

A STUDY OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ELEMENTARY
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA AND THE
TASKS THEY PERFORM

by

Albert Jerome Williams

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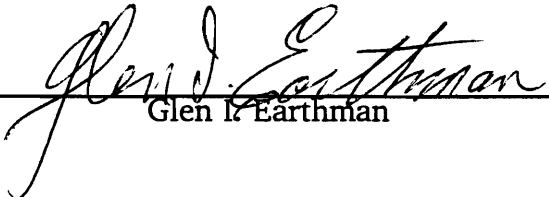
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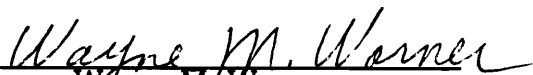
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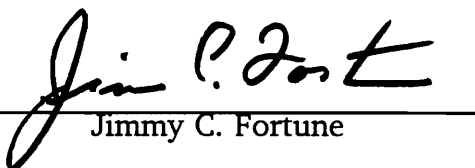
Educational Administration

APPROVED:


Glen R. Earthman


Robert R. Richards


Wayne M. Warner


Jimmy C. Fortune


Andrew T. Carrington

February, 1992

Blacksburg, Virginia

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Albert J. Williams

Committee Chairman: Dr Glen I. Earthman

(ABSTRACT)

The problem in this study was to ascertain the demographic characteristics and the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additionally, this study sought to ascertain how elementary assistant principals were assigned to their positions, what their career aspirations were, what training had contributed most to their success, what their greatest hindrance had been, how their tasks had been assigned to them, and the changes they had seen in the position in the past as well as what changes they anticipated in the future.

The Elementary Assistant Principals survey was mailed to elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Three-hundred and four questionnaires were mailed and two-hundred and six were returned. Seventy-four percent of the respondents returned the questionnaires.

The findings in this study reveal that elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia are typically middle aged males and they are involved

in many of the tasks generally associated with elementary administration. The primary tasks of the assistant principals were in student discipline, student transportation, textbook inventories and administering the schools special education program. Elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia were least likely to be involved in tasks related to the school's financial activities. Fifty task items were distributed across six functional categories including: community relations, curriculum and instruction, staff and personnel, student activities, school management, and student services.

Conclusions based on the results of this study indicate the importance of the principal in the training assistant principals through on-the-job training. A critique of this research study, as well as recommendations for further study are also included.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the past few decades, school enrollments have increased, and so have educational programs. Additionally, the educational program at the school site level has become increasingly complex. The number of elementary assistant principals has also increased to help principals perform many of the administrative, management, and instructional tasks dictated by such a complex system. Within the past ten years, the number of assistant principals has increased by nearly thirteen percent, and the position can be found in nearly one-third of the nation's elementary schools (Doud 1988, 57).

Assistant principals are generally assigned to elementary schools based on the size of the student population. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which accredits schools in Virginia, views the situation so critically that it has set a standard, based on student enrollment, for the employment of elementary assistant principals (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools 1990). Similarly, the state of Virginia has also established a standard for the employment of elementary assistant principals based on student population. The Standard for Accrediting Elementary Schools in Virginia requires schools with a student membership of 600 to 899 to have a half time assistant. A full time assistant principal is required in schools having a student membership of 900 to

1,500 students but schools below 600 are not required to have an assistant principal (Virginia Department of Education 1988, 21).

Originally, the assistant principal's primary responsibility was to relieve the principal of clerical and managerial duties. Today, however, the elementary assistant principalship may entail segments of the principal's, counselor's, teacher's, or the secretary's, responsibilities in one form or another (Boyan 1987). Occasionally, assistant principals may perform selected administrative tasks while still maintaining some of their teaching responsibilities (Boles and Davenport 1984).

Most authors consider the assistant principal to be a productive member of the administrative team. Team administration has been identified as an important development in education administration (Boyan 1987). The cooperative decision making aspect of the administrative team is a major factor in its success or failure (Barr and Dreeben 1983).

Clearly, the assistant principal can perform many detailed and repetitive support tasks so that the principal does not become consumed by the organizational maintenance requirements of the principalship (Iannacone and Podorf 1984). By giving up the organizational maintenance requirements, the principal theoretically has additional time to perform the instructional leadership role more adequately. Although some duties are assigned to the assistant principal through school board policy, the principal provides most of the input in deciding the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal. Thus, the

school principal must be prepared to assist the assistant principal in fulfilling the role expectations of the position if the elementary assistant principal is to be effectively used (NAESP 1970, Doud 1988).

Doud (1988, 41) reported that K-8 principals see on-the-job experience as a principal (96.8 percent), experience as a teacher (83.4 percent), and experience as an assistant principal (66.7 percent) as having "much value" to their success as an elementary principal. The respondents in Doud's study had first hand experience, in as much as fifty-three percent of them had been elementary assistant principals before becoming elementary principals.

On February 11, 1986, Kent Peterson, a member of Secretary of Education Bennett's study group, commented that more than half the nation's elementary principals would retire by 1994 (Bennett 1986, 44). Doud (1988, 12) also found a high percentage of principals, 42.6%, anticipated retirement by 1995. With such a high attrition rate of elementary principals anticipated within this decade, it is paramount that the training of their successors be given greater impetus so as to avoid future principals having to learn their role while "on-the-job" (Doud 1988). and never having been engaged in school administration without the support and guidance of an experienced professional (Peterson and Finn 1985).

Statement of the Problem

The replacement of nearly half the nation's elementary principals has generated a great deal of debate as to whom their replacements should be. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett (1986, 44) has proposed that persons with graduate degrees from other fields be allowed to enter the principalship while receiving additional training "on-the-job." Bennett's proposal represents a radical departure from current practice in the Nation as well as in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Bennett's proposal does not appear to consider the experience gained in the assistant principalship as an important factor in improving assistant principal's skills and preparing assistant principals for the principalship. Currently, little information exists to give educational decision makers an understanding of the opportunities afforded assistant principals in preparing for the principalship.

This research study investigated the following questions:

What are the demographic characteristics of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and what tasks do they perform?

The main research questions included the following sub-questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia?
2. What are the career aspirations of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia?

3. What training has contributed most to the success of elementary assistant principals?
4. What has been the assistant principals greatest hindrance to their performance of their?
5. What are the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals and how are these tasks assigned to them?
6. What changes have elementary assistant principals seen take place in the elementary assistant principalship in the past and what changes do they anticipate in the future?
7. Are there differences between the demographic characteristics of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and elementary assistant principals in the national study of the position conducted by the National Association of Elementary Principals in 1970?
8. Are there significant statistical differences between the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals who aspire to higher positions and those who do not?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and to determine what tasks they performed. Additionally, this study sought to ascertain what functions assistant principals

carried out and how these tasks were assigned to them. It was intended to find out what training had contributed most to their perceived success as well as what factors assistant principals considered the greatest hindrance to their performance. Moreover, this study was intended to ascertain how elementary assistant principals were assigned to their current positions and by whom. Finally, this study solicited data as to what changes in the position had taken place in the past and what changes assistant principals anticipated in the future.

Significance of the Study

This study provides data on elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and can provide educational decision makers with much needed information about the position of elementary assistant principal as well as people who fill these positions. These data can be extremely useful to the State Department of Education, local school boards, and superintendents in making decisions about the successors to those principals in the Commonwealth who will be retiring within this decade. This study also provides better information to define the elementary assistant principal's role as well as to produce a clearer understanding of the functions that are performed by persons who are assigned to these positions. Additionally, this study provides the necessary information needed by local staff development specialists in order to provide more productive staff development opportunities for current elementary assistant principals, as well as those who aspire to the position. Finally, the

research findings may lead to further statistical research on the role and functions of elementary assistant principals in order to enhance the utilization of persons in these positions.

Organization of the Study

This study has been organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduces and states the nature of the study. Specifically, Chapter I states the problem of this study, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study. Chapter II reviews those studies and literature that relate to the present problem. Chapter III describes the research procedure and techniques used in this study. Chapter IV presents the results of this study. Chapter V, the final chapter, summarizes the results of the study and offers conclusions and recommendations for further research based upon the findings of this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The position of elementary assistant principal is usually the first assignment in a progression from classroom teacher to the principalship. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the certification requirements are the same for elementary principals and elementary assistant principals (Certification Regulation for Teachers 1986, 22). The National Association of Elementary Principals has indicated that an estimated fifty percent of the nation's elementary principals will be eligible to retire by 1992 (McCormick 1987, 18). Many school leaders believe there is quite possibly a school executive shortage in the making (McCormick 1987, 18).

In March of 1987, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration issued the report, "Leaders for Americas Schools". Three of the major recommendations in the report were the need to model administration preparation programs in education administration after programs used in other professions, the need to involve public schools in the preparation of school executives, and the need to reform licensing programs (National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration 1988).

By training assistant principals for the principalship, public schools are directly involved in the preparation of school executives. It would thus appear

that the assistant principalship is a viable training vehicle for the future upward mobility of the assistant principal to the principalship. While the assistant principalship may serve as a training ground for future principals, the assistant principalship should also be a position that provides satisfying work experience for the individual as well as provide the principal with assistance in enhancing the total school program.

The requirement to assign elementary assistant principals to schools is not generally based on the needs of the students that the school serves, nor are they assigned based on their strengths or weaknesses to perform certain tasks. The standard by which elementary assistant principals are assigned to schools is a function of student population (Southern Associations of Colleges and Schools 1990).

In 1970, the National Association of Elementary School Principals conducted its first study of the position of the elementary assistant principal. In this study, the association found the median age of assistant principals was forty-two years. The majority of the assistant principals, fifty-seven percent, were between the ages of thirty-five to forty-nine years. Almost sixty-two percent of the assistant principals were men; thirty-eight percent were women. Of the total number of respondents, seventy-seven percent were married, sixteen percent were single, and seven percent were widowed, divorced, or separated (NAESP 1970, 11).

Forty-one percent of the assistant principals in this study were assigned to their position by the central office without consulting with the principal. Thirty percent stated the principal chose an assistant principal from a list and seventeen percent stated they were assigned to the position after the principal was consulted. Seventy-two percent of the assistant principals in this study stated they were elementary teachers prior to their appointment to the assistant principalship (NAESP 1970, 13).

The primary reason for becoming an assistant principal, as stated by thirty-five percent of the respondents, was to prepare for the principalship. Twenty-two percent of the respondents were urged to apply for the position by their principal and twenty-one percent of the respondents stated they preferred administration to classroom teaching. When asked if they would consider becoming an assistant principal if they were starting again, fifty-one percent indicated they would, twenty-nine percent indicated they probably would not (NAESP 1970, 73).

Twenty percent of the assistant principals in this study stated the assistant principalship would be their final occupational goal. Only eight out of 100 men looked upon the assistant principalship as their final occupational goal; 41 out of 100 woman indicated no expectation beyond the assistant principalship. Eighty percent of the respondents were seeking other positions for advancement such as the principalship at the middle and senior high schools, central office specialist, assistant superintendent, superintendent, and college instructors. Most of these

persons in this study, however, viewed the elementary principalship as their final occupational goal (NAESP 1970, 73).

In terms of experience in education, fifty percent of the respondents in the NAESP study had been in school work for ten to nineteen years. Twenty-two percent of the assistant principals had twenty to twenty-nine years of experience, and sixteen percent had nine years or less experience . When asked about the length of time in the position of elementary assistant principal, fifty-nine percent of the respondents had one to three years of experience, twenty-eight percent had four to nine years of experience and twelve percent had ten to nineteen years of experience (NAESP 1970, 19).

The elementary assistant principals in this 1970 study reported a median of ten years of elementary school classroom experience. Seventy-three percent of the assistant principals had been classroom teachers before they were assigned to the assistant principalship. The remaining twenty-seven percent of the respondents had secondary classroom teaching experience or no classroom teaching experience at all (NAESP 1970, 74).

The vast majority of the elementary assistant principals in the NAESP study, seventy percent, had Master's degrees. Fourteen percent of the respondents had Master's degrees plus Educational Specialist Certificates and one percent had Doctoral degrees. Interestingly, fourteen percent of the respondents reported only a Bachelor's degree or an associate's degree (NAESP 1970, 21).

The major field of graduate study for elementary assistant principals in this study was elementary administration, forty eight percent. Nineteen percent of the respondents had completed graduate work in elementary instruction, sixteen percent in general school administration, and six percent in elementary supervision.

When elementary assistant principals in the NAESP study were asked what preparation had contributed most to their success, on-the-job experience with a competent principal lead every category by a two to one margin. Sixty-six percent of the respondents selected this choice. Twenty-nine percent indicated classroom teaching had contributed most to their success. Less than four percent of the respondents indicated college preparation had contributed to their success (NAESP 1970, 52).

Finally, this national study of the elementary assistant principalship conducted by the National Association of Elementary Principals in 1970, revealed the principal's total involvement in the assignment of duties to the assistant principal. Whether through a conference or through a written job description, the school principal determined the tasks to be performed by their assistants.

When the respondents in the NAESP study were asked to identify the greatest hindrance to their performance, sixty percent indicated they had none. Twelve percent of the assistant principals indicated the unwillingness of the principal to delegate authority was their greatest hindrance. Eight percent believed the lack of understanding of the duties and the authority of assistant

principals were their greatest hindrance where as four percent believed their lack of preparation or experience in administrative work was their biggest hindrance. Interestingly, fifteen percent of the respondents indicated their heavy classroom teaching load was their greatest hindrance.

Preparing Elementary Assistant Principals

Good assistant principals are not born that way; they learn how to be effective through training and the application of such training. Beginning assistant principals are confronted by a real dilemma- "What do I do now?". The consequences for poor decisions have the potential to be very painful, thus creating the potential for an ineffective school program.

Few assistant principals are trained to assume positions of higher positions (Lindsay 1985, 41). Lindsay contends that assistant principals receive narrow theoretical training and their on-the-job training is just as narrow. Generally, assistant principals are treated as single task administrators. Unfortunately they learn few administrative skills needed by good principals (Lindsay 1985, 41).

Internships, mentorships, and assessment centers appear to be the most preferred types of activities used by school districts in the preservice training, recruitment, and selection of school principals (Amaio, 1988). The results of a study by Amaio (1988) concluded these three practices have almost unqualified support in terms of their potential for improving the preparation of school administrators and the selection of people for such positions.

Russell (1989) investigated the perceptions of 294 Illinois public elementary school principals and assistant principals regarding: the importance of competencies in their performance, the level at which they believed continued professional development should begin, and the sources of such training.

Principals and assistant principals in this study rated the listed competencies to be of great to moderate importance. Categories of competencies, in descending order of importance were:

1. Development of a positive school climate
2. Instruction
3. Interpersonal skills and communication
4. Curriculum development
5. Staff development and teacher evaluation
6. Planning and decision making
7. Personnel management
8. Building operations
9. Community resource development and support management

(Russell 1989,24)

Overall, Russell's 1989 study found that the sources of continued development activities most preferred by elementary school principals and assistant principals were as follows, in descending order:

1. Seminars and workshops
2. District sponsored inservice programs

3. On-the-job training
4. University coursework
5. Networks and mentors
6. Professional organizations (Russell 1989,96)

It was also concluded that neither the experience of the principal/assistant principal nor the size of the school were influential in the selection of responses to questions regarding competencies by the principal and the assistant principal.

The inservice of assistant principals must be an ongoing activity if the quality of their skills are to be improved. However, it is a great injustice to the education of children and to assistant principals themselves if their first exposure to the required tasks and skills of the principalship come only after they have assumed the position (Johnson and Synder 1986).

The traditional approach in the preparation of principals and assistant principals has been relatively simple (Daresh 1990). After having received a Master's degree and having taught for a few years, the aspiring principal or assistant principal completes the requirements for an administrative certificate. In many cases, the Master's degree could be in a different field as long as the necessary courses were taken in order to receive an endorsement as a school administrator. This approach has, for the most part, been very comfortable for students (Daresh 1990).

Richards and Fox (1990), in an article on internships, stated that far too often these programs were structured with insignificant and trivial

responsibilities included. The typical agreement between the principal and the intern, they continued, consisted of control duties and minor responsibilities. Control duties usually consisted of items such as bus duty, lunch duty, hall duty, attendance, and yard duty. Minor responsibilities included ordering textbooks, developing testing schedules, monitoring the testing schedule, and supervising the distribution and return of various reports from teachers.

If internship programs are to be meaningful, Richards and Fox stated the typical responsibilities of the first line supervisor must be incorporated into the internship program. Responsibilities given to interns should include specific projects, supervision activities, problem solving tasks, public speaking and public relations activities, latitude to make routine decisions, and leadership opportunities (Richards and Fox 1990).

McDowell County, North Carolina, like many other school districts, attempted to fill the gap in preparing administrators by developing its own academy for assistant principals (Peterson 1987). In doing so, administrators in McDowell County sought to attract teachers, incumbent assistant principals, and other district personnel to the program. This was prior to them being shaped by the demands of the principalship or by the job's role expectations. The school district felt the academies would influence bright, motivated teachers to consider administration and would also bring women and minorities into the pool of applicants (Peterson 1987).

The McDowell County academy based its conceptual framework around four specific areas. These areas were: human relations, structural framework, political framework, and symbolic framework. The human relations area depicted schools as a set of interpersonal relationships. The structural framework area delineated the bureaucratic and administrative processes of the organization. The political aspect viewed decisions and conflicts that needed to be resolved through negotiation, compromise, and power. Finally, the symbolic component viewed schools as a social system and culture with a unique set of norms (Peterson 1987).

Laura Cooper (1988), in her study of the professional development of principals and assistant principals, found the current conception of professional development is limited by an emphasis on formal obligations such as organizational memberships, by its neglect of on-the-job learning, and by its rational view of individual and organization change. Cooper's (1988) research suggested an alternative conception based upon an understanding of how successful principals and assistant principals actually think about and experience professional development.

The central conclusions of Cooper's (1988) study were: (1) Principals and assistant principals were actively involved in a wide variety of formal professional development activities. They most frequently participated in activities that were related to their instructional leadership role. (2) Principals and assistant principals were motivated by internal incentives, such as

enlightenment and affiliation, but their overall level of participation was limited because these incentives were frequently outweighed by negative disincentives such as loss of personal time. (3) Principals and assistant principals valued on-the-job experiences, such as having or being a mentor, more than all other types of formal learning experiences.

In 1986, the Council of Supervisors and Administrators of New York City, the Board of Education, and the City University of New York joined forces to provide on-the-job training and follow-up for elementary and intermediate schools (Gold 1990). The three agencies had determined there were certain skills which could not be taught effectively on a university campus, but must be learned on the job.

The purpose of this program was to provide training for new assistant principals and professional renewal for experienced assistant principals. Additionally, the purpose of this program was to heighten a sense of professionalism among participants, to remove feelings of isolation experienced by many junior administrators, to provide for networking, and to disseminate information about policies and new programs.

The major thrust of this program was a mentoring program in which field consultants visited with assistant principals on-site. Field consultants in this program were retired principals, supervisors, and superintendents who were selected based on their reputation for effective supervision and administration.

Assistant principals evaluated this part of the program as being outstanding in helping assistant principals in adjusting to their role (Gold 1990).

Role of the Elementary Assistant Principal

While the elementary school principal's role and training needs continue to be hotly debated, the role and training needs of the elementary assistant principal clearly have not crystallized.

A great deal of the assistant principal's training occurs on the job, and learning by "doing" and actually "doing" becomes a major part of the assistant principal's preparation (Lindsay 1985, 41). Lindsay (1895) suggests an orderly progressive preparation plan should be developed by principals for their assistants. The preparation plan, as proposed by Lindsay (1985), would involve the following steps:

1. Develop a comprehensive job description.
2. Identify specific skills needed for improvement or which need to be developed.
3. Provide many opportunities for professional development.
4. Make certain the assistant principal has a chance to gain experience in various facets of school administration (Lindsay 1985,17).

Citing the limited attention that had been given to the elementary assistant principalship, Gorton and Kattman (1985) conducted a national study of the position. They found that while most elementary assistant principals were involved with a variety of responsibilities, their main responsibilities were: administering student discipline, supervising substitute teachers, providing instructional materials, and establishing teacher duty rosters. Of these, administering student discipline was reported by most assistant principals as the one activity that occupied them the most.

Barbara Patton (1990) conducted a study to determine the demographic characteristics, job role, and career aspirations of elementary assistant principals in South Carolina in 1989. Elementary assistant principals identified thirty duties they perceived to entail a high degree of responsibility. These thirty duties were further rated by the elementary assistant principals for perceived degree of importance and discretionary behavior. Patton found the elementary assistant principal's role in South Carolina was generally not characterized by a high degree of discretionary behavior.

Koru (1989) conducted a study of the socialization of the assistant principal. In this study, the findings showed assistant principals spending a large amount of time performing various caretaker tasks. The assistant principal's day was characterized by brevity, interruption, and very brief verbal contact during the instructional day. Koru found differences between elementary assistant principals and secondary assistant principals with regard to instructional duties

and discipline. Finally, the findings suggest the socialization processes in the role of assistant principals are dysfunctional as preparation for leadership roles of greater responsibilities.

The idea that the elementary assistant principal's only purpose is to relieve the principal of time consuming tasks must be dispelled if the importance of the position is to improve the quality of instruction in schools. With more than fifty percent of the nation's school administrators retiring by the end of the decade, preparing future leaders to replace them is critical (Bennett 1986). The tasks and skills required in the elementary assistant principalship must be clarified in order to aid assistant principals in understanding their complicated and often ambiguous roles, to help principals appreciate, understand and utilize their new helper in a productive way, and to provide for a pool of well trained personnel to ascend to the principalship.

Although the assistant principalship should be a training ground for future principals, rarely is this the case (Lindsay 1985). Lindsay indicated that too few assistant principals were provided the necessary training from which skills are developed and their performance can be judged. For the most part, they received narrow, theoretical training, and their experience on-the-job was extremely narrow. Usually, an assistant principal is treated as a single facet administrator thus learning only a few of the many job skills needed to be good principals.

In as much as a new assistant principal's training occurs on the job, Lindsay (1985) suggested that an orderly, progressive preparation plan should be

developed. He further stated that the plan should include the following elements:

1. Carefully developed job description including specific expectations.
2. Provide, in writing, goals and objectives of the school and the school system.
3. Make certain the assistant principal has an opportunity to gain experience in the various aspects of building administration.
4. Provide the assistant principal the opportunities for professional development (Lindsay 1985, 46).

James L. Doud (1988) in a national study of elementary school principals found that thirty-two percent of the principals in this study had assistant principals. While only about one-third of the respondents reported having an assistant principal, this number represented an increase of thirteen percent over the past ten years. When asked how assistant principals were allocated, forty-six percent indicated the assignment of assistant principals in their school division was based on student enrollment. Twenty-five percent of the principals indicated that all elementary schools in their school district were assigned an assistant principal. Seven percent said that their assistant principal was assigned based on the number of staff members and six percent said that their assistant principal

was assigned to work on specific programs. "Other" forms of allocation procedures were reported by fifteen percent of the respondents.

When asked what duties their assistant principals performed, twenty percent indicated discipline and student management. Sixteen percent indicated "duties" as assigned, fourteen percent indicated supervision and evaluation of teachers, and eleven percent stated parent and community relations. About nine percent indicated their assistant principals focused on student evaluations and placement, facilities management, curriculum development, and supervision of the non-instructional staff. Only about three percent of the assistant principals were given responsibility for budget administration.

Gorton and Kattman (1985) in a national study of elementary assistant principals also found that administering student discipline was a primary responsibility of persons in the position. They also found that supervising substitute teachers, providing instructional materials, and establishing teacher duty rosters were primary responsibilities of elementary assistant principals. Additionally, Gorton and Kattman (1985) found that elementary assistant principals wanted more responsibilities in orienting new teachers and planning teacher inservice programs, in conducting student orientation programs and developing the school calendar, in developing curriculum, and in administering public relations programs.

Although the assistant principal is a key member of the administrative team, the degree of involvement in instructional matters, vary from school to

school (Wiles 1983). As one might expect, discipline and pupil personnel matters are the primary duties assigned to the assistant principal (Gorton and Kattman 1985). This situation, one requiring the assistant principal to spend most of the time dealing with pupil personnel matters and student discipline, has not drastically changed during the past fifteen years. A well defined definition of the role of the assistant principal as well as a comprehensive examination of the tasks that are assigned persons in the position is clearly needed (Wiles 1983). A description of the elementary assistant principal in Virginia as well as a determination of the current task performed by them could result in better utilization of persons in these positions.

Summary

One of the assets that the principal must utilize is the assistant principal. The elementary assistant principal's role is to assist the principal in facilitating the accomplishment of organizational goals. In order to provide the principal with this assistance, elementary assistant principals need to have a clear definition of what their duties and responsibilities are. Additionally, elementary assistant principals need to be given the training that will provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to accomplish the tasks for which they are responsible or share responsibility.

This chapter contains information pertaining to the role of the elementary assistant principal. The sources agree that the elementary assistant principal is

an asset that has been underutilized in assisting the principal and in fulfilling the role expectations of the assistant principal. Finally, this chapter has cited numerous writers in regards to the training programs for elementary assistant principals. These writers have noted a variety of methods for training elementary school administrators. The consistent theme, however, appears to be the need for continuous training and professional development as well as local involvement in the professional development of elementary administrators.

The elementary assistant principal continues to play an important role in public elementary schools. If assistant principals are to fulfill their full potential, however, their role must be given the scrutiny that the principal's role receives. In as much as a rapid turnover of educational administrators will occur in this decade, a demographic analysis of persons currently in the elementary assistant principalship, as well as an analysis of the tasks they perform, was clearly appropriate.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods and procedures used in this study. The chapter is divided into five sections: (1) a description of the population, (2) the research method used in the study, (3) the instrument that was used to collect the data, (4) a description of the procedures used in collecting data, and (5) the analysis procedure.

Description of the Population

Conclusions about a population cannot be drawn until the nature of the units that comprise that population are clearly identified (Hoy 1988). Investigators produce disappointing results when they use population frames without investigating the methods used to compile them, and without ascertaining if all members of the population are included (Best 1986). In this study, the total population consisted of all public elementary assistant principals within the Commonwealth of Virginia during the 1889-1990 school year.

Assistant principals of schools containing any combination of grades K-8 were included in this study. Grades K-8 are defined as elementary grades by the Virginia State Department of Education (1988). The names of all elementary assistant principals were obtained from a print-out of elementary schools from

the Virginia Department of Education. The information on the print-out was based on the school identification reports for the 1989-1990 school year. The school identification reports are completed by each school each year and forwarded to the State Department of Education. The population in this study was the three hundred and four elementary assistant principals in the Virginia public elementary schools.

Research Methodology

In this study a descriptive survey method was employed. The descriptive survey method, as utilized in this study, deals with relationships between variables. Best (1986) stated that survey research can be used to discover the relative incidences, distribution, and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables. He further stated that because survey research is a branch of social scientific research, it is easily distinguished from status surveys. The descriptive research method is used to described "What is." (Borg and Gall 1987). In discussing the descriptive survey method, Ary, Jacobs, and Rozavich stated:

"Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. They are directed toward determining the nature of the situation as it exists at the time of the study... (Ary 1985, 286).

The name descriptive has the underlying assumption that what is recorded and observed at one time could be recorded and observed at another time given that the conditions are the same (Hoy 1986).

Instrumentation

The purpose of this study was to describe elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia as well as to determine the tasks that they perform. It was determined, after reviewing various existing instruments, that the one instrument that best met the needs of this study was a revision of the normative and demographic questionnaire used by James L. Doud in his ten year national study of elementary principals. (See Appendix A). Permission to adapt and to use this questionnaire was granted by the National Association of Elementary Principals. (See Appendix B).

The normative portion of the questionnaire consists of fifty task items grouped into the following six categories:

1. School Management
2. Student Activities
3. Community Relations
4. Staff and Personnel
5. Curriculum and instruction
6. Student Services

These six categories are consistent with the job responsibilities normally associated with elementary school administration, and supported in the literature on effective schools, as well as the literature on the role of the elementary school principal and assistant principal (Russell 1989, Doud 1988, Hoy 1988, Blum 1987, and Morris 1984). These major categories, as well as the selected task items, were remarkably consistent with those identified by Joann Patton in her study of secondary assistant principals in Virginia (Patton 1987).

The demographic portion of the questionnaire consisted of items which investigated demographic information and career patterns of the elementary assistant principals who participated in the study. This part of the questionnaire contained questions relative to:

1. School Information
2. Personal Information
3. Professional Aspirations
4. Job Satisfaction
5. Working Conditions

Additionally, the questionnaire contained two open-ended questions which asked elementary assistant principals about changes they had seen in the position since they were first appointed and what changes they anticipated in the future. These questions were included in an attempt to investigate the changing nature of the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals.

Twenty-four elementary school principals from across the state were randomly selected from the Virginia Educational Directory for the 1989-90 school year and were asked to review the questionnaire in an effort to update the survey instrument. (See Appendix C). Their suggestions resulted in the rewording of six items, the deletion of five items, and the addition of nine items. The items deleted were in the areas of student activities, community relations, staff and personnel, and student services. The items added were in the areas of school management, student activities, and curriculum and instruction. These changes resulted in a survey that contained seventy-eight items as opposed to the original sixty-nine items.

Data Collection

The questionnaire and a cover letter were distributed by mail to all public school elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia at their school mailing addresses on April 12, 1990. (See Appendix D). Each packet was assigned a code number for identification and follow-up purposes. The return date for the initial survey was May 2, 1990. A second request to those who had not returned the initial survey was made on May 12, 1990 with a return date of May 27, 1990. (See Appendix E).

Of the 304 surveys mailed on April 12, 1990, 148 were returned by the May 2, 1990 deadline. The second letter, which was mailed on May 12, 1990, resulted in the return of an additional seventy-eight surveys. The total number

of surveys returned, 226, was seventy-four percent of the total population. Of the returned surveys, all 226 were usable for the purpose of data analysis.

A telephone survey of ten percent of the seventy-eight non-respondents was conducted to determine whether the demographic make-up or response disposition of the non-respondents were any different from the 226 respondents who completed the surveys. Based upon the telephone responses of this sample, it appears that no systematic differences exist between those who completed the survey and those who did not. Of the eight elementary assistants telephoned, five indicated that they had not had the time to complete the survey, two indicated that they thought that they had returned the survey, and one stated that the survey had never been received.

Analysis Procedure

In analyzing the data, the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) was utilized. Frequencies and percentages were used to compare the demographic characteristics of elementary assistant principals, the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals, and how tasks were assigned to elementary assistant principals. Frequencies and percentages were also used to compare the demographic differences of elementary assistant principals who participated in the 1970 National Association of Elementary Principal's study of position and the respondents in this study. Cross tabulations were used to determine statistical significant task differences of those assistant principals who

indicated the assistant principalship was their final occupational goal and those assistant principals who sought higher level positions. Tables were prepared to display the results of the data collected.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and to determine what tasks they perform. It was intended to describe the people in the position as well as the position itself.

The research questions were:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia?
2. What are the career aspirations of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia?
3. What training has contributed most to the success of elementary assistant principals?
4. What has been the assistant principals' greatest hindrance in the performance of their duties?
5. What are the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals and how are these tasks assigned to them?
6. What changes have elementary assistant principals seen take place in the position in the past and what changes do they anticipate in the future?

7. Are there differences between the demographic characteristics of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and elementary assistant principals in the National Association of Elementary Principals' 1970 national study of the elementary assistant principalship?
8. Are there significant differences between the tasks performed by assistant principals who aspire to higher positions and those who do not?

Population

Those surveyed were 304 elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Virginia Department of Education provided the list of elementary assistant principal assignments as of December 1989. A total of 226 surveys (seventy-four percent of the total population) were returned. Of those returned, all were useable for the purpose of data collection and analysis.

Research Question 1. What are the demographic characteristics of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia?

The demographic data upon which the following discussion is based are presented in Table 1. In 1990, nearly forty-six percent of the elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia were between 41 to 50

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT
PRINCIPALS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990

AGE

	UNDER 30	31- 40	41- 50	51 or OLDER	TOTAL
N	6	86	103	32	226
%	2.2	38.1	45.6	14.2	100

RACE

	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	OTHER	TOTAL
N	184	41	1	0	226
%	81.4	18.1	0.4	0	100

GENDER

	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
N	63	163	226
%	27.9	72.1	100

MARTIAL STATUS

	SINGLE	MARRIED	WIDOWED	DIVORCED	TOTAL
N	17	188	1	19	226
%	7.5	83.6	0.4	8.4	100

years of age. Thirty-eight percent were between the age of 31 to 40, fourteen percent were older than 51, and two percent were under the age of 30.

Eighty-one percent of the respondents were White, eighteen percent were Black, and less than one-half of a percent was Hispanic. Men comprised seventy-two percent of the assistant principals and women served in twenty-eight percent of the positions. Eighty-four percent of the elementary assistant principals were married, eight percent were single, eight percent were divorced, and less than one percent was widowed.

Education and career experience have been summarized in Table 2. The number of years in the education profession ranged from as few as three or less years to as many as ten years or more. Ninety-three percent of the subjects in this study indicated they had been in the profession for ten or more years. Six percent stated they had been in the field for four to nine years, while less than one-half of a percent had been in the profession for three years or less. Over sixty-three percent reported they had experience at the elementary level for nine or more years. Twenty percent reported six to eight years of experience in the elementary school, eleven percent reported three to five years of experience, and six percent reported elementary experience of two years or less.

When the number of years in the position of elementary assistant principal was examined, most of the respondents indicated they had been in their position for less than five years. Thirty-six percent reported they had been in their position two or less years, thirty-four percent had three to five years in the

TABLE 2

EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION OF ELEMENTARY
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990

YEARS IN EDUCATION

	0-3	4-10	10 or MORE	TOTAL
N	1	14	211	226
%	0.4	6.2	93.4	100

YEARS IN ELEMENTARY TEACHING

	0-2	3-5	6-8	9 or MORE	TOTAL
N	13	24	46	143	226
%	5.8	10.6	20.3	63.3	100

YEARS IN POSITION OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALSHIP

	0-2	3-5	6-8	9 or MORE	TOTAL
N	82	77	26	41	226
%	36.6	34.1	11.5	18.1	100

POSITION HELD JUST PRIOR TO BECOMING AN AP

	ELEM TEACHER	GUID COUNSELOR	SEC TEACHER	TEACHER TRAINER	GRAD STUDENT	OTHER	TOTAL
N	138	8	9	9	3	59	226
%	61	3.5	4	4	1.3	26.1	100

TABLE 2--CONTINUED

HIGHEST EARNED DEGREE

	BA,BS BED	MA,MS MED	MASTERS + 30	PHD ED	TOTAL
N	4	122	88	12	226
%	1.8	54	38.9	5.3	100

GRADUATE MAJOR

	NO GRAD WORK	ED ADMIN	INST	SUPVR	OTHER	TOTAL
N	5	149	25	29	18	226
%	2.2	65.9	11.1	12.8	8	100

HOURS DEVOTED TO PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PER WEEK

	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-MORE	TOTAL
N	14	153	50	6	1	226
%	6.2	67.7	22.1	2.7	1.3	100

position, twelve percent had six to eight years in the position, and only eighteen percent had nine or more years in the position.

Prior to becoming an assistant principal, the data in this study revealed most of the respondents had been elementary teachers. Sixty-one percent indicated they had been elementary school teachers prior to their appointment to the assistant principalship. Nearly four percent had been guidance counselors, four percent had been secondary teachers, four percent had been teacher trainers, and one percent were graduate students. Twenty-six percent of the respondents revealed they held "other" positions prior to their assignment to the assistant principalship.

Nearly ninety-eight percent of the elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia have advanced degrees. This is not a startling finding in as much as the certification requirements for administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia require a minimum of a master's degree in order to be certified for the position (Certification Regulations for Teachers 1986). Five percent of the respondents had doctorate degrees, forty percent had a master's degree plus thirty hours of additional graduate work, fifty-four percent held the master's degree, and two percent had only a bachelor's degrees. Of the ninety-eight percent with graduate degrees, sixty-six percent reported their graduate major was education administration. Thirteen percent had graduate degrees in supervision, eleven percent in instruction; two percent did not have a

graduate degree. Additionally, eight percent had graduate degrees in areas not listed in the survey.

In examining the number of hours devoted to professional growth, nearly sixty-eight percent of the persons in this study indicated they devoted six to ten hours per week to such activities. Twenty-two percent responded they devoted eleven to fifteen hours to professional growth activities, six percent devoted one to five hours, three percent devoted sixteen to twenty hours, and one percent devoted twenty-one or more hours to professional growth.

Table 3 summarizes the school characteristics of elementary assistant principals in this study. Fifty-two percent of the assistant principals were employed in school divisions with student populations of 25,000 to 99,999 pupils. Twenty-nine percent were in schools divisions with student populations of 3,000 to 24,999 pupils, twelve percent were in divisions with 100,000 or more pupils, and seven percent were in divisions with student populations of less than 2,999 pupils. School building enrollments ranged from school with student populations of less than 399 to schools with populations of 1,000 or more. Almost six percent of the assistant principals were employed in schools with student populations of 1,000 or more. The majority of assistant principals, sixty percent, were employed in schools with 700 to 999 pupils, thirty-four percent were in schools with student populations of 400 to 699 students, and less than one percent were in schools with under 399 pupils.

TABLE 3

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS OF ELEMENTARY
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990

SIZE OF SCHOOL DIVISION

	UNDER 2,999	3000 24,999	25,000 99,999	100,000 MORE	TOTAL
N	16	65	118	27	226
%	7.1	28.8	52.2	11.9	100

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

	UNDER 399	400 699	700 999	1000 MORE	TOTAL
N	1	77	135	13	226
%	0.4	34.1	59.7	5.8	100

GRADE CONFIGURATION

	K-3	K-4	4-6	K-5	K-6	OTHER	TOTAL
N	8	10	11	80	92	25	226
%	3.5	4.4	4.9	35.4	40.7	11.1	100

NUMBER OF FULL-TIME TEACHING POSITIONS

	5-14	15-30	31-45	46 OR MORE	TOTAL
N	6	25	162	33	226
%	2.7	11.1	71.7	14.6	100

The various grade configurations in elementary schools where elementary assistant principals were employed ranged from forty-one percent with grades K-6 to four percent with grades K-3. Thirty-five percent were employed in schools with grades K-5, four percent with grades K-4, five percent with grades 4-6, and eleven percent indicated their school configuration was not listed.

The majority of assistant principals in this study, seventy-two percent, revealed their school had a full time teaching staff on thirty-one to forty-five teachers. Fifteen percent were in schools with a full time teaching staff of forty-six or more, eleven percent were in schools with fifteen to thirty teachers, and three percent were in schools with five to fourteen teachers.

Table 4 summarizes the working conditions of assistant elementary principals in this study. The length of employment contracts of the assistant principals in this study was generally eleven months. Nearly forty-nine percent of the respondents indicated their employment contract was for a period of eleven months. Twenty-six percent of the assistant principals had twelve month contracts, and twenty-four percent had contracts for ten months. Less than one percent of the subjects in this study responded their contract was for nine months. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents averaged forty-two to forty-seven hours per week in the performance of their duties. Thirty-three percent averaged forty-eight or more hours, seven percent averaged thirty-six to forty-one hours, and less than one percent averaged thirty to thirty-five hours per week.

TABLE 4

WORKING CONDITIONS OF ELEMENTARY
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

	9 MOS	10 MOS	11 MOS	12 MOS	TOTAL
N	2	55	110	59	226
%	0.9	24.3	48.7	26.1	100

HOURS IN AVERAGE WORK WEEK

	30-35	36-41	42-47	48 OR MORE	TOTAL
N	2	15	134	75	226
%	0.9	6.6	59.3	33.2	100

Summary

A summation of the data gathered in this study indicated the average assistant principal in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1989-1990 is a white male between the age of 41-50 years of age. The individual is married, has ten or more years in education, and has been in their current position for three to five years. The average elementary assistant principal has a master's degree in educational administration and devotes six to ten hours per week to professional growth activities. The school in which the assistant principal is employed has between 700 to 999 students in grades K-6. The employment contract for the assistant principal is eleven months and their work week averages between forty-two to forty-seven hours per week. Table 5 presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

TABLE 5

SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
 OF ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN
 THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
 1989-1990

AGE	41-50
RACE	WHITE
GENDER	MALE
MARITAL STATUS	MARRIED
YEARS IN EDUCATION	10 OR MORE
YEARS IN ELEMENTARY TEACHING	9 OR MORE
YEARS IN AP POSITION	3-5
HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED	MASTER'S
GRADUATE MAJOR	ELEM. ADMIN.
HOURS DEVOTED TO PROFESSIONAL GROWTH	6-10
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	700-999
GRADES IN SCHOOL	K-6
SCHOOL DIVISION ENROLLMENT	25,000-99,999
TERM OF EMPLOYMENT	11 MONTHS
HOURS IN AVERAGE WORK WEEK	42-47

Research Question 2. What are the career aspirations of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia? Elementary assistant principals in this study were asked to respond to a series of questions regarding their career aspirations. Table 6 reflects the responses of the respondents. Sixty-three percent of the assistant principals responded they entered the assistant principalship to prepare for the principalship. Eighteen percent stated they entered the assistant principalship because they preferred administration to teaching. Twelve percent said they were urged to do so by their principal and seven percent indicated they entered the assistant principalship for higher income. When asked if the assistant principalship was their final occupational goal, eight percent indicated the assistant principalship was their final occupational goal. Ninety-two percent indicated their final occupational goal was not the assistant principalship.

When these ninety-two percent of the respondents were asked about their final occupational goal, seventy-four percent indicated their final goal was the elementary principalship. Seven percent of the assistant principals stated their final goal was to be employed in the central office. The remaining seven percent replied their final goal was to be employed as middle school principal, high school principal, an assistant superintendent, or superintendent.

Table 7 summarizes responses relative to how elementary assistant principals tasks are determined. Elementary principals, in a conference with their assistant principals, determined the duties of their assistants in forty-six

TABLE 6

CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF ELEMENTARY
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990

PRIMARY REASON FOR BECOMING AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

	HIGHER INCOME	PREFERRED ADMIN TO TEACHING	PREPARE FOR PRINCIPALSHIP	URGED TO BY PRIN	TOTAL
N	15	41	142	28	226
%	6.6	18.1	62.8	12.4	100

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALSHIP AS FINAL OCCUPATIONAL GOAL

	YES	NO	TOTAL
N	18	208	226
%	8	92	100

FINAL OCCUPATIONAL GOAL

	PRIN ELEM	PRIN MID	PRIN SEC	CENT OFF SPEC	ASST SUPER	SUPER	TOTAL
N	166	1	1	15	8	5	226
%	73.5	0.4	0.4	6.6	3.5	2.2	100

TABLE 7
 ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT
 PRINCIPAL TASK ASSIGNERS IN THE
 COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
 1989-1990

TASK ASSIGNERS

	N	%
PRINCIPAL	98	43.4
SUPERINTENDENT	1	0.4
SCHOOL BOARD POLICY	7	3.1
PRINCIPAL IN CONFERENCE WITH ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	104	46.0
PRINCIPAL AND SUPERINTENDENT	14	6.2
OTHER	2	0.9
TOTAL	226	100

WRITTEN JOB DESCRIPTION

	N	%
YES	170	75.2
NO	56	24.8
TOTAL	226	100

percent of the cases. About forty-three percent of the assistant principals in this study reported the principals alone determined the duties of the assistant principal. Six percent indicated their duties were determined by configurations such as the superintendent and/or school board policy. When assistant principals were asked if they had a written job description, seventy-five percent indicated a job description. Twenty-five percent indicated they did not have a job description.

Research Question 3. What training has contributed most to the success of assistant principals. Table 8 summarizes the responses of elementary assistant principals relating to activities which have contributed most to their success. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents indicated on-the-job training had contributed most to their success. An additional twenty percent of the subjects responded classroom teaching had contributed most to their success as an assistant principal. Only three percent felt their college preparation programs had contributed most to their success and less than one percent indicated school system in-service programs had made a significant contribution to their success in the assistant principalship.

Research Question 4. What has been the greatest hindrance to assistant principals in the performance of their duties? Table 9 summarizes this data. Most assistant principals, seventy-nine percent, indicated they had no hindrance

TABLE 8

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SUCCESS OF
ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

	N	%
CLASSROOM TEACHING	45	19.9
COLLEGE PREPARATION	6	2.7
ON-THE-JOB TRAINING	174	77.0
SCHOOL SYSTEM IN-SERVICE TRAINING	1	0.4
TOTAL	226	100

TABLE 9
 PERFORMANCE DETRACTOR OF
 ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS
 IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
 1989-1990

GREATEST HINDRANCE

	N	%
LACK OF EXPERIENCE	11	4.9
LACK OF PREPARATION	3	1.3
UNWILLINGNESS OF PRINCIPAL TO DELEGATE	16	7.1
LACK OF FACULTY UNDERSTANDING OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS ROLE	17	7.5
NONE	178	78.8
TOTAL	226	100

to their performance. Eight percent saw the lack of understanding of their role by the faculty as a hindrance and seven percent saw the unwillingness of the principal to delegate responsibility as a hindrance. Some assistant principals, five percent, saw their lack of experience as a hindrance while only one percent saw their lack of preparation in the same way.

Research Question 5. What are the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and how are these tasks assigned to them. Tables 10 thru 15 summarize the tasks assigned to them. These tasks are either performed solely by the assistant principal or the principal and the assistant principal share the responsibility for performing the task. The percentages reflect those tasks performed by the assistant principal as well as those shared with the principal. The total percentages may not equal 100 percent if the principal performed the task.

Table 10 summarizes the responses identified as community relations functions. Community fund drives were the tasks assistant principals performed by themselves most of the time. Twelve percent indicated they performed this task. About four percent had primary responsibility for public relations and the parent teacher association. Of those assistant principals having a primary role in community fund drives, the principal assigned the task in fifty percent of the cases. The public relation task was assigned by the principal forty-nine percent

TABLE 10

SELECTED COMMUNITY RELATIONS TASKS RATED ON
RESPONSIBILITY AND HOW THE TASKS WERE ASSIGNED
TO ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990*

		RESPONSIBILITY		HOW ASSIGNED		
		AP	S	P	C	SB
PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION	N	9	170	166	2	2
	%	4	75.2	73.5	0.9	0.9
COMMUNITY FUND DRIVES	N	27	68	90	5	1
	%	11.9	30.1	39.8	2.2	0.4
PUBLIC RELATIONS	N	8	110	108	10	0
	%	3.5	48.7	47.8	4.4	0

RESPONSIBILITY:
AP-ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
S-SHARED

HOW ASSIGNED:
P-ASSIGNED BY PRINCIPAL
C-ASSIGNED BY CENTRAL OFFICE
SB-ASSIGNED BY SCHOOL BOARD
POLICY

*N = Number of responses
% = Percent of respondents

of the time and the PTA task was given to the assistant principal by the principal seventy-four percent of the time.

Table 11 summarizes the data in responses to the six items that were considered under the curriculum and instruction functions. Fifty-seven percent of the assistant principals had primary responsibility in the testing program, fifty-one percent in the meetings related to the development of special education IEP's for students, and fifty-one percent had the primary task of conducting the eligibility meeting for the placement of students in special education programs. Over seventy percent of the time, the school principal assigned the responsibility of these tasks to their assistants.

Table 12 summarizes the responses of elementary assistant principals to the ten items identified as staff and personnel functions. Fifty-five percent of the assistant principals were responsible for the securing of substitute teachers. Twenty percent were responsible for coordinating student teachers, and less than four percent had responsibility for faculty meetings. In seventy-one percent of the cases, the principal was responsible for assigning the substitute teacher task to the assistant principal. The responsibility for supervising student teachers was assigned to the assistant principal by the principal sixty percent of the time and primary responsibility for faculty meetings was assigned by the principal seventy percent of the time.

Table 13 summarizes the responses to the eight items that were identified as student activities functions. Of the 226 respondents, few had many

TABLE 11

SELECTED CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION TASKS RATED ON
RESPONSIBILITY AND HOW THE TASKS WERE ASSIGNED TO
ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990*

		RESPONSIBILITY		HOW ASSIGNED		
		AP	S	P	C	SB
PUPIL FIELD TRIPS	N	84	89	155	10	5
	%	37.2	39.4	68.6	4.4	2.2
SPECIAL ED. (IEP) MEETINGS	N	116	84	165	16	10
	%	51.3	37.2	73	7.1	4.4
TESTING PROGRAM	N	129	59	169	13	4
	%	57.1	26.1	74.8	5.8	1.4
MASTER SCHEDULE	N	62	101	152	4	1
	%	27.4	44.7	67.3	1.4	0.4
SPEC ED ELIG MEETINGS	N	115	78	163	13	10
	%	50.9	34.5	72.1	5.8	4.4
FORMULATING SCHOOL GOALS	N	8	175	153	11	9
	%	3.5	77.4	67.7	4.9	4

RESPONSIBILITY:
AP-ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
S-SHARED

HOW ASSIGNED:
P-ASSIGNED BY PRINCIPAL
C-ASSIGNED BY CENTRAL OFFICE
SB-ASSIGNED BY SCHOOL BOARD

*N = Number of responses
% = Percent of respondents

TABLE 12

SELECTED STAFF AND PERSONNEL TASKS RATED ON
RESPONSIBILITY AND HOW THE TASKS WERE ASSIGNED
TO ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990*

		RESPONSIBILITY		HOW ASSIGNED		
		AP	S	P	C	SB
TEACHER HANDBOOK	N	24	161	172	2	1
	%	10.6	71.2	76.1	0.9	0.4
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS	N	124	57	161	11	6
	%	54.9	25.2	71.2	4.9	2.7
FACULTY MEETINGS	N	8	185	177	2	0
	%	3.5	81.9	78.3	0.9	0
TEACHER STAFF DEVELOPMENT	N	22	165	164	11	1
	%	9.7	73	72.6	4.9	0.4
TEACHER SELECTION	N	6	154	143	10	7
	%	2.7	68.1	63.3	4.4	3.1
STUDENT TEACHERS	N	46	99	135	5	2
	%	20.4	43.8	59.7	2.2	0.9
TEACHER ADDITIONAL DUTIES	N	25	131	146	2	0
	%	11.1	57.5	64.6	1.8	0
GRADE LEVEL MEETING	N	14	161	158	4	1
	%	6.2	71.2	69.9	1.8	0.4
LIAISON WITH EMPLOYEE GROUPS	N	8	110	108	7	1
	%	3.5	48.7	47.8	3.1	0.4
NEW INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES	N	24	149	155	10	0
	%	10.6	65.9	68.6	4.4	0

RESPONSIBILITY:
AP-ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS
S-SHARED

HOW ASSIGNED:
P-PRINCIPAL
C-ASSIGNED BY CENTRAL OFFICE
SB-ASSIGNED BY SCHOOL BOARD

*N = Number of responses
% = Percent of respondents

TABLE 13

SELECTED STUDENT ACTIVITIES TASKS RATED ON
RESPONSIBILITY AND HOW THE TASKS WERE ASSIGNED TO
ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990*

		RESPONSIBILITY		HOW ASSIGNED		
		AP	S	P	C	SB
STUDENT ASSEMBLIES	N	42	157	186	1	1
	%	18.6	69	82.3	0.4	0.4
STUDENT CLUBS	N	17	87	166	1	2
	%	7.5	38.5	73.5	0.4	0.9
SCHOOL NEWSPAPER	N	18	62	89	3	0
	%	8	27.4	39.4	1.3	0
SCHOOL STORE	N	24	56	88	1	0
	%	10.6	24.8	38.9	0.4	0
STUDENT GOVERNMENT	N	20	81	108	1	0
	%	8.8	35.8	47.8	0.4	0
SAFETY PATROLS	N	53	66	117	1	1
	%	23.5	29.2	51.8	0.4	0.4
MUSIC/ART CONTEST	N	19	73	92	0	0
	%	8.4	32.3	40.7	0	0

RESPONSIBILITY:
AP-ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
S-SHARED

HOW ASSIGNED:
P-ASSIGNED BY PRINCIPAL
C-ASSIGNED BY CENTRAL OFFICE
SB-ASSIGNED BY SCHOOL BOARD

*N = Number of responses
% = Percent of respondents

responsibilities in this area. Twenty-four percent of the respondents had primary responsibility for safety patrol and nineteen percent had primary responsibility for student assemblies. School safety patrols were assigned to the assistant principal as a primary responsibility by the principal fifty-two percent of the time. Of the nineteen percent of the assistant principals who had student activities as a primary responsibility, principals assigned the tasks eighty-two percent of the time.

Table 14 summarizes responses to the fifteen tasks identified as school management functions. Fifty-four percent of the respondents had primary responsibility for supervising transportation functions, approximately seventy-three percent had primary responsibility for textbook inventories, approximately fifty-one percent had primary responsibility for equipment inventories, and twenty-seven percent had primary responsibility for instructional materials. Custodial services, twenty-one percent, and school maintenance, approximately twenty-three percent, were the other areas where elementary assistant principals had primary responsibilities. The respondents indicated the principal had assigned these duties to them in over sixty percent of the cases.

Table 15 summarizes the responses related to those eight items identified as being student services functions. Forty-three percent of the respondents indicated student discipline was a primary responsibility. Twenty percent indicated student attendance was a major responsibility, while fifteen percent indicated student scholastic records were primary tasks.

TABLE 14

SELECTED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TASKS RATED ON
RESPONSIBILITY AND HOW THE TASKS WERE ASSIGNED
TO ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990*

		RESPONSIBILITY		HOW ASSIGNED		
		AP	S	P	C	SB
PARENT VOLUNTEERS	N	44	111	144	3	0
	%	19.5	49.1	63.7	1.3	0
INSTRUCTIONAL MAT	N	61	131	172	12	2
	%	27	58	76.1	5.3	0.9
TRANSPORTATION	N	123	64	150	10	18
	%	54.4	28.3	66.4	4.4	8
SCHOOL MAINT	N	51	122	158	9	5
	%	22.6	54	69.9	4	1.8
FOOD SERVICE	N	24	114	123	12	1
	%	10.6	50.4	54.4	5.3	0
CUSTODIAL SERVICE	N	47	117	151	12	0
	%	20.8	51.8	66.8	5.3	0
EQUIPMENT INVENT	N	115	62	155	15	2
	%	50.9	27.4	68.6	6.6	0.9
NON-SCH BUILD USE	N	31	96	116	12	6
	%	13.7	42.5	51.3	5.3	2.7
TEXTBOOK INVENT	N	164	26	178	4	6
	%	72.7	11.5	78.8	1.8	2.7
CLERICAL SER	N	7	115	120	2	2
	%	3.1	50.9	53.1	0.9	0.9
SCH BUDGETING	N	4	101	98	8	5
	%	1.8	44.7	43.4	3.5	2.2
FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS	N	3	82	83	12	4
	%	1.3	36.3	36.7	5.3	1.8
ACCRED REPORTS	N	27	115	126	10	2
	%	11.9	50.9	55.8	4.4	0.9
SCH BUS PARTNER	N	41	77	113	3	3
	%	18.1	34.1	50	1.3	1.3
PARENT HANDBOOK	N	17	135	148	4	1
	%	7.5	50.7	65.5	1.8	0.4

RESPONSIBILITY:

AP-ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
S-SHARED

HOW ASSIGNED:

P-ASSIGNED BY PRINCIPAL
C-ASSIGNED BY CENTRAL OFFICE
SB-ASSIGNED BY SCHOOL BOARD

*N = Number of responses
% = Percent of respondents

TABLE 15

SELECTED STUDENT SERVICES TASKS RATED ON
RESPONSIBILITY AND HOW THE TASKS WERE ASSIGNED
TO ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990*

		RESPONSIBILITY		HOW ASSIGNED		
		AP	S	P	C	SB
STUDENT HANDBOOK	N	18	152	155	6	2
	%	8.0	67.3	68.6	2.7	0.9
NEW STUD. ORIENT	N	16	156	163	1	1
	%	7.1	69	72.1	0.4	0.4
GUIDANCE PROG	N	5	128	120	6	7
	%	2.2	56.6	53.1	2.7	3.1
STUDENT DISCIP	N	77	135	189	3	7
	%	34.1	59.7	83.6	1.3	3.1
STUDENT ATTEND	N	45	83	123	5	6
	%	19.9	36.7	54.4	2.2	2.7
PARENT CONF.	N	14	188	182	2	3
	%	6.2	83.2	80.5	0.9	1.3
STUDENT SCHL REC	N	33	118	143	5	3
	%	14.6	52.2	63.3	2.2	1.3
STUDENT ASSIG.	N	30	146	163	4	4
	%	13.3	64.6	72	1.8	1.8

RESPONSIBILITY:
AP-ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
S-SHARED

HOW ASSIGNED:
P-ASSIGNED BY PRINCIPAL
C-ASSIGNED BY CENTRAL OFFICE
SB-ASSIGNED BY SCHOOL BOARD

*N = Number of responses
% = Percent of respondents

Fifty tasks items were divided into six major categories which included fifty functions which were described in the literature as being tasks associated with elementary administration. These categories involved functions dealing with community relations, curriculum and instruction, staff and personnel, student activities, school management, and student services. The specific tasks where assistant principals devoted most of their time were student discipline, textbook inventories, school maintenance, scholastic records, equipment inventories, the school testing program, and the school special education program. An examination of the data in this study reveals elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia are involved in all aspects of the school's operation. Most of the instructional task, however, are handled primarily by the building principal.

Research Question 6. What changes have elementary assistant principals seen take place in the position in the past and what changes do they anticipate in the future? Table 16 summarizes the responses of elementary assistant principals relative to changes they have seen in their position since they were first assigned to the position. An increase in the number of the tasks they performed and the stringent training requirements were indicated by over forty-three percent of the respondents. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents saw shared decision making with the principal as the most significant change.

TABLE 16

PAST CHANGES IN THE ELEMENTARY
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALSHIP IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990*

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TASKS PERFORMED.	(43%)
MORE STRINGENT TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.	(38%)
SHARED DECISION MAKING WITH THE PRINCIPAL.	(24%)
MORE SEVERE DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS.	(22%)
MORE DEFINED JOB DESCRIPTION.	(19%)
GREATER NON-SCHOOL USE OF SCHOOL FACILITY	(17%)
MORE EXTENSIVE USE OF COMPUTERS	(15%)
GREATER RESPONSIVENESS TO PARENT/COMMUNITY CONCERNS	(12%)
INCREASED HOURS TO ACCOMPLISH ASSIGNED TASKS	(11%)
GREATER PRESTIGE FOR ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS	(8%)
SALARIES HAVE NOT KEPT PACE WITH TEACHERS	(4%)

* % = Percent of respondents indicating this choice.

Table 17 summarizes assistant principal responses relative to the changes they anticipate in the assistant principalship in the future. Forty-four percent of the elementary assistant principals revealed their responsibilities would continue to swell. Twenty-two percent indicated a greater reliance on computers to assist them in the performance of their administrative duties as the biggest trend they see in the future.

Research Question 7. Are there differences between the demographic characteristics of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and elementary assistant principals in the national study of the position conducted by the National Association of Elementary Principals in 1970? Table 18 summarizes the demographic characteristics of assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the demographic characteristics in the National Association of Elementary Principals 1970 study of the elementary assistant principalship. Elementary assistant principals in the National Association study were ten years younger, had been in elementary teaching for less years, and averaged fewer hours in an average work week.

Research Question 8. Are there significant differences between the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals who aspire to higher positions and those who do not? the fifty tasks items were cross tabulated with assistant principals final occupational goal. Table 19 shows those tasks wherein a

TABLE 17

ANTICIPATED CHANGES IN THE ELEMENTARY
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALSHIP IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
1989-1990*

CONTINUED INCREASE IN RESPONSIBILITIES.	(54%)
GREATER RELIANCE ON TECHNOLOGY.	(22%)
CONTINUED SHIFT TO SITE BASED MANAGEMENT.	(15%)
GREATER IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS.	(11%)
GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	(6%)
GREATER INTERACTION WITH OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES.	(5%)
CONTINUED INCREASE IN THE SEVERITY OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS.	(4%)

* % = Percent of respondents indicating this choice.

TABLE 18

COMPARISON OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF
ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF
VIRGINIA 1990 AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS STUDY OF 1970

	VIRGINIA	NAESP 1970
AGE	41-50	36-39
RACE	WHITE	WHITE
GENDER	MALE	MALE
MARITAL STATUS	MARRIED	MARRIED
YEARS IN EDUCATION	10 OR MORE	10-19
YEARS IN ELEMENTARY TEACHING	9 OR MORE	2-9
YEARS IN POSITION	3-5	1-3
HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED	MASTER'S	MASTER'S
GRADUATE MAJOR	ELEM ADMIN	ELEM ADMIN
HOURS DEVOTED TO PROFESSIONAL GROWTH	6-10	1-9
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	700-999	700-999
SCHOOL DIVISION ENROLLMENT	25,000-99,999	25,000-99,999
HOURS IN AVERAGE WORK WEEK	42-47	36-41

TABLE 19

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES,
AND CHI SQUIRE STATISTICS
COMPUTED FOR ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL RESPONDENTS
TO THE TASKS PERFORMED BASED UPON FINAL OCCUPATIONAL GOAL

TASKS PERFORMED	RESPONSIBILITY						CHI SQ	df	LEV OF SIQ
	AP		SHARED		TOTAL				
	FREQ	PER	FREQ	PER	FREQ	PER			
1. STUDENT ASSEMBLIES									
AP-FINAL GOAL	8	53.3	7	46.7	15	7.5	7.5	1	.0052
HIGHER POSITION	35	18.9	150	81.1	185	92.5	9.73	1	.0018
2. CUSTODIAL SERVICES									
AP-FINAL GOAL	8	57.1	6	42.9	14	9.1	5.36	1	.0205
HIGHER POSITION	34	24.3	106	75.2	140	90.9	6.92	1	.0085
3. MASTER SCHEDULE									
AP-FINAL GOAL	11	84.6	2	15.4	13	8.5	9.54	1	.0020
HIGHER POSITION	51	36.4	89	63.6	140	91.5	11.46	1	.0007

significant difference at the .05 level existed. Student assemblies, custodial services, and developing the instructional master schedule were the only tasks exhibiting a significant difference between those assistant principals who indicated the assistant principalship was their final occupational goal and those who sought higher level positions.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and to determine what tasks they performed.

The research questions this study sought to answer were:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia?
2. What are the career aspirations of elementary assistant principals in the commonwealth of Virginia?
3. What training has contributed most to the success of elementary assistant principals?
4. What has been the greatest hindrance to the performance of assistant principals?
5. What are the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals and how are these tasks assigned to them?
6. What changes have elementary assistant principals seen take place in the position in the past and what changes do they anticipate in the future?

7. Are there differences between the demographic characteristics of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia and elementary assistant principals in the National Association of Elementary Principals' 1970 national study of the elementary assistant principalship?
8. Are there significant differences between the tasks performed by assistant principals who aspire to higher positions and those who do not?

Findings

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, no study had been reported to describe the demographics characteristics of elementary assistant principals or the tasks that they perform. While the literature provided limited information about the need to have such positions in the elementary schools, little has been written relative to the position. The last nationwide study of the elementary assistant principal was done by the National Association of Elementary Principals in 1970.

Lindsay (1985, 41) contended that assistant principals receive narrow on-the-job training.

The findings in the present study reveal the assistant elementary in the Commonwealth of Virginia is involved in all aspects of the total school program. The elementary assistant principal functioned, to a certain extent, in all of the

fifty tasks which were identified from the literature. These fifty tasks were identified in six functional categories. The functional categories were community relations, curriculum and instruction, staff and personnel, student activities, student services, and school management.

The analysis of the data in the demographic part of the survey revealed that the average elementary assistant principal in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1990 is a white male who is between the age of 41 to 50. The assistant principal is married, has been in education for 10 or more years, and has been in elementary education for 9 or more years. The assistant principal holds a master's degree in the field of education administration, and has been in the assistant principalship for 3 to 5 years. Prior to becoming an assistant principal, the majority of the respondents held elementary school teaching positions. Elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth are generally found in schools with a student population of 700-999 students containing grades K-6. Assistant principals are generally employed for eleven months and work 42 to 47 hours per week. Elementary assistant principals are employed in all school districts regardless of the school districts' size. The majority of the elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia, however, are employed in school districts with 25,000 to 99,999 students.

In a 1970 national study of the elementary assistant principal, the National Association of Elementary Principals found that the median age of elementary principal in the study was 36-39. The national study also found that

sixty-two percent of the assistant principals were males. Additionally, the national study found that seventy-two percent of the respondents were married (NAESP, 1970). Finally, the national survey found that the majority of the respondents viewed their current position "as a way to prepare for the principalship". When compared to this state study of assistant principals, assistant principals in the NAESP were younger, had fewer years in elementary teaching, and had fewer years in the assistant principalship. The other findings in this study of the assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia are consistent with the finding in the NAESP 1970 study of the elementary assistant principalship.

Just over sixty percent of the respondents in this study indicated that they were assigned to their position by the central office after consultation with the principal. Over twenty-six percent were assigned by the central office and just over twelve percent were chosen from a list by the principal.

The primary reason given by the majority of respondents for becoming an assistant principal was to prepare for the principalship. Over sixty-two percent of the assistant principals indicated this was the case. Eighteen percent preferred administration to teaching. Twelve percent entered the assistant principalship at the urging of their principal while over six percent entered administration for higher income.

In this survey of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia, eight percent of the respondents revealed that the assistant principalship

was their final occupational goal. The remaining respondents, ninety-two percent, indicated various positions to which they aspired. Over seventy-three percent aspired to be elementary principals. Just over six percent aspired to work in the central office as a specialist of one type or another. Less than six percent wanted to be college teachers, about four percent aspired to be assistant superintendents, and less than three percent aspired to be superintendents. Less than one percent of the assistant principals in this study aspired to be middle or senior high school principals.

Principals in consultation with their assistant principals determined the tasks of the assistant principal in forty-six percent of the cases. Just over forty-three percent of the assistant principals in this study indicated the principal alone was responsible for determining their tasks. The superintendent and the principal determined the assistant principal's tasks in just over six percent of the cases reported. The respondents indicated other types of configurations were used to determine the assistant principals tasks in less than five percent of the cases. Over seventy-five percent of the responding assistant principals had written job descriptions which list their tasks. Less than twenty-five percent of the respondents did not.

By a very large margin, seventy-seven percent, the respondents indicated on-the-job training had contributed most to their success as an assistant principal. Just over nineteen percent credited classroom teaching as contributing most to their success. Less than four percent credited their college preparation

program or school system in-service program with contributing most to their success.

Most of the respondents, over seventy-eight percent, did not consider any factor to be a significant hindrance to their success in the assistant principalship. The unwillingness of the principals to delegate authority was a hindrance for seven percent of the respondents. An additional seven percent of the respondents indicated the lack of staff understanding of the role of the assistant principal as a hindrance. Lack of experience, just under five percent, was also considered a hindrance to the performance of assistant principals in the Commonwealth.

The analysis of the fifty tasks in the six functional areas as rated by the assistant principals in this study resulted in the determination of which tasks were performed primarily by the assistant principal and which tasks were shared with the school principal. A summary of the tasks in the six functional categories indicated:

Community Relations. The major function performed by assistant principals in this area was community fund drives.

Curriculum and Instruction. The school testing program, special education services, and pupil field trips were the main tasks in this area performed by assistant principals.

Staff and Personnel. Obtaining and supervising substitute teachers was clearly the main function that elementary assistant principals in the

Commonwealth of Virginia perform in this area. This task was rated highest of all the tasks listed in this area by a margin of two to one.

Student Activities. The major tasks performed by assistant principals in this area were sponsoring the safety patrol and coordinating student assemblies. Most assistant principals shared the other tasks in this area with their principals most of the time.

School Management. The primary tasks performed by assistant principals in this area were transportation (supervising the arrival and departure of students), textbook inventories, equipment inventories, and providing instructional materials to teachers. This area consumed a vast majority of the assistant principals time on a consistent basis.

Student Services. In this area, student discipline was the task revealed as the primary task of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth. This finding is consistent with the national study of elementary assistant principals conducted by the National Association of Elementary Principals in 1970. It is also consistent with the responses of elementary principals in a national study of elementary principals conducted by Doud in 1988.

The majority of the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia are assigned to them by their principal alone or by their principal after consulting with the assistant principal. Very few tasks were assigned to assistant principals by the central office or by school board policy.

Conclusions

The analysis of the data in this study revealed that elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia perform primary tasks in all of the major functional areas of the school. Student discipline, textbook inventories, equipment inventories, providing instructional materials, coordinating student assemblies, sponsoring the school safety patrol, procurement of substitute teachers, special education, student field trips, and community fund drives were tasks primarily assigned to elementary assistant principals. The data also indicated the vast majority of the fifty items in the six functional areas were tasks for which principals shared responsibility with the assistant principal for accomplishing. Shared responsibility with the principal appears to be the organizational structure that is utilized in the majority of the elementary schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The administrative team appears to be the organizational concept most utilized in elementary schools in Virginia.

The elementary assistant principal appears well entrenched in the operation of elementary schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Their job performance encompasses every facet of the school's program. Elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia are professionals who are essential to the effective operations of elementary schools. The vast majority of the assistant principals in Virginia aspire for positions of greater responsibility and authority. The scope of the tasks they perform are as broad and varied as the schools in which they are employed.

Seventy-seven percent of the assistant principals in this study responded that on-the-job training had contributed most to their success as an assistant principal. Classroom teaching accounted for just over nineteen percent of the responses. College preparation programs and school system in-service programs for assistant principals accounted for just over three percent of the respondents responses.

Assistant principals responded that they wanted other positions in the future. The elementary principalship was the position that was most sought. Although all principals have not been assistant principals, most of them have.

The cross tabulation of those assistant principals who view the assistant principalship as their final occupation goal and those who did not revealed three significant differences. These differences were the tasks of student assemblies, supervision of custodial services, and development of the master schedule. These differences, when viewed in global terms do not appear to have a great deal of impact on the tasks performed in the six functional categories by elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Recommendations

Although discipline, special education functions, transportation, community fund drives, field trips, obtaining and supervising substitute teachers, textbook inventories, equipment inventories, and securing instructional materials for teachers are important tasks performed by elementary assistant principals in

the Commonwealth of Virginia, their job involves much more. They perform most of the tasks associated with elementary administration. Their responsibilities are shared with the principals in order to provide a consistent educational program for the children they serve. This positive development of shared responsibilities greatly enhances the team concept of school administration.

Training activities for assistant principals might be improved by encouraging principals to give greater priority to training assistant principals for the principalship. In as much as on-the-job training impacts so positively on the success of elementary assistant principals, the training of principals to perform this task is critical to the success of their assistant principal. Assistant principals need intense training in school budgeting and school finance in order to develop proficiency in these critical tasks. Also, the assistant principal's role requires greater clarification at the building level. Additionally, the same type of professional development activities that are provided to principals must be afforded to assistant principals if assistant principals are expected to assume the principalship and not have to learn their role as they perform the role.

Finally, the number of tasks assigned to assistant principals cannot continue to increase if assistant principals are to remain effective. Instructional leadership is a time consuming process and assistant principals will be of limited use in this area if their role becomes one of custodial management. Custodial management in this regard relegates assistant principals to maintenance of the

institution. While maintenance of the institution by assistant principals will relieve principals of this function and provide them with greater opportunities for involvement in the instructional program, it may not provide the assistant principals with the opportunities to learn the instructional leadership role. Clearly, the instructional leadership role will be paramount for assistant principals upon elevation to the principalship. The use of currently employed paraprofessional in dealing with many of the routine tasks may provide the assistant principals the opportunity to increase their involvement in instructional leadership functions. Additionally, teachers might be paid a minimal supplement to create more time for the assistant principal to become involved in the instructional program.

Critique of the Research

In most research studies there are areas in which improvements become apparent. In this study, modification of the instrument could have addressed the amount of time that assistant principals devote to the tasks they perform. The number of returned surveys may have been increased in the survey if they had been sent at a different time of the school year. The instrument was mailed in April and May which is generally two of the busiest months of the year for elementary administrators. An additional modification to the survey instrument could have been the creation of a five point likert type scale in order to

determine not only the responsibilities performed by elementary assistant principals but also their discretionary behavior.

Suggestions for Further Study

Suggestions for future study include studies which would focus on:

1. Elementary principals observations of the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. A comparison of the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals in urban, suburban, and rural communities.
3. A comparison of the perception of elementary principals and elementary assistant principals on the tasks performed by elementary assistant principals.
4. An examination of elementary administration training programs and a comparison of the effectiveness of each.
5. A comparison of the role of elementary assistant principals and secondary assistant principals.
6. A study of the professional development of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY

Control Number _____

Part I General Information

Directions: Please circle the one answer for each of the following questions that best describes your situation.

I. Descriptive Information

1. How would you describe your school division?
 - a. Urban
 - b. Suburban
 - c. Small Town
 - d. Rural

2. What is your official title?
 - a. Assistant Principal
 - b. Vice - Principal
 - c. Administrative Assistant
 - d. Assistant to the Principal

3. How large is your school division?
 - a. Under 2999 students
 - b. 3000 - 24,999 students
 - c. 25,000 - 99,999 students
 - d. 100,000 or more students

4. What is your age?
 - a. Under 30
 - b. 31 - 40
 - c. 41 - 50
 - d. 51 - older

5. What is your sex?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

6. What is your marital status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Widowed
 - d. Divorced

7. How is one assigned to a school as an assistant principal?
 - a. Assigned by central office without consulting principal.
 - b. Principal chooses assistant principal from approved list.
 - c. Assigned by central office after consulting with principal.

8. What position did you hold just prior to becoming an assistant principal?
 - a. Elementary Teacher
 - b. Guidance Counselor
 - c. Secondary Teacher
 - d. Teacher Trainer
 - e. Graduate Student
 - f. Other

9. What was your primary reason for becoming an assistant principal?
 - a. Higher income
 - b. Preferred administration to teaching
 - c. Prepare for the principalship
 - d. Urged to do so by the principal

10. Do you consider the assistant principalship as your final occupational goal
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If no, please circle your final occupational goal.

- a. Principalship (Elem)
- b. Principalship (Middle/Junior High)
- c. Principalship (High School)
- d. Central Office Specialist
- e. Assistant Superintendent
- f. Superintendent
- g. College Instructor
- h. Other (please specify) _____

11. How long has your principal been in the principalship?
- a. 0 - 2 years
 - b. 3 - 5 years
 - c. 6 - 8 years
 - d. 9 or more

II. Experience and Preparation

1. How many years of experience have you had in school work?
- a. 0 - 3 years
 - b. 4 - 10 years
 - c. 10 or more
2. How many years of experience have you had in elementary teaching?
- a. 0 - 2 years
 - b. 3 - 5 years
 - c. 6 - 8 years
 - d. 9 or more
3. How many years have you been an assistant principal?
- a. 0 - 2 years
 - b. 3 - 5 years
 - c. 6 - 8 years
 - d. 9 or more
4. What is your highest earned college degree?
- a. BA, BS, BEd
 - b. MA, MS, MEd
 - c. Masters + 30 hours (Eds, CAGS)
 - d. EdD, Phd

5. What was your major field of graduate college study?
 - a. No graduate work
 - b. Elementary school administration
 - c. Elementary instruction
 - d. Elementary supervision
 - e. Other

6. How many hours per week do you devote to professional growth activities?
 - a. None
 - b. 1 - 5 hours
 - c. 6 - 10 hours
 - d. 11 - 15 hours
 - e. 16 - 20 hours
 - f. 21 or more

III. Work Conditions

1. What is the enrollment of the school in which you are employed?
 - a. Under 399
 - b. 400 - 699
 - c. 700 - 999
 - d. 1000 or more

2. What grades are included in your school?
 - a. K - 3
 - b. K - 4
 - c. 4 - 6
 - d. K - 5
 - e. K - 6
 - f. Other (List) _____

3. How many full-time teaching positions are in your school?
 - a. 5 - 14
 - b. 15 - 30
 - c. 31 - 45
 - d. 46 or more

4. What is your term of employment each year?
 - a. 9 months
 - b. 10 months
 - c. 11 months
 - d. 12 months

5. How many hours per week do you average at your school?
 - a. 30 - 35 hours
 - b. 36 - 41 hours
 - c. 42 - 47 hours
 - d. 48 or more

IV. Major functions of Assistant Principals

1. What preparation or experience has contributed most to your success as an assistant principal?
 - a. Classroom Teaching
 - b. College preparation
 - c. On-the-job training with the principal
 - d. School division sponsored in-service programs

2. How are your task determined?
 - a. Principal
 - b. Superintendent
 - c. School Board Policy
 - d. Principal in conference with assistant principal
 - e. Principal and Superintendent
 - f. Other, please specify _____

3. Do you have a written job description?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. What do you believe is the most serious block or hindrance to your functioning effectively as an assistant principal?
 - a. Lack of administrative experience
 - b. Lack of administrative preparation
 - c. Unwillingness of principal to delegate
 - d. Lack of staff understanding of assistant principal duties
 - e. None

Part II

Listed are a series of activities (tasks) performed by elementary administrators. Please indicate with a check (x) if you have responsibility for performing any of these tasks in your school. If the task is performed by you or is a shared task, please indicate how you were assigned the task.

Responsibility

AP - Assistant Principal

S - Shared

How Assigned

P - Assigned by Principal

C - Assigned by central
office administrator(s)

SB - Assigned by school
board policy

Task Performed

Responsibility

AP S

How Assigned

P C SB

1. Student Handbook	_____	_____
2. Student Assemblies	_____	_____
3. New Student Orientation	_____	_____
4. Parent Volunteers	_____	_____
5. Guidance Program	_____	_____
6. Teacher Handbook	_____	_____
7. Substitute Teacher	_____	_____
8. Student Discipline	_____	_____
9. Student Clubs	_____	_____
10. Parent Teacher Association	_____	_____
11. Parent/Student Handbook	_____	_____
12. Grade Level Meetings	_____	_____
13. Faculty Meetings	_____	_____
14. Teacher Staff Development	_____	_____
15. Instructional Materials	_____	_____
16. Transportation	_____	_____
17. Formulating school goals	_____	_____
18. School Maintenance	_____	_____
19. Food Services	_____	_____
20. Custodial Services	_____	_____
21. Equipment Inventories	_____	_____
22. Non - School building use	_____	_____
23. Pupil Field trips	_____	_____
24. Special Ed. (IEP) Meeting	_____	_____
25. Textbook Inventories	_____	_____

Responsibility
 AP - Assistant Principal
 S - Shared

How Assigned
 P - Assigned by Principal
 C - Assigned by central
 office administrator(s)
 SB - Assigned by school
 board policy

Task Performed	Responsibility		How Assigned		
	AP	S	P	C	SB
26. Teacher Selection	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
27. Student Attendance	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
28. Student Teachers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
29. Sp. Ed. Elig. Meeting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
30. Testing Program	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
31. Master Schedule	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
32. Community Fund Drive	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
33. School Newspaper	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
34. Clerical Services	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
35. Student Class Assignments	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
36. School Budgeting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
37. Financial Accounts	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
38. Teacher Additional Duties	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
39. Accreditation Reports	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
40. New Instr. Approaches	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
41. School Busi. Partnerships	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
42. School Store	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
43. Parent Conference	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
44. Student Scholastic Records	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
45. Liaison w/employee groups	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
46. Student Government	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
47. Safety Patrol	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
48. Music/Art Contest	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
49. Activities Program	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
50. Public Relations	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

1110 Lakeview Drive
Portsmouth, Virginia 23701
January 23, 1990

National Association of
Elementary Schools Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3483

Dear Sir:

I am beginning a study of the assistant elementary principalship in Virginia as a doctoral student at Virginia Tech. The purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics of elementary assistant principals and to ascertain the tasks that they perform.

In doing so, I am requesting to utilize and modify as necessary the instrument used by James L. Doud in the ten year study of elementary principals. James L. Doud's study is titled "The K-8 Principal in 1988" and was published by the National Association of Elementary Principals in 1989. I will be happy to send you the results of the final study if you will note your interest in your reply.

I thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Albert J. Williams

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

1110 Lakeview Drive
Portsmouth, Virginia 23701
March 8, 1990

Dear Colleague:

I am a student in education administration at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia. I am in the process of completing the degree requirements for the Doctor of Education degree and to fulfill this requirement I am conducting a study to determine the characteristics and tasks performed by elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Your name was randomly selected from the Virginia Educational Directory for 1989-90 to participate in the pretesting of the questionnaire which will be used in this study. Please complete the questionnaire and in the space provided under each question, indicate any ambiguities in format or language. Additionally, please indicate any recommendations that you believe would improve the effectiveness of this questionnaire. I would appreciate receiving your comments by March 27, 1991. A self addressed return envelop is included.

I thank you for your assistance and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Albert J. Williams

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

1110 Lakeview Drive
Portsmouth, Virginia 23701
April 12, 1990

Dear Assistant Principal:

I am a student in education administration at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia. I am in the process of completing the degree requirements for the Doctor of Education degree and to fulfill this requirement I am conducting a study to determine the characteristics and tasks performed by elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The enclosed survey will be the basis for this statewide study and your assistance in completing this questionnaire will provide the data which will be utilized. I greatly appreciate your taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will remain in strict confidence. I thank you for your assistance in this endeavor.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelop on or before May 2, 1990.

Sincerely,

Albert J. Williams

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

SECOND LETTER TO ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

1110 Lakeview Drive
Portsmouth, Virginia 23701
May 12, 1990

Dear Assistant Principal:

I am a graduate student in education administration at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. In fulfilling the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree I am conducting a study of the demographic characteristics of elementary assistant principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia as well as the tasks that they perform. On April 12, 1990, I mailed you a questionnaire with a self-addressed envelop. I requested that the questionnaire be returned by May 2, 1990.

Your questionnaire has not yet been received and your responses are important to this study. Enclosed is another questionnaire and a self-addressed envelop. I sincerely hope your schedule will permit you the opportunity to participate in this study.

I thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,


Albert J. Williams

VITA

Albert J. Williams was born February 1, 1946 in Norfolk, Virginia. He attended schools in Norfolk, and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1964. Mr. Williams attended Norfolk State College where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in health and physical education in 1968. From 1968 to 1972 Mr. Williams served in the United States Army with oversea duty in the Republic of Viet Nam. While completing his military service, he began graduate work at the University of Tennessee in Nashville. In 1973 he earned a Masters of Science degree in education administration from the University of Tennessee. Upon leaving military service in 1972, he began teaching in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Mr. Williams taught from September, 1972 to June, 1975 at Newtown Road Elementary School as a physical education teacher for one year and as a community school consultant for two years. In July of 1975 he was appointed to the assistant principalship where he served in a number of elementary schools. In July of 1979, Mr. Williams was appointed to the elementary principalship and he served in that capacity until June of 1989 when he was appointed principal of Brandon Junior High School. In July of 1990 he was appointed to the principalship of Floyd E. Kellam High School.

Mr. Williams is married to the former Brenda D. Wilson and they have two children, Albert Jr. and Tanya.


Albert J. Williams