classroom and they see this as some place to graze or do something different. They really have no concept, some people. To be administrators, I have never worked so hard. I work harder each year because more comes on my plate and not much gets taken off. Change is another thing that you really have to be able to deal with. What helped me a lot was that I would have four or five things that I was going to do each day. Then I learned I wouldn't get any of them done, or maybe I would get two of them done, or maybe I'd get three - that's be a good day. I started at the end of the day checking things off that I did do. Then I'd see that list was much bigger than the list of the things I didn't do. In many cases they were things that I did well for somebody - that's a good day for me.
6. Why have you not participated in the Futures Leadership Academy?	1B: I don't think it was in place when I became a principal, so it's the same thing. I went to a principal's academy w/all the little mini-workshops that they offered to new principals. But also, once it came on board, that was a point in time, that's when my children still needed to be driven around to all their events. Plus I tried very faithfully to go to every event at my own personal school. It was a time issue, my children and my school were more important than taking courses and as another person said, I wasn't so sure I was going to get that much out of the things. Because I kind of had them in a mini forum, through the principal's academy. 2B: My basic reason was a time issue. I had been in the system for 35 years and how much longer are you going to be here. Also, I had no desire to be a principal. I enjoy my role as an assistant principal. I don't mind doing the grunt work. I enjoy doing it. I enjoy meeting people. I enjoy talking to kids. I figured that if you go to the principalship you climb that ladder a little higher. There's more on you. I'm looking at that, do I have the time? Is that something I want to do? I'm staying on equal ground where I feel most comfortable. I think some people are born to be assistant principals. I think someone said that earlier. You've got a job and I think I was just born to be an assistant. Outside of that, like I said like someone else said taking a space from someone else. Then again I never thought I'd be an assistant that long. 35 years and as long as I enjoy it I'm going to stay w/it. There may be, if there's one thing I would join the Future's system for is that finance part. I think I need to know more about the finances.

table continues

Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
6. Why have you not participated in the Futures Leadership Academy?	<p>3B: I'm going to be honest with you as an assistant principal when the Leadership Academy first developed me had no desire to do it because I had no desire to be a principal. I was quite happy doing what I was doing. Then I moved on to the high school and got a principalship before the next round. As a new principal I participated in the Principals Academy. Other than that I guess it's just a time factor now.</p> <p>4B: I could just ditto what everybody else has said. My big thing was at a certain point it was not in effect when I was an assistant principal. I looked at who was teaching the different courses at the academy. I already had worked with most of those people and more importantly at that time in my life, I was a single parent. I had to change my focus from my job to my son and then when I got married again my focus stayed with my son and my wife and that was where my focus has been. I had to do a really sit down and think where I was going and what I had wrecked in the past. I said OK, I am where I am and I enjoy what I am doing and I need to keep the focus on the two most important people in my life. So be it.</p> <p>5B: In my case when it first started up, I looked at the curriculum and it was mostly people that I already knew and had worked w/ talking about things I already knew and it just seemed like it would be taking a space from someone. My career has kind of gone backwards from the way a lot of people do it. I had already been in the central office for all those years and had already worked in so many committees and worked w/every department in the school system. I was very comfortable w/how it functioned and operated, who did what and who to call so it just didn't seem appropriate to participate when someone else may benefit more.</p> <p>6B: When I wanted to be an administrator, there was no Future's Academy so that's why I did not participate. However, I have participated in a Future's Academy as a teacher. I've worked on several topics--change, diversity, and those kinds of things. I've really enjoyed doing that because not only do I get a chance to share, but I get a chance to get feedback and learn from the people who are in that Academy. I was a Danforth Scholar through ODU and I was chosen by the school division to participate in that and it was very similar w/very active intern ship. I had an internship in a community w/an attorney. Then I also had a one-year internship at both the middle and high school w/two mentors so that was a really great experience. I also participated in the Hampton Roads leadership program while being employed in Virginia Beach.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your university course work, your experience on the job, or a combination of the two?	<p>1B: I would say it is more experience on the job. I certainly think that the people you work under, as a teacher, they certainly mold you in certain ways. Your upbringing, I think that sort of molds your leadership style a little bit. Some of the course work, maybe. I try to think back on the Master's program, nobody really stood out in my mind. I think more of the undergraduate level; they stood out as people who really kind of molded me as far as what kind of teacher I wanted to be and what kind of leader I wanted to be. But I think more on the job experience would have to be the answer for me.</p> <p>2B: It's definitely on the job training, because I don't think there is any text book or any course work that could set you in line for what you could experience in any one day. You just don't know, you get up in the morning, it's a new day, and it's a new adventure. So I would definitely say you could read about things, maybe in school law book or in school law studies. But as far as the rest of it, I would agree it would have to be on the job training.</p> <p>3B: I have to agree with you, I think on the job experience. As far as a teacher, my mom was a teacher that was my model right there. Then the administrators that I have worked with in the past have definitely modeled for me and I feel like have taken bits and pieces from everyone I worked with. Those good pieces, the pieces that don't fit my personality, don't use, but the good stuff that real effective for that leader I try to use, I borrow, I steal, what ever, what 6B mentioned before. It's on the job training.</p> <p>4B: I parallel 5B on that, in the classroom world where we would say the best type of learning is learning by doing. In the military it was learning by doing and every where I've been its learning by doing. It's most relevant type of learning and I agree with that and everything else. That's the big thing with me, it's learning by doing actual practical activities that kids can relate to applying knowledge and concepts.</p> <p>5B: I agree with everybody else, it's on the job. We all had a core value set that we brought into this job, but every year they get refined a little. You work with the different faculty, different parents, different students, and you learn from all those experiences. Definitely on the job is most important.</p>

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Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
7. Do you feel your leadership style was refined via your university course work, your experience on the job, or a combination of the two?	6B: I would have to say on the job training as well. I think you are who you are and I think you form a lot of that as a classroom teacher. I think that is why it is important to have taught and then to do what we're doing, that really, I think shapes us. Any mentor that I have had, has always said be yourself, know what your core values are, what your belief system is, and be able to identify that. Then I think that you could go out with that and then the experience on the job helps to shape that. I don't believe course work can do it. I also believe serving on committees, I really enjoy that when I am with my peers. Sitting with these folks around this table today really just validated for me, that maybe I am doing something right. So I think your peer collaborations are quite helpful, professional organizations, I've heard people say I read, I do research. I am not in a formal graduate program, but I am reading all the time. That is very helpful to me, and I think also probably making sure that you are happy. Unhappy people are really the problems that we might field day to day. If prioritize your family life, making sure you are getting a chance to be with your family, to do some of the things you need to do, to manage your stress, that makes you energized when you come to work and I find that unhappy people make very unhappy leaders.
8. After completing your masters program and other school sponsored professional development, in what areas would you like to have more training?	1B: I agree with everyone that has spoken but, I'm also thinking about best practices. We get these lists of best practices that are happening in the United States. We don't get the nitty gritty, the specifics of it. For example, they'll say, in this school division they are focusing more on reading. Well, what exactly are they doing, are they extending the day? How are they still meeting the state requirements of the hours that required for the different subjects and focusing more on reading. I think we get a lot of these generic ideas and they sound great, but we want more about implementation. 2B: I am going back to question 2 and that finance question. You need to know how to spend the money. 3B: I would agree with you and just more instructional strategies. Those strategies that really work with kids. Special Ed kids, how we are going to close that gap. For me, it feels like that gap is not closed. We keep moving them along and how do we close that gap and what is the best methodology out there to close gap. Getting kids to read and how do we maintain their interest. We are working with an MTV generation. How can we pull them away from that TV and really get them interested in learning and wanting to learn?

table continues

Appendix N (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Two

Interview Question	Response
<p>8. After completing your masters program and other school sponsored professional development, in what areas would you like to have more training?</p>	<p>4B: You hit my big point with that. Specifically, to what are doing here, for example - reading practices. Let's go in and define what is actually being done in that classroom and what creates good results, the same thing with special education. Let's look at, for more training; let's take our own school in the summer and have a work shop on what's happening with Special Education in the building and achievement gaps that exist. What must we do in our building and what are we not doing in our building to close that achievement gaps? We have practical things that are coming out of our practical problems. I think that focuses people, I mean that's where I'm big on is looking at the practical aspects of solving the problem -that's a problem that you and I have to deal with. It may be a little different in our buildings, so yes you are right, there might be too much generic stuff being thrown around.</p> <p>5B: The one area that I constantly work on and always appreciate more training is in special education. The regulations and the laws that are passed just are constantly changing. There is such a wide range of disabilities and students coming in with different disabilities and trying to meet their needs. I always feel somewhat inadequate in understanding how to help all these different children with all their different problems, be successful in school. Then to work with their parents who are carrying such a heavy load trying to raise children with all these disabilities. So, I always appreciate any information they can share with us on how to deal with autism, asbergars, and emotional children and how to teach them how to provide discipline. I don't know that's ever going to end. I'll probably never feel like I know enough about that area to be comfortable to say I don't need to learn anymore.</p> <p>6B: Curriculum development, I don't think you get a lot of that. With the changes that principals and teachers are faced with, it's really great to have that skill. I don't think you get enough of that. You certainly could do that in an advance program. Special education certainly always has its challenges. Working with closing achievement gaps. How to use your data and how to interpret your data. Of all the assessments we are doing, we are collecting a lot of data, how often are we really sitting down and determining it. I think it's not just the minimal things we are doing. I think we have figured out a whole lot of things with our standards, I'm really aiming for other things, PSAT, SAT, AP test. I'd like to see the ceiling verses the floor. It worries me that we are spending a lot of time at the bottom.</p>

Appendix O

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Three

Interview Question	Response
<p>1. Discuss your role as an assistant superintendent focusing on the methods you employ to evaluate principals.</p>	<p>1C: the method of the assistant superintendent in evaluating principals is one of collaboration. We use guided questions as a way to at least open up discussions w/principals. Then we begin w/meetings, talking, visits w/them, showing of their evidence of what they have achieved, and accomplished, and using the division's evaluation instrument to access them. So it's a long process w/a good bit of talking and evidence collecting for that.</p> <p>2C: I see some of the same things 1C said. Basically I look at their physical responsibilities, their budgets, how they spend their money, how they comply on the rules and regulations and policies. I review their continuous improvement model to see if they're using the correct strategies to achieve what they need to achieve. And then of course we look at their SOL scores and check to see what they're doing w/their data. Are they improving where they say they are improving? Are they dropping? Then the big thing that I look at is, are they evaluating their staff regularly? Do they have an instructional model that they are using to get the most out of their staff? I also look at how they respond to complaints. Are they responding to the public? Are they dealing w/the issues in the school that they are supposed to be dealing with? And so forth.</p> <p>3C: In evaluating principals we look at many documents during school visits, we look at their organizational plan, their plan for continuous improvement. We have a Rubric that we use currently to access and evaluate principals. We look at their SOLS scores'; we look at their formative assessment on local testing. We look at evaluations from teachers on how effective they feel as though the school is operating. We look at their criteria for satisfying the five principal evaluation standards for the school division. Another thing we look at is the instructional program. Go into classrooms to look at student engagement, and how students are engaged in learning, how teachers are presenting the lessons, we look at the structure of the lessons in the classroom. In just a general overall good, effective managing of the school itself. We look at how welcoming the staff is when you walk into building. But essentially focusing on the five major standards for principal's evaluation and all the criteria that goes in to satisfying those five standards.</p>

table continues

Appendix O (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Three

Interview Question	Response
1. Discuss your role as an assistant superintendent focusing on the methods you employ to evaluate principals.	<p>4C: I think one of the things is just the observations made going into the building. Obviously the other three participants have mentioned a lot of the things that I would include. But I think going in, observing in the building, walking around and somebody mentioned going from classroom to classroom, seeing what kinds of activities are going on in the classrooms. In addition to that, we look at feedback through a variety of ways; a school report card certainly, we get feedback from parents, students, teachers, about the various leadership pieces of the building. We also get a lot of feedback in our office by virtue of parent concerns, also teacher concerns. We also receive feedback from curriculum and instruction coordinators. They're working w/our individual school principals as well. So all those things also play into our evaluation processes. Some of them are very concrete but also some other ones are more intuitive. Obviously, you probably get a parent concern or feedback from a teacher concerning a building from every single building in our division and that you don't weigh heavily. However, when you start to get a pattern there then we also take a look at those patterns that may weigh into the individual evaluation process.</p>
2. What is your role in the Futures Leadership Academy?	<p>1C: I was on the original advisory committee when the Futures Academy program began. Did training sessions the first two or three years of the program? Have been introduced this year to the screening process in this position? I see myself as a supporter, an advocate for those who are participating in the Futures Academy.</p> <p>2C: Basically I have assisted w/the screening process at the direction of the Director for Observational Development. She provides a rubric and we go through the applicants unnamed and follow the Rubric for points to come up w/the candidates that are selected for the Leadership Academy. Also I've been a guest speaker for the Leadership Academy talking to the group right before their graduation answering questions, providing examples of different things as far as school climate) and leadership. That's basically what I've done.</p> <p>3C: As the previous two members stated, I've been involved in the selection process for candidates for the Futures Academy. I attended the graduation ceremony as well for the Futures Academy.</p>

table continues

Appendix O (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Three

Interview Question	Response
2. What is your role in the Futures Leadership Academy?	4C: I was involved in the development of the Futures Academy, the screening of applicants, and have taught some Futures Academy classes. Also, I have been involved with the leadership team and reviewing the Futures Academy and making adjustments as we go along through the process and how it works and what we are actually teaching our future leaders. And I've also been involved in actually presenting the information about our academy at national conferences.
3. Do you think the Futures Academy has been effective in preparing principals? If yes, how? If no, why?	<p>1C: I'd say yes for the reasons given so far. Also, because the Academy provides an interactive setting for people to get a sense of work ethic, the leader, manager role that the principal has to and the assistant principal has to assume and it gives them a depth of experience that they wouldn't have or in that they don't have if they are coming straight w/out any of that sort of training. So yes, I do think it is effective in preparing.</p> <p>2C: I'd say yes as the candidates seem to have a deeper knowledge of the school system. The Academy offers real life-examples and gives them real life experiences that they can use when they become principals. It is very evident in the way they answer questions and the way they demonstrate their knowledge. I think it's been great.</p> <p>3C: The Futures Academy has been effective in preparing principals. One of the areas discussed in the Futures Academy of course was the core values of the school division. Having the Academy candidates to understand the mission, the vision, and core values of the school division is a very important relationship to becoming a future leader of the school division. Also, the Academy helps candidates to optimize their own strengths and their leadership capacity as well. In addition, the Academy helps candidates to gain experience to creating very effective learning environments. Finally, the Academy is very helpful in preparing future administrators how to actually have a learning environment that is able to meet future challenges.</p> <p>4C: And I also feel yes is the correct answer. It's hands on, practical experiences from individuals who participate in the academy. It gives us an opportunity to grow our own. Many times candidates come out of various college preparatory programs with the theory, but not the practical knowledge nor the skills set they actually need to hit the ground running as a principal or assistant principal. It gives them a broad overview, too, of the division and all the different areas of our division which I don't think is readily available in college preparatory programs. I think it's so important as a future leader to integrate this information together into your program.</p>

table continues

Appendix O (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Three

Interview Question	Response
<p>4. What differences do you see in principals who participated in the Futures Leadership Academy and those who did not?</p>	<p>1C: We think they are, by and large, they are better problem solvers and I think that is due to the fact that they've seen first hand how to use the resources of an organization, how to not be isolated, and to not be afraid to ask colleagues or others for advice. That concept of networking it's a very comfortable environment for them. They know they can trust their cadre the colleagues. They don't feel as alone in dealing w/an issue; they have a support group out there.</p> <p>2C: I think the difference, one of the biggest differences; they seem to understand the larger picture rather than just the individual. They're given more experiences that relate to the actual job whereas a teacher out of the classroom wouldn't normally have that. They seem to link to things easier. The big thing is it seems like they are able to make a decision better when you give them an experience or a sample of an issue that might be going on. They are more attentive to details when we ask questions and they are learning things. The last thing, they're more student-centered when they're coming from the Academy than the normal applicants.</p> <p>3C: I would say knowledge of the school division and also the networking, The Futures Leadership Academy participants really know the school division. Part of their process is a visit around the school division so that they can become familiar w/just the departments and the resources that are available to them. They tend to have a higher skill set. They seem more confident in their job and are very willing to take risks.</p> <p>4C: I guess number one, the skill set and the knowledge, the ability to hit the ground running. It starts back w/the interview process in that you can really see a difference in those individuals you interview for the position who have not gone through the Futures Academy and those who have. You can definitely tell a difference. It's their depth of knowledge, their knowledge of the culture of the school division and knowledge of what we consider to be important in Virginia Beach. The fact that what we do is always based on what's best for children; all those things come through loud and clear in looking at those who have participated in the Future's program.</p>
<p>5. How successful do you feel the Futures Leadership Academy has been in providing VBCPS with a high quality pool of potential school administrators?</p>	<p>1C: I would say the Futures Leadership Academy has been highly successful. The quality of those applicants, I think, is overall superior to the general applicant pool. So I would say highly successful.</p>

table continues

Appendix O (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Three

Interview Question	Response
<p>5. How successful do you feel the Futures Leadership Academy has been in providing VBCPS with a high quality pool of potential school administrators?</p>	<p>2C: Excellent quality. I can't think of anyone I've brought forward from the Academy that hasn't excelled, done wonderfully. The cohort part has been excellent too because they have a team of other people that have gone through that they can call instantly to get a question or get them answered. The Organizational Development is always there and they keep contact w/these people even after they leave the Academy. They still keep in contact, they still advise, they still call back w/questions and they've been very successful.</p> <p>3C: The Futures Leadership Academy has been extremely successful. It's providing an opportunity to look at, so to speak, in a laboratory setting and to see candidates and to see how well they interact w/each other. To see how well they would provide the necessary the leadership skills that are needed for a future leader. The Futures Leadership Academy has also provided the school division w/the knowledge of the potential number of candidates that would be available to fill open positions.</p> <p>4C: I think it's been a wonderful opportunity for us to have a large core of applicants. By virtue of fact that these applicants to the Academy have been screened to begin with, we're getting top quality individuals in this process. I have to echo what the other people have said, they hit the ground running here, so much more qualified to do the job than just your general pool of applicants who come from another division.</p>
<p>6. What do you see as the strengths of the Futures Leadership Academy?</p>	<p>1C: I think the added piece of the requirements of reflection and reflective writing has the indirect result of building confidence and helping people discover within themselves what sort of leader they will be. I also think that another indirect strength and benefit of the Academy is that it builds loyalty to the organization. It's easy to assume that everyone, all principals will have a sense of respect and even love for the organization. The camaraderie of the Futures Academy spreads that sense of the strength of the group far beyond just one person. So I think that's a nice side benefit of it.</p> <p>2C: I think the main strength is its excellent syllabus that devised for the training. It was done by educators. They asked the questions "What do you need?" and they gave the people what they needed. The organization of it has been great. They took the people out, they didn't all do it after clock hours, and they did it during clock hours which I think is excellent because they did it when they are fresh. It's not a one shot deal, but a long process. They don't finish it until they have done every piece of what the design said they should do.</p>

table continues

Appendix O (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Three

Interview Question	Response
6. What do you see as the strengths of the Futures Leadership Academy?	<p>3C: The practical hands on experience are definitely a strength of the Leadership Academy. For example surviving a crisis, principals get a chance to simulate the crisis so that when they are faced w/that area as a future leader, they are able to be more successful. Budget and finance, one of the areas that often times there aren't the experience at the school level to be involved in budgeting and finance.</p> <p>4C: I think it really is a very professionally organized opportunity for individuals. You get something that is equal to or exceeds of the quality of a national conference. It is very professionally done, and the individuals who participate in it get a lot of feedback, a lot of follow through throughout the Academy. I don't know whether this question was mentioned earlier but the cohort group is very important, as well, because you establish resources that you can rely on for the rest of your career. You know you're not out there alone I'll mention one other thing, too. One of the strengths is the constant revision of the academy, constant evaluation by the participants, the feedback received often times means they will adjust the types of things that they do in the Academy and they constantly seek feedback as to whether what they are providing to the applicants is actually working or do they need something different.</p>
7. What weaknesses do you see or what changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of the Futures Leadership Academy?	<p>1C: Again I don't see actual weaknesses in the program. I would concur w/3C that to just continue to fine-tuning it is??). One perception sometimes is that the Futures Academy is an automatically step into principal-ship and I think that just has to be periodically clarified and as a reminder basis because that is about the only criticism that I ever hear from it is that are they all being selected.</p> <p>2C: I don't see any weaknesses in the program, I don't think I would change anything. It's just been a great program.</p> <p>3C: One of the changes or recommendations of course is not a change really or recommendation, or a weakness, but it is to continue the on-going assessment and the evaluation of the process so that the Futures Leadership Academy can be as effective as possible. And then secondly, I would say to replicate the Futures Leadership Academy in other school divisions.</p>

table continues

Appendix O (continued)

Raw Data Matrix: Focus Group Three

Interview Question	Response
7. What weaknesses do you see or what changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of the Futures Leadership Academy?	4C: I think I really don't see any weaknesses, as such. I think the challenge is to continue to change with the times and be alert to the kinds of leadership activities that are needed. My recommendation would be to continue as we have in the past, to look at the opportunities and make changes as needed or if needed. An example of that is recently somebody mentioned that special education knowledge was needed in the Academy. They felt like it was not a weakness, but was something that was needed for them to be more successful in their jobs. This topic is being added to the next academy. So we have to keep being alert to the needs of our potential administrators.



Institutional Review Board Initial Review Application

Directions

- Type responses to all questions / requests below. It is recommended that you read through this document before completing.
- **Do not leave a question blank unless directed.** If a required question is not applicable to your study, explain why.
- Do not restrict your responses to the space provided. Provide a thorough response to each question. Be as specific as possible, keeping in mind that you are introducing the study to the IRB. Incomplete applications will result in requests for clarification from researchers and will cause delays in review and final approval.
- Type responses in the designated shaded boxes or check the designated check boxes.
- Use non-technical language throughout your application. Federal regulations require IRB applications to be written in lay language at an 8th grade reading level. Do not use jargon or scientific terms in your explanations/descriptions.
- Check for grammatical or typographical errors before submitting. Protocols with substantial errors will be returned for corrections.
- This form must be completed and submitted (as a Word document) electronically. Submit all required documents (e.g., Review Form, Initial Review Application, all study forms requested within this application, and bio-sketches) to irb@vt.edu. For questions, contact Carmen Green, IRB Administrator, at ctgreen@vt.edu or (540) 231-4358.

Section 1: General Information

What is the Study Title: A Case Study of: A Principal Preparation Program in One School District

[Note: If this protocol has been submitted to a federal agency for funding, the title of that application **must** match the title of this submission.]

Check this box if this study **only involves the collection or study of existing data**, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens **and respond only to the following sections within this document:** Section 1: General Information; Section 2: Justification; Section 8: Confidentiality / Anonymity; Section 14: Research Involving Existing Data; and Section 15: Additional Information below (Note: Section 15 is optional).

1. Will this research involve collaboration with another institution?

- No
 Yes

If yes,

- A. Provide the name of the institution(s): **Virginia Beach City Public Schools**
- B. Indicate the status of this research project with the other institution's IRB:
- Pending approval
 Approved [submit approval letter with this IRB application]
 Other institution does not have a human subject protections review board
 Other, explain:

Section 2: Justification

2. Describe the background of this study, including supporting research: **This study will be conducted to determine if this specific principal preparation program is successfully recruiting and training future school administrators to fill impending vacancies in administrative positions. Research has shown that school divisions across the country are experiencing a shortage of qualified school leaders and are staffing these positions with uncertified personnel.**
3. Describe the purpose / objectives of this study and the anticipated findings/contributions: **The purpose of this study is to determine if school personnel who participate in the school division's principal preparation program are better prepared for the principalship than those personnel who have not participated in the training program. I am unsure what will be found but feel certain that whatever the findings indicate, the school division will receive feedback for the**

first time on the program and can make subsequent decisions concerning the program's future.

4. Explain what the research team plans to do with the study results (e.g., publish, use for dissertation, etc.): **The research will be used to meet the requirements of a dissertation as well as to share findings with the school district.**
5. Briefly describe the study design: **A qualitative case study will be used. Data will be collected using purposefully selected focus groups. Data analysis will follow the constant comparative method to identify the most salient themes.**

Section 3: Recruitment

6. Describe the subject pool, including inclusion and exclusion criteria (e.g., sex, age, health status, ethnicity, etc.) and number of subjects: **24 subjects (10 principals, 10 assistant principals, 4 assistant superintendents) will be selected. The field test focus group will be comprised of 4 principals and 4 assistant principals; 2 each from a population of principal preparation program graduates and non-graduates. Focus group one will consist of 3 principals and 3 assistant principals who graduated from the principal preparation program. Focus group two will consist of 3 principals and 3 assistant principals who did not participate in the principal preparation program. Focus group three will consist of the 4 assistant superintendents who evaluate principals.**
7. How will subjects be identified to participate in this research study (If searching existing records to identify subjects, indicate whether the records are public or private. If private, describe the researcher's privileges to the data)? **Participants will be purposefully selected from a population of all current principals and assistant principals in the school division to be studied.**
8. The IRB must ensure that the risks and benefits of participating in a study are distributed equitably among the general population and that a specific population is not targeted because of ease of recruitment. Provide an explanation for choosing this population: **This population serves the needs of the study.**
9. Describe recruitment methods, including how the study will be advertised or introduced to subjects [submit all advertising / recruitment forms (e.g., flyers/posters, invitation letter/e-mail, telephone recruitment script, etc.) with this IRB application]: **No recruiting methods will be used. Participants will be asked to participate and have the right of refusal.**

Section 4: Requesting a Waiver for the Requirement to Obtain Signed Consent Forms from Participants

This section (Section 4) not required for studies qualifying for exempt review

Many minimal risk socio-behavioral research studies qualify for a waiver of the requirement for the investigator(s) to obtain signed consent forms from subjects [i.e., researcher does obtain verbal or implied (i.e., consent implied from the return of completed questionnaire) consent from subjects; however, does not obtain written consent from subjects]. Examples of types of research that typically qualify for this type of waiver are as follows: internet based surveys, anonymous surveys, surveys not requesting sensitive information, and oral history projects. You may request a waiver of signed consent for either some or all of the study's procedures involving human subjects.

10. Are you requesting a waiver of the requirement to obtain signed consent forms from participants?
 - No, consent forms will be signed by all research participants prior to participating in all research procedures [submit consent document template(s) with this IRB application]
 - Yes

If yes,

- A. Select **one** of the criteria listed below and describe how your research meets the selected criteria:

Criteria 1: [Typically used for anonymous surveys] The only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern:

Or

Criteria 2: The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context (e.g., sitting down and talking with someone, calling someone at home and asking everyday questions, mall survey, mail survey, internet survey, etc.):

Either selection of either Criteria 1 or Criteria 2 above, the IRB suggests and may require the investigator to provide subjects with a written or verbal (for telephone interviews) statement regarding the research, which should provide subjects with much of the same information that is required within a consent document. This is typically accomplished by providing subjects with an information sheet (i.e., a document similar to a consent form; however, does not request signatures), supplying the information within the invitation letter, or reading the information sheet to the subject over the phone.

- B. Will you be providing subjects with a written or verbal statement regarding the research?
- Yes [submit supporting document(s) (e.g., information sheet, invitation letter) with this IRB application]
If yes, check all methods that will be utilized to provide subjects with a statement regarding the research:
- Information sheet physically provided to subjects
 - Information sheet will be read to subject over the phone
 - Information captured within the invitation document
 - Other, describe:
- No, provide justification for not supplying subjects with this information:
- C. Does this waiver of written consent cover all study procedures involving human subjects?
- Yes
 - No, list the study procedures for which this waiver is being requested to cover (Note: a consent document may be required for the study procedures not included under this waiver):

Section 5: Consent Process

11. Check all of the following that apply to this study's consent process:
- Verbal consent will be obtained from participants
 - Written consent will be obtained from participants
 - Consent will be implied from the return of completed questionnaire (if the study only involves implied consent, skip to Section 6 below)
 - Other, describe:
12. Provide a general description of the process the research team will use to obtain and maintain informed consent **and** respond specifically to A-D below:
- A. Who, from the research team, will be overseeing the process and obtaining consent from subjects? **The researcher**
 - B. Where will the consent process take place? **In writing initially and then again prior to starting the focus group interviews.**
 - C. During what point in the study process will consenting occur (Note: unless waived, participants must be consented before completing any study procedure, including screening questionnaires)? **In the participant selection phase, at the beginning of the focus group interviews, and again at the conclusion of the focus group.**
 - D. If applicable [e.g., for complex studies, studies involving more than one session, or studies involving more of a risk to subjects (e.g., surveys with sensitive questions)], describe how the researchers will give subjects ample time to review the consent document before signing:
 Not applicable to this study

Section 6: Procedures

13. Provide a step-by-step thorough explanation of all study procedures expected from study participants, including the length of sessions involved, and total time commitment: **Participants will be expected to attend a focus group interview session to be conducted at a high school. The session should last 1.5-2 hours and participants will be asked to provide input into the questions asked by the researcher.**
14. Describe how data will be collected and recorded [submit all data documents (e.g., questionnaire, interview questions, etc.) with this IRB application]: **Data will be collected in the focus group interviews via audiotape and anecdotal notes taken by a secretary. The audiotapes will be transcribed verbatim and participants will be provided the opportunity to review all individual statements for accuracy. The audiotapes will be destroyed at the completion of the study. Anonymity will be maintained at all times.**
15. Where will the study procedures take place? **A High School Conference room**

Section 7: Risks and Benefits

16. What are the potential risks (e.g., emotional, physical, social, legal, economic, or dignity) to study participants? (do **not** state, "There are no risks involved." Acceptable language = "There are no more than minimal risks involved.") **There are no risks involved.**
17. Does this study involve (check one box): minimal risk or more than minimal risk to study participants?
Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily activities or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.
18. Explain the study's efforts to reduce the potential risks to subjects? **Participants will be seated in comfortable chairs in a controlled environment, food and drinks will be provided.**
19. What are the direct or indirect anticipated benefits to study participants and/or society? **The benefits of this study is the feedback to the school division and the principal preparation program.**

Section 8: Confidentiality / Anonymity

20. Will the study release personally identifying study results to anyone outside of the research team (e.g., participants identified in publications with individual consent)?
 No
 Yes

If yes,

To whom will identifying data be released?

21. Will researchers be collecting and/or recording identifying information (e.g., name, contact information, etc.) of study participants?
 No (identifying information of participants will not recorded in study files)
 Yes

If yes,

The IRB strongly suggests and may require that all data documents (e.g., questionnaire responses, interview responses, etc.) do not include or request identifying information (e.g., name, contact information, etc.) from participants. If you need to link subjects' identifying information to subjects' data documents, use a study ID/code on all data documents.

- A. Describe if/how the study will utilize study codes:
- B. If applicable, where will the linked code and identifying information document (i.e., John Doe = study ID 001) be stored and who will have access (Note: this document must be stored separately from subjects' completed data documents and the accessibility should be limited)?

22. Where will data documents (e.g., questionnaire, interview responses, etc.) be stored? **In the researcher's home library.**
23. Who will have access to study data? **The researcher.**
24. Describe the study's plans for retaining or destroying the study data: **Audiotapes will be destroyed and all anecdotal notes will be housed in a secure location in the researcher's home library.**
25. Does this study request information from participants regarding illegal behavior?
 No
 Yes

If yes,

Does the study plan to obtain a Certificate of Confidentiality [visit our website at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/studyforms.htm#COC> for information about these certificates]?

- No
 Yes (Note: participants must be fully informed of the conditions of the Certificate of Confidentiality within the consent process and form)

Section 9: Compensation

26. Will subjects be compensated for their participation?
 No
 Yes

If yes,

- A. What is the amount of compensation?

Unless justified by researcher (in letter B below), compensation should be prorated based on duration of study participation. Payment must not be contingent upon completion of study procedures. In other words, even if the subject decides to withdraw from the study, he/she must be compensated, at least partially, based on what study procedures he/she has completed.

- B. Will compensation be prorated?

- Yes, please describe:
 No, explain why and clarify whether subjects will receive full compensation if they withdraw from the study?

Section 10: Audio / Video Recording

27. Will your study involve video and/or audio recording?
 No
 Yes

If yes,

- A. Select from the drop-down box → audio only
- B. Provide compelling justification for the use of audio/video recording: **Audiotaping will provide the researcher the opportunity to transcribe verbatim interview responses.**
- C. How will data within the recordings be retrieved / transcribed? **A secretary, not affiliated with the school division, will transcribe interview comments from the audiotapes.**
- D. Where will tapes be stored? **In the researcher's home library**
- E. Who will have access to the recordings? **The researcher and the secretary transcribing the tapes.**

- F. Who will transcribe the recordings? **A retired secretary.**
- G. When will the tapes be erased / destroyed? **Tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study**

Section 11: Research Involving Students

28. Does your study include students as participants?

- No (if no, skip to Section 12 below)
 Yes

If yes,

A. This study involves (select all that apply):

Students in elementary, junior or high school (or equivalent)

College students (select all that apply):

College upperclassmen (Juniors, Seniors or Graduate Students)

College freshmen – please note that some college freshmen may be minors (under the age of 18).

If the study meets the specified criteria, the IRB may grant a waiver of parental permission to include these minors without individual guardian permission [see question 32B for further information].

Select one of the following:

These minors will be included in this research

Minors will be excluded from this study. Describe how the study will ensure that minors will not be included:

B. Does this study involve conducting research with students of the researcher? (Note: If it is feasible to use students from a class of students not under the instruction of the researcher, the IRB recommends and may require doing so):

No

Yes, describe safeguards the study will implement to protect against coercion or undue influence for participation:

C. Will the study need to access student records (e.g., SAT or GRE scores, or student GPA scores)?

No

Yes [if yes, a separate signed consent/assent form (for student's approval) and permission form (for parent's approval if subject is a minor) must be obtained and submitted to the Registrar's office] [submit consent form template(s) with this IRB application]

Section 11A: Students in Elementary, Junior, or High School

[Answer questions 29 & 30 below if your study involves students in **elementary, junior or high school (or equivalent)**]

29. Will study procedures be completed during school hours?

- No
 Yes

If yes,

A. Students not included in the study may view other students' involvement with the research during school time as unfair. Address this issue and how the study will reduce this outcome:

B. Missing out on regular class time or seeing other students participate may influence a student's decision to participate. Address how the study will reduce this outcome:

30. You will need to obtain school approval. This is typically granted by the Principal or Assistant Superintendent and classroom teacher. Approval by an individual teacher is insufficient. School approval, in the form of a letter or a memorandum should accompany the approval request to the IRB. Is the approval letter(s) attached to this submission? Yes or No, if no, explain why:

Section 11B: College Students

[Answer question 31 below if your study involves **college students**]

31. Will extra credit be offered to subjects?

- No
 Yes

If yes,

- A. Include a description of the extra credit to be provided in Section 9: Compensation above
- B. What will be offered to subjects as an equal alternative to receiving extra credit without participating in this study?

Section 12: Research Involving Minors

For more information about involving minors in research, visit our website at

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/newstudy.htm#Minors>

32. Does your study involve minors (under the age of 18) (Note: age constituting a minor may differ in other States)?

- No
 Yes

If yes,

- A. The procedure for obtaining assent from these minors and permission from the minor's guardian(s) should have been described in **Section 5** (Consent Process) in this form.

Researchers may request a waiver of parental permission if the study meets the criteria specified under letter B below. Requesting a waiver for the requirement to obtain informed permission from guardians may be helpful when recruiting college students for minimal risk socio/behavioral research. Most studies involving minors must obtain parental permission prior to the recruitment of minors.

- B. Are you requesting a waiver of parental permission?
- No, parents/guardians will provide their permission
- Yes, describe below how your research meets **all** of the following criteria:
- A) The research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects:
- B) The waiver will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects:
- C) The research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver:
- D) (Optional) Subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation:
- C. Does your study reasonably pose a risk of reports of current threats of abuse and/or suicide?
- No
- Yes, thoroughly explain how the study will react to these reports (Note: subjects must be fully informed of the fact that researchers must report reasonable threats of abuse or suicide to the appropriate authorities/persons in the Confidentiality section of the Consent or Permission documents):

Section 13: Research Involving Deception

For more information about involving deception in research and for assistance with developing your debriefing form, visit our website at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/newstudy.htm#Deception>

33. Does your study involve deception?

- No
 Yes

If yes,

- A. Describe the deception:

- B. Why is the use of deception necessary for this project?
- C. Describe the process of debriefing [submit your debriefing form with this IRB application]:
- D. By nature, studies involving deception cannot provide subjects with a complete description of the study during the consent process; therefore, the IRB must waive a consent process which does not include, or which alters, some or all of the elements of informed consent. Provide an explanation of how the study meets **all** the following criteria for an alteration of consent:
- A) The research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects:
 - B) The alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects:
 - C) The research could not practicably be carried out without the alteration:
 - D) (Optional) Subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation (i.e., debriefing for studies involving deception):

The IRB requests that the researcher use the title "Information Sheet" instead of "Consent Form" on the document used to obtain subjects' signatures to participate in the research. This will adequately reflect the fact that the subject cannot fully consent to the research without the researcher fully disclosing the true intent of the research.

Section 14: Research Involving the Collection or Study of Existing Data Documents, Records, Pathological Specimens, or Diagnostic Specimens

34. Will your study involve the collection or study of existing data?
- No
- Yes

If yes,

- A. From where does the existing data originate? **Documents from the principal preparation program**
- B. Provide a description of the existing data that will be collected: **Program graduates, pedagogy, major changes, promotion rates, and anecdotal notes.**

Section 15: Additional Information

35. Provide additional information not captured within this worksheet here [response to this question **not** required]:

