

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION Background

The effectiveness of our schools is high on the list of public concerns. One of the major factors impacting that effectiveness is the quality and competency of school administrators. Therefore, the question of what we are doing to train and develop these leaders is of vital interest.

High quality, university degree programs in education administration have existed for some time. But as is true for all professions, before academic knowledge can be effectively applied in the real world, it must be supplemented, seasoned, and reinforced with practical knowledge and skills. And prior to the late 1980s, school systems, almost universally, were doing little to provide current or potential administrators with this vital information.

In the 1980s, researchers began drawing attention to this failing and the need to do something about it. Peterson (1983) reported on a survey conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics that found “school administrators perceived a need for improved or expanded training to perform their jobs effectively.”

That need was being intensified by a manifest growth in the scope and complexity of a school principal’s job. Edmonds (1982) asserted that principals had to view themselves as instructional, as well as administrative, leaders of their schools, responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating instructional outcomes and objectives. Crews and Weakley (1996) pointed out that in addition to the basic requirements that principals “...know how to balance a budget, hire and fire personnel ... and ... build a strong curriculum,” (p. 9) they were now also having to “...address issues such as student discipline procedures, instruction assessment, and the planning and implementation of school improvement programs” (p. 3).

A 1996 report by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, The High School of the 21st Century, stated that “School systems should stand ready to help current principals maintain their footing despite these tectonic shifts in the educational landscape. Among the emergent areas requiring attention are those having to do with balancing resources, building consensus, and knowing about instruction that takes account of individual needs and latest findings in brain research and cognitive theory” (p. 101). Fullan (1998) asserted that, “The job of the principal or any educational leader has become increasingly complex and constrained. Principals find themselves locked in with less and less room to maneuver” (p. 6). Whitaker (1999) stated that, “Current and aspiring principals need to understand the changing and demanding role of the principal. All principals would benefit from leadership preparation programs” (p. 352).

Other researchers, pointed out that in order for administrators to be effective, they had to be conversant with local facts and issues such as the political, cultural, economic, and demographic characteristics of their jurisdiction — knowledge that many administrators, particularly new ones, did not necessarily possess. Anderson (1991) opined that “Good superintendents ... ensure that new principals are aware of the values, beliefs, and norms of the communities where they are assigned, and that they share the district’s or supervisory body’s aims and goals” (p. 67).

A number of researchers emphasized the training needs of aspiring and neophyte administrators. Anderson (1991) stated that, “Unfortunately, many first year principals experience a ‘sink-or-swim, learn-on-your-own’ induction to the job that, in turn, increases their anxiety about fulfilling their responsibilities” (p.49). He added “Too often, principals are tossed into the job without sufficient support from their superiors” (p.67). The large number of new administrators entering schools during the 1980s and 90s increased the impact of this shortcoming. According to Pharis and Zakariya (1979), there were eleven thousand new administrators in that year. By the mid-1990s, the number had climbed to nearly twenty-five thousand a year. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1993-94)

These developments, and their documentation in numerous research reports such as those cited, created a greater awareness and recognition within the public education arena that in-service training programs for administrators were a vital need. School boards and district superintendents increasingly acknowledged that it was no longer reasonable or wise for them to expect school administrators to meet the multiple challenges of their jobs without providing those administrators with the knowledge, skills, and array of routines and approaches they needed to master in order to perform effectively. Thus, beginning in the 1980s, a number of proactive districts implemented formal leadership education and development programs. Since that time, this movement has grown slowly but steadily. In 1996, the Sarasota County, Florida School District decided it was time to act.

Research Questions and Purpose of the Study

In July 1996, I was asked to develop, implement, and direct a development and training program for Sarasota County school administrators, and I was named director of the program. Sarasota County was a medium-sized school district in which a continuing high growth rate in school population and an anticipated substantial number of administrators transfers and retirements in the near term were intensifying the need for such a program.

This dissertation is a “descriptive case study” of that program. I began the study in June 1998, two months after I had relinquished the program directorship and moved to another administrative position within the district office. The study addresses a threefold research question:

What was the impetus behind the implementation of a leadership academy by the Sarasota County, Florida School District? How did the district plan, design, organize, and implement the academy? What were the results of the implementation?

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the training and development of school administrators in public education. Chapter 3 presents the case-study methods I employed. Chapter 4 describes the history, nature, and demographics of the Sarasota district. Chapter 5 is the case-study narrative, in five parts: 1) the events and forces that led to the implementation of the academy, 2) how the academy was planned and designed, 3) how the academy was implemented, operated, and managed, and how it evolved, 4) the outcomes, and 5) feedback from academy participants. Finally, in Chapter 6, I offer insights that I gained during my tenure as director of the academy and from conducting this study.

Significance of the Study

This study will provide other districts that are contemplating the development and

implementation of a formal administrator-training program with a documented description of how one district accomplished such an initiative. The information included in the study should help these districts decide whether to pursue a similar initiative, and help guide them if they do so decide.

The study includes a thorough description of events leading up to the implementation of the Sarasota program, and the stages of its design, development, and implementation. It includes detailed descriptions of the program curriculum and the training strategies employed. It also documents administrative components and infrastructure of the program, including its organization, management, and budgeting; its trainee selection procedure and instructional approaches; its impact on in-district promotions; and how the trainees reacted to and evaluated the program.

The study should also be of interest to other researchers who are addressing the issues of administrator professional development in the public education milieu.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The subjects of effective schools, effective school leadership, and district-administrator training programs have been dealt with in the literature, to any significant degree, only since 1980. From that time forward, interest in and research on these subjects accelerated rapidly, and the literature is now voluminous and rich. McCurdy (1983) observed, "Researchers have been able to construct a much clearer picture of a successful school than ever existed. Some of their findings confirm commonly held notions based on experience. Other findings contradict what was thought to be effective" (p. 8). During the 1980s, effective-schools-theory research made it clear that leadership by the principal was crucial to achieving school improvement. As Sava (1983) put it, "After three decades during which leadership has been expected from everyone else, the 1980s could be the decade of the principal" (p. 5). Anderson (1991) expressed the opinion that, "The last decade's research on effective schools and the current call for school reform both point to the principal as a key person in the quest to create excellent schools" (p. 10).

A salient finding of this research was the importance of the principal's instructional leadership role. Greenfield (1981) indicated that although principalship research was in its early stages, it had already come to recognize "principals as important to the development of knowledge and practices useful in enhancing the conditions of learning and improving the consequences of teaching for our nation's youngsters" (p. 8).

Significantly, researchers of effective schools specified the knowledge and skills that principals required in order to exercise the general and instructional leadership roles that the researchers were investigating during this time. These researchers also reported on the gap between those requirements and the actual knowledge and skills that most in-place and aspiring principals possessed, a gap that clearly pointed to a need for formal leadership training and mentoring programs in the workplace.

Anderson (1991) opined that, "Reform of principal preparation must keep pace with the larger school reform movement, which is espousing changes in nearly every aspect of schooling, from what children learn, to the way decisions are made, to how the curriculum is developed, and what role parents have in their children's education" (p. 11). Whitaker (1999) stated, "Current and aspiring principals need to understand the changing and demanding role of the principal. All principals would benefit from leadership preparation programs. Local school districts should explore opportunities for exposure and training for aspiring principals, so they will be better prepared as vacancies occur" (p. 352-364).

Effective Schools Research

During the 1950s and 1960s, education researchers directed most of their efforts to studying the effects that social forces and student attributes, such as ethnicity and socioeconomic background, had on student performance. The "Coleman Report" (Coleman, 1966) was the most influential work from this body of research. It reflected the national prominence of the school desegregation issue at the time and it had a substantial impact on poor and minority students. Its central thesis was that student

achievement was linked more to family and school demographics, such as how much education their parents had, what their family income was, and who their classmates were, than to how the school managed its academic program.

Some researchers took exception to this thesis and conducted a number of studies in the early 1970s that looked more deeply into the relative impact of student demographics (race, family history and income) and school quality on academic outcome. These studies showed unequivocally that how schools manage their academic programs does significantly impact student learning. Greenfield, in “A Review of Research on the Principalship” (1971-1981) wrote, “As researchers probed for reasons behind the differences [in outcomes], they discovered that how schools are run corresponds with how well they perform” (p. 8).

In contemplating these results, researchers realized that looking at how the human and material resources of a school system impacted student achievement was a fruitful and important line of research (Wiles and Lovell, 1975). They initiated a number of studies aimed at identifying the factors that characterized successful schools, schools with high student achievement and good student behavior. These studies documented the relationships between an array of district, school and classroom practices on the one hand, and student academic and behavioral performance on the other. This line of inquiry came to be known as *effective schools research* (ESR), which focuses on how administrative planning, policies, and actions affect student performance and behavior as well as other measures of school effectiveness.

Brookover and Lezotte (1977), as part of a Michigan State University research team, conducted “The Michigan Study,” which analyzed the impact on student achievement of changes in school processes and instructional programs. Monitoring eight elementary schools for three consecutive years, using established statewide achievement measures, they determined that six of the eight were improving schools. Their analysis revealed that the leaders at those schools 1) assumed more responsibilities for instruction, 2) held higher expectations for educational accomplishments of the students, and 3) utilized statewide testing as an indicator of student achievement. It found that the leaders of the declining schools appeared to be permissive and to emphasize informal and collegial relationships with their teachers, and that they placed more emphasis on general public relations than on evaluating how effectively their schools were providing a basic education.

Edmonds and Frederiksen (1979) provided one of the best examples of early ESR, “What Do We Know About Teaching in Urban Schools?” (CEMREL, Inc., 1979) They described instructionally effective schools for minority children in the Detroit, Michigan, and urban area. These were schools that were performing at or above grade in mathematics and reading as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test and the Iowa

Test of Basic Skills. Edmonds and Frederiksen found that all the effective schools exhibited the same five characteristics:

1. Strong instructional leadership by the principal.
2. High expectations by the staff for student achievement.
3. An orderly atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning.
4. An emphasis on basic-skills acquisition.
5. Frequent monitoring of student progress as the basis for instructional evaluation.

As ESR moved into the 1980s (e.g., Bossert, 1982; Felsenthal, 1982; McCormack-Larkin & Kritek, 1982; and Squires et al, 1983), researchers continued looking at the procedures, processes, behaviors, and organization that characterized clearly effective schools. They all concluded the same thing: there were specific operating practices and leadership characteristics that were highly likely to produce strong student achievement.

McCurdy (1983) summarized it this way: “In most studies on school effectiveness, researchers naturally began to ask what makes some schools different from others. As they probed for reasons behind the differences, they discovered that how schools are run corresponds with how well they perform” (p. 8). Lipham (1983) concurred by stating, “When the goals of the school are clear, reasonably uniform, and perceived as important, and when the staff is committed to them, successful schools result” (p. 39).

Every researcher was able to point to specific factors that correlated strongly with academic achievement and success; that is, they were able to identify a set of *educational best practices*, the salutary impact of which was confirmed by empirical results.

McCurdy (1983), for one, summarized these factors: “The major factors turned out to be a school climate that is safe and orderly and conducive to learning, a school wide emphasis on basic skills instruction, high expectations of youngsters by teachers, a system of monitoring pupil progress that is tied to the school’s academic goals—and strong leadership by the school principal” (p. 5).

During the mid-1980s, studies such as Eicholtz, 1984; Kroeze, 1984; Farley, 1985; McCormack-Larkin, 1985; and Miller, 1985, further validated the findings of the earlier studies and refined the understanding of the various factors involved. From these studies, the leadership qualities and effectiveness of the principal emerged as a preeminent factor.

The Role of the School Principal

Between 1980 and 1985, a number of ESR researchers began emphasizing the principal as instructional leader. That is, a principal who creates and directs an instructional program that incorporates current research on instructional methods and who directs teaching efforts in curriculum and classroom instruction, student assessment, and program design (Snyder, 1984; Squires, 1980). Clark, Lotto, and McCarthy (1980) contended that the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal impacts educational outcomes every bit as much as teacher instructional practices. They pointed to the need for a principal to be more actively involved in the instructional program, manifesting their involvement by organizing goals and objectives, establishing criteria for performance, creating a conducive work setting, and soliciting support for the academic program. They wrote that effective leaders must be able to “...initiate, motivate, and support improvement throughout the school” (p. 468).

Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee (1982) examined what constituted effective instructional management behaviors, grouping these behaviors in four areas: (1) goal setting and production emphasis (2) power and decision making (3) organization/coordination, and (4) human relations. They concluded that, “...effective instructional leaders devote more time to the coordination and control of instruction and are skillful at the tasks involved. They do more observations of the teachers’ work, discuss more work problems with teachers, are more supportive [of] teachers’ efforts to improve (especially by distributing materials or promoting in-service activities), and are more active in setting up teacher and program evaluation procedures” (p. 37-38). They also wrote that an

effective instructional manager must be able to comprehend how student-learning outcomes are affected by how the school is organized (p. 44).

Michael Cohen (1982) confirmed Bossert's view that a principal's instructional management behaviors must promote teaching and learning in the classroom. He asserted that ineffective principals detach themselves from the teaching and learning process, display little interest in teacher staff development, monitoring instructional delivery, communicating with teachers about unit lessons, or modeling new curriculum practices. He suggested that, to be effective, principals should interact with their staffs in a number of positive ways: involving their staffs in the selection of professional development in-services; developing and implementing disciplinary guidelines; and observing and evaluating teachers (p. 29).

Dwyer (1984) expanded on Cohen's list of behaviors. He proposed that the necessary skill areas are "1) goal setting, 2) monitoring, 3) evaluating, 4) communicating, 5) scheduling, 6) staffing, 7) modeling, 8) governing, and 9) filling in" (p. 176). He contended that a principal should hire his teaching staff, plan the curriculum, monitor building-maintenance projects, and monitor staff and student performance based on planned goals and objectives. Additionally, he suggested that a principal needed to have the ability to link routine activities to the social characteristics and forces in the district (p. 42).

Eicholtz (1984) wrote, "... through management style and management skills, the principal serves as the instructional leader, the motivator, and the molder of school climate" (p. 22). He too listed a set of principal behaviors that he suggests would provide a structure for improving the instructional environment of a school, including teaching skills. Eicholtz proposed that an effective principal:

1. should serve as a role model in following through with school improvement ideas and demands maximum effort on behalf of all involved.
2. should listen well to others.
3. routinely visits and discusses the school program with staff and students.
4. actively participates in school activities.
5. makes formal classroom observations to evaluate teachers and the instructional program.
6. provides long- and short-range plans with and for staff members.
7. conducts ongoing evaluations and utilizes statistical evidence for appropriate student placement.
8. uses incentives and rewards for students and staff.
9. uses input from community, staff, and students for defining a school citizenship policy.
10. encourages students to believe that they can be "winners."
11. emphasizes and enforces a curriculum that meets the needs of the students.
12. welcomes parents to the school and in the school (p. 24).

Drake and Roe (1986), summarizing several surveys, concluded that, nationally, the role of the principal had been regarded as either instructional-educational or administrative-managerial in nature (p. 22). An administrative-managerial principal concentrates on the relatively routine administrative tasks of maintaining school records, planning and controlling the budget, disciplining students, monitoring and administering

personnel, supplies, and equipment, and communicating reports from the central office to parents as well as the faculty and students. An educational-instructional principal develops plans and implements instructional innovations that improve staff involvement and instruction. They work directly with their staff to evaluate and promote student achievement and the instructional program and to develop and provide educational and professional resources for instruction. They also establish a system of teacher accountability for student learning, provide channels of communication for community involvement in the school, and encourage maximum teacher performance.

Although there is universal agreement on the significance of the principal's instructional leadership role, the literature continues to provide varied opinions regarding how that role should be performed and how it relates to teacher instruction. Erwin (1986) investigated the perceptions of secondary school principals and teachers to determine the effect of a secondary principal's instructional leadership behavior on the instructional practices of classroom teachers. Eight secondary principals and 435 teachers responded to the North Carolina Appraisal Instrument for Principals. Erwin used frequency distributions and percentages to analyze the data. Selected tasks of the principal were placed into five categories: Administrative, Evaluative, Public Relations, Interpersonal, and Organizational.

According to the survey, the leadership behaviors with the most significant effect on the teachers were 1) developing an annual plan, 2) recognizing student and teacher accomplishments and praising outstanding academic achievement, 3) discussing classroom observations with teachers, 4) evaluating teachers, and 5) allotting time for planning. The study indicated the need for principals to involve teachers and students in the development of rules, to directly consult with teachers concerning teaching strengths and weaknesses, to recognize and promote teachers who exhibit effective classroom teaching skills, and to allocate sufficient funds for teaching materials.

"Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century (1989)," a report prepared by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, concluded that middle school principals need to seek more involvement from students, parents, and staff. The report pointed out that because of the emerging needs of early adolescents, the middle school principal's role has to be flexible on nearly all decisions relating to curriculum, behavior, and social activities. "The principal is open-minded and willing to listen; committee members recognize that the principal has ultimate responsibility for overall operation and performance of the building" (p. 55-56).

The "Turning Points" authors also outlined what they believed to be the significant characteristics of an effective middle school principal. (And, in my opinion, high school principals as well.) They are:

He or she would create an environment in which each house can be a truly creative enterprise. Such a principal would have some attributes now associated with superintendents of school districts: political skill at helping groups of people to solve problems, the capacity to articulate a broad educational vision, the ability to see and plan based on broader trends (e.g., changes in the population of the community and fluctuations in resources) and the capacity to understand and deal effectively with the larger civic and political context of the school, including the business

community, policymakers, and the broader public. The building administrator would also be responsible for equity and fairness in allocating resources among houses, and for developing means to collect and make accessible data needed to ensure public accountability of school-wide student outcomes (p. 58).

In 1996, the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Carnegie Foundation published an important and widely disseminated report, “Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution,” that proposed reforming the American high school. A substantial number of individual schools and school districts involved themselves in workshops, seminars, models, and networking activities to implement the report’s seven recommendations, two of which dealt directly with principalship:

- “The principal will provide leadership in the high school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction, and focus for students.
- The principal will foster an atmosphere that encourages teachers to take risks to meet the needs of students” (p. 99).

The report charged high school principals with setting the climate for change and then leading the implementation of that change. It offered general guidelines on how they should fulfill this charge. “An effective principal must inspire and lead by example. He or she should be a defender of academic integrity” (p. 100). “A secure principal tolerates reasonable mistakes by teachers who try to bolster the learning of their students and protects such teachers from critics who have no patience for innovation. These principals, in turn, need the affirmative support of superintendents who appreciate the enabling role of the principal” (p. 102). This prestigious report summed up, at least at the high school level, the prior twenty or so years of effective schools research, including the preeminent importance of the principal. Its impact was felt at all school levels, throughout the country.

Knowledge and Skill Requisites for Principals

ESR created a universal awareness of just how important the principal was in determining school performance; and especially of the critical role-played by the principal’s instructional leadership. By the end of the 1980s, effective schools researchers were doing more than just pointing this out; they were expounding on precisely what the leadership role entailed and they were defining the specific knowledge, skills, and competencies that principals needed to know in order to effectively fill that role.

In 1993, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (a group of researchers and educators from across the country) published a manual, “Principals for Our Changing Schools: Knowledge and Skill Base “. In compiling the manual, the board solicited input from all levels of the educational hierarchy, including 1) professors; 2) principals; 3) assistant principals; 4) superintendents; 5) central office administrators; and 6) teachers. The board identified twenty-one areas (which they called "domains") in which principals required knowledge, skills, or proficiency. They grouped the domains into four generic categories: 1) Functional, 2) Interpersonal, 3) Contextual, and 4) Programmatic.

Functional Domains are the general managerial processes through which administrators perform their functions. They are:

1. Leadership
2. Information Collection
3. Problem Analysis
4. Judgment
5. Organizational Oversight
6. Implementation
7. Delegation

Interpersonal Domains are how administrators relate to their superiors, peers, subordinates, and the public. Their inclusion acknowledges how critical such relationships are in achieving organizational purpose and in satisfying an administrator's personal and professional goals. These include:

1. Motivating Others
2. Interpersonal Sensitivity
3. Oral and Nonverbal Expression
4. Written Expression

Contextual Domains relate to the external forces impacting an organization. In the education milieu, they refer to the intellectual, ethical, cultural, economic, political, and governmental influences that impinge upon schools. Included are:

1. Philosophical and Cultural Values
2. Legal and Regulatory Applications
3. Policy and Political Influences
4. Public Relations

Programmatic Domains are specific executive responsibilities that a principal must address and manage and include:

1. Instructions and Learning Environment
2. Curriculum Design
3. Student Guidance and Development
4. Staff Development
5. Measurements and Evaluation
6. Resource Allocation

Reviewing this manual, McCall (1993) commented that, "The authors modestly state that their intent has been to define the center lane in a broad road, to identify the essential knowledge and skills for successful practice, and to encourage others to build on their work according to individual and institutional preferences and state licensing" (p. 11). In a later analysis, McCall (1994) observed that, "Eleven of these 'domains' are process or skill oriented; 10 are more content focused; most, however, synthesize knowledge and skill. Some are more central to student-adult relationships; others involve adults only" (p. 20).

It is noteworthy that almost all the identified domains would apply equally well to administrators in government, private industry, or any other realm. Viewed in that light, the Policy Board manual is a tacit acknowledgment that school administrators are first and fundamentally executives. Several later studies explicitly support this assessment. In 1995, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and National Association of Secondary School Principals assembled eighty educators and researchers from across the nation, in St. Louis, Missouri, to address the issue of educational leadership. The educators agreed that a principal should "define and sustain purpose,

develop and nurture community, and foster personal and organizational growth” (p. 90). They portrayed the principal as “the keeper of the dream” who acts as an agent between the school and the community. They predicted that in the 21st century, selection of high school principals would be based on qualities of leadership rooted in established knowledge and skills that result in dedication to good instructional practice and learning. They added that current principals would build and refine the skills and knowledge required to lead and manage change. They then concluded that a principal is little different from administrators in private enterprise; that the requirements for effective principals are similar to those required for high-achieving executive officers in the business sector (p. 45).

The recommendations of the St. Louis symposium create a great deal of pressure on a candidate for the position of principal because they call for the candidate to demonstrate the requisite knowledge and skills *prior* to obtaining the post. The symposium report describes these a priori skills, “. . . knowing how to work with groups in order to reach high quality decisions and how to plan the use of resources. Moreover, a prospective principal should be able to motivate people and communicate with them clearly. Both the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration have identified the knowledge and skills essential for effective practice” (p. 101).

The report pointed out that existing principals would face greater challenges than those who had not yet been appointed. “The authoritarianism and aloofness that marked the leadership style of some high school principals in years past has fading appeal in the collaborative and collegial climate associated with today’s reform” (p. 101). It observed that sitting principals who do not acquire or seek training are on the path to ineffectiveness, to be manifested in low student achievement and a poor school climate. “Principals who thought sound management skills were enough to do the job must obtain sufficient grounding in state-of-art teaching and learning to offer insightful observations on instructional reform” (p. 23). It urged them to obtain the knowledge and skills they would need to provide effective leadership.

C. Ray Johnson (1998) also pointed out the similarities between school administrators and private enterprise CEOs. He said they included 1) day-to-day challenges of running a business, 2) having the “big picture” issues of how to stay competitive in sight, 3) emphasis on systematic, clear, and focused thinking about the true purpose of company resources, 4) mental discipline, allowing one to stay focused on key elements that make a business successful, 5) making major decisions about core competencies, 6) improving everyday support operations (e.g., cash management, management development, banking relationships, etc.), and 7) CEOs looking to improve results in particular aspects of their businesses (acquisitions, turnarounds, leadership, business operations planning, etc. (p. 38).

Anderson (1991) systematically studied what principals, particularly new ones, actually did on the job and what skills and knowledge they needed to do them. (Note: His study was conducted in the Sarasota County, Florida School District and became an important element of the training program documented in this case study). Anderson asked a group of beginning principals to identify and rank the most critical administrative tasks for which they were in need of knowledge and training. Table 1 lists the consensus top twenty-one tasks.

Table 1
Important Tasks as Identified and Ranked by New Principals

<u>Task</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Plan and manage school budget	1
Understand "unwritten" rules, procedures, and expectations	2
Plan and direct improvements in curriculum	3
Understand district goals, philosophy, and expectations of principals	4
Orient to, and understand, staff	5
Assess relevance of instruction, curriculum, and evaluate program outcomes	6
Understand and implement school board policies, district rules, and administrative procedures	7
Supervise accounting procedures for school monies	8
Understand curriculum content, objectives, and organization	9
Understand and work through district decision-making processes	10
Assess community needs, problems, and expectations	11
Develop master schedule	12
Set goals and develop long-range plans	13
Supervise and evaluate staff	14
Deal with staff concerns and resolve conflicts	15
Help staff improve and plan developmental activities	16
Elect, assign, and orient staff	17
Supervise and direct custodial services, maintenance of facilities, and plant systems	18
Supervise special programs	19
Supervise purchasing procedures	20
Coordinate the opening and closing of each school year	21
Anderson, M. E. (1991). <u>Principals: How to train, recruit, select, induct, and evaluate leaders for America's schools</u> (Book No. 0-86552-106-9). Eugene, OR: Clearinghouse on Educational Management. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EA 023 124).	

Anderson's survey demonstrated that national organizations, theoretical researchers, and field practitioners were all on the same page and that the published concepts and observations were valid. This raised the confidence of those who needed to accept them and would be impacted by them.

Anderson (Florida Education Leadership Study Guide, 1991) proposed that in the coming years principals would need to attain skill competency in 1) Leadership, 2) Organizational Management and Development, 3) Human Resource Management and Development, 4) Communications, 5) Curriculum, 6) School Finance, 7) School Law, and 8) Technology. McCall (1994) agreed,

New principal preparation programs must address the troublesome 'clinical gap' that exists between classroom and practice, and between subject content and specific technique. To close the gap, a new starting point is required.

Accordingly, the search for effective knowledge and skill base should begin with

the work of principals in contemporary schools. That work must first be defined and organized into identifiable, rational building blocks that are skill-rich and knowledge-rich. Next, the connections between knowledge and skills should be recognized in the many problems principals respond to and in the many tasks they initiate. (p. 7)

School-Leadership Training

As the foregoing discussion reveals, there was a consensus among scholars, national commissions, and practitioners that existing principal training was wanting. All fault rested with local school districts for not offering field-based programs. They also agreed on what the basic content of such programs should be.

McCurdy (1983) was one of the firsts to articulate the shortcomings of the extended administrative preparation programs. “Administrative preparation training is a hodge-podge of what are commonly called ‘quick fix’ sessions designed to deal with narrow topics, such as handling stress, complying with Public Law 94-142, or using microcomputers” (p. 74).

Anderson (1991) expressed it this way, “The central problem appears to be that most university programs present knowledge about school administration, but do not help students develop skills to translate that knowledge into practice” (p. 6). And, “Although our focus so far has been on university training programs, probably the most crucial ingredient in preparing capable school leaders is the school district” (p.19). This was a natural conclusion, given that so many of the important tasks identified in his study (see list in the preceding sub-section) are so directly linked to local conditions and issues that knowledge concerning them could be meaningfully imparted to administrators only within their own schools or districts.

By the mid-1980s, and increasingly in the 1990s, a number of states and districts were taking heed of these criticisms and attempting to do something about the problem. In many states, certification regulations were changed from course-driven to competency-driven. A number of states and universities (during the 1990s) modified their school-leader preparation programs to focus on knowledge competencies that had been confirmed by solid research, and administrative internships, networking activities, and other laboratory experiences as integral parts of the learning and assessment process. Florida, which is home to the in-district program described by this study, is a case in point.

In 1986, the Florida legislature passed Statute 231.087, “The Management Training Act.” The Act formally recognized that effective principals and other school administrators are fundamental to quality public schools. In addition, the Florida Council on Educational Management, the Florida Academy for School Leaders, and the Center for Interdisciplinary Advanced Graduate Study added their support to improving the quality of school administrators. The state support came by the way of funding, much of which went into training, including workshops, in-services, topical institutes, and leadership academies.

The Florida legislation provided a state, regional, and district support system for school leadership training. “This support system included the identification of those competencies basic to effective management of schools; a performance-based management training program; a competency-based evaluation for school managers, which went into effect July 1, 1986. The legislation included a research and service

center for principals and other educational managers” (The School Board of Sarasota County, Florida. Human Resource Management and Development Plan, 1997, p. 75). Additionally, the statute called for career development, in-service training, and skills enhancement for present and potential educational leaders.

Anderson’s 1991 criticism was still all-too-accurate late in that decade. While some districts had attempted to correct the situation, they were faced with ineffective instructional leaders, dropping test scores, and incompetent teachers. As a result, researchers such as Philip Hallinger and Edwin Bridges (1991) were able to observe, “much of why administrative training, despite recent signs of change, remains under attack for being too theoretical or insufficiently rigorous” (p. 34).

Alternative Training-Program Models

During the 1980s, educators from across the U.S. began searching for alternative ways to develop school leaders into instructional leaders and to improve their managerial competence. A number of state departments of education and local school districts launched principal preparation programs. Researchers examined these initiatives and reported on them.

Daresh and Laplant (1983) classified the various approaches into three categories and five generic training models. Their three categories are: 1) Academic Preparation (Traditional University Courses); 2) Field-Based Learning (Internships, Planned Field Experiences, Practicum); and 3) Professional Formation (Mentoring, Reflection, Platform Development, Styles Analysis, Personal Professional Development). Their five generic models are:

1. Traditional — On-campus university courses.
2. Institutes — Short-term, topic-specific learning sessions conducted by principals, university professors, and outside experts.
3. Competency-Based — Simulated field situations in an off-site assessment center to evaluate and develop skills such as problem analysis, judgment, decisiveness, etc.
4. Networking and Mentoring — Administrators share problems and accomplishments with peers and receive counsel from experienced and able administrators.
5. Leadership Academy — A broad, structured curriculum, designed and sponsored by the state or the local school district.

Leadership Academies

Because the implementation of a leadership academy is central to my case study, I shall focus here on that model, including its origins and its history.

Leadership academies offer aspiring and sitting administrators a multi-mode learning program designed to provide them with the skills and information they need in order to be effective leaders. Daresh (1989) defines a leadership academy as “An arrangement wherein a school district or state education agency provides structured learning experiences to educators on an ongoing basis. It is an in-house institute sponsored by and for practitioners without reliance on outside agencies” (p. 11). Outside presenters, however, are utilized as needed.

According to Patterson (1983), “Academy programs began in the late 1970s at the state level, when Pennsylvania included school leaders in its overall school improvement process” (p. 12). About the same time, on the national level, several state executive

school officers were exposed to management development, using an academy model, through the American Management Association (AMA) and the National Academy for School Executives (NASE). Some of the earliest programs established the structure of the academy model and provided guidance to others that followed. Among them were programs in Maryland, Florida, and North Carolina.

The Maryland Professional Development Academy (MPDA, 1978) offered four state regional institutes. Their topics included: The OK Administrator, Moving from Segregation to Integration, and Increasing Teacher Effectiveness. A series of ten five-day programs, each serving thirty participants, were held at two retreat locations. Over the course of the program participants defined a personal project to be implemented when they returned to their districts. The program was discontinued in 1990.

The Florida Academy for School Leaders (FASL) was initiated in 1980 and administered by the state department of education. The Florida Council on Educational Management served as its board of directors. The FASL goal was to upgrade the quality of management at every public school level by providing in-service training for school managers that supplement the traditional programs offered by colleges and universities. The program was designed to identify competencies that characterize high-performing principals; establish standards and procedures for measuring and evaluating performance of those competencies; and provide the training required for principals and other managers to acquire the competencies. It was set up to: develop training materials not readily available elsewhere; implement a program of competency certification for school managers and construct a performance-based compensation system for those managers; and identify criteria for screening, selecting, and appointing principals and other managers (The SREB Leadership Academy, p. 21). The program was phased out in 1994.

The North Carolina Leadership Institute for Principals (NCLIP, 1979) was run by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and headed by a special assistant to the state superintendent. The program offered a series of three- to five-day staff development seminars for the state's 2,000 principals. Topics included teacher evaluation, discipline alternatives, school law, general management principles, and time and stress management. The program also offered computer training, a human resource

bank, and internships. The program was discontinued in the 1990s.

A number of state-level academies fell victim to declining revenues, the small constituency they served, and increasing pressures on administrators to remain in their schools rather than attend training conferences. Crews & Weakley (1996) asserted that:

In many states, leadership development is not a priority. Maryland lost its Professional Development Academy in 1990. Virginia has seen professional development eliminated from the state department of education twice since 1991. In Louisiana, the budget for its Administrative Leadership Academy has dropped to less than half its original allocation in 1988. In Mississippi, state funding for the School Executive Management Institute has decreased to just above half its original allocation in 1982. Oklahoma also has faced funding reductions for professional development. Some states, including Oklahoma and

Georgia, use registration fees for some training programs to provide additional resources. (p. 15)

State-level academies frequently failed to meet the expectations of the principals who attended them and the school districts that relied on those principals to provide leadership development for their employees. Among the problems most commonly cited were:

1. Failure to provide sustained training and development opportunities over time. According to Crews and Weakley (1996), leadership academies that offered one-shot training activities seldom made a difference in the principal or school performance (p. 42).
2. Lack of effectiveness in preparing leaders for local settings. Evaluations of the Indiana Principal Leadership Academy concluded, "We question whether the training intervention offered through the IPLA has been sufficiently powerful to develop the type of instructional leadership that will result in substantial school improvement. Significant widespread changes in workplace practices will only occur when the professional skills of principals have been strengthened and there is concerted support for implementation at the local level" (Hallinger & Anast, 1992, p. 425).
3. Lack of opportunity for coaching and mentoring in real school settings. Centralized leadership academies were not able to provide frequent or significant opportunities for skill development with feedback during sessions when skills are the focus for training. Sporadic or long-distance mentoring was generally unsuccessful. As Hallinger and Anast (1992) put it, "The development of expertise during the training is necessary if principals are to confidently attempt to put their new skills into practice" (p. 425).

District-Based Leadership Academies

In spite of the failures of state-administered leadership academies, no one questioned the validity and effectiveness of the academy model. Rather, the consistently discouraging results were interpreted as pointing to the need to tailor training content to the district the academy served. As a result, in the 1990s a number of local districts began establishing their own academies, utilizing the lessons learned from the state programs but applying those lessons within the political, economic, and educational context of their district.

District personnel exercised full control over the program, although they utilized local universities and businesses to obtain guidance and instructors. As Leak (1997) put it, "District-designed and operated leadership academies can be better tailored to specific district needs and characteristics than can state programs" (p. 49).

A number of district initiatives have been highly successful. The consensus of researchers is that these successes are in no small measure the result of district central staff, principals, and other district personnel working together to design, plan, and develop the programs. Following is a brief review of some of the more noteworthy programs, including two in Florida, the home of the district described in this case study. (The year each program was initiated follows the district name. All of these programs are still operating.)

Brevard County, Florida (1992)

The Brevard district staff development director runs its "Schools Leadership Academy." Its research-based curriculum is kept current by an on-going needs assessment survey by principals and assistant principals. In addition, the staff

development director oversees the district student assessment process. The director, in collaboration with the school operations and curriculum services team, makes annual adjustments to the program based on the latest assessment data. The director also contracts with the appropriate presenters, consultants, as well as seek out classrooms, and learning materials. The program includes concurrent sessions, large and small groups, and role-alike groups as needed.

The academy has different offerings for aspiring administrators, assistant principals, and experienced principals. Sessions are three hours every other week beginning in January of each school year. Additionally, administrators are given information about national leadership development programs such as the I/D/E/A/ Professional Development program, NASSP Assessment Center, and Principal centers. These professional development opportunities are scheduled throughout the year and made available to the administrators. Aside from tailored material in the academy curriculum, the special needs of aspiring and assistant principals are addressed by job shadowing, internships, and mentoring programs.

One of the primary purposes of the Brevard academy is to develop effective communications among central staff, principals, assistant principals, and teachers. Over the past years, the academy has served as a communications mechanism for all district administrators and continues to assist with the interpretation of federal, state, and local initiatives (Brevard County, Human Resource Department, 1996).

Hillsborough County, Florida (1991)

The Hillsborough County “Protégé’ Program” serves aspiring administrators, assistant principals, experienced principals, and minority administrators. The district assistant director of staff development supervises the program. Central office personnel and designated principals and assistant principals set the program curriculum. Annually, administrators meet in focus groups to discuss topics and issues confronting district administrators, such as: safe and orderly schools, discipline, school improvement implementation, staff development, and student achievement. Participants are offered classes, workshops, and in-services once a month beginning in November of each school year.

The stated goals of the program are to improve the leadership effectiveness of all administrators, increase their technical and interpersonal skills, and establish a network of support for new administrators to the district (HCPS, 1996). A special component of the program is recruitment and retention of aspiring and experienced minority administrators. After five years of operation, an outside consultant evaluated the program, interviewing a large sample of district administrators and past academy participants. Her report, “Leadership Personnel Training and Information: Needs Assessment, under the auspices of The West Central Educational Leadership Network,” (Curtis, 1996), summarized what the interviewees thought an ideal academy would offer. The report organized the results into three major themes, each with several sub-themes (p. 4 -39).

1. Managing the School

- Legal updates and refreshers – Participants seek broader knowledge of the legal and ethical issues affecting them and their access to relevant school and justice system records.

- Student discipline – Participants want to explore alternative disciplinary methods and techniques.
- Personnel matters – Participants seek additional knowledge such as: teacher assistance, discipline of non-certified personnel, contract issues, hiring, interviewing, termination procedures, and certification of off-campus coaches.
- Budget and finance – Participants seek knowledge regarding business partnerships, avoiding audit errors, budget transfers, waivers, and a better understanding of district budgeting and spending.

2. Leading Schools into the Future

- Successful strategies –Participants want to know more about the strategies that schools with similar demographics have found to be successful. They want, as one middle school principal put it, “recipes for success” that can be shared among schools at the national, state, and local levels.
- Managing change – Administrators point to the pace and complexity of change occurring within their schools: the increase in new instructional strategies and curricula, the move from junior high schools to middle schools, and role changes that occur from restructuring. They seek knowledge on how to help faculty and staff to prepare and cope with change, to think and operate creatively, and to manage the stress that arises from shifts in the nature of work and relationships.
- Political issues – Participants seek information on legislative perspectives, how to influence policy makers, and how to communicate policy issues to parents, staff, and community.

3. Use of Time

Personnel seek techniques for such issues as using their time more effectively, setting priorities, and balancing tactical management imperatives with strategic management activities. These results were brought to the full population of supervisors, assistant principals, and principals for validation, refinement, and prioritization. The top five training areas that emerged from the process were legal updates and refreshers, suspension alternatives, personnel practices, technology, and finance and budget. The director of staff development modified the program accordingly.

Baltimore, Maryland (1992)

The Baltimore school district has created an innovative academy to prepare and develop its public school leaders within the context of a long-term professional development program and given it the title of Baltimore Academy for Educational Leadership (BAEL). The program’s strategic mission is “To ensure that aspiring and practicing school system leaders and leadership teams acquire the knowledge and develop the skills needed to direct continuous improvement efforts in our schools that results in improved performance outcomes” (BCPS, 1996 p.516).

The program is based on the premise that a partnership between the district and local businesses, universities, community agencies, and other school systems would result in a quality school system (p. 510). It strives to create self-directed leaders who have the competencies and skills needed to collaboratively solve problems and create their preferred future, and who possess the knowledge and skills, and attitudes needed to implement change and reform that will result in improved performance outcomes (BCPS, 1996 p. 521).

The program covers six “core leadership domains,” communication; curriculum, instruction, and the learning environment; setting direction, implementation, and measurement; organization and management; individual and organizational growth and development; and problem solving and decision making (BCPS, 1996 p. 516). It does this through four independent components:

1. Aspiring Leaders Partnership Program – An 18-hour graduate program designed to prepare teachers and district staff so they can meet the Maryland State Department of Education license requirements for principals and instructional supervisors.
2. Beginning Principals Institute – A program designed to assist newly appointed school principals during a two-year induction period. The instructional content addresses all six core leadership domains (Listed in the above paragraph). Each cohort of new principals explores educational issues and concerns that it ranks as the most pressing for its individualized professional development plans.
3. Skill Builder Series for Leaders – A program designed around the Baltimore Academy for Educational Leadership (BAEL) domains, which is intended to sharpen skills of principals and central office staff. Activities include workshops presented by area corporations, businesses, and universities (BCPS, 1995).
4. Superintendent’s Cabinet Seminars – A professional development program for district-level administrators (W. Robinson, personal communication, 19 March, 1996). Los Angeles, California (1990)

The Los Angeles Leadership Academy (CSLA) is a two-year program for assistant principals and experienced principals that offers an integrated approach to developing effective school leaders, especially instructional leaders who will commit themselves to improving student achievement in a standards-based system. The curriculum incorporates the latest educational research-based knowledge competencies, skills, and understandings of the role of the instructional leader.

There are nine learning sessions and a symposium in each year of the program. The topic areas for the first year sessions are: Systems Thinking in a Standards-based system; Management/ Operational Procedures (Two Days); Reculturing to Improve Student Achievement; Race, Ethnicity and Student Achievement (Two Days); Change in a Standards-Based System; and Curriculum Alignment (Two Days).

The second year sessions devote one day to each of the first-year topic areas and one day to each of three additional topic areas: Professional Development in a Standards-Based System; Using Assessment Systems to Improve Student Achievement in a Standards-Based System; and Building Relationships and Communication Structures in a Standards-Based System.

The curriculum is designed to build a shared vision of a standards-based education system, align assessment practices with the standards-based curriculum, align instruction with the curriculum, bring teacher professional development into synchronization with the system, create a culture that supports improved student achievement and pupil retention, and promote issues. Within the learning sessions, participants are able to practice implementing standards, using change strategies, using facilitation strategies, and applying problem-solving skills. The program also utilizes coaching and mentoring.

A one-day symposium completes each academy year. The symposium brings central office staff together with principals and assistant principals for a program of

concurrent sessions presented by local and national speakers. The presenters address educational, social, and political issues; review current, research-based case studies on principalship; demonstrate new technology applications in education; and present implementation strategies for new state and federal initiatives. The event also provides an opportunity for the attendees to network (CSLA at Los Angeles, 1996).

Lowell, Massachusetts (1985)

The Lowell Leadership Academy (LLA) serves some sixty administrators in the city public schools. It was formed as a partnership between the school system and the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. “The purpose of the Lowell Leadership Academy is to provide collegial support, reduce isolation, and enhance perspective; deal with system-wide issues; and foster the ongoing development of leadership skills and knowledge” (Boccia, Ackerman, & Christensen, 1996).

The university puts on full-day, monthly sessions during the school year, and a week-long summer institute. In addition, academy leaders employ a number of creative strategies and activities to deliver program content. For example, to avoid information overload and to reinforce the learning process, they use small-group discussions within, and following, formal presentations. Other alternative learning methods tried over the years include:

- a) Level Groups—Elementary, middle, and high school administrators are placed together for a separate breakout session with their peer colleagues.
- b) Fishbowls – Five or six administrators discuss and attempt to resolve an issue while the larger group of remaining participants observe and listen. The purpose is to clear the air and help the larger group address sensitive or controversial issues that participants might otherwise be reluctant to raise or discuss.
- c) Selected Publications – Featured publications are distributed to all participants throughout the monthly learning sessions. This enriches the dialogue in the sessions and also creates a foundation for follow-up or reinforcement of presentations.
- d) Experiential Learning – Participants take part in structured activities such as role-playing, simulations, and problem solving exercises for academy curriculum topics.
- e) Case Stories – Participants write narrative vignettes of their own leadership experiences. These are shared with the group.
- f) Personal Style Inventories – Participants utilize personal inventory instruments such as the “Myers-Briggs” indicator. These instruments help to promote self-awareness and self-knowledge, strengthen interpersonal skills and flexibility in responding to others and to diversity, and promote an understanding of how different people communicate, deal with information, reach decisions, and organize their environments.

Summary

The need for, and the nature of, leadership training for aspiring and incumbent

school administrators have been research driven. Effective schools research during the 1980s determined that how a school was run determined its effectiveness and that the principal was paramount in creating a climate for strong academic achievement. Additional research established that the nature of the principal position was rapidly changing and broadening. Researchers identified the characteristics that modern principals required in order to be effective. One of the most important was exhibiting strong instructional leadership.

Further research determined that many incumbent principals lacked the requisite knowledge and skills. It concluded that ongoing, field-based training, as a supplement to traditional principal preparation programs in the universities, was the most effective way to remedy the problem. As a result, a number of states established principal training programs. The almost universally disappointing results of these state-based initiatives led researchers to conclude that such program needed to be district based and district administered so that training content could be tailored to the needs of the district, and local administrators would have a sense of ownership and control over their programs.

Leadership academies emerged as a flexible model for implementing these district-based programs. A number of successful, on-going implementations throughout the country have attested to the efficacy of this model and the validity of the district-based training approach.

CHAPTER 3 CASE STUDY METHODS

Merriam (1998) defines a *qualitative case study* as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 21). She adds that the defining characteristic of a case is that it is “a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27), and she cites support for this concept from other researchers. She goes on to define a *descriptive case study in education* as “one that presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study—a historical case study that chronicles a sequence of events” (p. 38). She distinguishes this from *interpretive* and *evaluative* case studies, which involve such things as conceptualizing, analyzing, interpreting, hypothesizing, explaining, and judging.

Under these definitions, this study of the implementation of a leadership academy in the Sarasota County, Florida School District is a quintessential “descriptive case study in education,” and I selected my case study methods accordingly. Other research-methodology texts confirm the appropriateness of this designation and approach. Stake (1995) asserts that a case must have sufficient integrity to exist as an identifiable entity within a larger system, saying “the case [itself] is an integrated system” (p. 2). Yin (1994) asserts that “The case study is preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated” (p. 12), and that; “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). I investigated a leadership academy implementation (an identifiable entity and contemporary-event phenomenon) in the Sarasota School District (a larger-system context). The development and implementation of the academy were influenced by, and interwoven with, district’s policy and operations; the academy, in turn, affected the district. Relevant behaviors could not be manipulated.

Lijphart (1971) calls descriptive case studies atheoretical. He states they are “entirely descriptive and move in a theoretical vacuum; they are neither guided by established or hypothesized generalizations nor motivated by a desire to formulate general hypotheses” (p. 691). Merriam (1998) points out that, “Unlike classical ethnographies, they [descriptive case studies] do not attempt to describe all linked phenomena” (p. 19), and that, “A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (p. 19). Accordingly, in this study, I made no attempt to frame general hypotheses, and I focused not on the evaluation or potential outcomes of the Sarasota academy, but rather on the conditions and events that led to its implementation, why the leadership academy model was selected, and how the implementation was carried out.

Data Collection

I followed the recommendation of Miles and Huberman (1984) that multiple methods should be used when collecting data for a qualitative research study (p. 24). I employed a variety of data sources, including primary source documents, direct observation, interviews, and surveys.

Merriam (1998) asserts, “This type of research [a descriptive case study] employs techniques common to historiography — in particular, the use of primary source material. The handling of historical material is systematic and involves distinguishing between

primary and secondary sources” (p. 35). She adds that “...the case study relies on many of the same techniques as a historiography, but it adds two sources of evidence not usually included in the historian's repertoire: direct observation and systematic interviewing” (p. 8). I utilized relevant documents, records, and archives of personnel who were actively engaged in the case (primarily the program director) or who were impacted by it. These persons had either contributed to the planning, development, and implementation of the academy, participated in the training the academy provided, or were otherwise, but relevantly, involved in administration within the district. I surveyed and interviewed many of these persons as well.

Direct Observation

Merriam (1998) recommends making observations with context sensitivity: “first, observations take place in the natural field setting instead of a location designated for the purpose of interviewing; second, observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a second-hand account of the world obtained in an interview” (p. 94).

As I reported earlier, I was appointed as director of the leadership program at the moment of its conception, a position I held for two years, until April 1998 (two months before I began preparing the prospectus for this case study), at which time I passed the directorship to a colleague and assumed another administrative position in the district. My program-director role significantly impacted the methods I employed for this case study, since a good deal of its descriptive narrative was derived from the personal observations, experiences, and documentation I acquired in that role.

When this study began, I had a more complete and intimate knowledge of the program than any other individual. Over the course of two years, I had established the program goals; evaluated alternative approaches to administrative training; recommended the academy approach; planned, organized, finalized, and budgeted, the program; set up, scheduled, facilitated and observed training activities; and solicited feedback on the program's effectiveness. In so doing, I worked in concert with the superintendent, central office staff personnel, and a number of ad hoc planning committees, as well as with external advisors, consultants, and academy instructors.

Thus, even though this was a post facto study, I had the benefit of first-hand observations I made contemporarily with the related events, albeit experienced as a participant, not as a researcher, and certainly not as an arms-length researcher. Such an arms-length researcher, if he had begun this study when I did, would have regarded me (as the original program director) as a primary and rich data source. In essence, as I conducted and documented this case study, I essayed to treat myself in the same manner.

To avoid text awkwardness and reader confusion, from here on, when I refer to myself in the role of leadership academy director, I will use the third person. And from here on, except when I relate in the final chapter the insights I gained during my program-director tenure, the term ‘I’ will always refer to me in my researcher role.

Historical Documents

Merriam (1998) states, “The data collection techniques used, as well as the specific information considered to be ‘data’ in a study, are determined by the researcher's theoretical orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected” (p. 70). Accordingly, my first step was to obtain critical historical documents

specifically dealing with the academy's design, development, and implementation. I used these documents to check the accuracy of information collected by way of observations interviews, and personal recollections. These documents included suggestions and recommendations from the leadership academy committee, minutes of school board meetings, articles in local newspapers, superintendent directives, Florida principal-competencies guidelines, district staff development publications, and the program director's field notes, status reports, and surveys.

Because of Florida's Sunshine Law (Section 286.011, Florida Statutes, 1967), I was able to use all these documents freely and to secure information in its natural state. The law provides that "All meetings of any board or commission of any state agency or authority or of any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision, except as other provided in the constitution, at which official acts are to be taken are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times, and no resolution, rule, or formal action shall be considered binding except as taken or made at such meeting."

According to Merriam (1998), "One of the greatest advantages in using documentary material is its stability. Unlike interviewing and observation, the presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studied" (p. 126). The collected documents helped me triangulate the perceptions of the academy participants and persons responsible for its inception.

Case Objectivity

This case study is unusual in that in the two years prior to undertaking it, I directed the planning, implementation, and operation of the subject program. I relinquished that role two months prior to beginning the study and continued to work for the school district in another administrative capacity during the course of the study and afterward.

My prior role as program director, and the intimate personal knowledge it gave me from conception through full implementation, provided me with some distinct advantages as I conducted this study. But it also introduced the potential for conflicts of interest and partiality. I believe that potential was minimized because this was a descriptive case study. As such, I was basically a reporter of what occurred, and my objectivity should be no less than that of a strictly arms-length researcher. The potential for conflicts would have been substantially greater if the study had been interpretive or evaluative.

On the one hand, my intimate involvement with the program helped to enhance the completeness and accuracy of this case study. On the other hand, my continuing position as a district administrative staff member may have inhibited my reporting of certain personal and organizational issues. I can only state that I strove for objectivity and believe that I have presented all the issues and events that substantively impacted the program.

CHAPTER 4

CASE SETTING: THE SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT

The subject case took place in the Sarasota County, Florida School District. The city of Sarasota, the county seat, has a well-established reputation as a cultural and intellectual center. It boasts a symphony orchestra, an opera company, a ballet company, a performing arts center, several professional theaters, two community-theater companies, a noted art museum, and a large contingent of retired (and often active) academics, artists, and musicians. It is home to a branch of the University of South Florida; New College, a highly selective liberal arts institution; the University of Sarasota, a graduate college; Keiser College, an undergraduate business college; Selby Library; and the Ringling School of Art and Design, a leading fine arts college. This intellectual atmosphere, and the population drawn by it, has influenced the public education system of the county. That system perennially ranks near or at the top of the state by any measure, and is competitive on a national basis (Spotlight On Sarasota County Schools, 1996). Among the district's accomplishments:

- Venice Elementary School received the U.S. Department of Education, "Blue Ribbon Schools" award.
- Nineteen district schools were designated by the Florida Department of Education as "five-star schools" in the 1996-1997 school year. This award recognizes schools with exemplary programs that effectively involve the community in producing student improvement.
- Two-thirds of the district's schools regularly receive the yearly Florida "Golden School" award. This award is given annually by the state to schools whose documented volunteer hours at least double the student enrollment.

In 1996, the year the subject leadership academy was initiated, Sarasota was a medium-sized Florida school district, with 31,205 students in 32 schools (19 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 5 high schools, and 2 special schools) (Munson, 2000). The district also ran an Adult and Community Education Center and a Technical Institute.

The district is the largest employer in the county. In 1996, its full-time payroll consisted of 2,200 instructional staff, 1,800 classified staff, and 140 administrators. Instructional and classified personnel accounted for 96% of the workforce. Members with advanced degrees comprised 52.9% of the instructional staff compared to the state average of 38.5% (Spotlight On Sarasota County Schools, 1996, p.2).

Student Population

The county population grew substantially between 1988 and 1999, the 1988 population of 257,667 increasing by 22.5%, to 315,653 by 1999. At the same time, county demographics changed in ways that impacted the schools. More families were moving into the area, decreasing the percentage of retirees in the population. The district director of research and development attributed this to the academic reputation of the district. He told me that, "A number of parents in the Sarasota area have sought academically challenging schools," and that "I have received a number of requests from parents of neighboring school districts and parents from other states asking how they can gain admission to the Sarasota District schools" (W. Robinson, Field Notes, June 20, 1998).

When this case study began, district attendance performance was improving, going from 92.1% in the 1994-95 school year to 93.3% in 1995-96. This improvement translated to 385 more students in school. According to the district attendance supervisor, the improvements stemmed from the development of a K-8 curriculum on student work-habits; initiation of employability skills; implementation of researched-based, school-attendance best practices, and a continuing focus on improving attendance.

The attendance supervisor attributed a concurrently rising graduation rate and falling dropout rate to the same factors. In 1995-96 the graduation rate for the district was 79.90%, compared to the state average of 73.22%. The dropout rate was 3.78% for 1995-96 compared to the state average of 5.02%. These performance improvements were of course welcome, but they added to the growth in the effective student population during the subject period.

Minority Students

During the 1980s and 1990s, the percentage of minorities in the county increased. By 1998, although the student population was still predominantly white middle-class, minority representation had become significant — 10% African American, 6% Latino, 1% Asian/Pacific Rim, and 1% Native American (Weiss, 1996).

At the time the subject case began, district administrators were beginning to recognize and formally acknowledge that its most evident academic and performance weaknesses were associated with minority students. This included: minority reading scores 20 points below that of white students of the district, increasing minority suspension and expulsion rates (ten percent in the 1995-96 school year), and attendance,

graduation, and dropout rates that were unfavorable relative to non-minority students. At that time, the district began formulating programs and initiatives to address these issues.

Special Academic Programs

In addition to its traditional academic programs, the district offers an array of supplemental and alternative programs that cater to the special talents and academic and career interests of students who perform well both academically and behaviorally. These programs draw students from throughout the district.

A visual and performing arts magnet program provides specialized and intensive training for high school students with talents and interest in dance, theater (performing and technical), radio and TV, music, and visual/graphic arts. The school at which the program is offered boasts a theater, instructional and rehearsal classrooms, and classrooms for skit and stage designing.

A law and public service academy provides students with the unique opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in these fields. The law segment of the academy offers students a wide array of law enforcement training to specialized paralegal seminars with local and state attorneys. The public service activities are mutually driven by students, parents, businesses, and the community agencies to develop an enthusiasm for learning.

A MAST science and technology program provides students with a rigorous curriculum emphasizing medical research. Two additional strands, Health and Science Technology and Construction were introduced during the 1997-98 school year. In all three strands, students complete a common academic core coupled with internships, career shadowing, mentor-supervised research, and participation in summer institutes.

Students are selected to participate in these programs only if they maintain a GPA of 2.5 or better and must have both good attendance and no discipline referrals for behavioral misconduct.

A separate K-12 school offers an accelerated academic program for intellectually gifted students who qualify by taking entry examinations. To qualify, the students must display talents in areas such as art, music, drama, or writing. They must also be self-starters and have demonstrated the ability to work independently on their academic assignments. The academic rigor of this school is comparable to many high school advanced placement classes or International Baccalaureate Programs.

A vocational school, located near the geographical center of the district, serves nearly fourteen hundred students annually, including summer and night classes (offering adult classes as well). Those of its students who are over-age, or who are returning after dropping out, are given an opportunity to prepare for, and take, the GED test for high school graduation.

Programs for Problem Students

The district includes seven other schools designed to meet the needs of approximately 300 students with learning or physical disabilities, or with behavioral problems. Private companies, which hire and supervise their own staff, operate five of the seven. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and the Sarasota district manage the other two schools jointly. The overall program is under the direct supervision of the district Executive Director of Charter and Opportunity Schools.

One of the seven schools serves children (K-12) who have severe emotional or physical problems. Two serve expelled students, allowing them to work at their own pace, complete a behavioral management program, and participate in random drug testing. And four of the schools serve students who are truant, behaviorally disruptive, or have a high risk of dropping out. These schools provide students with a setting in which they can succeed academically, become confident with their peers, and adjust socially.

District Administrative Organization

The district administrative organization during the 1996-1997 school year consisted of five school board members, a superintendent, two assistant superintendents, four executive directors, and four directors. These persons are collectively classified as “non-instructional administrators” in compliance with the State of Florida Department of Education designations. In 1996, the district organization also included eight central office administrators designated by the DOE as “instructional administrators,” including an executive director of curriculum, four supervisors, a director of staff development, and two consultants (math and reading). (See Appendix F for a full organizational chart.)

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE: SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Note: The field notes, diary, calendar, and personal recollections of the Sarasota County Director of Educational Leadership, who oversaw the development and implementation of the subject case, are the source of most of the information included in this case narrative. Other sources are explicitly cited.

Genesis

A New Superintendent

In January 1996, following a nationwide search, the Sarasota County, Florida School District (SCSD) hired a new superintendent who held the same position in a Virginia school district of approximately 6,000 students. The prior superintendent, after ten years in that post, had resigned to take the same position in another state.

The school board told the new superintendent that, although the community and the board were proud of their school system, they wanted to raise it to world-class status by the new millennium. One of the superintendent's first activities was to translate the board directive into a formal strategic plan that articulated the goals and philosophy of the district and framed a program for attaining those goals and implementing that philosophy. He presented it to the school board on March 20, 1996, calling it "The Campaign for Excellence."

In the plan, the superintendent wrote that a world-class school district would have "a curriculum in which students successfully compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally and are prepared to make well-reasoned, and healthy lifelong decisions" (The Campaign for Excellence, 1996, p. 4). He added that it also required principals to function as "instructional leaders who effectively and consistently communicate that mission of continuous improvement to the staff, parents, and students" (The Campaign for Excellence, 1996, p. 6).

The major initiatives of the strategic plan were: redefining the district curriculum, preparing for student growth and trends, maintaining and improving student performance, redesigning special student programs, reorganizing the central administration staff, and implementing a comprehensive staff development program for teachers and administrators. *Effective Schools Research* and *Continuous Quality Management* were to underpin each of these initiatives (The Campaign for Excellence, 1996, p. 4).

The superintendent enlisted the school board, teachers, parents, students, and the community to help him achieve these ambitious goals. "Together, through coordinated efforts at the district level and at the individual school sites, we will develop and implement a world-class curriculum, support teacher growth and development, improve accountability for student achievement, develop and enforce new standards of discipline, promote school improvement, and support the effective infusion of technology throughout all classrooms and the district" (The Campaign for Excellence, 1996, p. 2).

The Director of Educational Leadership

To oversee the comprehensive staff development initiative required in the strategic plan, the superintendent named a Senior Executive Director (SED) who had been a high school principal within the district for eighteen years. To oversee the design and implementation of the leadership-training program for school administrators, which

was one of the crucial elements of this initiative, the SED hired a Director of Educational Leadership (DEL), effective July 1, 1996. The DEL came from Virginia where he had been an elementary school principal and chairman of the Hampton Roads Principal Center in Norfolk.

On the day the DEL assumed his position, the superintendent and SED introduced him to the superintendent's advisory cabinet. They reiterated the strategic plan initiatives, including the staff development program. They stated that the initial focus would be on creating a leadership-training program for experienced and aspiring administrators. They explained that the new program would include instructional leadership skills acquisition, identification and development of aspiring administrators, and high performance expectations.

The superintendent talked about those expectations. He stated that, after conferring with several constituencies in the district and in the community at large, he had concluded that there had to be some systemic changes in the way principals ran their schools. "I only want 'Blue Chippers' leading our schools," he said (W. Robinson, Field Notes, July 16, 1996). He said they had to function as instructional leaders, not just building administrators. He added that he wanted them to be grounded in the concepts of *Effective Schools Research* and *Total Quality Management*, the concepts of which were to underpin the entire strategic plan (W. Robinson, Field Notes, July 17, 1996). Following the meeting, the superintendent gave the SED and DEL his thoughts on the shape the leadership training initiative should take. He expanded on the point he had made at the cabinet meeting regarding how the community perceived current school administrators. He said he had found that the board, parents, community leaders, and the central district staff did not hold the administrators in high regard. He added that the administrators themselves recognized their need for additional training and they were also asking for it in addition to more opportunities to network with their peers.

The superintendent observed that a third of the existing school administrators would be retiring within the next 4-6 years. Therefore, although the DEL's charge was to develop a comprehensive program, he should first address the needs of aspiring and newly appointed administrators. In that regard, the superintendent told the SED and DEL they should coordinate with the director of human resources to integrate training with the processes of identifying and selecting new administrator candidates, and, ultimately, placing them in the schools. The superintendent also made it clear that he wanted first priority to be given to in-district candidates, reaching outside the district only when a qualified local candidate could not be found (W. Robinson, Field Notes, July 17, 1996).

The personnel and groups related to the leadership-development activities of the DEL are shown in Figure 1. Their interactions, as relates to the leadership-training program, will be detailed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Planning and Design

Before beginning the planning and design of the program, the DEL recognized that he needed to research the subject area. He planned to conduct internal research—studying the district strategic plan, reviewing district staff development history, reading internal documents, and interviewing district personnel; and external research—studying programs of other districts, researching alternative training models, consulting with educational training specialists. He also planned to study the literature on *Effective*

Schools Research, Total Quality Management, and knowledge competencies and skills for administrators. He performed this research during his first month on the job.

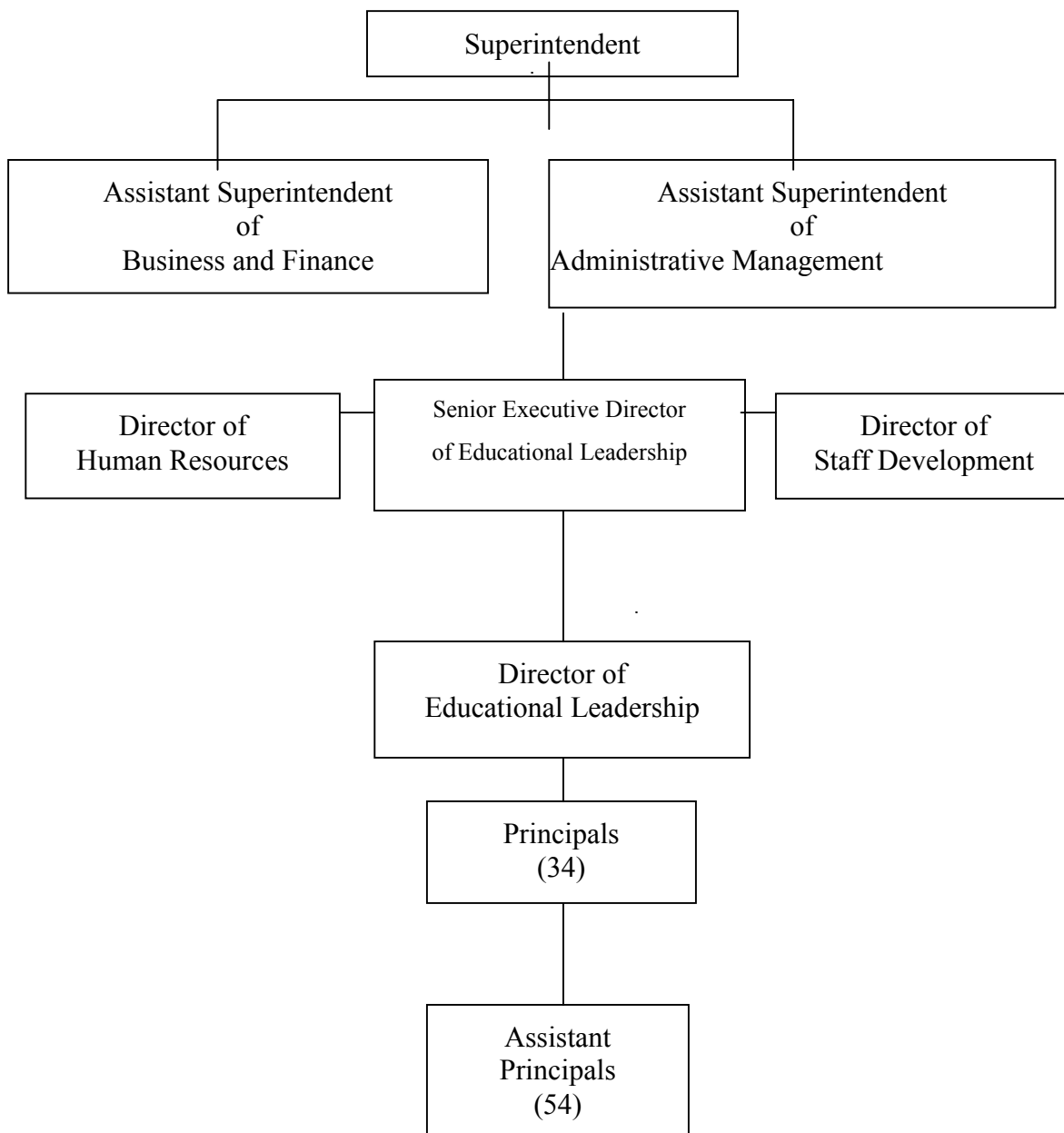


Figure 1. Organization and personnel involved with administrative leadership development in the Sarasota County School District 1996-1997.

Internal Research

The DEL learned that the committee which had helped the superintendent put together the strategic plan had documented a number of cogent observations with regard to staff development in the district (Campaign for Excellence Committee Report, 1996). Among them was a reiteration of the superintendent's observation that current administrators were unhappy with the existing program. The committee wrote that the program was not designed with any systematic approach for identifying and assessing the leadership qualities of incumbent administrators or for selecting, developing, and placing new administrative leaders. It observed that the program did not have an organized curriculum or a long-range program to help administrators acquire leadership skills (p. 4).

The committee alluded to the district's longstanding failure to focus on the principal's instructional leadership role and to the lack of training programs to engender, promote, and develop that role. "Historically, the culture in each school forced principals to function more as managers than as instructional leaders" (p. 2). The committee also noted the lack of systems supporting instructional change (e.g., instructional assessment and management) and the absence of a research-based focus on instructional leadership. Finally, it observed that some administrators, staff, and parents did not fully accept responsibility for student learning.

To correct these deficiencies, the committee stated that the strategic plan would call for mentoring, training, and internship programs to identify and prepare future school leaders; a quality-driven system to define and assess effective leadership qualities; ongoing training in leadership issues such as labor contracts and legislative mandates; and training to prepare principals to function as effective instructional leaders.

To get first-hand information regarding the mood and views of district personnel, the DEL interviewed seven central administrators, nine principals, six assistant principals, eighteen aspiring administrators, and the former director of staff development. The latter was particularly helpful and supportive. She was quite knowledgeable about leadership training within the district and provided the DEL with an in-depth review of the preceding ten years. Among her comments were (W. Robinson, Field Notes, August 12, 1996):

I have researched leadership-training programs and participated on various district initiatives where we pondered over establishing a leadership academy. However, I have concluded that the essential needs of a district leadership academy would be to educate and keep administrators growing personally and professionally. I am simply referring to sustaining the present administrative needs as well as seeking out current best practices.

There has always been a need for a leadership academy since the 1980s rise in student growth. I am not alone in my thinking because many of our new and experienced administrators have come to my office seeking assistance in all phases of administrative leadership.

I personally think the leadership academy should be a year-round training, networking, and mentoring program. This type of organization should focus on aspiring, new, and experienced administrators. Participants should have small and large training sessions, special research projects, and skills acquisition workshops, and scheduled mentoring

sessions.

When I first started in staff development, I had to do a need assessment with participants to determine content, presenters, and workshops. I'm sure whoever designs the academy must consider the needs of the participants. However, I also would recommend that the program organizers consider the district strategic plan, the superintendent's focus, student achievement, and diversity (W. Robinson, Field Notes, September 8, 1996. p.3).

The DEL also met with the director and executive director of human resources to begin the coordination process that the superintendent had recommended, to determine how the existing aspiring administrator pool worked, and to learn how Florida statutory and regulatory requirements impacted the process.

The administrative pool, he was told, was a file of qualified and certified candidates, from both inside and outside the district, who would be considered as assistant principal and principal positions became available. The requirements for acceptance into the pool included a degree from an accredited university and a masters degree in educational leadership. A candidate's technical skills were assessed by a written examination and a comprehensive oral interview. The candidate's field-performance aptitude was assessed using in-and-out basket simulations and by seeing how effectively the candidate could interpret student achievement test data.

The human resource director explained that in 1986, the Florida Legislature passed the *Management Training Act* (231.087) "to provide for a state, regional, and district support system for excellence in principals and other educational managers." Additional legislation (Section 231.086) required each Florida district school board to adopt and implement an objective-based process for screening, selection and appointment of principals and assistant principals. The legislation authorized the Florida District Council on Educational Management to adopt guidelines containing criteria for judging the adequacy of program components (Human Resource Management Development, 1996, p. 4).

The DEL asked a sample of district teachers in the pool, how they viewed the system. Most of them felt that the pool was not working well for in-district candidates—that they were at a disadvantage versus outside candidates. Administrator-hiring statistics for the five years preceding the academy (see Table 2) seemed to support their contention. In the immediately prior year, for example, seven assistant principals (APs) had been hired from outside the district while none had been promoted from within the district. Regardless of whether the statistical imbalance was due to credentials or to some other factors, it was clear that the district needed to do something to improve the opportunity for its own teachers to move into administration.

Table 2.

Pre-Academy Hiring Statistics for Sarasota Assistant Principals

School Year in which AP Positions Were Filled	Total Positions Filled	Hired from Outside the District	Promoted from Within the District	Transferred from Other District Staff Positions
1992-1993	8	6	1	1
1993-1994	11	8	2	1
1994-1995	8	5	1	2
1995-1996	6	4	2	0
1996-1997	7	7	0	0

External Research

The DEL read accounts of noteworthy leadership-training programs operating throughout the country, including a number of Florida programs. He sent questionnaires to these Florida districts to learn more about their programs. The most consistent and prominent general advice he received from the districts that responded was to prepare all school administrators as if they were senior executives of a Fortune 500 company. Other specific recommendations he received were to:

Design a multilevel program, covering personnel from aspiring administrators to experienced administrators.

Develop a selection process for entry-level administrators.

Provide a program that encourages and inspires minority participation.

Base a great deal of the training on *Effective Schools Research*.

Seek out the concerns of district administrators, issues, concerns, and needs.

Develop executive summaries for building administrators from research-based topics and blue ribbon reports.

Utilize performance simulation activities to help administrators gain skills and knowledge.

Establish an on-going mentoring program for aspiring and new administrators.

Prepare all administrators to work with difficult parents and community leaders.

Design units and workshops to cover components of effective teaching.

Provide annual in-services for administrators on the concepts of implementing and managing change (W. Robinson, Field Notes, August 28, 1996).

The DEL also conducted telephone interviews with the leadership training directors and staff development personnel of several Florida counties including Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Dade, Duval, Hillsborough, Manatee, Palm Beach, Pinellas, and Polk. (The highlights of some of these programs are described in Chapter 2.) The DEL visited Hillsborough County to talk with the program director and participants, and to observe some training sessions. The interviews and visits confirmed the advice the DEL had gleaned from the written surveys and provided valuable insights into how a leadership-training program should be launched and operated.

The Steering Committee

The DEL's in-district interviews had convinced him that district personnel would be generally receptive to the new training initiative. He also recognized that an effective program would require, as well as benefit from, active participation by all affected parties. If those who would be impacted by the program felt a degree of ownership and control, the program would be considerably more likely to succeed. In addition, their knowledge and experience would help him create an effective and practical design. He also determined that an outside consultant with expertise and experience in the area could help him avoid common pitfalls and mistakes.

With that in mind, the DEL formed and chaired a project steering committee consisting of three central office directors, three principals (elementary, middle and high school), three assistant principals (elementary, middle and high school), three teachers (elementary, middle and high school), a university professor, and a program consultant. District members were selected based on referrals from other central office staff members and considerations of the candidates' involvement with district administrators and their knowledge of current administrative practices. Past participation in leadership programs and their knowledge about the area were also considered. The teachers selected all aspired to administrative positions. The director of staff development recommended the professor, who specialized in educational leadership at a nearby university and had previously presented several workshops to district administrators. The program consultant was a former superintendent of a California school district who specialized in school-leadership training and development issues, and who had been serving the Sarasota district as a mentor to its thirty-four principals.

To focus steering committee members, the DEL distributed a list of open-ended questions for them consider before the first meeting. They were asked not to share their answers in advance, but to bring them to the meeting for group discussion. The questions were:

- Who will the leadership academy serve?
- What area or department will oversee the academy?
- How will the academy obtain credibility and validity?
- What safeguards are needed to ensure consistency of the curriculum?
- Who should determine the academy's syllabus?
- How will teachers and other staff members get into the academy?
- How long will participants be actively engaged before they become administrators?
- Should struggling or ineffective administrators be eligible to take classes to seek improvement of their skill?
- Should we use our most effective and strongest administrators in the academy to teach and mentor others?
- How will the academy work in conjunction with neighboring universities principal-preparation programs?
- Should outside instructors or consultants be used to teach course offerings?

The steering committee was scheduled to meet two times each month for an hour and a half. The DEL distributed an agenda several days before each meeting. The meetings were structured so that there was always time for open committee dialogue and group consensus. As the project proceeded, in addition to the whole-committee

meetings, members consistently met in sub groups, both formal and informal, with and without the DEL.

At the first formal committee meeting, on July 21, 1996, the DEL defined the charter, which had been established by the strategic plan and his directive from the superintendent. That charter was “to establish a leadership training program, for both school-based and central administrators, that will identify and develop a strong cadre of leaders who will become technically and instructionally prepared to lead children into the 21st century” (W. Robinson, Field Notes, July 21, 1996). He added that the strategic plan specified that the program would incorporate the findings of *Effective Schools Research* and the principles of *total quality management*.

The committee was informed that leadership training for aspiring administrators was to be the first phase of the comprehensive and on-going staff development program as set forth in the plan. This priority had been set by the superintendent based on the significant number of district administrators who would be retiring during the ensuing five years, the critical importance of effective school leadership, the widespread consensus within the district that some significant changes were required in the nature of that leadership, and an equally widespread consensus that the district did not have in place a program that was effective, or would be able to effect the necessary changes. This first phase was to be operative by the end of 1999, as directed by the superintendent.

Finally, the DEL related to the committee what he had learned from his external research, summarizing the highlights of the similar programs he had reviewed and the advice he had been given by their directors. He suggested that he and some of the committee members would benefit from visits to Hillsborough and Dade counties for face-to-face discussions with the directors of their successful, on-going leadership development programs.

The Design Process

At its first meeting, the committee agreed that the first phase of the program, in addition to its training component, should encourage and inspire teachers to consider administration, have a set of rigorous qualification standards for participation, and search for qualified and certified teachers within the district who were interested in administration. They named this first-phase the “Transitional Leadership Program” (TLP).

Based on this agreed set of objectives and basic components, the DEL drafted a framework for all phases of the program and a preliminary design for the TLP. He presented the draft at the second committee meeting on July 29, 1996. At that meeting, the DEL also informed the committee what he had learned from the human resources directors.

He proposed a program centered on a leadership academy model, but one that, beside the classroom curriculum, included other learning modalities such as competency-based field simulations, assigned reading, case studies, portfolios, and coaching, networking, and mentoring. He outlined a four-tier program, each tier designed to cover a defined segment of personnel. The first tier, the TLP, would serve teachers and, potentially, central staff personnel who aspired to field administration positions. The second tier would serve incumbent assistant principals and Tier-1 graduates who had not yet been placed. The third Tier would serve novice principals (with up to three-years of

tenure) and principals who were new to the district. The fourth tier would serve experienced principals and central office administrators.

Over the final five months of 1996, the steering committee, using the researched experience of similar programs and the results of effective school research, and with input from appropriate other field, central staff, and outside experts, established the objectives, basic structure, and general curriculum content of each of the four tiers. The majority of their efforts were directed to the TLP. As a result, by December 1996, the TLP was fully designed and ready for implementation.

The initial tier concepts and designs were as follows (some of which were subsequently modified, or never implemented—see Section C, Implementation).

Tier 1 — The Transitional Leadership Program (TLP)

- Objective: Identify qualified district teachers interested in administration, encourage them to pursue their interest, and provide them with the training they require in order to lead world-class schools in the 21st century.
- Structure: Formal training, including lectures, workshops, case studies, and field simulations. Assigned and recommended reading. Mentoring and coaching. Personal portfolio development. Peer networking.
- Participant Selection: Highly selective. Formal qualification criteria. Written applications and interviews.
- Content Areas: Leadership; instructional leadership; cultural and change processes; technology; communications; time management; district initiatives.
- Timing: One year of formal training. Continuing mentoring and coaching for unplaced participants (up to four years).

Tier 2 —The Assistant Principals Program

- Objective: Provide incumbent, non-TLP-graduate, assistant principals with the training they will require to lead world-class schools in the 21st century. Provide continuing training and other development opportunities to TLP graduates who have not yet secured an administrative position.
- Structure: Formal training, including lectures, seminars, and district central staff presentations. Assigned and recommended reading. Mentoring. Internships. Networking among participants.
- Content Areas: Effective schools correlates and best practices; principles of continuous quality management; instructional leadership; managing change; safe and orderly schools; district issues.
- Timing: Annual formal training. Continuing mentoring for new assistant principals (three-five years).

When the DEL shared the initial concepts and design of the Tier-2 program with the incumbent assistant principals (APs) that the tier was designed to serve, they were supportive but requested a voice in the final design. They, particularly the highly experienced APs, wished to play an active role in designing, developing and implementing their program. Their expressed desire was welcomed, and they were given a strong voice in setting the curriculum content and in determining how to structure a program that would best meet their overall staff development needs.

Among their suggestions was that the academy should be aligned with state and district curriculum initiatives, particularly in mathematics, writing and reading areas.

They also made a number of suggestions concerning the delivery of content. They recommended strategies such as real-life scenarios on school leadership, presentations from persons who had been effective practitioners or administrators, interactive role-playing exercises, and research articles and journals that addressed their local issues and concerns.

The APs wanted practical and realistic approaches to problem resolution, working with various types students and parents, and developing strategies for implementing programs and initiatives. They wanted to learn ways to elevate their skill levels. They made it clear that they felt the district had neglected their professional development over the years. The Tier-2 program benefited greatly from their participation in its design.

Following two meetings with the DEL and the Program Consultant, the APs prepared a program proposal and presented it to the DEL. After the superintendent approved the proposal, the DEL worked with the APs to fine-tune it. On March 23, 1997, a final version was promulgated, consisting of four parts (Assistant Principals Proposal for Leadership Training, 1997).

Part I: Procedure

During one full-day (workday) session per month during the school year, except for September, December, and late May, teachers participating in the Tier-1 leadership academy would substitute for an attending AP. For consistency, a particular teacher would substitute for the same AP each time. This would provide Tier-1 participants with actual field experience.

Part II: Framework

The Tier-2 academy would address (1) Research, (2) Internship, (3) Training, (4) Job-alike (APs sharing information about their particular grade configuration), (5) Visitations or Job Swaps, (6) Personal evaluation (shadowing, mock interviews, performance simulations), and (7) Conferences (locally developed).

The research, training, and job-alike elements would be handled by the full-day sessions. Internships, visitations, and personal evaluation sessions would be tailored and timed to individual needs and desires. The locally developed conferences would give each AP an opportunity to plan and present material to other educators within the district, or outside communities such as other districts or private, charter, and specialty schools.

Part III: Day-Session Schedule

8:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Research Review and Application
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Training (in-house trainers)
11:30 – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.	Job-Alike
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.	Expert Presenters

Expert presenters expanded on the topics by covering current research, administrative best practices, related management issues, and personal growth issues.

Part IV: Themes And Topics

The academy would include six major themes or strands:

- Instructional Leadership
- Safe, Orderly and Welcoming Schools
- Community Involvement
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Management Issues

Personal Growth

The proposal included a list of proposed topics for the training sessions.

Research/Training

Assessments/Evaluations
 Instructional Leadership
 Multiple Intelligence/Observing Teachers Teaching the Concept
 Safe, Orderly and Welcoming Schools
 Continuous Quality Improvement
 Change Agents
 Technology/Distance Learning

Management Issues

Community and Parental Involvement
 Budget/Finance
 Staff Evaluations
 Legal Issues (Media – TV, Paper, Internet, etc.)
 Human Resource Issues, Policies and Procedures
 Contracts (Classified and Instructional)
 School Improvement Plan (SIP), School Advisory Council (SAC), and
 Shared Decision Making (SDM) Development
 Technology as a Management Tool
 Personal Growth
 Managing Stress
 Portfolio Development
 Interpersonal and Motivational Skills
 Leadership Styles
 Conferencing Skills
 Time Management
 Group Facilitation

Tier 3 —The New Principals Program

- Objective: Serve as an induction program for new principals to the district, easing the transition process for recently appointed principals and principals new to the district, and imparting to them knowledge regarding the planning and implementing of school and instructional improvement initiatives.
- Structure: Presentations. Participative seminars. Portfolio and “Entry-Plan” creation. Assigned mentors. Attendance at state and national conferences. Participation in Tier-4, networking and best-practices-sharing sessions.
- Content Areas: District culture; political and socialization skills; district and state initiatives; Florida’s “competencies for principals;” implementing school improvement initiatives.
 - District Culture — Participants will gain an understanding of their school’s and the district’s culture and environment, demographics, vital statistics, and political climate.
 - Socialization Skills — Participants will develop a personal "entry plan" and specific performance targets for three years.
 - District and State Initiatives — Participants will discuss and analyze relevant statutory and regulatory initiatives and plan how to implement them.

Florida Principal Competencies —Participants will discuss Florida’s 19 state required competencies and the significance and impact on their jobs.

Initiative Implementation — Participants will discuss strategies for effectively implementing school-improvement initiatives.

- Timing: Monthly sharing sessions. Twice a year shadowing of experienced effective principals.

General Comments: Tier 3 is designed to provide significant individualized attention for participants by having them work with experienced mentors. The concept is to give new principals the time to discuss with their mentors serious and significant questions about their new roles, and to receive help and guidance for their personal and professional staff development.

Tier 4 —The Experienced Principals Program

- Objective: Keep experienced principals vitally interested in, and continually involved with, leadership development. Take advantage of in-house field leadership skills and experience.
- Structure: Formal networking and sharing sessions. Service as mentors and counselors for aspiring, junior, inexperienced, or ineffective administrators. Service as trainers and presenters for lower level tiers. Service on the Leadership Academy planning board. Participation in district “innovation” research projects.
- Timing: On-going.
- General Comments: Tier 4 is designed to be highly participative. In addition to serving as mentors to aspiring administrators, assistant principals, and beginning and ineffective principals, Tier-4 participants (principals) would serve as trainers and presenters in other academy tiers and serve on the planning board of the academy. They would also direct special action-research projects by participants in other academy tiers and they would arrange internships for subordinate academy participants.

The academy curriculum was designed to develop leaders who could and would apply the findings of effective schools research. Its broad content areas—Leadership, School Programs, School Culture, Communication, and Technology—were incorporated within all four tiers.

The Leadership area addressed self-awareness, teaching and learning styles, value clarification, stress reduction, and time management. The School Programs area addressed school-improvement planning, instructional supervision, and teacher evaluation. The School-Culture area included effective schools research, group-process skills, institutional assessment, staff motivation and morale, classroom management, and staff development. The Communications area addressed oral and written communication skills and ways to forge and maintain school-business and school-community partnerships. The Technology area explored how to utilize computer resources and tools such as the Internet, search engines, and e-mail, as aids in the performance of administrative duties and responsibilities. It also addressed classroom applications of technology such as in-district networking and broadcasting.

Implementation

Tier 1

Implementation of Tier-1 (the TLP) began in December 1996. The initial cohort had 20 participants selected from 92 applicants (see Table 3). The cohort included one

high school counselor, one special education program specialist, one teacher on special assignment serving as a coordinator of a major grant (Florida Grant 2000 specifically designated for teacher staff development), one special education staff developmental trainer, two middle school math teachers, one high school language arts teacher, and thirteen elementary teachers. Almost all of them held Masters Degrees in Educational Leadership. They were mature teachers relatively well grounded in educational leadership theories and concepts.

Table 3.
Tier-1 Participants

Cohort	Applicants	Admitted to the Academy	Graduated from the Program
1	92	20	18
2	42	12	11

From the outset, the expert presenters and the DEL urged the participants to regularly read publications such as *Educational Leadership*, *Harvard Review Letter*, *Phi Delta Kappa*, *Education Week*, and professional journals from organizations such as the National Elementary and Secondary Principals Associations. In addition, the DEL and program consultant prepared and distributed executive summaries of major educational blue ribbon reports and best-practices literature. The summaries highlighted the authors' main points and perspectives on the topic and included a brief discussion of the related issues and concerns. Participants were coached to incorporate researched-based articles, books, and case studies into their personal portfolios to document the growth of their knowledge base during the TLP. Participants were assigned mentors to help them better understand their personal leadership strengths and needs.

The first TLP included ten formal training sessions between December 1996 and May 1997. Each session was scheduled from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., and was divided into three sections: a presentation of theory and research, case studies, and performance-simulation activities.

One week prior to each training session, participants were given copies or executive summaries of germane journal articles, educational reports, and curriculum best practices to allow them to prepare for the theory and research section. During this section, time was provided for the participants to interact with the presenters to discuss this material, explore the topic in greater depth, inquire about related new administrative concepts and theories, and seek out techniques for improving their own administrative skills.

Most of the case studies were taken from the archives of national school leadership organizations such as the Association for Curriculum Development (ASCD), The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). The selected studies addressed currently important administrative decisions and activities such as student achievement and test assessment planning, staff development preparation, student attendance and behavioral modification plans, and parental involvement strategies. Some of the studies were taken directly from situations and experiences in the Sarasota district.

The performance simulations gave participants an opportunity to gain skills they would need if promoted to administrative positions, and a chance to practice these skills and have them evaluated. Many of the simulations were conducted during the three-hour learning sessions. Because of time requirements or logistical considerations, however, some, such as in-and-out basket transactions, oral presentations to simulated persons and groups, and interviewing techniques were scheduled at other times convenient to the participants.

Following each learning session, the DEL distributed evaluation forms to participants for their feedback on the presenters, content, and activities, and for improvement suggestions.

The second Tier-1 cohort had 12 participants selected from 42 applicants (see Table 3). The group included a former assistant superintendent from California, a high school counselor, a technical expert on developmental delay, and nine classroom teachers, most with fewer than five years of teaching experience. Other than the former assistant superintendent, none of these professionals had been exposed to or had attended a leadership academy.

The second-year program was easier to manage than the first had been. One reason was the substantially smaller cohort size. Another reason was the experience the program administrators had gained during the opening year. Also, most of the logistical problems and operating difficulties from the first year had been corrected. Most significantly, however, the program administrators had addressed many of the issues and concerns that the first cohort had expressed regarding curriculum, presenters, and activities. (See “Subsequent Program Modifications” later in this chapter.) One of the most important was to have presenters shorten their lectures to provide additional time for questions and open group discussion. Of course, the reduced cohort size also helped in this regard.

The sessions for the first TLP cohort were:

- Sessions 1, 2 and 3

Content: Leadership and decision making. Concepts and principles of vision development, administrative knowledge competencies and skills mastery, transformational leadership characteristics, and problem analysis. The role of culture and change processes. Management and leadership roles of the principal. Barker’s Vision Development and Paradigms. Use of case studies, simulations, role playing, and portfolio development in the TLP.

At the start of the first session, the DEL and the superintendent explained the program and its procedures. Participants introduced themselves, including their educational backgrounds and why they aspired to administration.

Mode: Lecture; research reviews; question and answer period; case studies; videos and reading with group discussion.

Presenters: Program Consultant, Superintendent, and DEL

- Sessions 4, 5 and 6

Content: Important elements of the “Campaign for Excellence” (District Strategic Plan), including effective schools correlates such as assuring a safe and orderly school, instructional alignment, staff development, and instructional leadership methods mastery. Understanding the relationship between the use of effective schools data and total quality management. Measurement and evaluation procedures such as diagnostic information;

outcomes on students, staff and school environment; and, drawing inferences from program revisions. Effective use of resources and allocations; procuring, apportioning, monitoring, evaluating fiscal, human, materials, and school goals.

Mode: Lecture; review the research; and question and answer period.

Presenters: Program Consultant, DEL, and curriculum department managers.

- Session 7

Content: The strategic planning process, including development of vision, mission, involvement of major constituents involved in data collection to determine strengths and needs of the organization; development of short- and long-range implementation plans; extensive use of disaggregate data, monitoring and accountability, and continual revision of plans based on appropriate information.

Each participant presents his school's Advisory Council Plan for group discussion.

Participants are formed into sub-groups and are asked to develop mock district strategic plans that they will present in the last session of the academy.

Mode: Lecture; review the research; and question and answer period.

Presenters: Program Consultant and DEL.

- Sessions 8 and 9

Content: Budget, legal and regulatory applications; public relations; pupil personal services; administrative services. Educational technology advances. Providing safe and orderly schools. Working with individual parents and parent organizations. Written and oral communications.

Mode: Lecture; review the research; interactive; and question and answer period. Internet exploration. Panel discussion by current principals.

Presenters: Program consultant, oral communications expert, written communications expert, DEL, district and school administrators, technology consultant, panel of experienced principals.

- Session 10

Content: Developing a Learning Community. The works of Senge, Barth, and Covey concerning the importance of schools becoming learning communities. The importance of continuous professional development through educational journals, books, research organizations, educational workshops, and visits to school sites that have been declared "highly effective" by state departments of education.

Mode: Lecture; review the research; interactive; and question and answer period.

Presenters: Program Consultant, Title 1 Supervisor, and DEL.

Technology

Technology application was discussed and demonstrated in almost every TLP session. Participants learned how to use Internet search engines to access ERIC files, the U.S. Department of Education, Phi Delta Kappa, and other educational research web sites. They gained familiarity with e-mail, multi-media presentations, and databases from various departments of education and the SCSD assessment database system, which evaluates the delivery of content, curriculum implementation, and discipline management in the Sarasota district.

Additional Learning Modalities

The TLP employed several other learning modalities in addition to formal training sessions. These included assigned reading, case studies, field simulations, portfolios, and mentoring and coaching.

TLP participants were asked to read or review selected research literature in each content area. Much of this material was distributed to them two weeks prior to the related training session. For the area of *schools for the 21st century*, the literature included several “Blue Ribbon Reports” on school reform. For *working with early adolescents and adolescents*: the Carnegie Report (1989) on “Middle Level Education,” and the National Association of Secondary School Principals study “Breaking Ranks, Changing an American Institution.” (1996). For *culture and change*: Michael Fullan, *Visions That Blind* (1993), Peter Senge, *Building Learning Organizations* (1990a), John Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (1984), and Bruce Joyce, *Changing School Culture Through Staff Development* (1990). For *time management*: Covey, *Putting First Things First*, Bliss, *The ABC’s of Time Management*, and *Time Management Tools* by the Franklin Planner (1995). For *leadership*, synopses of publications by Roland Barth, Theodore Sizer, Debra Meier, James Comer, and Phillip Schlechty were distributed to participants.

Case studies used in the TLP included those published by national organizations such as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and National School Leadership. Others were derived from situations and experiences in the Sarasota School District. Field simulation activities gave participants an opportunity to gain new skills and receive feedback from peers and experts. The simulations included conducting video-taped interviews with mock job applicants (with experienced administrators evaluating and assessing); conducting in- and out-basket simulations; observing and evaluating teachers delivering academic content; giving video-taped oral presentations on school matters (with immediate feedback from oral communication experts); and disaggregating actual student performance data.

TLP participants were required to maintain a portfolio for their personal records and for academy administrators to use in evaluating participant progress through the program. The portfolios were to include 1) personal information such as background, resume, transcripts of course work, professional goals, and personal vision statement, 2) administrative information such as district organization, schedules, policies, and meetings; Florida legislative issues and initiatives; and scheduled staff-development sessions, 3) district data on assessment tests, expulsions and suspensions, 4) communications such as letters to parents, memos to district offices, memos to school staff, speaking engagements, audio and video tapes of school events and programs (school-wide activities such as back to school night, open house for parents, and presentations to parents and community leaders on students’ testing program outcomes), and written publications (school newsletters and parental notices of events and school-wide activities, local and national magazine articles), 5) records of instructional leadership activities and accomplishments such as leading a school-improvement initiative; dialoguing with teachers, parents, principals, assistant principals, and community leaders; helping to implement innovative changes at the school or district level; working with other teachers to improve their performance; serving on staff development committees; and sharing with peers professional journals and readings on curriculum best practices, 6) personal and professional development achievements such as attendance at curriculum and instructional workshops; membership in professional

organizations; visiting innovative classrooms; readings, university courses, and research studies, 7) community involvement such as volunteer work with community groups and organizations; joining community partnerships; and participating in tutoring programs, and 8) professional recognition, such as academic awards, letters of commendation, community awards, and formal evaluations.

Each TLP participant was assigned an experienced principal as a mentor to assist with personal and professional growth. Participants also received continual coaching and counsel from the program consultant, including how to develop their portfolios and how to focus their vision and career options. Participants completed a leadership and decision-making survey to assess their leadership and decision-making styles and they reviewed the results with their mentors.

Tier 2

Tier-2 implementation began in the fall of 1997. Participants included 33 incumbent APs (12 incumbent APs declined participation), seven APs newly hired from outside the district, and 13 Tier-1 graduates who had not yet obtained an AP position. Twenty-five of the participating APs were seasoned administrators with 15 years or more of service. All of them had completed their masters degrees in educational leadership and several of them had completed the course work for their doctorate. Five of the APs had three-to-five years of administrative experience, and three of them were just beginning their administrative careers.

Because of the large number of participants and some scheduling problems, the design concept of full-day sessions with TLP-graduates substituting for the attending APs was dropped. Instead, duplicate half-day sessions were held on the same day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Participants could choose whether to attend the morning or afternoon academy. There were no substitutes for the APs.

The Tier-2 program consisted of ten formal training sessions between October 1997 and May 1998. Each three-hour session was divided into three sections: a presentation of theory and research, case studies, and performance-simulation activities. Time was set aside within the sessions for the APs to ask questions of, and have free-form discussions with, the expert presenters.

As with Tier 1, case studies were taken from local and national real-life school scenarios. Many of the chosen studies provided clear and understandable resolutions to issues such as student performance and test-assessment planning, staff development preparation, student attendance and behavioral modification planning, and parental involvement strategies. A number of the studies were taken directly from the participants' actual school operational situations and experiences.

The performance simulations were also oriented toward real-life situations and professional needs. The APs were instrumental in identifying and summarizing a number of issues and problematic situations such as communicating with angry and hostile parents, evaluating ineffective teachers, preparing a school improvement plan, and interpreting student achievement data for their teachers. The performance simulations gave participants an opportunity to acquire, improve, and practice these important skills. Many of the performance simulations were conducted during the three-hour scheduled academy sessions. Others, such as working with difficult students, initiating programs for low achieving students, and developing business partnerships, were arranged at each participant's convenience.

Participants were given executive summaries of major educational articles, publications and newsletters that focused on the main points of school leadership theories and research studies. These summaries significantly reduced the time required for outside reading. The expert presenters encouraged the APs to incorporate into their daily schedules reviewing and reading researched-based best practices and case studies. Throughout the learning sessions, the DEL distributed evaluation forms to participants to obtain their feedback on presenters, content, and activities and for their suggestions on how to improve the academy.

The Tier-2 sessions were:

- Session 1

Content: Effective leadership through the application of the principles and findings of Effective Schools Research and Continuous Quality Improvement. Review of the SCSD Strategic Plan and Human Resources Management Development Plan.

Mode: Lecture; research and literature review; interactive discussion; question and answer period; skill practice and coaching.

Presenters: Program consultant, DEL, outside expert presenter on Continuous Quality Management, District Superintendent, and District Director of Human Resources.

- Session 2

Content: Assessment and Evaluation. Use of statistical data from district, state, and federal government agencies such as audits, achievement test grades, graduation rates, attendance, and other assessment measures.

Mode: Lecture; research and literature review; interactive discussion; question and answer period; skills practice and coaching.

Presenters: Program Consultant, DEL, District Title 1 Supervisor, District Executive Director of Pupil Support Services, and District Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

- Session 3

Content: Instructional leadership. Reading, writing and math “Best Practices.” “High Yield Strategies” such as modeling, setting high expectations, and establishing a positive school climate. Good questioning strategies.

Mode: Lecture; research and literature review; interactive discussion; question and answer period; skills practice and coaching. Immediate objective feedback from expert presenters in educational leadership. Cooperative learning groups for leadership methods and skills practice. Studying district vignettes for problem solving techniques.

Presenters: Program Consultant, DEL, and District Title 1 Supervisor.

- Session 4

Content: Parents-as-partners and community involvement. Current research on parenting styles. Types of parental involvement. Working with community leaders. Understanding the political implications of business partners. Diversity issues.

Mode: Lecture; research and literature review; interactive discussion; question and answer period; skills practice and coaching; job-a-like sharing.

Presenters: Program Consultant, DEL, University Professor, and Outside Expert on Diversity and Sexual Harassment.

- Session 5

Content: Reading Instruction Strategies for Administrators. Current national research in reading programs. “Best practices” in reading, kindergarten through twelfth grade, from

experts such as Dr. Robert Slavin of John Hopkins University, Dr. James Comer of Yale University, and Dr. Marie Carbo of National Reading Styles Institute.

Mode: Lecture; research and literature review; interactive discussion; question and answer period; skills practice and coaching.

Presenters: Program Consultant, DEL, and District Title 1 Supervisor.

- Session 6

Content: Instructional Leadership: How, Why and What Is It? Instructional Leaders and Managers. Effective Schools Correlates and Total Quality Management. Dr. Lezzotte's "High Yield Strategies" and Dr. Deming's "Profound Knowledge Concepts."

Mode: Lecture; research and literature review; interactive discussion; question and answer period; skills practice and coaching; job-a-like sharing.

Presenters: Program Consultant, DEL, District Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and five district principals (three elementary, one middle, and one high school).

- Session 7

Content: The concepts and culture of the change process, and effective strategies for handling it. The researched-based articles on educational change by researchers such as Fullan, Sarason, Gresso, Cunningham, and Hall.

Mode: Lecture; research and literature review; analysis of the "Climate Survey" for each district school; interactive discussion; question and answer period; skills practice and coaching.

Presenters: Program Consultant and Superintendent of Schools.

- Session 8

Content: Planning for and managing safe and orderly schools — strategies and tactics, responsibilities, and safety curriculum content. Managing crises. Current data on school violence.

Mode: Lecture; research and literature review; individual plan development; interactive discussion; question and answer period; skills practice and coaching.

Presenters: Program consultant, DEL, Florida Department of Education representative and University Professor.

- Session 9

Content: Planning, Budgeting and Finance — district level, school level. Teacher Contracts. Union Relations — Contractual Agreements, collective bargaining procedures.

Mode: Lecture; research and literature review; interactive discussion; question and answer period.

Presenters: District Executive Director of Budget and Finance, District Director of Human Resources, and President of the District Teachers Union.

Tier 3

The Tier-3 program has not yet been implemented.

Tier 4

The Tier-4 program has not yet been implemented.

Setbacks and Delays

Several setbacks and delays occurred during the implementation of the leadership academy. First and foremost were funding problems. Just before the academy was to get underway, the district was beset with serious budgetary problems. In spite of the superintendent's stated commitment to leadership training and its prominent place in the

strategic plan, the funds made available for it were less than what the program administrators believed were required and had budgeted.

The superintendent asked the DEL to list the budget items that were absolutely critical to establishing the leadership academy. Those items are listed in Table 4. The district budget ultimately covered them.

Table 4.

Critical Budget Items for Initiating the Leadership Academy

Priority	Description	Unit Cost	Total Cost
1	Consultant and Presenters	\$1,000 per Session	\$19,000
2	Facilitator	\$600 per Session	\$11,400
3	Equipment and Materials	Audiovisual: \$4,000 Miscellaneous: \$1,100	\$5,100
4	Conferences for Participants	\$1,500 per Conference	\$9,000

The DEL found ways to secure other important program resources that the district budget did not cover. The district staff development librarian agreed to establish an administrative professional section to serve program participants. The director of the “Goals 2000” state grant program gave each academy participant a subscription to “Education Week Magazine.” The district technology director supplied, on loan, laptop computers for program participants.

The other serious implementation problem concerned the schedule. In the summer of 1996, the DEL informed the superintendent that, at the rate things were progressing, the leadership academy would not be ready to begin until the spring of 1997, or perhaps even the fall of 1997. The superintendent was unhappy with this timetable and told the DEL that implementation of the program could be no later than the fall of 1996. He reiterated how critical he considered it to have the district principals, assistant principals and aspiring principals exercising more and better instructional leadership techniques. He also reiterated the immediate need for a cadre of well-prepared, aspiring administrators to fill the numerous positions that would become available in the near future.

Ultimately, the program was launched in December 1996. The attempt to begin it in the fall was hampered by delays in the early program planning and design process, resulting primarily from the inability of district staff members and principals to consistently attend committee meetings, the failure of the staff members to complete surveys or return phone calls in a timely manner, and delayed responses by administrators and central office staff to requests for ideas and opinions. Eventually, however, as the planning process gained

momentum, these problems were eliminated and program development moved ahead smoothly and rapidly, albeit too late to meet the superintendent's desired timetable. Finding a permanent facility for the learning sessions and performance simulation activities also proved difficult. Three separate sites, used during the first three months of the 1996-1997 school year, turned out to be too large or too small. The DEL was then promised a classroom at the district office that could house twenty-five adult students. But after two classes, that room became unavailable due to building renovations. Finally, the superintendent resolved the matter by reserving a recently renovated room in the district administration complex. The DEL used that site for both tiers during the remainder of the first year and in the second year.

The DEL and Human Resources Director (HR) disagreed regarding the participant-selection process. Upon completion of the academy, if a participant decided to apply for an AP position, the HR Director wanted the individual to undergo the existing qualifying process for the district administrative pool. The DEL maintained that since the requirements for entry into the academy were even more rigorous than those required for pool qualification, there should be a single, consistent set of criteria. Ultimately, the superintendent resolved the issue by ruling that all academy participants would be evaluated as though they were applying for a new district administrative position and thus would go through only one qualification process.

Outcomes

An important objective of the Tier-1 TLP was to improve the opportunities for aspiring district teachers to obtain administrative positions. As the figures in Table 2 earlier in this chapter indicated, in the five school years immediately preceding the implementation of the leadership academy, 30 administrative openings were filled by candidates from outside the district and only six were filled by district teachers. The hiring statistics for the three school years immediately following the leadership academy implementation (see Table 5) contrast significantly with the earlier results. Over those three years, open administrative positions were filled by five outside candidates and 11 district teachers. Analyzing and evaluating the precise causes for this favorable change is outside the scope of the study, but it is reasonable to conclude that the TLP was at the least a contributing factor.

Table 5.
Post-Academy Hiring Statistics for Sarasota Assistant Principals

School Year in Which AP Positions Were Filled	Total Positions Filled	Hired from Outside the District	Promoted from Within the District	Transferred from Other District Staff Positions
1997-1998	7	2	5	0
1998-1999	6	1	3	2
1999-2000	6	2	3	1
Totals	19	5	9	3

Feedback

At the close of each academy year, the DEL asked participants to complete an anonymous survey form on which they could rate and comment on program content, scheduling, time, learning modalities, materials, class size, and participant-qualification requirements. All 32 aspiring administrators who had gone through the Tier-1 program and the 40 assistant principals who had gone through the Tier-2 program completed a survey form. The program administrators used this feedback, along with their own observations, to identify ways in which they could improve the program (see Survey Comments 1-8).

The survey formats included seven statements that the respondents could rate on a Likert-Scale, with space for them to add free-style written comments to explain, expand on, or support their ratings. A final general question (Number 8) asked the responders for their suggestions on how the program should be modified and improved. (See Survey Comments, Question #8).

Tier-1

The attendance rate of 98% that aspiring administrators sustained throughout the TLP learning sessions seemed to indicate they had positively embraced the program. Their survey responses confirmed this perception. Following are their aggregate Likert-scale ratings and a representative sample of their comments.

1. The academy's program design addressed my professional needs.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(1)	(1)	(3)	(26)

Comments

- “The program design addressed my professional needs by providing a comprehensive model that covered many facets of school leadership.”
- “This multifaceted approach to learning addressed many of my professional needs like current school administrative best practices, knowledge competencies, *Effective School Research* and Total Quality Management.”
- “I think that the program design offered a more realistic approach to leadership training and school based management.”
- “The program design included a number of critical administrative techniques, procedures and ways to show us how instructional leadership skills could be utilized.”
- “The organizational structure of the academy provided us with a wealth of training activities, knowledge competencies, research studies and expert presenters.”
- “I believe that the academy's program design offers a multifaceted approach to adult learning.”
- “The academy's design incorporated a number of rigorous simulation activities such as role-playing, real-life school scenarios and local case studies.”
- “The program design offered each participant an array of learning modalities.”
- “I feel that the program design was too rigid and not flexible enough for aspiring administrators.”

“The program design was organizationally weak and lacking down-to earth personalization, and I think the program was too theoretical and not enough hands-on activities to acquire some real needy skills.”

2. *The academy curriculum addressed important topics for leadership.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
(0)	(2)	(1)	(5)	(24)

Comments

“I think that the sequence of learning activities was organized and well thought out for each session.”

“I believe that curriculum objectives were clear and precise throughout the units.”

“The presenters’ formal and informal lectures addressed many worthwhile administrative topics.”

“The curriculum standards for sessions were set at a high level.”

“Many of the reading assignments were appropriately introduced, but challenging to say the least.”

“The curriculum sequence of learning activities is suitable for the district leadership academy.”

“Executive summaries, which included significant educational articles, reports and research, are highly effective.”

“The design of performance simulation activities is practical and real to us.”

“The academy’s curriculum addressed a lot of superficial topics. Many of the issues presented during the learning sessions were not real or practical for our training.”

3. *The academy content was delivered in a concise and understandable manner.*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(0)	(5)	(24)

Comments

“I think the learning sessions were clear and articulated well throughout the program.”

“The majority of the sessions were rigorous and comprehensive throughout the sessions.”

“The role-playing activities involving real life scenarios were highly effective for us.”

“The question and answer segments gave us an opportunity to share and build some needed skills.”

“The presenters’ executive summaries have been highly effective for me.”

“The academy’s delivery of content was too formal and poorly structured to fit my professional needs.”

“I concluded that the pace of the presenters was too accelerated and the topics were not presented in a understandable fashion.”

“There never enough time to discuss real local issues of the district.”

4. *I gained knowledge competencies and skills from the academy experience.*

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (1)	Neutral (1)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (26)
Comments	<p>“I acquired much needed knowledge and skills on curriculum matters from the program.”</p> <p>“I affirm that I increased problem-solving skills through learning sessions and the performance simulation activities.”</p> <p>“I increased my writing and oral communication toward the end of the learning sessions.”</p> <p>“I have no doubt that the academy’s broad leadership approaches help me gain more knowledge.”</p> <p>“I really embraced student achievement data in the sessions and during the informal discussions.”</p> <p>“I increased my interpersonal and networking skills by attending performance simulation activities.”</p> <p>“I have acquired additional knowledge and skills on curriculum matters.”</p> <p>“My ability to problem solve new administrative situation has increased tremendously.”</p> <p>“Embracing student achievement data enables me to be better focused.”</p>				

5. *The academy is an appropriate staff development program for school leaders.*

	Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (0)	Neutral (0)	Agree (17)	Strongly Agree (15)
Comments	<p>“I strongly feel that the academy has provided the district with a viable leadership program for its school leaders.”</p> <p>“The program covers all phases and levels of school leadership.”</p> <p>“I believe that the academy encourages different ways of thinking about school problems in general.”</p> <p>“I think the academy as a staff development program has already demonstrated its value by the attendance of our aspiring administrators. Many of them stated that the program director, consultant and presenters have encouraged different ways of thinking about school related issues and concepts.”</p> <p>“We were provided with mutual support and trust from the academy’s staff and other participants.”</p>				

6. *The academy is serving my personal and professional growth needs.*

	Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (0)	Neutral (0)	Agree (8)	Strongly Agree (24)
Comments					

“The academy served many of my personal and professional needs throughout the program.”

“I believe that the academy provided an active and involved setting rather than a passive environment.”

“The academy offered a mentoring component for us to share personal and professional issues.”

“The program provided us an opportunity to acquire much needed knowledge and skills.”

“We experienced many developmental tasks for multiple learning situations.”

“The program offered opportunities for me to model new skills and acquire new administrative concepts.”

“I strongly agree that the academy served my personal and professional needs throughout the learning sessions and activities.”

“The academy has provided an array of personal growth activities that includes active learning modalities not passive seat work.”

7. *How would you rate the academy overall as an administrative staff development program?*

	Poor (0)	Fair (0)	Average (3)	Good (3)	Excellent (26)
Comments					

8. *What organizational elements would you consider changing or modifying to improve the academy's program?*

“ I would add more time on task to work on technical and interpersonal skills.”

“ I would incorporate additional time for experienced administrators to coach aspiring administrators.”

“I would increase the strategies to work with behaviorally difficult students.”

“I would place greater emphasis on total school improvement plans.”

“I think that the program director should reduce the amount of researched-based reading assignments outside of the regular classroom assignments”

“I would like to remove the personal interview taping activity as a requirement.”

“I am concerned about the amount of lecturing time given to the expert presenters.”

TIER 2

1. The academy’s program design addressed my professional needs.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(11)	(23)
Comments					

2. The academy’s curriculum addressed important topics for leadership.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	(1)	(2)	(4)	(15)	(18)
Comments					

- “Throughout the learning sessions, expert presenters articulated the executive summaries on various articles and reports in a timely fashion.”
- “I thought that the curriculum topics were most appropriate for us and aligned with current best practices.”
- “The curriculum topics were comprehensive enough to address my issues on leadership.”
- “I think the presenters covered the curriculum topics extremely well throughout the learning sessions.”
- “My colleagues embraced the curriculum topics because they were in collaboration with what APs process on a daily basis.”

3. *The academy’s content was delivered in a concise and understandable manner.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	(1)	(6)	(4)	(17)	(12)
Comments	<p>“I concluded that the role-playing activities involving real life scenarios were highly effective.”</p> <p>“The question and answer segments offered sharing and skill building opportunities for me.”</p> <p>“I think the presenters were clear and concise during the learning sessions.”</p> <p>“The presenters gave many examples and research on APs’ best practices.”</p> <p>“I thought that several learning units were aligned perfectly with <i>Effective Schools Research</i> and the correlates.”</p> <p>“The program’s delivery of content was precise, timely and easily understood.”</p> <p>“I think that the presenters went out of their way to assist and help us understand strategies and best practices.”</p> <p>“I feel that the program consultant and the presenters really wanted us to grasp the new administrative competencies.”</p> <p>“The presenters were too stiff and too formal in their presentations.”</p> <p>“The presenters gave us a ‘mental overload’ when they got into the research on instructional leadership.”</p>				

4. *I gained knowledge competencies and skills from the academy experience.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	(0)	(4)	(6)	(6)	(24)
Comments	<p>“I developed new strategies and techniques for stress management.”</p> <p>“I acquired some assertiveness skills during our role-playing activities.”</p> <p>“I increased my organizational and planning skills during the learning sessions.”</p> <p>“I obtained knowledge and skills from researched-based presenters when they presented units on educational best practices.”</p> <p>“I secured a number of knowledge competencies from local and national case studies.”</p>				

- “I adopted new skills and strategies from experienced administrators as they presented in the academy.”
- “I really enjoyed the learning experiences and the camaraderie with my colleagues in addressing some of the new administrative issues.”
- “The program has allowed me to pick up on many new leadership skills like communications, writing letters and talking with parents.”
- “I appreciate the tutorial time and extra hours-spent in teaching me new hands-on experiences as well as presenters demonstrating the current best leadership practices.”
- “I did not have enough time to gain any meaningful skills.”
- “We needed more time to dialogue and discuss issues facing our students and staff today.”
- “I think that some of the planned activities were too formal and too far ahead of what we do in our school.”

5. *The academy is an appropriate staff development program for school leaders.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Comments	(2)	(6)	(4)	(23)	(5)
“The academy’s programs affirms administrative support for APs throughout the learning sessions.”					
“Yes, the program is more than appropriate.”					
“I appreciate the mutual support and trust from my colleagues and the district staff.”					
“I fully accept the academy’s preplanned opportunities and programs designed for us.”					
“I think the APs have accepted the academy as a top notch program for leadership-training.”					
“Because APs have so many professional needs, I appreciated the opportunities to be part of a program that allows you to reflect and share common problems as well as resolutions.”					
“I recognize the fact that many of the APs were in full support of the programs as a strong staff development source.”					
“The academy program is not an appropriate staff development program for school leaders because it is too structured.”					
“The program only serves potential principals and not experienced career APs.”					
“The academy as a staff development program is too narrow in its administrative focus.”					
“Much of the lack of focus is due to poor organizational structure and the university type of lectures from presenters.”					

6. *The academy served my personal and professional growth needs.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	(2)	(5)	(7)	(12)	(14)

Comments

- “The programs allowed me to share and help other participants through difficult learning situations.”
- “The academy provided me with a variety of individualized learning units.”
- “The learning sessions were designed to help us maintain emphasis on instructional leadership and effective school research correlates.”
- “The program curriculum provided us with current research analysis and feedback to participants on a regular basis.”
- “The program has served my personal and professional needs.”
- “I have shared personal and professional situations with other participants in the academy that has helped me to grow and make sound decisions.”
- “I concur that the academy has served my personal and professional growth needs in administration.”
- “The program since its establishment has given me a professional source to ask questions, explore new ideas and try some innovative techniques with my colleagues.”

7. *How would you rate the academy overall as an administrative staff development program?*

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
(6)	(6)	(7)	(11)	(10)

Comments

- “The school district’s attempt to equip our future leaders with some real practical experiences is to be commended for an overall good program.”
- “I think the academy program overall for aspiring administrators and APs has been effective.”
- “I strongly feel that the APs don’t need a lot of theory or concepts on administrative issues. I truly think that they need to be problem solvers and practical practitioners.”
- “I strongly endorse the academy as a diversified and intensive leadership program.”
- “The academy provides an overall good local administrative training program.”
- “I think the academy overall has developed a solid program for all its district leaders.”
- “I think the program should be rated as a good because of the learning sessions, simulated activities, informal presentations and the networking sessions.”
- “The academy program is not an appropriate staff development program for school leaders because it is too structured.”
- “The program only serves potential principals and not experienced career APs.”

8. *What organizational elements would you consider changing or modifying to improve the academy’s program?*

- “ I think the program director should reduce the amount of researched-based case studies and reading assignments.”
- “The APs should not waste time on personal interview, audio-visual taping activities.”

“I conclude that the academy should reduce the amount of lecturing time by expert presenters and add more time to discuss personal and professional topics on administrative problem solving.”

“I know that many of the APs are bored with extremely structured learning sessions.”

“The program needs to use more cooperative learning techniques for the delivery of content and expert presenters need to cut back on the lecturing time.”

Subsequent Program Modifications

The feedback and suggestions of academy participants, along with the direct observations of the DEL and other program administrators and consultants, identified a number of modifications from which the program would benefit.

Tier 1

The participants of the first TLP recommended that a number of program elements be expanded. They asked that participants be given additional executive summaries of educational blue ribbon reports and researched best practices. They asked that they be referred to additional references and research sites. They requested more sessions addressing strategies for raising student achievement and more attention to developing their personal skills in that regard, including data interpretation skills. They asked for additional group discussion time on each topic. They requested more performance-simulation activities.

They also suggested that the cohort size be significantly reduced, arguing that their 20-person cohort did not allow for sufficient personal and up close interactive participation between teachers and participants. The group consensus was that a reduced cohort size would create greater skills and knowledge acquisition by the participants. As a result of these suggestions, the DEL implemented several program modifications for the second cohort. The cohort size was reduced to twelve, substantially lowering the participant-teacher ratio. He asked expert presenters to reduce the length of their formal presentations and to prepare additional written summaries of their presented topics. He expanded group discussion time on high-interest topics from twenty to thirty-five minutes per session and increased the time allocated to performance-simulations from one hour to one-and-one-half hours per session.

The feedback from the second TLP cohort participants indicated that these modifications produced their intended results. The participants did not repeat the criticisms and suggestions of their predecessors. They did suggest, however, that the TLP should include more coaching from experienced principals and assistant principals. In response, the DEL included in his budget for the upcoming school year a stipend of \$500 for each district principal selected to coach TLP participants and he established a plan to provide those administrators with training on effective coaching and mentoring. Unfortunately, the superintendent did not approve the funding for this initiative and it was not implemented.

In addition, following the second TLP, the DEL and program consultant concluded that effective use of digital technology by school administrators should receive greater emphasis in the Tier-1 program. They asked the district director of technology to develop an appropriate learning unit and this unit was added to the curriculum for the third cohort.

The DEL and the program consultant also believed that participants would benefit by having to conduct an action-research project during the course of their academy year. This would consist of having participants identify a problem or issue at their schools and secure their principals' approvals to study the problem and develop a solution. The program consultant prepared a learning unit on how to conduct such studies (qualitative and quantitative), and the unit was added to the curriculum for the third cohort.

Tier 2

Many of the suggestions of the Tier-2 participants concerned proposed additions to the academy curriculum that were directed toward improving student achievement and outcomes. These included best-practice strategies for raising student achievement; counseling skills for handling difficult students and parents; practice on de-escalating conflicts; curriculum modifications and instructional developments useful for remediation of low-achieving students; research-based findings on active learning methods for gifted students; paraphrasing and mediating conflicts between students and teachers and student-to-student disagreements; and identifying inequities in student learning and curriculum implementation.

The participants requested more units on developing people skills and organizational skills; more hands-on practical experiences with budgets and financial transactions; more sessions on how to manage categorical funding for curriculum programs and capital projects; and more specific information on school laws, school-board rules, etc. They also suggested more opportunities to shadow principals, more curriculum-research-based workshops, a series of after-school programs focusing on curriculum topics, and more role-playing as a principal working in an effective school environment.

While recognizing the merits of these suggestions, the DEL also realized that including them in the already intensive program would be a challenge and would undoubtedly increase the program budget and the time demands on participants. With these cautions, the DEL passed the suggestions on to his successor.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past eleven years, I have been involved in the implementation and operation of three district leadership-training programs. I was a committee member and a consultant for the Virginia Beach Schools program in Virginia Beach, Virginia. I chaired and represented the Hampton Roads Principal Center in Norfolk, Virginia, which was designed for over two hundred principals in the region. I directed the planning, design, and implementation of the Sarasota, Florida Leadership Academy that is the subject of this descriptive case study. In addition, for ten years I was a school principal.

Over the course of those experiences I have studied in depth the research literature on effective schools, the principalship, and educational-leader training. I have also reviewed and studied successful on-going training initiatives throughout the country, including having made a number of site visits to observe the operation of these programs and discuss them with their leaders and their participants. As a result, I believe I understand what it takes to create and manage an effective district-based educational leadership program. I fully appreciate the issues and challenges involved, and the pitfalls that can cause such an initiative to fail.

As I stated in Chapter 1, one objective of this study is to help other districts that are contemplating the development and implementation of a formal administrator-training program decide whether to pursue that initiative, and to help guide them if they do so decide. In putting together the Sarasota program, I benefited from the advice of the administrators of other successful educational leadership programs. I am hopeful that by sharing my insights, others may similarly benefit.

I caution that the recommendations I offer are my opinions derived purely from empirical observation and personal experience. Congruent with the nature of this study, they are not the results of rigorously designed and conducted research studies.

General Conclusions

Case study inquiry produces both anticipated and unanticipated findings. This case study was no exception. As expected, the inquiry yielded information on the planning process that had been employed in the development of the studied leadership academy, the policy and political environment in which it operated, and the manner in which the academy actually served its intended audience.

Less expected was the extent to which the study also revealed and underscored the idiosyncratic nature of program development in a rapidly changing school district, the powerful impact local leaders have on such initiatives, and how changing demographics, financial conditions, board membership, state policy initiatives, and other unanticipated forces can affect planning and program development.

Perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from this case study is how complex it is to launch an initiative of this scope in a dynamic and rapidly evolving environment such as is commonly found in school districts. In the subject case, for example, changes in the superintendent position and a suddenly deteriorating budgetary environment created major implementation stresses.

The second significant conclusion emerging from this study is the critical role district leaders play in determining the success or failure of the initiative. The superintendent and senior district staff executives shape the agenda for school reform and leadership development; they establish and nurture the climate in which leadership development occurs; and, ultimately, through resource allocation, policy formation, and advocacy, they mold the form of and the internal support for the program.

Finally, this case study clearly revealed that changing demographics among the teaching and administrative population, not only in Florida but across the nation, lends a sense of urgency to improving and expanding leadership preparation, both in-district and in the universities. The nationwide shortage of school leaders, combined with the declining attractiveness of the administrative role in many schools, requires that districts, universities and state agencies collaborate on new models for preparation and development, and develop coordinated continuing programs for implementing those models.

The content of such programs must insure that both future and incumbent administrators are firmly grounded in the theoretical underpinnings and practical conclusions of the research on effective schools, the nature of modern school principalship, and the general characteristics of effective executive performance. The programs must recognize the realities of the school environment and provide administrators with the practical tools they require to perform effectively in that real-world environment.

Specific Recommendations

Based on these overarching conclusions, I offer the following specific recommendations to district officials concerned with policy formation and program development in leadership development, and to researchers in the field.

Planning And Preparation

1. Study the literature on effective schools research and the evolving role of the principal. This extensive research is the theoretical base upon which educational leadership training is built. It defines the ultimate objectives of the training, i.e., the end product it should strive to produce.
2. Study other extant, successful educational leadership training programs. Establish a dialogue with the administrators of these programs and secure information and data from them regarding their programs' strategies, design, content, scheduling, and budget. Visit as many of these program sites as time and budget permits.
3. Make the training initiative a formal component of the district strategic plan. The program cannot be a side issue. It must be seen as an integral and essential element of the overall district improvement plan. Its role in that plan must be understood and supported by all senior administrators in the district. Its inclusion in the plan is an important step toward insuring that this is the case.
4. Establish an understanding of, and solicit support for, the initiative throughout the district organization. Clearly communicate program goals to teachers, administrators, and central staff. Seek their active involvement in the planning and design process by having them participate in a central program steering committee and on various sub-committees focusing on particular program issues.

5. Recognize existing professional development efforts within the district and integrate them into the new program. Involve the administrators of the current (and past) training programs in the planning and design process of the new program.
6. Establish uniform and consistent qualification criteria for entry of aspiring administrators into the training program and into the promotional pool. Add graduation from the training program to the criteria list for the pool.
7. Structure the program to respond to the special needs of the district. Much program content will be the same from district to district, but local student and staff demographics and characteristics should dictate increased or decreased emphasis in certain program elements.
8. Allow sufficient time for the planning and design process. A full year is a good estimate.

Staffing

1. Establish the program directorship as a full-time position and prepare a formal job description for the position, clearly delineating its responsibilities and prerogatives.
2. Employ the services of a local university professor of educational leadership to serve as a program consultant. An experienced external expert can provide valuable advice and counsel. An average of five hours per week on a continuing basis should be sufficient.
3. Utilize presenters who are true experts in their topic and in educational leadership training concepts. Presenters are one of the cornerstones of an effective program.
4. Involve effective in-house senior administrators as mentors, coaches, and presenters for aspiring administrators and assistant principals.

Structure and Content

1. Use the leadership-academy training model. It provides the most comprehensive and flexible approach.
2. Design a comprehensive program to include aspiring administrators, assistant principals, inexperienced principals, and experienced principals, even if all program levels will not be implemented initially.
3. Design a continuing program of formal academy training. The nature of the program will change, and its intensity will decrease, but professional development should be a continuing way of life.
4. Allow two academy years for aspiring administrators. Given the practical limitations on available trainee time, there is too much material to cover in one year.
5. Utilize multiple training modalities at every training level. For example, over the two-year academy for aspiring administrators, the following time allocations might be appropriate.

	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
Lectures/Discussions	30%	20%
Case Studies (local and national)	20%	20%
Performance Simulations/Guided Practice	40%	60%
Job-alike Talks and Discussions	10%	0%

6. Include non-classroom activities, such as shadowing, mentoring, coaching, networking, and school-based project work. They are vital elements of a well-rounded program that will result in the acquisition of practical skills as well as theoretical knowledge.

Suggestions for Further Research

In all case study research, wisdom ultimately comes from the accumulation of information across different settings, times and populations; that is, across different cases. The purpose of work such as that presented in this study is to assist planners and policy makers as they shape the agenda for school reform and leadership development in their states and districts. Thus, the most significant research in this area is now to aggregate the knowledge that has come from individual improvement efforts through careful review of published and unpublished case studies, program evaluations and other descriptive analyses of principals' academies and related leadership development initiatives. The ultimate purpose of this systematic review would be to identify common policies, practices and problems that will serve as a manual of sorts for district-based leadership development programming.

Beyond this overall recommendation, and given the growing shortage of trained leaders for the nation's schools, additional research recommendations stem from the need for more interagency collaboration than has ever been the case before. Specifically:

1. Explore the advantages, disadvantages, and practicality of partial or total state funding of district-based administrator training programs. Define a workable system for implementing and controlling such an approach.
2. Explore how district-based administrator training programs and university-based principal preparation programs can best be coordinated and interact in a complementary manner.

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Appendix A

Initial Contact Letter

July 7, 1996

Director of Educational Leadership
Waide L. Robinson
Sarasota County Schools
1960 Landings Boulevard
Sarasota, Florida 34231
(941) 927-9000

Dear _____: (School Administrators and Central Staff)

I am presently seeking information and suggestions on ways to design, plan and implement the new district leadership-training program. Superintendent Tom Gaul has appointed me director of this project as of July 2, 1996. I accepted this appointment without hesitation because of my successes with past district leadership programs.

I have chaired the Hampton Roads Principals Center at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, which is responsible for training opportunities of over two hundred principals. And, I participated in the development of the leadership academy in the Virginia Beach Public Schools in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

As a new administrator to the school district and the Sarasota community, I would like to introduce myself to you and your staff. I will be visiting your school in the very near future and would like to conference and interview you about past, present and future leadership training opportunities. Your feedback and comments are important to me, as I will use them to strengthen and steer our efforts in the right direction. In addition, I would like for you to consider being part of the district-wide steering committee for the new program. I will explain more about the steering committee during my visit.

Gail Smith, my secretary, will be contacting you in the very near future to set up an appointment for this meeting within a few days. I look forward to meeting with you and your staff to begin our dialogue as we continue to foster effective leadership training throughout the district.

Sincerely,

Waide L. Robinson

Appendix B
District Consent Letter

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
Senior Executive Director of Educational Leadership
1960 Landings Boulevard
Sarasota, Florida 34231

April 16, 1998

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter will certify that the School Board of Sarasota County fully supports the dissertation efforts of Waide L. Robinson. In fact, we assisted him in his efforts to describe and document the new district administrative leadership academy.

We are pleased that he has chosen to conduct his study on a topic that many of us in Sarasota County Schools share with great interest conceptually and theoretically. We will provide information on students, staff, and district documents; past and current information to the degree Mr. Robinson needs them. The findings of his study are of great interest to us.

Please contact me if you need further assistance at (941) 927-9000

Sincerely,

Ray Rainone
Senior Executive Director of Educational Leadership

Appendix C

Informed Consent Statement

May 1, 1998

Before agreeing to participate in this research project, it is important that the following explanation of the proposed procedures be read and understood. The following statement describes the purpose, benefits, risks, and precautions of the study.

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study conducted by Waide L. Robinson. The purpose of this study is to investigate: What was the impetus behind the implementation of a leadership academy by the Sarasota County, Florida School District? How did the district plan, design, organize, and implement the academy? And, What were the results of the implementation?

Participation in this study involves personal interviews, surveys, informal communications, and observations of activities in which the leadership training takes place. I understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in this research activity at any time. Duration of participation is limited to the time required to respond to the interview questions and to be observed as a participant in training.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to subjects associated in this research. Names of individuals will remain confidential and will not be used in any reports of the research, unless the noted individuals give written permission. A summary of the research will be available to the participants, if they desire, at the conclusion of the study.

Any questions I have regarding any aspect of this research will be answered by Waide L. Robinson at: Office: (941) 927-9000

Participant _____ Date _____

Appendix D

Confirmation Letter

June 1, 1998

Director of Educational Leadership
Waide L. Robinson
Sarasota County Schools
1960 Landings Boulevard
Sarasota, Florida 34231
(941) 927-9000

Dear _____: (Participants, School Administrators and Central Staff)
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study concerning the Sarasota School District's initiating, planning, designing, organizing, and implementing a leadership training program for school administrators.

As per our phone conversation, you are scheduled to fill out the survey on _____ from _____ to _____ at the following location _____ . No preparation on your part is necessary.

If you have any questions or need to communicate about the survey content, please call Waide L. Robinson at (941) 927-9000.

I look forward to your completing the survey and talking with you about the program.

Sincerely,

Waide L. Robinson

Appendix E

Thank-you Letter

July 1, 1998

Director of Educational Leadership
Waide L. Robinson
Sarasota County Schools
1960 Landings Boulevard
Sarasota, Florida 34231
(941) 927-9000

Dear _____: (Participants)

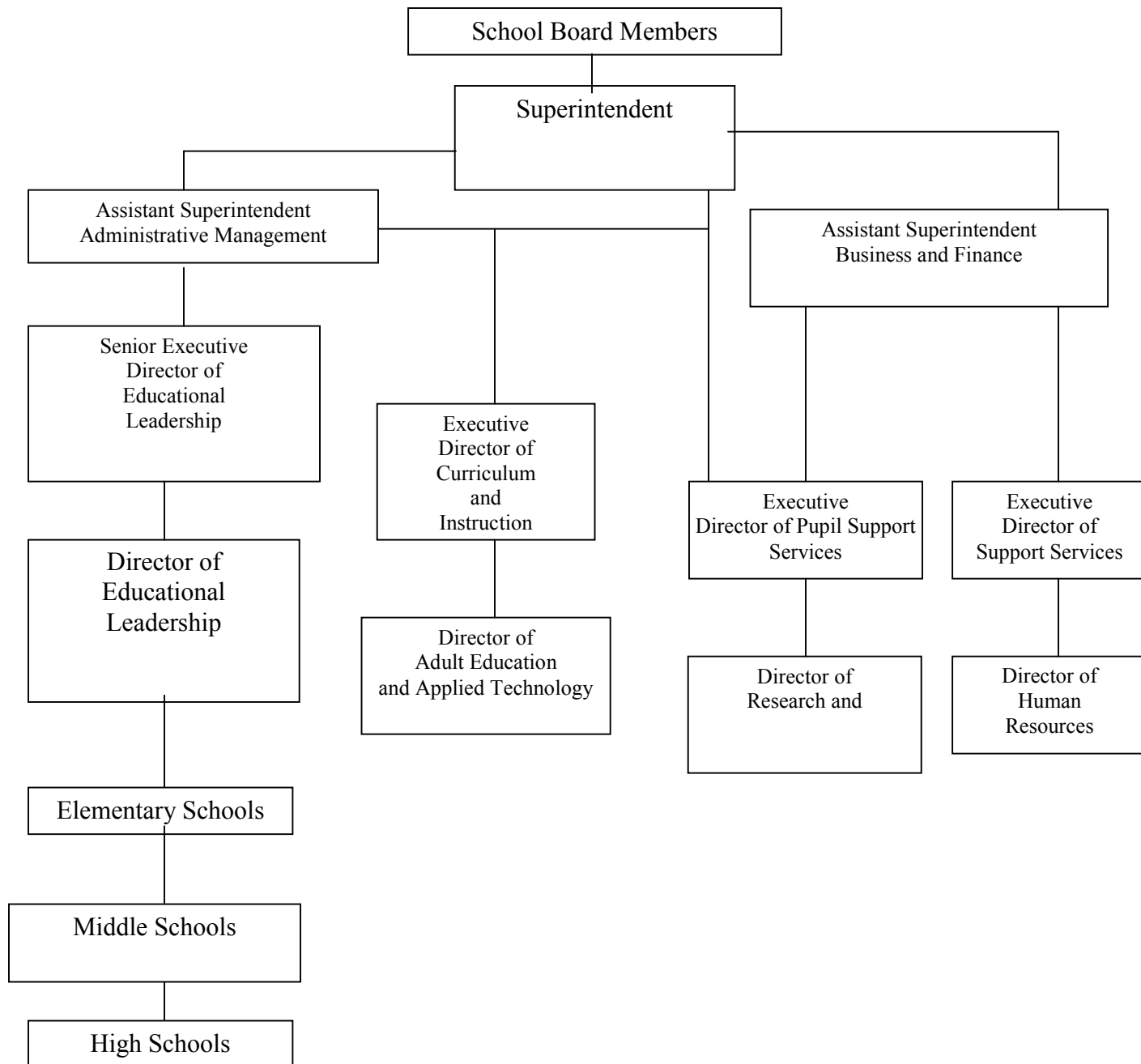
I would like to express my gratitude for your participation in this current research project. I appreciate your taking the time for the survey and informal discussions. The information you have given me regarding the program's design, planning, curriculum, content, and implementation is extremely useful.

I will, of course, be sending you a final report upon completion of the study. Please let me know if there is any way I can assist you in the future.

Sincerely,

Waide L. Robinson

APPENDIX F
 Organization Chart
 THE SCHOOL BOARD OF SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
 May 7, 1996



Appendix G

District Population Data

Populations of Sarasota County and Student Bodies

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Population</u>		<u>Percentage Increase in Student Membership</u>
	<u>County</u>	<u>K-12</u>	
1998-99	315,653	33,240	3.5%
1997-98	311,043	32,130	3.0%
1996-97	305,848	31,205	2.6%
1995-96	301,528	30,423	2.2%
1994-95	296,002	29,777	1.2%
1993-94	290,612	29,413	2.6%
1992-93	287,203	28,675	1.1%
1991-92	283,140	28,365	2.7%
1990-91	277,776	27,618	1.6%
1989-90	263,937	27,189	4.3%
1988-89	257,667	26,070	2.5%

10 year Percentage Gain: 22.5%

Notes: The source of data for K-12 is the Profiles of Florida School Districts. The information is based upon the Second Month Attendance Report and excludes the Sarasota County Technical Institute and Pre-Kindergarten.

The source of data for the population is the Local Government Financial Information Handbook and is based on April 1, of the calendar year indicated by the first date of the school year.

APPENDIX H

Field Notes Collection Form

Field Notes

NAME:

DATE:

POSITION:

WORK LOCATION:

MEMBER CHECKED DATE:

MEMBER CHECKING INITIALS:

DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW SITE:

OBSERVATION OF PARTICIPANT:

MAIN THEMES OR ISSUES:

INSIGHTS, SPECULATIONS, OR EMERGING EXPLANATIONS:

GENERAL COMMENTS:

APPENDIX I
Questionnaire
Leadership Training Programs

Name _____ District _____ Date _____

I am seeking information from selected “Principal Leadership Training Programs” operating throughout the country, including a number of Florida programs. My colleagues referred your program to me, or I read about it in a leading journal of educational leadership. If possible, I would appreciate some specific recommendations on why, what and how you plan, design and implemented your leadership-training program. I ask that you respond to the following questions: (Please return ASAP to Waide L. Robinson, 1960 Landings Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34231.

1. What type of program design would you recommend for a multilevel program, covering aspiring administrators, assistant principals, new principals (3-5 years) to experienced principals?
2. What is your selection process for entry-level administrators?
3. Are you including special activities for minority participation?
4. What is your theoretical underpinning for the program’s curriculum?
5. Did you seek out the concerns of past and present district administrators; issues, concerns, and needs?
6. What were some of the curriculum strategies and methods you used throughout the learning sessions?
7. What strategies did you employ to help administrators gain skills and knowledge?
8. Did you have in place, sessions to work with difficult parents and community leaders?
9. Please list any advice or recommendation on how to plan, design and implement a new leadership-training program for school administrators?
10. Comments and suggestions!

Waide L. Robinson

Vita

2001-02

Executive Administrative Office School Business Services
Sarasota County Schools, Sarasota, Florida

Mr. Robinson is currently the “Executive Administrative Officer of School Business Services” for the Sarasota County School District, Sarasota, Florida. His basic functions include coordinating and managing all aspects of the district’s ancillary business services. He serves as liaison between Division of Instruction and Division of School Business Services. He is responsible for: Responding to community and parent issues concerning School Business Services; Providing management guidance in the allocation of portable classroom space; Providing recommendations concerning school program capacity and for key initiatives during the year (examples: School Plant Survey); and, making recommendations to Assistant Superintendent regarding employee hiring, promotions, and disciplinary actions.

Mr. Robinson was formerly the Executive Director of Charter and Opportunity Schools for three years and served as Director of Educational Leadership for two years. During his tenure as director of educational leadership, he created and directed the district principal leadership academy. In addition, he has assisted with the district “Mentoring Program for Culturally Diverse Male Students” at Booker High School, Riverview High School and Sarasota High School.

His educational achievements include, the completion of an Ed.D. Degree in Educational Leadership from Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia; He obtained a “Certificate of Advance Study in Educational Administration at Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut; He also completed his M.S. Degree in Traffic and Safety Education at Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut; and obtained his B.S. Degree in Industrial Arts Education at Elizabeth City State University, Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

He has three children, Qiana, a daughter who is married and presently completing a Ph.D in “American Studies” at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; Thena, a daughter who recently graduated from Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia and presently preparing to attend law school; and, a son, Lafayette, who is an eight grader in the Newport News School District, Newport News, Virginia.